

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 faith.

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Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of May 31, 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.

The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Romans chapter 11, verses 1 through 10.

Commentary: Paul rhetorically asks, "[H]as God rejected his people?" (11:1), and the answer Paul gives is that God has retained a portion of Israel for Himself, and Paul cites the exchange between Elijah and the Lord [YHWH] to show that at the "present time" [mid 1st-Century CE] there is a remnant of Israel "chosen by grace" (v. 5) that has been destined to be saved as there were 7,000 Israelites who hadn't bowed knees to Baal in the days of the first Elijah ... not bowing knees to Baal becomes a shadow and type of being "chosen by grace," which keeps alive the concept of a predestined elect, but not as Calvinists taught the concept.

Paul makes Elijah's appeal against Israel a type of how God was then working with this natural nation of Israel, thereby establishing the following correspondence which begins a series of correspondences:

- After slaying the 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:22, 40) and after the Lord [YHWH] sends rains to break the long drought of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1), Elijah flees from the wrath of Jezebel and journeys forty days and forty nights without food or drink until he reaches Mount Horeb where the word of the Lord comes to him (1 Kings 19:8-9).
1. There Elijah tells the Lord that of God's servants, he alone is left alive, and Israel seeks his life.
 2. Elijah is told to leave the cave and go out and stand before the Lord.

3. The Lord was not in the great wind that broke in pieces rocks so Elijah did not then leave the cave; nor was the Lord in the earthquake that followed the strong wind; nor was the Lord in the fire that followed the earthquake.
 4. The Lord was in the low whisper that followed the great displays of power. And Elijah leaves the cave and face to face, but with his face covered by his cloak, Elijah repeats his lament about being alone, the only servant of the Lord left alive.
 5. The Lord told Elijah to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his place, saying that the person of the house of Israel who escapes the sword of Hazael shall be put to death by Jehu and the one who escapes Jehu shall be slain by Elisha.
 6. Elisha as the prophet of God is anointed to kill idolatrous Israelites (1 Kings 19:17); he is not anointed to bring peace or to heal the infirmed or to be a witness for the Lord, or to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.
 7. Then, the Lord tells Elijah that He will leave 7,000, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed Baal (v. 18).
- When Paul cites Elijah's appeal against Israel, Paul leaves out of the context Elijah's instructions to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, each commissioned to slay those who worship Baal in the house of Israel.
 - Being saved by grace, now, is analogous to not be killed for idolatry, which will have all those Israelites saved by grace not practicing idolatry—Paul identifies his people, natural Israel, as an idolatrous nation.
 - Idolatry produces, by Paul's reasoning, hardness of hearts (Rom 11:7), and to those who have been hardened, God gives a spirit of stupor (v. 8) so that they cannot turn to God and be healed, a reality Isaiah addresses and the shadow and copy of God sending a delusion over rebelling saints who "did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess 2:12).

Understand, when moving from physical to spiritual to not believe the truth is to practice idolatry! Unbelief is idolatry. And Jesus came into this world to deliver to a nation that did not know the Father, that had never heard of the Father, and that practiced idolatry in the second temple *the truth*. Jesus' words are *the truth*, and Jesus said to His disciples, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20). Why? Because the scribes and the Pharisees were idolaters: they were hypocrites, having the

law but only outwardly living by it, and then only when men were looking, hence the need to ring a bell before giving an alm.

- Hypocrisy is idolatry!

Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ... Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:17, 19). Whoever doesn’t teach these commandments is an idolater—and these commandments are those that Moses twice lugged down from atop Mount Sinai; for Jesus also said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:46-47). And that question remains valid: if a person does not believe Moses, how will the person believe Jesus—and the answer is, the person won’t. The person simply will not believe what Jesus said. Thus, the person will be, if born of spirit, an idolater, a rebellious and lawless son of God. In other words, the person will be a typical “Christian” as seen in Sunday morning worship services.

One of the persistent questions concerning Scripture is whether Scripture serves as a Homeric simile of the Book of Life in which disciples are epistles (2 Cor 3:3), or whether Scripture is the actual shadow and copy of the Book of Life. If Scripture is a Homeric simile, then not every detail in Scripture is an actual darkened representation of an event or of living being in the Book of Life, but if Scripture is a true shadow—and this should scare those *typical Christians in Sunday services*—then the last Elijah will anoint a spiritual equivalent to Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha to slay the spiritually circumcised house of Israel, except for a number equivalent to the 7,000 whom the Lord [YHWH] referenced, with the endtime reality of these 7,000 in the 8th-Century BCE being the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation.

