

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is questioning authority.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of April 19, 2014*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For *just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.* Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! (Rom 11:25–33 emphasis added)

8.

Same head citation as last Sabbath; for the partial hardening that came upon Israel, originating with Moses putting on a veil so that the people could not see the glory of God that shone from his face from having entered into the presence of the Lord, forms the shadow and copy of the partial hardening that came over spiritual Israel with the death of the Body of Christ ... the Church—the Body of Christ—that consists (consisted) of disciples truly born of spirit was never large; for no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws the person from this world and teaches the person the rudimentary principles of holiness, again:

Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.** And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' [Isa 54:13] **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me ...**" (John 6:43–45 double emphasis added)

If a person is not drawn by the Father from this world, and then taught by the Father, hearing the Father and learning from Him, the person simply cannot come to Christ Jesus. No exceptions. And how is a person foreknown by God and drawn from this world? Then how does this person learn from the Father? Does the person learn the rudimentary principles of holiness from a book? Where in Matthew's Gospel does Jesus say anything about the pronouncement of the Father's name; where in the separation of goats from sheep (Matt 25:31–46) is there anything about the authority of a book or of magic words. Doesn't the principle of holiness involve not a recognized religion, nor religious dogma, but serving one's brother and neighbor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the homeless? Does God need to teach people to keep the Sabbath before they can feed the hungry? No, He doesn't. He needs only to prevail upon the person to love the person's neighbor and brother. He can quickly see the person's heart when the person has the opportunity to do good when it would be just as easy—and perhaps more logical—to not do good.

Evil begins with not believing God, not hearing and believing the Father, not hearing and seeing and believing the Father. Evil manifests itself in most people not in the person doing a horrific deed, but in the person being a hypocrite, say, knowing to keep the Sabbath but worshiping on Sunday instead—or on Friday instead. Evil manifests itself in denying Christ, in succumbing to the desires, even demands of the flesh. And a Christian denies Christ when the Christian worships a triune deity ...

The generation that reached its majority in the 1960s—the first of the Baby Boomers—experienced a *Zeitgeist* that caused this generation to question authority: *Don't believe anyone over thirty.* This generation was psychologically prepared to question the authority of books; the authority of the Bible. And for cause: *Sola scriptura* is the teaching of an earlier generation of rebels who became the *establishment* and gave to humanity centuries of war, two world wars, and the nuclear bomb (100 megaton nuclear bombs that if strategically placed on the geological ring of fire could turn the earth into another asteroid belt orbiting the sun).

Christianity based on *Sola scriptura* is an ideology that doesn't question authority. Rather than think for him or herself, individuals who hold to *Sola scriptura* accept what is and has been taught by those who seem to have authority.

Today, I have leaning in a corner near me a fibreglas fishing rod recently made in Vietnam. It is an inexpensive rod, but one adequate for its purpose ... did American military forces bring Capitalism to Vietnam, or did the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam put into place conditions in which Vietnam built for itself a transactional economy, filling a low-end void created by Japan's and now China's increased prosperity? Did the *domino theory* advocated by the American military in the 1960s prove true or false? Was it proper for American youth in the late 1960s to question America's involvement in Vietnam? At the time, I was very much opposed to Vietnam War protesters. I tried to enlist three times, but was turned down each time: too large, too muscular. Three times my local draft board sent me to Portland for an induction

physical. I was again turned down each time. Only now, a shoulder torn up in an auto accident was added to the reason why the military didn't want me.

What separated my generation from previous generations going back to the Christian Reform Movement of the 16th-Century CE was that Zeitgeist of questioning authority; for without *permission* to do so, no person can rebel against the Adversary—this permission coming from God and coming via tweaking human reception of the Adversary's continual broadcast of rebellion against God. Thus, questioning or challenging authority took many forms, from cultural—the mores of marriage and sexual relationships—to political (the American Civil Rights Movement) to theological: few Christians continued to believe in a literal six day creation, and those who did were ignorantly rebelling against the liberation of Christian dogmas.

When Native Americans say that their ancestors heard the breaking of Lake Bonneville at Red Rock, with the massive spill cutting through Marsh Creek Valley and to the Snake, cutting away Hell's Canyon within the occupancy of *the people* on the land, how long ago did Lake Missoula break? A glacial flood occurred that created Washington State's pothole country in a day. Presumably, at the end of the last ice age, an ice dam ruptured on what is now the Clark Fork River and a massive flood swept across eastern Washington and into the Columbia River. Recent research seems to show that over two millennia (13,000 to 15,000 years ago), the dam reformed and ruptured as many as twenty-five times, each time discharging more than ten times the flow of the Amazon River ... did *the people* hear the Bretz Floods rather than the breaking of Lake Bonneville? And what level of authority is attached to the dating of the Missoula Floods? The same level that is behind global warming?

