

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 a worthless vine.

## Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of June 25, 2011*

*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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And the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! Therefore *thus says the Lord God: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* And I will set my face against them. Though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them, and you will know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have acted faithlessly, declares the Lord God." (Ezek 15:1-8)

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### *The Christian Church as the Vine*

The comparison the Lord made that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were like a vine fit only for the fire can be extended to the pretenders who claim to be of New Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that is from above. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our [Christians'] mother" (Gal 4:25-26). Christians and the greater Christian Church form the spiritual reality that cast as its

shadow the ancient house of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, where idolatrous sacrifices were made on most every rooftop.

The city of Jerusalem located in the modern State of Israel is of no particular importance to Christians, but is of special importance to the false teachers and false prophets imbedded within greater Christendom; for earthly Jerusalem gives these false teachers a cause that can be used to justify their bastardized ministries.

Christendom's teachers, virtually without exception, claiming to be of God while teaching *Christians* to transgress the commandments, especially the Sabbath commandment, use earthly Jerusalem and the encirclement of the city by fundamentalist Moslems to prevent Christians from repenting, turning to the Lord, and beginning to live as spiritual Judeans. These false teachers use earthly Jerusalem as a lynx trapper would use a feather flasher to attract the attention of passing cats; these false teachers use Jerusalem to hinder the realization that Christendom has entwined itself around the great tree representing the kingdom of spiritual king of Babylon, the single kingdom of this world that will fall when the Adversary, the present prince of this world, is cast from heaven (Rev 12:7–10).

The Adversary as the spiritual king of Babylon (see Isa 14:4) casts as his spiritually lifeless shadow ancient King Nebuchadnezzar, who told Daniel,

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. (Dan 4:4–12)

As the earthly king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, in type, represents the Adversary, the spiritual king of Babylon that will be cast, bound, into the Abyss upon Christ Jesus' return, the hanging gardens that Nebuchadnezzar had constructed—gardens that were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—and the overall beauty of the city of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar form shadows and copies of the Adversary's administration of this present world, which to human eyes looks pretty good, particularly in the United States of America where millions of acres of tasseled corn and bearded wheat wave in summer breezes, ripening, awaiting harvesting, a nation that stretches from sea to shining sea, a nation from whose streams yellow gold can still be

panned from Maine to Alaska and from Georgia to California, a nation pleasing to the eye, a nation dedicated to justice and liberty for all.

But the United States of America is anti-authoritarian: in America, freedom means being free from the restraints of law and custom, to break traditions and taboos, free to invent and reinvent oneself—and just when a Christian thinks that the United States can get no farther from God than it is, America *creates* an additional way, additional distance by which and in which the peoples of the nation can slip even farther away from the Father and the Son, leaving righteousness dead in the dust of salt flats.

When the United States of America is closely examined, the nation is a putrid, festering sewer of injustice and debt: it is a nation where men lay with men and women with women and the State of New York just legalized marriages between peoples of the same sex. It is a nation where chaste women appear in public looking like prostitutes; it is a nation that slays its youth before they are even born; it is a nation that has stolen the freedom and future prosperity from its children and grandchildren; it is a nation that hoards its own natural resources (especially oil) while exhausting the resources of poor nations; it is a nation that now meddles in the internal affairs of less developed or less powerful nations; and it is the nation that will collapse the economy of this world when it fiscally collapses in the near future. The United States of America, once the world's best hope for freedom and economic prosperity, has taken its anti-authoritarian foundations to their logical conclusion: America is not a Christian nation, never was a Christian nation despite claims to the contrary, and represents the Adversary's best hope of demonstrating that he and his ideology of equality can rule over angelic sons of God.

Yet, from 30,000 feet on a flight from Atlanta to Seattle, no other nation holds greater beauty or more promise ...

The Apostle John wrote, "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).

From 30,000 feet, America's imperfections are barely noticeable—and what the person sees are those things that cause Americans and American Christians to love the nation.

The United States of America is both this world and a thing of this world, a construction of pious men who did not and indeed could not keep the commandments of God. The United States' Constitution is **not** a divinely inspired document, but represents the Adversary's best attempt to prove that sons of God can govern themselves apart from God. But neither angelic nor human sons of God can rule themselves—

There is only one pattern of governance that will produce justice and liberty for all, and this is not a pattern that can be constructed anywhere on earth until the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation: any society organized on *transactions* will not long endure without going to war to recover what has been lost or used up, or to gain what the society never possessed. Any society organized on *transactions*, on buying

and selling, on doing business is doomed to failure despite great technological advances having been made before that failure occurs.

Theoretical Capitalism, which when unregulated by government, will have no transaction occurring unless both parties to the transaction benefit, and restricted (by government) Capitalism in the United States has produced economic prosperity and ease of life no previous people on earth could even imagine, let alone enjoy. However, the so-called good things that have come from free-market Capitalism have contributed to increased anti-authoritarianism in America, with individuals now able to create themselves [their outer selves] in their own image [i.e., that of their dead inner selves]; within on-line personas differing from real world lives. And what has been seen is the absolute exclusion of God from the affairs of men: it isn't that God is dead for he isn't, but that human culture in the Western world functions without belief of God, and with only token lip service being given to even the god of this world, the Adversary, whom greater Christendom worships as if he were the Most High God.

When cast from heaven (again Rev 12:7–10), the Adversary has a work to do, albeit a work he will unwittingly do; for the Son of Man's governance of this world **will not** be based upon transactions, but upon a social construct that one Sabbatarian minister used to call *the give way of life*, a subject about which this minister knew very little and had even less understanding. The work that the Adversary will do in the Endurance, the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation, is to prevent faithful Christians from buying and selling, thereby forcing this third part of humankind to organize themselves into a society not based upon transactions of any sort (bartering is a transaction). And a society not based upon transactions will not deliver to its individual members those things to which Americans have grown accustomed; hence, what will be seen is that very few American Christians will actually enter the kingdom of God for their love of this world and for the things of this world is too great a stumbling block.

