

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 obedience is as a cloak worn daily.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 24, 2008

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.

If the kingdom that Jesus receives is not from this world or of this world (John 18:36), and if this kingdom is presently still ruled by the prince of the power of the air, the "spirit" now at work in all sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2), then the returning Jesus is not coming to claim an earthly throne or kingdom. He is not coming to rule from a physical capitol or temple. And His return is not predicated upon events that happen in this world, but upon events that happen in the invisible and hence unobservable heavenly realm, a supra-dimensional realm that is without matter/mass and as such timeless.

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The person conducting services should read or assign to be read Matthew chapter 24, verses 1 through 35.

Commentary: Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (v. 35), thereby giving to His words permanency that the material creation, subject to decay, lacks.

The concept that enacted ideas or words uttered in the heavenly realm cast shadows that are manifest in this visible, knowable world as material things is perhaps too difficult of a concept for most self-identified Christians to understand: the logic for such understanding is, though, inherent in the Breath of God being a creating and renewing force (Ps 104:24, 30).

Ideas are, in this world, intangible and ephemeral until acted upon: they come and go without attracting undo attention to themselves unless inscribed or recorded in some fashion. But once an idea has been reduced to a tangible thing—inscribed text, say—then the idea acquires a sense of permanency, especially when used to produce material objects. And what the world sees are twenty or so geographical locations worldwide, ten in the US and ten elsewhere, where the creativity of humankind hatches innovation as if ideas were salmon eggs laid in gravel redds, floating in a fog of milt, fertilized by diversity and communal openness. These few locations nurture creativity until ideas, as embryos that have successfully struggled to free themselves from their shells, venture forth as alevins, with the remaining egg yolk upon which the idea feeds still clinging to

the belly of the idea. An alevin's yolk sac contains all that is needed for the idea to become a fry that will now head for protected locations from where the idea can dart forth to catch the funding needed to move from being a pre-migrant to a smolt, with a silvery coating over its scales to shield its body from the ravages of the marketplace. And as smolt, the ideas move from fresh to saltwater where they migrate from these twenty streams to the oceans of the world.

But ideas are not either Pacific or Atlantic salmon even though reproductive cycle of Pacific salmon might well metaphorically represent the life cycle of an idea that will pass away when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Christ (Rev 11:15).

Jesus spoke to His disciples in only figures of speech, or in metaphors (John 16:25); for He spoke the Father's words, which were not about the things of this world but form the things of this world, a subtle distinction that can be easily overlooked. In this material universe, the words of a person form an article or a book, which then becomes the basis for splitting an atom, the basis for building a nuclear bomb, the basis for ending the war with Japan in horror and great destruction. With three or so decades—half of a human being's present lifespan—an idea ushered in the Cold War, a nuclear arms race, and the possibility of turning the earth into another asteroid belt.

Jesus said His disciples would hear of wars and the rumors of wars, nations rising against nations, famines and earthquakes, but that His disciples should not be alarmed by the possibility of a nuclear exchange that might turn the world into gravel, that such an exchange (if it were to occur) is but the beginning of the hard labor pains (Matt 24:6-8) of Zion bringing forth a nation in a day (Isa 66:7-8).

The beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation—the period before the Tribulation actually commences—will be marked by wars and rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes, but the seven endtime years will be about the death of disciples, hatred of disciples, the falling away of disciples, the rise of false prophets that lead more disciples astray, the rise of lawlessness [sin] and the love of many disciples growing cold until it becomes a legitimate question of whether Jesus will find faith here on this earth when He returns. The Tribulation is about Zion bringing to birth many sons of God, with these sons separating themselves into a spiritual Abel, a spiritual Cain, and a spiritual Seth, the children of the last Adam, a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45).

- If disciples in the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven (Matt 22:30), then do these sons of God, born of spirit, need a mother like that of the first Eve?
- Will there be a last Eve like that of the last Adam (Rom 5:14), a single female individual who brings forth children from ovum fertilized by the Father?
- Is Zion a woman, the source for the ovum that will be fertilized by the Father when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (*cf.* Joel 2:28; Matt 3:11) as salmon eggs are fertilized in a fog of milt?
- Are human beings really anything more than a materialized idea (Gen 1:26)?