When a person has been repeatedly told lies, the person tends to become cynical. But how does a person know he or she has been told lies? What is the difference between a lie and the truth when both are well told, and when both are believed. Consider the temptation account in Matthew's Gospel versus the temptation account in Mark's Gospel, with Mark's account cited first:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens being torn open and the spirit descending [*eis* — into] Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." The spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him. (Mark 1:9–13)

The account is short: the spirit/breath of God entered into Jesus, and caused Jesus to withdraw from humanity for forty days. During these forty days—nothing is said about fasting—Jesus was tempted by Satan, and angels ministered to Him ... this temptation account will form the mirror or chiral image of the conversion and spiritual birth of Jesus' disciples, which will have the temptation of the Adversary and the ministering to the disciples by the angels of God occurring before spiritual birth that equates to the receipt of the breath of God in the form of the indwelling of Christ Jesus, with Jesus being the vessel that has come from heaven and that is able to hold in the disciple the *bright fire* that is the glory of God.

Matthew's temptation of Jesus is quite different:

Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And *after fasting forty days and forty nights*, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him. (Matt 4:1–11 emphasis added)

Can the two temptation accounts be reconciled? No, not without doing serious damage to one or both of them. So which one should be believed ... from what very high mountain can all of the kingdoms of the world and their glory be seen? When standing on the North Pole, can New Zealand be seen? How about if a person built a very high tower on the North Pole, could New Zealand be seen? Or does the curvature of the globe prevent the other side of the globe from being seen regardless of how high the mountain or tower? It does, doesn't it? Thus, Matthew's temptation account and by extension, Luke's temptation account cannot be literally true. However, Mark's temptation account can be true, especially when coupled with John's Gospel and John's Jesus stating that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws the person and teaches the person the rudimentary principles of righteousness; i.e., having love for God, neighbor, and brother.

Questioning authority doesn't mean outright rejection of authority. Rather, in the example of Matthew's and Mark's temptation accounts, Matthew's account shows in many ways that it cannot be read literally (*e.g.*, fasting for forty days — going without ingesting liquids for forty days will have produced death at least a week earlier), that it can only be read figuratively. And if Matthew's Gospel can only be read figuratively, then this gospel is not a biography of a historical human individual. Nor is Luke's biography that of a historical human person, but Luke's *Jesus* isn't Matthew's *Jesus*. No amount of reconciliation will cause Luke's Gospel to be true; for again is the temptation account as a witness mark, try to align Luke with Mark:

And Jesus, full of the holy spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days. And *when they were ended*, He was hungry. The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" And he took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "'On their hands they will bear

you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:1–13 emphasis added)

In Mark's account, throughout the forty days the Adversary tempted Christ and angels ministered to Him, but not so in either Matthew's Gospel or in Luke's Gospel—and there is no temptation account in John's Gospel.

The authority of Scripture must be questioned, tested, and proved either true or false, with the same criteria used for testing spirits applied to testing Scripture itself ... it is one thing to unknowingly believe a lie, to believe disinformation, but it is quite another things to know that what you believe is a lie and yet continue to believe whatever it is; for the question emerges, can you really believe a falsehood that you know is false? Can you really believe that global warming is occurring when you have just experienced the coldest winter in a century, with three polar vortexes? And if you can, what sort of a liar are you that you can lie to yourself and believe your own lie?

Most people in the Western World have given up on *Sola scriptura*, even as they continue to claim that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. They create Christmas manger scenes with three wise men on camels, thereby linking Matthew's Gospel with Luke's, not at all troubled by the descent of Jesus from Solomon in Matthew's Gospel, and the descent of Jesus from Nathan in Luke's Gospel, when the prophet Isaiah says of the Messiah that He shall be a root sprout from the stump of Jesse (Isa 11:1–2), meaning that the Christ is not a descendant of David but a descendant of Israel as represented by Jesse's ancestry prior to Israel's rebellion against God in the days of Samuel.

Question everything; question authority, but hold what you question without rejecting it until you see if the problem is your lack of knowledge, lack of understanding ... a great many Americans have bit into this conspiracy theory or that one, with the Federal Government doing everything it can to promote these conspiracy theories, thereby discrediting them and those who believe them. For the person who has truly been conned will never know that he or she has been deceived, but will always hold that what the person believes is true even when it is easily seen to be false.

