

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 testing the spirits.

## Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of July 19, 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 1 John chapter 4.*

**Commentary:** John writes that disciples are to love one another, “for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (v. 9) ... is what John writes true, or has John used “love” differently from how the concept is today commonly perceived?

Paul wrote, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ... For the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot” (Rom 8:5, 7).

For Paul, the person who does not submit to God's law has his or her mind set on the flesh and cannot please God, does not love God, but remains subject to death—and John writes the same message: “And by this we know that we have come to know him [Jesus], if we keep his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected” (1 John 2:3-5). So the person who knows God will keep His commandments. The person who has been born of spirit is not hostile to God and will keep the law. Thus, those individuals who remain hostile to [opposed to] keeping the law (i.e., keeping the commandments) are not born of spirit but still have their minds set on the things of the flesh. These individuals cannot please God and do not even know God, a brash statement considering that such individuals fill the pews of nearly every Christian church on Sunday mornings. And these individuals, often outwardly displaying great love for other “Christians,” have used Romans chapter 14 as their justification for continuing to live as they have always lived.

If God so loved us that He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, “we ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11), for no one has ever seen God (v. 12) and how can we love what we have never seen when we cannot love those we do see? So as John writes, “And this commandment we have from him [Jesus]: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (v. 21).

A disciple is his or her brother's keeper ... does a disciple love his or her brother by watching him sally forth in sin without saying anything to him? James writes, "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his [the one who wanders] soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (Jas 5:19-20).

But what if this sinner does not want to be into "the truth"? How much effort should be expended to bring the sinner back? Is there a qualifier to loving one's brother that has been overlooked, especially considering the status of Christendom has changed greatly in the past nineteen hundred years?

The question must again be asked, but refined to a point: does a Sabbatarian disciple love his Christian brothers by watching them flagrantly transgress the commandments without saying anything to them? Or has the wolf growled at these Sabbatarians so many times that they fear to say anything, sitting instead on their hands with their mouths clamped tightly shut, pretending that if they leave those who worship on the 8<sup>th</sup> day alone, they will be left alone? Well, when the great falling away occurs, they won't be left alone. They will be hunted as if they were beasts, slaughtered as so much livestock, and those doing the slaying will sincerely believe they do God a favor. So there is no reason to remain quiet, even when knowing that these Christian brothers are probably far less *Christian* than they pretend to be.

John wrote that we are to test the spirits, "for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (4:1) ... these many false prophets went out teaching that they were genuine *Christians* and John and those with him were false—

To determine genuine from false Christians and Christian teachers, the spirits must be tested. And for John, the test was whether the spirit confessed that Jesus had come in the flesh. But this was a 1<sup>st</sup>-Century test for which cheating spirits secured an answer sheet: the spirit animating Christendom orthodoxy goes to great lengths to stress that Jesus was fully man [i.e., He came in the flesh] and fully God [i.e., He came as God], thereby confessing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and effectively negating John's test of who is and isn't of the antichrist<sup>1</sup>.

But if Jesus were fully God from birth, what happened when the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him as a dove? ... Keep this question in mind, for in its answer is the gospel that Paul taught.

Today, who denies that Jesus came in the flesh? Certainly Christian orthodoxy doesn't seem to, nor do satellite theologies seem to. But when Jesus came to John the Baptist at the beginning of His ministry and told John that He needed to be baptized by John (Matt 3:13), John objected and said that he needed to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus countered with, "Let it [Jesus being baptized] be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (v. 15). So by Jesus' testimony, His baptism by John was necessary to fulfill all righteousness—and Paul wrote, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:3-4).

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<sup>1</sup> Paul's test of preaching the gospel free of charge, not even burdening the ones being taught when in need, with those who ask for tithes and donations being false apostles and deceitful workmen is a far more effective test and a much more difficult test to fake.

