

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 *the two witnesses*.

## Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of June 16, 2007

*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.*

One of the few aspects of the Book of Revelation about which Christendom agrees is that the two witnesses will conduct a 1260 day ministry from Jerusalem, in the modern nation of Israel. In fact, some impertinent individuals have relocated to Jerusalem or are seeking to relocate as they believe they are the prophesied witnesses. But Christendom has proven itself to be an extremely poor reader of Scripture, and its readings of Revelation disclose just how little understanding Christendom has concerning all things spiritual, especially this vision of John.

\*

*The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Revelation chapters 11, verses 1 through 14; followed by Zechariah chapter 4.*

**Commentary:** First, some parameters need to be established. The death and resurrection of the two witnesses, followed by the earthquake, concludes the second woe (Rev 11:14), not the end of the Tribulation. A third woe is still to soon come. Thus, the Tribulation will be longer by at least the length of the third woe than the three and a half years that was taught by the former Worldwide Church of God. In fact, the third woe will be at least forty-two months or three and a half years long (Rev 13:5). So the tribulation contains two forty-two month periods [Rev 11:2 & 13:5], or two 1260 day periods [Rev 12:6 & 12:14]. And as has been argued elsewhere, there will be seven endtime years of tribulation, a period of 2520 days with Day 1260 being a double day, something that has not been seen since Joshua led the army of Israel against the five Amorite kings (Josh 10:12-14).

The 1260 day ministry of the two witnesses coincides with the "time, times, and half a time" (Dan 7:25) when the saints and the law are given into the hand of the "little horn," the man of perdition who comes by the workings of Satan (2 Thess 2:9)—the little horn is the spirit being [Satan] who empowers a human being, an Arian Christian, who will sincerely believe that the angel within him is Christ Jesus, and it is this human being who will declare himself God when spiritual Babylon, the single kingdom of this world (Rev 11:15), falls and is no more forever. Thus, the time, times, and half a time when saints and the law are delivered, by God, into the hand of the little horn is the first 1260 days of seven endtime years of tribulation.

Saints **will not** be bodily raptured into heaven to escape deliverance into the hand of Satan. Rather, they will be delivered into the hand of Satan for the perfection of faith; for the transformation of the Body into the Bride ... no man marries his own body. A separation must occur. And this separation comes through the second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death by being filled or empowered with the Holy Spirit.

- The seven endtime years begin with the spiritual liberation of Israel, a spiritually circumcised nation (Rom 2:29 *et al*).
- This liberation of Israel will again see the lives of men given as ransom for Israel (Isa 43:4), and this liberation will cause Israel's exodus from Egypt to be forgotten (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8).
- This liberation will be the revealing (Luke 17:30) or uncovering of the Body of the Son of Man, meaning that because sin will no longer reside within the fleshly members of disciples as it presently does (Rom 7:21-25), Christ will no longer "cover" disciples with His garment of righteousness as He presently does.
- The Bride of Christ will wear Her own garment of righteousness at the Wedding Supper, but until born again or born of Spirit disciples are liberated from indwelling sin when the lives of men are again given as ransom for Israel, disciples' righteousness is as a bloody rag.
- As Abraham's faith was counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3), the faith of disciples will be counted to them as righteousness—and this faith will be severely tested when the saints are delivered into the hand of the little horn after being empowered by the Holy Spirit and liberated from indwelling sin and death.
- The seven endtime years of tribulation are about the perfecting of faith in first Israel (the first 1260 days), then in the third part of humankind (Zech 13:9), born of Spirit when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh halfway through these seven endtime years.

The job of the two witnesses isn't to kill people who would kill them (Rev 11:5), or to cause drought and famine to occur (*v.* 6), or to strike the earth with every kind of plague (same verse). Rather, their job is to deliver their testimony that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13); for death will be defeated. Their job is to die after publicly making themselves visible to all the world. With Christ Jesus, with whom they stand, they will defeat Death, the fourth horseman (Rev 6:8) and the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven; they will deal a mortal wound to Death when they are publicly resurrected after three and a half days (Rev 11:11).

