

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 fasting for selfish reasons.

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

## Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of June 7, 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.*

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This is what He showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And [YHWH] said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then [YHWH] said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'" And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom." Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. But [YHWH] took me from following the flock, and [YHWH] said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' Now therefore hear the word of [YHWH]. 'You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac.' Therefore thus says [YHWH]: 'Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land.'" (Amos 7:7-17)

What was [is] the plumb line the Lord set in the midst of the people? A line separating righteousness from unrighteousness, the temple at Jerusalem from Bethel and the high places of Isaac — note the identifier — or is this plumb line vertical, a separation of the House of Israel from God, with the Lord to never again hear the prayers and pleas of Jeroboam and his people?

A veil separated Moses, a prophet—and more than a prophet—from the people of Israel, this veil preventing the people from seeing the glory of the Lord; this veil preventing the people from entering into the presence of the Lord; this veil representing the curtain separating the Holy Place in the temple from the Holy of Holies ... Israel had no access to the Lord except through the high priest who on one day a year—*Yom Kipporim*—made atonement for himself and the people and entered into the Holy of Holies, which in Herod's temple was empty, the chief priests of Israel thus perpetrating a fraud upon the people.

Initially, the Lord separated Himself from the House of Israel with the plumb line the prophet Amos relates to the people ... it is little wonder that Amaziah, chief priest of Bethel, says what he does to Amos, representing Moses and the Lord. This plumb line did for Bethel and its temple what the men of Nebuchadnezzar did for Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, that is, raze it. This plumb line made desolate the high places of Isaac and the sanctuaries of the House of Israel; it razed the theological underpinnings of what Jeroboam had imposed upon the people. And according to the Lord, never again would He “pass by” or consider the people of the House of Israel.

Prophets do not deliver pleasant words ... there is nothing pleasant in Amos telling the people of Israel that the Lord will bring the sword against them.

When it became needful for the Lord to speak to Israel through a prophet, the nation was already far from God. Its words and those of its king were not being heard by God; so the prophet functioned as an intermediary, a human voice that could be heard by the people, a human voice through whom God spoke. As such, the prophet functioned as an Advocate for the Lord, a representative of the Lord, a kinder, gentler spokesperson who was neither kind nor gentle ...

In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of [YHWH], in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, "Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of [YHWH]'s house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. I will also bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, declares [YHWH], for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon." Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of [YHWH], and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May [YHWH] do so; may [YHWH] make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of [YHWH], and all the exiles. *Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for*

the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that [YHWH] has truly sent the prophet." (Jer 28:1-9 emphasis added)

The prophet of old who prophesied peace spoke words that would not happen in his lifetime. However, the prophet who called upon Israel to mend its ways also spoke words that would not come to pass in the prophet's lifetime. For the people of Israel, righteous in their own eyes, were not righteous before God. If anything, they were the antithesis of righteous:

Cry aloud; do not hold back;

lift up your voice like a trumpet;

declare to my people their transgression,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet they seek me daily

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that did righteousness

and did not forsake the judgment of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments;

they delight to draw near to God.

*"Why have we fasted, and you see it not?"*

*Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?"*

Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.

Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to hit with a wicked fist.

**Fasting like yours this day**

**will not make your voice to be heard on high.**

Is such the fast that I choose,

a day for a person to humble himself?

Is it to bow down his head like a reed,

and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

Will you call this a fast,

and a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of wickedness,

to undo the straps of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover him,

and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

**Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,**

**and your healing shall spring up speedily;**

your righteousness shall go before you;

the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

**Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;**

**you shall cry, and He will say, "Here I am."**

If you take away the yoke from your midst,

the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday.

(Isa 58:1–10 — indented lines are spiritual portions of thought couplets;  
italicized lines are the people speaking; bold face is for emphasis)

Going without food and drink for a day or for several days is a fast for the person, not a fast that gets the person closer to God. Going without food and drink for a day is a selfish fast intended to manipulate God into doing the person's will, and not a fast that causes the person to do the will of God. Big difference.

To go without food and drink for a day doesn't cause God to hear the person's words, the person's request to, say, heal the person or heal another person. To go without food and drink doesn't draw the person closer to God. Contrary to what has been taught by the false teachers of Israel, physical and spiritual, afflicting the flesh only serves to afflict the flesh, most noticeably in the person's hunger.

The fast that God desires is for the person to loose the bonds imprisoning the hungry, the homeless, the naked. When a person cares as much for neighbor and brother as the person cares for him or herself, the person "fasts" in a means acceptable to the Lord ... the person fasts regardless of whether the person eats or drinks. The *fast* is the loosening of bonds; thus, the person fasts by sharing food with the hungry, by sharing shelter with the homeless, by clothing the naked. It is this fast that will cause the person's prayers to be heard by the Lord. The growling of an empty belly does nothing for the person or the person's relationship with God.

The bread of affliction is unleavened bread. To afflict the soul will now have the soul be unleavened, that is without sin, with sin being manifested unbelief of God in the form of transgressing the Law.