Unless in *baptism* there is a comparison of apples to oranges, the baptism of disciples into Christ's death would have Jesus' baptism also be into His death when He took upon Himself the sins of Israel. However, between when Jesus was baptized and when His body would die three and a half years later was the entirety of His earthly ministry. Thus, Jesus' earthly ministry was about what Paul writes in the sixth chapter of his treatise to the saints at Rome—and it will be here asserted without being argued that Jesus' earthly ministry forms the shadow and copy of His endtime heavenly ministry that will complete the prophetic week.

If disciples are baptized into Jesus' death so that these disciples can walk in newness of life, what actually happens for the fleshly bodies of disciples do not die as Jesus died at Calvary when the disciple is baptized?

If disciples are “buried with him by baptism into death,” the beginning and end of Jesus' earthly ministry are compressed into the baptism of the disciple—with baptism always representing death, not birth by water—hence, Jesus' baptism and receipt of the divine breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] becomes the pattern for, or type of the “old self” or “old man” being crucified with Jesus and a “new self” or “new man” resurrected to life “in a resurrection like his” (Rom 6:5-6), with the flesh actually putting on glory at the end of Jesus' seven year ministry.

The flesh and blood body of Jesus is now analogous to a person's old self or old nature [that which imparts *personhood*] that is crucified with Jesus “in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing” (Rom 6:6). Walking “in newness of life” doesn't pertain to the future, when disciples receive glorified bodies, but pertains to the period immediately following baptism; so a person is resurrected from the dead without the physical body either dying or becoming immortal when “the Father raises the dead and gives them life” (John 5:21) “as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom 6:4). The theological juxtaposition is thus:

- Jesus' physical body is a type or representation of the “human nature” received from God that enlivens every human being, the nature which King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from him for the seven years when he received from God the nature of an ox (Dan chap 4).
- Baptism is unto the death of this human nature that has been consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) because of the transgression of the first Adam.
- Because Jesus' father was not the first Adam, but *the Logos/Theos*, Jesus was born “free,” and not in bondage to disobedience; thus, He was born free to keep the commandments of God. But this is not the case with any person whose father, however generations removed, is the first Adam.
- Because a person's human nature is baptized into Jesus' death, and buried in a death like Jesus', “the personhood” of the individual is raised from death by the Father (John 5:21) as the Father raised Jesus from the dead—raised so that this new personhood can walk in newness of life, not enslaved to sin.
- A person is raised from the dead [resurrected] and from a death like Jesus' when the person receives a second birth, a second life (John 3:5-8) through receipt of the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] as Jesus received a second life when He was raised from baptism and the breath of God descended upon Him as a dove.

A shadow or type of a spiritual thing is the mirror image of the spiritual thing in one less dimension than the spiritual thing ... Paul argues that this physical realm reveals the

things of God (Rom 1:20), but it does this by forming the left hand image of the right hand of God. When Jesus was glorified He sat down at the right hand of the Father (Heb 10:12 *et al*). Disciples, when born of spirit, should form the left hand image of Christ Jesus, walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6), imitating Paul as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17)—“image” used because it is not the flesh of the disciple that dies at baptism or is crucified with Jesus or is raised from the dead “by the glory of the Father” (Rom 6:4). It is the inner human nature that activates the flesh that is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Jesus’ flesh and blood body existed in one less dimension than does this inner human nature, received initially from God as a life force that causes a human being to be a human being and a cat to be a cat, in addition to causing the lungs to breathe and the heart to pump. It exists at a more primordial level than “instinct,” or “reasoning,” both manifestations of this inner self.

The inner creature or old nature is, again, the nature that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from him in an instant. It comes from God and returns to God, and it is not an immortal soul although ancient Greek philosophers taught that it was. Rather, it is the nature of the great predators that will be changed when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Isa 11:6-9). It is the nature that will be taken from the lion-appearing first king of Daniel chapter 7 when this spirit being has its wings plucked off and is lifted up and made to stand as a man and is given the mind of a man. Some cutting edge research has been presented at Loma Linda University showing certain chemicals produce in this “nature” a desire to know God or to seek God; so this nature does not exist separate from the flesh, but is united with the flesh by the creation process and would seem to have entered the first Adam when *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the nostrils of the man of mud.