Understand! The two witnesses will deliver a message that neither Trinitarian nor Arian Christianity wants to hear: they will publicly testify that Grace has ended, that the person born of Spirit who takes sin back inside himself or herself has committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven, and has condemned himself or herself to the lake of fire [sin is the transgression of the Law – 1 John 3:4]. They will testify that all Israel must keep the precepts of the Law; that the only circumcision that matters is of the heart and not of the flesh (Rom 2:26-29). They will testify that the person who does not believe Moses' writings will not believe the words of Christ Jesus, about whom Moses wrote (John 5:45-47). And the two witnesses will not be initially recognized by Jew or Greek, Christian or Muslim; for they will not be in

physical Jerusalem, but in a spiritual wilderness as John the Baptist was in a physical wilderness.

\*

*The person reading should now reread Revelation chapter 11, verses 7 & 8.*

**Commentary:** The number of theologians and prophecy pundits who have used the clause, “where their Lord was crucified” to conclude that the two witnesses will be in physical Jerusalem are too many to recognize or to denounce. Nevertheless, all of them are utterly without spiritual understanding; for “Jerusalem” is neither spiritually or symbolically “Sodom.”

\*

*The person reading should now read Ezekiel chapter 16.*

**Commentary:** It is easy to say that the “Jerusalem” to whom these words of God are addressed is only the ancient, pre-Babylonian-captivity city of Jerusalem, but this identification runs into problems when God says that Samaria is Jerusalem’s older sister, and that Sodom is Jerusalem’s younger sister.

- Historically, Jerusalem is the city of David, the capital of his kingdom, and the capital of Solomon’s kingdom. Thus, historically, Jerusalem is Samaria’s older sister; for Samaria did not become the capital of the northern kingdom until after Jeroboam’s rebellion following Solomon’s death.
- Plus, Sodom as a city ceased to exist in the days of the patriarch Abraham; so for Sodom to be Jerusalem’s younger sister requires that “Jerusalem” be read spiritually rather than historically.

The passage in Revelation about the two witnesses says that “Sodom” should be read spiritually or symbolically—and when Sodom is read spiritually, it is not Jerusalem; it is Jerusalem’s younger sister. Thus, Jerusalem is not spiritually called or named Sodom. The place where “their Lord was crucified” (Rev 11:8) is not Jerusalem.

Before proceeding to discuss “Egypt,” a disciple needs to back up and look at where Jesus was crucified: yes, He died on a cross at Calvary. But where was He? Was He not inside His creation, inside of space-time? He was, wasn’t He? Was He not the light of this world? He was. So He was in spiritual darkness; He was in sin, and He became sin when He took upon Himself the lawlessness of Israel. So the first thing that can be said about where the Lord of the two witnesses was crucified is that their Lord was crucified in a landscape of spiritual darkness, and in sin.

- Egypt symbolically represents sin, just as Sodom has become a byword for sexual deviancy or sexual sin.

Remember, the vision of John recorded in the Book of Revelation occurs on the Lord’s day (Rev 1:10), a specific period at the end of the age when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14). John was transported forward in time approximately two millennia. The events described in the vision are “soon” to occur (Rev 1:1; 22:6-7, 12, 20). The angel tells John not to “seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Rev 22:10). Two thousand years is not “near”; nor is two thousand years “soon” if these linguistic icons have any familiar assignment of meaning. Thus, what is seen in the Book of Revelation is an open vision that internally doesn’t occur until roughly two thousand years in the future. In this vision, the seals on the Scroll are removed—the seals are not removed in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE, but in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century CE if this is now the time of the end. Therefore, the vision is not sealed when the seven endtime years of tribulation begin. But the vision was