Despite Jesus' warning to His disciples that they should mislead no one—"Βλέπετε [See to it] εἴ τις [not any] ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ [you deceive]" (Matt 24:4 — this verse is regularly mistranslated into English)—the 1st-Century Church did lead many disciples astray; for from Israel comes the ovum that will become, when impregnated by receipt of the divine breath of the Father, the many sons of God that will be born or separated from God when the seven endtime years of tribulation begins.

As has been explicated in previous Sabbath readings, Scripture begins with marriage and ends with marriage even though born of spirit sons of God do not marry as men and women do in this world marry. New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ (Rev 21:2, 9-10), having the glory of God (v. 12). This “city” is the “house” of God that has grown large as physical Jerusalem was the house of David that grew large after David made it his capital residence. Christ doesn’t marry as a man marries a woman. Rather, He marries as the Father was “married” to *Yah* in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*. And as the Λόγος was θεὸς and was with θεόν in the beginning (John 1:1-2) with these two being *one* as Eve was *one* with Adam (Gen 2:24), New Jerusalem will be *one* with the Messiah when this glorious city returns after the thousand years.

How can a city measured with a rod at 12,000 *stadia*, with a wall of 144 cubits, built of jasper, while the “city was pure gold, clear as glass” (Rev 21:18) be the Bride of Christ, the glorified Church that began when Jesus breathed on ten of His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]” (John 20:22)? There is, in this world, a logical disconnect.

In Revelation “appearance” is function, meaning that the glorified Christ does not “appear” as a lamb in chapter one: “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest” (1:12-13). Yet Christ does appear as a lamb in chapter five: “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (5:6).

- The “seven eyes” are seven spirits that function as “eyes” for the Lamb. They are the seven stars that are the seven angels to the seven churches (Rev 1:20).
- The “seven horns” are the seven lampstands that are the seven churches which function as lords in this world.
- The glorified Christ functions as the paschal lamb of God—a slain lamb is hung by its head and appears as a man standing.

In interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, Daniel tells the king that he is the image’s head of gold (Dan 2:28). As such, Nebuchadnezzar formed the spiritually lifeless shadow of Satan, the king of spiritual Babylon and the reality of the head of gold—that old dragon, Satan the devil, not Nebuchadnezzar, is the gold that will be present when the stone cut without hands crushes the feet of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw (v. 45). Thus, “gold” becomes a representation of the head of the reigning hierarchy that rules the kingdom of this world. And the city of New Jerusalem was of pure gold, clear as glass, not the usual appearance of God ... Jesus said He would build His church of Himself: “I will build of me the church”—οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (Matt 16:18). He is the Head of the Son of Man; He is the gold that has replaced that old dragon, Satan the devil. But the assembly [*ekklesia*] that is one with Him (John 17:20-23) as He is one with the Father has been built from Him by having residing with within each disciple the spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] (Rom 8:9) as well as the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. Literally, the Church that belongs to the glorified Christ has also been built by the glorified Christ through His spirit dwelling in His disciples. The literal translation of the Greek first person possessive pronoun reveals information concealed by its English equivalent.

The gold as pure as glass is gold without sin, without blemish, and this gold is not only the glorified Christ but is also His Body, thereby establishing a reigning hierarchy of a different sort from the Adversary's; for it isn't just the Head of the hierarchy that is gold, but all of the hierarchy. All of the hierarchy is as the Head, Christ Jesus, is. There is, among the firstfruits, none of lesser value as there is in Babylon, where the princes of Persia are of lesser worth (silver as opposed to gold) than is the fallen day star Lucifer, and the king of Greece is of less worth than the princes of Persia, with the kings within the "king of Greece" possessing great strength but little worth as iron is worth less than bronze and bronze less than silver.

- The metal referenced, beginning with "gold, clear as glass," pertains to the worthiness of the living entity in the heavenly realm, with those human beings not in heaven who love fathers or mothers, sons or daughters more than Christ not being worthy of Christ (Matt 10:37).
- The bronze kingdom of Greece rules through the appetites of the belly and the loins, with the great horn that is the first king within this federation of kings appearing as the erect penis of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision.