The justification for logically moving from 7,000 natural Israelites to 144,000 natural Israelites develops from the 70 years when there was no temple in earthly Jerusalem (586 BCE to 516 BCE) serving as the shadow and copy of the approximately 1200 years (325 CE to 1525 CE) when no spiritually circumcised Israelite dwelt in the heavenly city of Jerusalem: disciples are the spiritual temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16), so it was not that there were no Israelites in earthly Jerusalem for 70 years, but that there was no temple in this city that serves as the shadow and copy of the heavenly city.

- The difficulty in believing that a physical building in which the Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices to God can and does represent a living person who has been born of spirit caused those whom Paul taught to abandon his teachings while Paul still lived.

- The bodily tent of flesh in which the new self or new creature, born of spirit as a son of God, dwells is, however, directly analogous to the physical temple in which the descendants of Levi served God, which makes the new selves or creatures the spiritual reality of the Levitical priesthood.
- Not all of who have descended from Israel belong to Israel (Rom 9:6) as not all Israel were Levites—and as the 144,000 does not represent all of Israel, but 12,000 of 12 tribes, with the tribe of Dan being excluded (Rev 7:4-8) and with these 144,000 following the Lamb of God wherever He leads.
- The 144,000 that come from natural Israel can, now, be likened to the tribe of Levi being ordained for service to the Lord [YHWH] at the cost to each of his son and his brother (Ex 32:25-29).
- These 144,000, now, become spiritually like Elisha was physically—and Elisha was ordained to slay those idolatrous Israelites who escaped the swords of Hazael and Jehu.
- By their obedience of the law and by their belief in Christ, the 144,000 will “slay” (as in spiritually condemn as opposed to shedding blood) neighbors, brothers, and sons as the physical sons of Levi slew neighbor, brother, and companion (Ex 32:27) following Israel’s *40 day rebellion* against God, the nation’s rebellion while Moses was still atop Sinai and in the presence of *Yah*.
- Moses was to Aaron, his brother, as God (Ex 4:16); thus, Moses was to Aaron (both of whom are Levites) as Christ Jesus is to *born again Christians*, the spiritual successors to the sons of Levi and the younger brothers of Jesus (Rom 8:29).

The movement from physical completeness being represented by “7” (Gen 2:1-3) to spiritual completeness being represented by “12” gives agreement to “70” (the number of years when there was no temple in earthly Jerusalem) being a type of “7,000” as the numeral “1200” is a type of “144,000” (or 12 x 12,000), an underdeveloped subject but also a subject that can be easily abused by those who are carnally minded. This type of numerology must be approached with utmost caution if the one using it is to avoid making Scripture say silly things that are not true.

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The reader should now read Malachi chapter 4; followed by Luke chapter 1, verses 1 through 25, and Matthew chapter 11, verses 11 through 19.

Commentary: The testimony of Scripture is that there will be another Elijah or a last Elijah—an endtime Elijah—that was foreshadowed by the first Elijah, and the testimony of Scripture is that John the Baptist was a type of this last Elijah; for John came preaching repentance as the one who would make straight the way to Jesus as the Messiah. But (and this needs to be remembered) Jesus did not come in the 1st-Century as the Messiah so it logically follows that there will be another like John who comes at the end of the age.

The angel Gabriel subtly tells disciples how to read Scripture: referring to John, Gabriel tells Zechariah, “[H]e will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:15-17 — emphasis added).

- In the oracle of the Lord given to Malachi, the Lord [YHWH] says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction” (4:5-6).
- In moving from physical to spiritual, turning “the hearts of the children to their fathers” is the physical type of the spiritual reality of turning “the disobedient to the wisdom of the just” as is striking “the land with a decree of utter destruction” the type of “to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”
- If the Lord [YHWH] physically struck the land of Judea with a decree of utter destruction, no flesh would be physically alive. All would die. Likewise, if a people is not prepared for the Lord, no human being would be saved, but for the sake of the elect—the people who are prepared—those days will be cut short (Matt 24:22).

If there is no evident or apparent or visible *wisdom of the just* to which the last Elijah can turn the disobedient, this last Elijah will not successfully prepare a people for the Lord and the land will then be physically struck with utter destruction so that no human being would be saved alive. But *the wisdom of the just* functions as a euphemistic expression for Christ Jesus, for John said of himself, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord,” as the prophet Isaiah said” (John 1:24), followed the next day by, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.” I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel” (vv. 29-31).