A Sabbatarian Christian ministry that cannot bring anyone to Christ Jesus nevertheless has value in that the ministry amounts to a warehouse where the person can be stored until drawn from this world by the Father. The problem, however, with such Sabbatarian ministries is their physical seduction ... when the mind is spiritually empty, the mind seeks to fill itself with those things that are not of God such as the importance of racial purity or British Israelism or the utterance of names. Thus, the mind of the person warehoused in a Sabbatarian Christian ministry tends to become cluttered with worthless *secret knowledge*, such as that of the Tri-Laterals. Question everything; question why anyone would seek to rule this world? Does the person who seeks to rule seek gold or authority or the blood of millions? If rule of this world were obtained by a clique, what could this clique do that isn't already being done by a ruling elite? Imprisoning human persons in a gulag doesn't produce wealth for the ruling elite, but becomes a net loss to rulers: it always ends up costing more to maintain prisoners than can be recovered in work done by the prisoners. Thus, Hitler's solution of quick death—while a net loss to the nation—made more economic sense than did Stalin's labor

camps. Pol Pot seemed to think so. And which conspiracy theory proposes anything more gruesome than Hitler's final solution?

Shall humanity fight over a square of ice in which their dead cannot be buried ... the mantle of this earth's crust is no more than the North Sea ice over which Danes and Swedes fought in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Question authority that would send young men off to war to nation build when *the Mouse Trap is the thing to trap the king*, an allusion Utah's then Senator Robert Bennett used in reference to Clinton's White Water scandal, a reference Rush Limbaugh spent an hour discussing before someone privately told him that he needed to untie the other half of his brain, that he didn't know the play.

I was at University of Alaska Fairbanks' Midnight Sun Writers' Conference in 1981, when Robert Stone told graduate students—I was not then one—that if the multinational corporations wanted to rule the world, let them, the *vener of civilization was very thin*. He angered many, but he was correct. Shall we fight for ice? For our control over land that will soon be no more. That is what John writes:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15–17)

Is not *democracy* of this world? Is not *liberty* an illusion of this world? Are you really free to come to Christ Jesus if the Father doesn't draw you from this world? Or is not the denomination you have joined your *Mouse Trap*? An artificial construct enacted to reveal truth without ever being true?

Christians are not to park their brains with their cars when attending Sabbath services. They are to question everything, holding fast to what can be proven, and turning loose of what cannot.

I was not a 1960s or 1970s fan of *Hanoi Jane*, but I knew that LBJ was lying whenever he opened his mouth. I thought Nixon would turn around the direction of the country, but freezing prices was as poorly considered as was engaging in an Asian land war. So I listened to Alaska's *Patriots in Action* and to the *Alaska Independence Party* before I understood the reality of what Paul wrote about the Adversary being the prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world that continued to rule the mental topography of living creatures a quarter century after Calvary, with nothing having changed since then and with nothing much going to change until the single kingdom of this world is taken from Satan and his angels and given to the Son of Man (*cf.* Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18, 12:7–12).

The Sabbatarian Christian who sincerely believes the conspiracy theories circulated by the empty minds of far too many Sabbatharians needs to find wherever he or she parked the person's brain and as quickly as possible, get off the Adversary's game board: it's not enough to change sides, going from being a white pawn to being a black pawn or vice versa. The Christian needs to become as Moses was when he tended his father-in-law's sheep on the backside of nowhere. The Christian doesn't need to be as Moses was when he slew the Egyptian; for forcefully resisting whomever is in power will only keep the Christian on the Adversary's game board. The Christian needs to become as nearly invisible in this world as possible. In other words, the Christian needs to hide in plain sight, which is the opposite of becoming involved in attempting to reform the politics of

this world. The Christian needs to manifest love for neighbor and brother and for whomever the Christian encounters, trusting God to supply the person's needs while working six days a week ... in work or in wages, no one should trust. A Christian works because works keeps hands and minds busy between Sabbath days.

In this world, the reformers get reformed, becoming in a generation the establishment that cannot be trusted.

In this world, the Adversary encourages the participation of all, from serf to steward, from pauper to prince, with each person striving to achieve his or her share of a common dream that originates with the Adversary.

Question everything; question authority, but be smart about the questioning. Don't reject a Gospel because it cannot be literally true. Assume it has been preserved in Scripture for a reason, even if that reason isn't immediately apparent. Assume the fault is yours, in what you don't know or understand. And if after examining yourself, correcting your shortcoming in knowledge, making sure you know what the *Mouse Trap* used to trap the king is, then you are in a better position to either not use or to accept a Gospel that cannot be literally true.

This Reading actually continues for another 30,000 words, the length of a short book. But I will break it here and divide its remainder up in bit-size pieces for easier reading.

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The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

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