The focus of the Law isn't the *self*, but displaying in deeds love for God, neighbor, and brother ... it isn't enough for a Christian to say that he or she loves the Christian's brother. The mouth is capable of uttering words that are without sincerity or meaning. It is from the mouth that lies come: the Christian who contends that he or she has been born again, but who continues to live as a Gentile, lies to neighbor and brother and perhaps even to the Christian's inner self, but this Christian doesn't lie to Christ, who knows whether His spirit [*pneuma Christou*] dwells in the person. So what Christ Jesus *hears* aren't words [utterances] coming from the person's mouth, but the sincerity of the heart. The uttered word is of absolutely no importance.

However, as with prayers those things that have been long taught about fasting are so persistently planted in the minds and hearts of even the Elect—Sabbatarian disciples who should know better—that the Elect fast to get closer to God ... how much closer to God can you get than to have the indwelling of the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] in the spirit of the man/person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*]? Will fasting (going without food and drink) get a person numbered among the Elect closer to God

than being One with Him? Come on, read the text! Think about what you read. If you left your mind at your neighbor's, go get it. There's still time to learn.

What did Jesus mean when He prayed,

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one ... I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, *that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one*, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:9–11, 20–23 emphasis added)

A man and his wife are one flesh: how is a man and his wife one flesh when they are two people? They are one flesh for the woman came from the man, hence the woman has the flesh [and breath of life] of the man, but only in a figurative sense. A woman's body doesn't feel like a man's body. Thus, they are "one" when the man enters his wife, the uncovered head of the man being in his wife (the theological problem with condom use) for the purpose of procreation, with circumcision uncovering the head of the man.

God is one, for the spirit [breath — *pneuma*] of the Father is in His Son, Christ Jesus, as the uncovered head of a man is in his wife, thereby causing two to be one.

Now, will going without food and drink for a day or for many days cause a husband to be anymore "one" with his wife than he is on the marriage bed? No! So how will going without food and drink cause a human person born of God through the indwelling of Christ Jesus to be any more "one" with God that this person already is?

How did Jesus answer John's disciples when they asked why His disciples didn't fast:

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. (Mark 2:18–20)

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Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. (Matt 9:14–15)

Has the Bridegroom been taken away from the Elect, who are foreknown and predestined by God, called, justified, and glorified by Christ—and if glorified, the Elect are permanently with the Bridegroom for they are "one" with the Bridegroom long before the Marriage Supper ... the Elect are NOT the Body of

Christ or of the Body of Christ. Rather, the Elect are *one* with Christ as horns on the head of the slain Lamb are one with the Head of this slain Lamb.

The problem Christendom has poorly addressed is *predestination*: when the spiritual Body of Christ died through want of the spirit of God—the Father temporarily ceased drawing persons from this world, ceased for long enough that there was no human person alive truly born of spirit after John died (ca 100–102 CE)—and Christianity [the Jesus Movement] grew more rapidly than it previously had even though the Body of Christ was spiritually dead, the “growth” of Christianity was “away” from God. Christianity grew toward Greek paganism, adopting the values and teachings of Greek philosophers, but with the incorporation of Christ solving the fundamental problem of paganism, how does a person know if he or she has lived a “good enough” life to escape death thereby entering heaven upon death?

The preceding remains the fundamental problem of Islam; for only by dying in *jihad* is the Muslim assured of entering heaven.

Jesus in John’s Gospel, written late in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE, is self-aware of this problem inherent to paganism, for John’s Jesus introduces a new category of disciple, not one who follows Christ as part of the crowd, but one who is like the first disciples:

Category #1:

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, ***I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*** (John 5:21–24 double emphasis added)

In this first category, the Father, who judges no one, raises the dead and gives them life, delivering them to Christ Jesus for Him to call, justify, and glorify through the indwelling of His spirit, His breath. But this is not the case in the second category.

Category #2:

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.

In the first category, those who hear Jesus’ words and believe the Father (whose words Jesus speaks) has eternal life and has passed from death to life without coming under judgment. In the second category, those who have done good will be resurrected to life (that is, given eternal life after death) and those who have done evil will be condemned for the evil they did—this second category is analogous to Matthew’s Jesus dividing sheep from goats (Matt 25:31–46) for

there is a division of humanity based upon judgment. Not so in the first category: the Father judges no one, and those who believe the Father—which is not possible unless the Father draws the person from this world, this person now being predestined to be inwardly glorified while the person still lives physically ...

In the first category, the person is never judged beyond being foreknown by the Father, and the person is glorified while the flesh lives. The flesh isn't glorified. The inner self is. It isn't the flesh that the Father raises from death, but the dead inner self; the dead inner self Jesus referenced when He said, *Permit the dead to bury the dead of themselves* (Matt 8:22).