presented openly at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE; so the vision has to be sealed until the time of the end as the visions of Daniel were sealed and kept secret until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9; 8:17, 26). And the vision of John has been sealed by the recorded appearance representing how the *thing* or *entity* functions in the plan of God. For example, the glorified Jesus is described in Revelation 1:13-16 as a man clothed in a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest, hair white like wool, white as snow, but in chapter 5, He is pictured as a slain Lamb for He functions in the plan of God as the Passover Lamb of God. The seven spirits are described in chapter 5 as seven eyes, for these spirits function as eyes. The angels to the seven churches and the seven churches function as seven horns on the head of the Lamb. Thus, the same Christ Jesus that is seen in Revelation 1:20 is the same glorified Jesus that is seen in Revelation 5:6. This difference is the “key” necessary to unseal the vision that John presented openly but sealed near the close of the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE.

Because appearance functions as attributes, names also function as attributes: Sodom is not named because of its geographical location, but because of what it represents spiritually. Egypt is not named because of where it is located, but because of what it represents.

\*

*The person reading should now read Ezekiel chapter 23.*

**Commentary:** Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem, the capitals of the northern kingdom [Samaria] often identified as the house of Israel and the southern kingdom identified as the house of Judah prior to when Samaria was taken captive by the Assyrians. Neither of these kingdoms existed in this configuration prior to King Solomon’s death. Thus, neither could physically begin their whoring in Egypt (*vv.* 3, 8, 27).

If Oholibah is Jerusalem, and if Oholibah, like her sister, began her whoring in Egypt, then Jerusalem cannot spiritually or symbolically be Egypt, which is the land from which Oholibah left when she became God’s (23:4).

Again, God presents Samaria as Jerusalem’s older sister; yet Samaria did not become the capital of the northern kingdom until 70+ years after Jerusalem became the capital of all Israel. Thus, the rebellion of Jeroboam represents the end of one era and the beginning of another, a subject previously addressed but a subject that will be revisited in the near future. Today, the purpose is to show that Scripture does not commit the two witnesses to being killed in physical Jerusalem. And any reading of the prophet Ezekiel’s recording of the words of God will have Sodom being the younger sister of Jerusalem, not Jerusalem herself, and will have Egypt being the land where Jerusalem began committing spiritual adultery and not Jerusalem herself. Therefore, since Sodom and Egypt cannot spiritually or symbolically be Jerusalem, the place where the two witnesses’ Lord was crucified cannot spiritually be Jerusalem. The great city which is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt is spiritual Babylon, its king being Satan the devil (Isa 14:4-21), and Babylon falls halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. Babylon falls when the one like the Son of Man receives the kingdom of this world.

Does this mean that the two witnesses will not die in physical Jerusalem? No, it does not. What it means is that the Book of Revelation does not provide a specific geographical location for where their ministry occurs or where the king of the bottomless pit (the bear of Daniel chapter 7) will finally slay them. Rather, the location is spiritual: they will be slain in sin as Christ Jesus was at Calvary. Whether this sin is

theirs or whether it is assigned to them remains a subject for speculation. It might well be theirs, for though empowered [i.e., liberated from indwelling sin] by the Holy Spirit, one or both of them could have been given clean garments (Zech 3:5) prior to the second Passover. If they received these garments early, the garments most likely became soiled before Israel was liberated from indwelling sin and death.

So, for all of those would-be witnesses, understand that the primary job of the two witnesses is to defeat Death by publicly dying and being resurrected. Yes, being with the glorified Christ Jesus wherever He goes is an honor, but to receive this honor, the two witnesses will die as He died. Glory and honor comes with a high price tag, and right now, none of the self-identified witnesses are willing to pay this price. They seem to believe that being one of the two witnesses is all about terrorizing others; about elevation of self and personal glory. They have not considered that they will die in sin as Jesus did when He took on the sins of all Israel ... may God have mercy on those who today self-identify themselves as one of the two endtime witnesses.

\*

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

\* \* \* \* \*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[ [Home](#) ] [ [Sabbath Readings](#) ]