The world is presently ruled by the appetites of the flesh: the hunger that comes from the belly and the need for sexual gratification that comes from the loins. The need to satisfy hunger and horniness temporarily exceeds even the love that a person has for his or her human father or mother, son or daughter—and this love for one's physical family hinders and too often prevents a person from coming to Christ.

As a son of disobedience, every person is tethered to this world and unable to take up his or her cross [or better, *stake that tethers*] and follow Christ because of the appetites of the flesh; for few human beings are truly willing to lose their lives for the sake of Christ. The demands of the flesh (i.e., the appetites of the flesh) and the love for those who are of flesh keep most human beings staked to those areas of choice pasture where creativity is nurtured in diverse and open environments. The democratic rewards of this world are found in these areas, but God is seldom found in these twenty or so geographical corridors of opportunity. Rather, God is most often found where a person lives as an orphan in his world as Abraham lived in Canaan as a squatter under the oaks of the Amorite Mamre.

In His Olivet discourse, Jesus said that His disciples should not be alarmed by wars and rumors of wars ... how many Christian prophecy pundits satisfy the appetites of their flesh by causing infant sons of God to be alarmed by wars and rumors of wars, from a united Europe attacking English speaking nations to Iran attacking the modern State of Israel? Certainly most do. Most Evangelical pundits create tremendous alarm in disciples with the possibility of imminent war in the Middle East. Yet Jesus clearly said that these physical things—wars, famines, earthquakes—are but the beginning of Zion's birth pains. They are not part of the seven endtime years of tribulation. They are only precursors to the Tribulation. And it is absolutely inexcusable that so many prophecy pundits earn their livings causing alarm in disciples. These pundits are worthy of the second death for the harm they do to newly born sons of God.

The abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel (11:31) is not, according to Jesus, a second century BCE event, but an endtime event that occurs after disciples are delivered up to tribulation and put to death and hated by all nations; after many disciples have fallen away and have betrayed one another and hate one another;

after many false prophets have arisen to lead many astray; after lawlessness [sin] has increased and the love of many has grown cold. The abomination of desolation was not a statue of Zeus placed in the empty Holy of holies by agents of Antiochus Epiphanes IV; was not a pig sacrificed on the altar of the temple built by Zerubbabel; was not the Seleucid king himself—all of these are but shadows of the endtime abomination of desolation. The abomination that desolates is “son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess 2:3-4); he is the little horn of Daniel chapters 7 & 8, the little horn that springs forth from the head of the king of the North, the fourth beast, the fourth horseman, Death himself.

As the horns on the head of the Lamb are the seven churches, the ten horns on the head of the fourth king of Daniel chapter seven are ten churches or ten church leaders that teach lawlessness. The little horn differs from the ten horns that are in place before this little horn springs forth, and this little horn uproots three of the ten horns (7:8) when he attempts to change times and the law (v. 25), suggesting that these three horns are Sabbatarian churches that teach some form of lawlessness, ranging from not keeping the high Sabbaths to alarming disciples about wars occurring and rumors of wars about to occur.

Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world or from this world (John 18:36), and the sign Jesus gave of His coming and of the close of this age (Matt 24:3) is also not of this world or from this world. Rather, the sign is the seven endtime years of tribulation that begin with the second Passover liberation of Israel, a nation circumcised of heart. Disciples are not to be alarmed by the events that are of and are from this world. Although these events will sap the strength of this world, making it impossible for this world to recover from the liberation of Israel, these physical events are really of small concern to disciple. What is of much greater concern is the disciple's struggle to learn to walk uprightly as a biped before God, and not continuing to shamle along as livestock that will be sacrificed when the spiritual temple of God is dedicated as 120,000 sheep and 22,000 oxen were sacrificed when Solomon dedicated the first temple (2 Chron 7:5).

Those twenty corridors of creativity where ideas hatch as salmon eggs will, unfortunately, see a return run at the end of the thousand years when Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit for a short while (three and a half years) ... as Pacific salmon return to the waters of their nativity, locating these waters by their scent, Israel at the end of the Millennium will attempt to return to the ideas of this era, meaning that Israel will love fathers and mothers, sons and daughters more than the nation loves Christ; meaning that Israel will love the things of this world more than they will love obedience to God. For “obedience” is an idea that has substance in this world as if the word were a cloak that is put on daily when rising from sleep.

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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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