In lieu of Jesus judging the Elect after death, giving life to those who have done good and condemning those who have done evil, the Father foreknowing the person while the person lives, or even before the person lives, serves the same purpose of election, with the Elect having no say in when they are born of spirit as a son of God.

Now, because the Body of Christ will not be born of spirit while they live physically, the Body of Christ must choose to believe God; must choose to be obedient. And for this purpose, the Body of Christ will fast for selfish reasons: to know the will of God, not to change God's mind about this or about that. However, the Elect are born of spirit and as such as "one" with Christ and by extension, with the Father. The Elect will not fast for selfish reasons. Rather, the Elect will fast on *Yom Kipporim* as the acceptable atoning offering for the high priest of Israel, for the people of Israel, and for the temple. Otherwise, the Elect will not fast for the Bridegroom remains with them in the form of the indwelling spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*].

Christians within the greater Church suspended their disbelief, and now find that they cannot easily reengage their minds ... their minds are like a Ford *limited slip differential* when one rear wheel is off the ground. Their conscious minds spin, but their minds go nowhere. Their thoughts are bogged down as they wonder if it is really so, that their decades of fasting have meant nothing to God.

The Soldotna building contractor thinks about how he handled subcontractors, having drywall contractors sheetrock homes on weekends—on the Sabbath—so his crew would be ready to go come Monday morning. The Cook Inlet gillnetter thinks about having his boat's crew scrub and bleach the fish hold late Friday night so the boat can be on the fishing grounds before Monday's opening. The hardware store owner cannot really afford to be closed on the Sabbath, so employees keep the business open while the owner attends Sabbath services ... how many Sabbatarian Christians, once they achieve a little authority, *lord* it over their employees? More than a person would suspect. How many Sabbatarian husbands hold their wives hostage, requiring of wives undeserved obedience? This was certainly the case in the former Worldwide Church of God. And who supported the husband's abuse of authority? The ministry of the former Worldwide Church of God, with the Church's *Spokesman's Club* being the principle instrument through which abuse was taught.

In 1976, when putting together an outboard dealership on the Kenai Peninsula, I needed a test tank. A friend and excellent metal fabricator offered to

weld a tank together if I got the steel and a cutting torch. A local deacon of the Kenai WCG congregation said he had a torch I could use. I arrived at his jobsite just before noon, and he left the camp trailer that served as office and lunchroom, help me load the torch and tanks into my pickup, and returned to the camp trailer to find one of his crew sitting where he wanted to sit. He jerked the chair out from under the fellow, who landed hard on his butt, popped up and was about to hit the contractor before he thought better of doing so. He grabbed his lunch and stomped out. The contractor turned to me and said, “He doesn’t understand authority the way we do.”

I didn’t then and still don’t understand authority in that way.

Within a few years, the contractor underwent a crisis of faith ... he now believes nothing. But then, what he believed before did him more harm than good; for where was love in any abuse of authority?

Far too many members of the former Worldwide Church of God were harmed by what Armstrong’s ministry taught. Wives died of cancer that could have been easily treated early-on. At least one child died of untreated appendicitis ... God heals. Trust God, have faith, and God will heal you. But is this what happened? Did God heal? Were prayers answered? At what point should a Christian intervene when another Christian doesn’t rightly understand Scripture—and this is the tough question? Should a Christian permit another Christian to tell a third party that God will heal this third party if this third party gets right with God and has faith that a healing will happen?

It is this last question where ignorance has real-world consequences: it is presumptive for one Christian to interfere in the affairs of another. Without being invited into the situation, should the Christian with knowledge permit the one without knowledge to give bad advice to a third party? I fear that is the case: the one with knowledge needs to permit the one without knowledge to bring about the premature death of the third party, even when considerable suffering is involved. The one without knowledge will learn in no better way than to vicariously suffer with the one whom he or she has harmed out of good-intentioned ignorance.

Enter the ministry of the former Worldwide Church of God. Assemble yourselves on this stage where your judgments will be made. And while you wait, consider all that you have done ... what did you teach about being born again, about being born of spirit from on-high? What did you teach about healing? About prayer? About fasting? Don’t worry about what you taught about prophecy—everything you taught was wrong—but worry about what you taught concerning Christian living? Concerning having love for your fellow Christians, brothers in Christ. Worry about every time you said *Churchianity* with a smirk on your face. Worry about the racism you taught, the sexism, the lists you had husbands tape to refrigerator doors for their wives to do. Worry about the little things; worry about what you taught about herbal medicine, white sugar, white flour. Then answer the question, did you do parishioners more harm than good? Was not your fasting simply going without food and drink for purely selfish reasons? Where in all of your fasting did you loosen bonds?



Why bring this up now? Because the worse of what Armstrong taught is now being taught by Sacred Name heretics—

The zeal of Sacred Name heretics is admirable, but badly misplaced. Where in Scripture does it say that proper utterance equates to salvation?

Prophets spoke the Lord's words. They were Advocates for the Lord in the court of public opinion.

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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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