John baptized Israel into repentance that Jesus might be revealed to Israel, implying that without repentance, without being baptized into repentance, Jesus would not have been revealed to Israel.

- If Jesus had not been revealed to Israel, there would not be any evident *wisdom of the just*; hence, the endtime Elijah could not turn the hearts of the many drawn and called sons of God to their Father.
- By extension, if the endtime Elijah does not turn disobedient “Christians” to the *wisdom of the just*, the Lamb of God will remain unknown to the theology that bears the name of Christ Jesus as in the 1st-Century the Lamb of God was unknown and unrecognized by unrepentant Sadducees and Pharisees.
- The *wisdom of the just* is now repentance from disobedience, or walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:3-6) and imitating Paul as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17); for Jesus is the manifestation of the *wisdom of the just*, the manifestation of obedience to the Father.

Turning the hearts of physical sons to their physical fathers is the type and shadow of turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, or of turning sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3) to the Father and His Christ. This now sets up the task of the endtime Elijah: turning the heart of the Father toward disobedient sons of God—

How would or could Christ turn the heart of the Father towards disobedient sons of God—disciples who, when sin had no dominion over them (Rom 6:14) voluntarily returned to sin, making themselves again bondservants to sin, which leads to death (v. 16)? The prophet Zechariah writes,

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
 against the man who stands next to me, declares the Lord of hosts.
 Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;
 I will turn my hand against the little ones.
 In the whole land, declares the Lord,
 two [parts] shall be cut off and perish,
 and one [part] shall be left alive. (13:7-8)

Jesus said he was this shepherd: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered”’” (Matt 26:31). And the scattering of disciples that was seen after Jesus was physically taken and interrogated is a shadow and type of the scattering of the flock after the spiritual Body of Christ was taken captive by the prince of this world.

The Lord of hosts’ turning His hand against the little ones wasn’t a 1st-Century happening, but is an endtime event that occurs when “they shall be given into his hand [i.e., the hand of the little horn on the head of the fourth beast] for a time, times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25).

Because of the lawlessness of the saints—of Christians—the Father will turn His hand against the saints just as He caused or permitted *the sword to strike the Shepherd and the sheep to be scattered* when Jesus took upon Himself the sins of Israel, thereby becoming sin. As Paul commanded the saints at Corinth to deliver the man who had his father's wife to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that in the day of judgment the spirit might be saved, the Father will deliver the saints into the hand of the man of perdition for the destruction of the flesh—but (and this is a huge “but”) not before the saints are liberated from indwelling sin and death by being filled or empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Although prophecy can fail, it won't on this occasion: the “many” who have been called do not now and will not in the future attempt to walk uprightly before God as bipeds, but rather, they shamble along as beasts, following after the appetites of the flesh, loving this world, pursuing the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions. They follow those teachers of lawlessness who do mighty deeds in the name of Jesus Christ, little realizing that the endtime Elijah will turn the heart of the Father only toward those disciples who are as oil and wine (Rev 6:6), the processed produce of the Promised Land. Only those disciples who strive to walk uprightly before God, neither crawling as an infant nor hunched over as a quadruped, will escape being merchandised by sin as if they were cereal grains to be bought and sold.

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The reader should now read Romans chapter 11, verses 11 through 36.

Commentary: Paul said that through natural Israel's trespasses (lawlessness) salvation came to the Gentiles “so as to make Israel jealous” (Rom 11:11) ... how will a Gentile living as a Gentile make a natural Israelite jealous? Won't happen. Not in the 1st-Century, nor in the 21st-Century. In order for a physically uncircumcised Gentile to make a natural Israelite jealous, the Gentile must live as the natural Israelite lives without being physically circumcised. Simply put, a Gentile must live as Jesus, an Observant Jew, lived. If the Gentile persists in living as a Gentile, the person is an unprofitable servant, worthy of death.

The convert who insists on living as a Gentile is not of God, does not have Christ dwelling within the person, and most likely has not been born of spirit but is a spiritual bastard, fathered by Satan but masquerading as a disciple. And on this person the world and its prince bestow the identifying label, *Christian*, such is the shame that has come to the wild olive branches that would be grafted onto the root of righteousness.

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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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