Today, transactions cannot be avoided: no person is truly self-sufficient although the Amish come closer than most other Americans do in living without engaging in the business of this world. ... Former President Calvin Coolidge said that *the business of America is business*, which expresses a truism imbedded in the Adversary having deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9). But when the Adversary is cast from heaven and cast into space-time from which he cannot escape, the Adversary will openly reveal that it is he, not the Father and the Son, that has been behind Capitalism and behind Socialism and behind Communism and behind every other "ism" in this world.

When Jesus thrice cleansed the temple, once at the first Passover of His ministry and twice at the last Passover of His ministry, with the earthly temple in earthly Jerusalem representing the shadow and type of Christians within greater Christendom, the pattern was set for Christ Jesus to drive out from within the Christian Church all those who buy and sell at or immediately before the Second Passover liberation of Israel, then again at the end of the Millennium. But Jesus will use the Adversary as His whip of cords, for it is the *strings* of the Adversary that ties this present world together, binding nation to nation and peoples to peoples and one person to another person, with each of these *strings* representing a transaction.

Commodities are bought and sold on spot markets and in futures contracts in an understandable and predictable manner, but for most of human history, there has been

a shortage of commodities that could be sold, with human persons through slavery being turned into perhaps the most marketable commodity. The 21<sup>st</sup>-Century fundamentalist Muslim who purchases a young Christian boy or girl for a sex slave follows in a millennia old tradition that will not be eradicated until transactions themselves cease to exist—there can be no peace among nations or peoples until love for this world and the things of this world is taken from the hearts of human beings.

Today as in the past, marriages are transactions made between bride and groom, or between the parents of the bride and the groom, or as of today in the State of New York, between groom and groom or between bride and bride.

People are commodities even when they are not openly bought and sold, even in America; for God consigned [concluded] all of humankind to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). God did it. God delivered humankind into lawlessness so that men would die. God will, following the Second Passover liberation of Israel, deliver all of Christendom into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation (see Dan 7:25; Zech 13:7–8). And the Christian that then seeks to save his or her fleshly body will lose the person's indwelling eternal life.

Perhaps it is in marriage where every American Christian can see the person's own anti-authoritarianism that will keep the Christian out of heaven ... how many Christian women cover their long hair with a covering of fabric to show that by their long hair there are in submission to God and by the covering of fabric they are in submission to their husbands? Or is it okay for American Christian women to manifest their anti-authoritarianism by sporting cropped, uncovered hair? Is it okay with God for chaste Christian women to dress in attire more appropriate for a prostitute than for a Christian? Is it okay with God for American Christians to ignore the Sabbath and attempt to appear before Him on Sunday instead?

Contrary to the prevailing anti-authoritarian doctrines of modern American Christendom, brides once were the property of their husbands, a situation that ought not to have been—and human slavery forms the shadow and type of all of humankind being consigned to disobedience by God so that He could have mercy on all.

Marriages as transactions, futures contracts made with prenuptial agreements, have supported the patriarchal organization of Western cultures through the construction of Apollonian societies in which *form, moderation, and symmetry* are valued, and Dionysian *debauchery, violence, and exuberance* are devalued. Hence, the female world of fluids (milk and menstrual discharges) have relegated women to being commodities that can be bought and sold, with women themselves being the most frequent sellers of female flesh ... but in the Millennium where transactions will at least temporarily cease to exist, a marriage will not be a transaction but a creation of *one from two*, thereby completing physically what was intended from the beginning, with this new *one entity* composed of two people representing the Bridegroom and the Bride (i.e., Christ Jesus and the glorified Church/New Jerusalem), two people that cannot again be separated into two individuals once they have been joined together by God.

Marriages cannot occur between two men, or between two women; for Christ Jesus doesn't marry Himself, nor does the Church marry the Church. Marriages can only occur between one man and one woman, not between one man and many women; for Peter

told the rulers of the temple, “This one [Jesus] is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11–12).

Christ Jesus wasn't rejected by Britons or by Chinese rulers, but by the builders of the earthly temple of God. Today, Christ Jesus isn't rejected by *Philadelphians*, but by greater Christendom.

As the people of Judah and of Jerusalem were represented by a worthless vine fit only for the fire, a vine that entwined itself around the glorious tree (as poison ivy does) representing the earthly king of Babylon, Christians (especially American Christians) and greater Christendom can be represented as a worthless vine fit only for the lake of fire, a vine entangled in the affairs of this world where it circles the kingdom of the Adversary, the spiritual king of Babylon, whose fate is certain and whose fall will take all of Christendom down with him.

As earthly Jerusalem in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar was a vine that could only live by entwining itself around the Babylonian, forsaking all others, including the King of Egypt, New Jerusalem in the days of the Adversary's reign as prince of this world is a worthless vine, faithless and lawless and fit only for destruction by fire—and thus it is to this vine that the Adversary will turn to try and save himself following the Second Passover liberation of Israel. It is to Arian Christendom [representing the King of the North] that the Adversary will come once spiritual Babylon is dealt a below-the-belt blow hard enough to stagger this world, a blow that will see all uncovered firstborns killed in a day.

Once the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs, it will be extremely unlikely that any genuine Christian can engage in transactions in or with this world. Thus, whatever the Christian has on hand will have to do until a new culture emerges, one not based on transactions. For the vine that represents greater Christendom will be chopped down by the Second Passover liberation of Israel, and will be closely examined by God for 200 days before most of it will be condemned to the lake of fire.

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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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