As a person’s shadow lies to the side of a person that is farthest away from the light, and as the shadow of a three-dimensional person exists in two dimensions only, the shadow and copy of a heavenly thing occurs in this earthly realm, which will make Jesus’ first three and a half years of ministry the shadow and copy of His endtime ministry when He, as the glorified Son, will again deliver the Father’s words. The interruption in this ministry occurs from the death of His body, His physical body at Calvary and His spiritual Body. The resurrection of his physical body occurred after three days; the resurrection of His spiritual Body will occur after the third day. As the gates of Hades did not prevail over Jesus’ physical body which saw no corruption, the gates of Hades will not prevail over His spiritual Body that also will not see any corruption when it is returned to life: today, though, Christendom is a stinking corpse, divided, without life and in dire need of resurrection. The dark portion of the fourth day transpired before Jesus ascended to His Father (John 20:17); the dark portion of the fourth day will see the saints delivered up to tribulation before the light comes and the saints are glorified. Jesus as the Head of the Son of Man died and was resurrected to glory; the saints as the Body of Christ (of the Son of Man) will likewise die and be resurrected to glory, with this glory not coming from the Father who gave life to the saints when they were crucified with Christ but from the Son to whom all judgment has been given (John 5:21-22) and who will give life to whom He will through causing the mortal flesh to put on immortality.

Within the single verse of John 5:21 is all of Christendom’s history, beginning with the Father raising disciples from the dead as Jesus was raised from the dead (Rom 6:4)

to the Son giving life to whom He will by causing the perishable flesh of disciples to put on imperishability as His flesh put on immortality when He ascended to the Father.

If the flesh and blood body of the man Jesus is the shadow of the inner creature or nature that enlivens the flesh—the inner self that is baptized into His death and raised up by the Father through the Father giving life to disciples by receipt of His divine breath (again, John 5:21)—then the man Jesus had to have come in the flesh, and had to have come without spiritual life until after baptized when the divine breath of the Father descended upon Him as a dove. He could not form the shadow otherwise.

John's baptism was unto repentance, or the death of lawlessness and resurrection into a newness of life that would have the person living without sin, but living as a mortal human being with no eternal life dwelling within the person. John's objection to baptizing Jesus stemmed from Jesus being without sin; Jesus had no need to repent. He had no need to walk in a *newness of life*, for He already walked without sin. Again, His father was not the first Adam, but *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος]; so Jesus was not born consigned [or concluded] to sin as a bondservant of the Adversary. To borrow the terminology of Christian orthodoxy, Jesus was born without *original sin*. Hence, as a flesh and blood human being, Jesus was born free to keep the laws of God and was without condemnation; He was born free to keep the commandments even though He was tempted in all things as other men [and women] were. And He had kept the commandments as John knew that He had.

Rejection or failure to comprehend the Hebraic teaching that human beings must inherit eternal life (*cf.* Luke 10:25; 18:18) and do not have inherent indwelling eternal life in the form of an immortal soul hindered or outright prevented Greek theologians from understanding what occurred when the breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Jesus as a dove (Matt 3:16) ... if Jesus were born of Mary as the only Son of *the Logos* who was *Theos* (John 1:1, 14; 3:16) and was with *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning, the claim of the Apostle John, then Jesus had no life of any sort that came from *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν or the Father] prior to receiving the divine breath of the Father when it descended upon Him as a dove—and only after receiving life from the divine breath of the Father does the Father call Jesus His beloved Son (Matt 3:17).

In order for Jesus to be fully God prior to the divine breath of the Father descending upon Him, *the Logos/Theos* could not have come as His son, but as Himself ... the argument that has Jesus being fully man and fully God makes Jesus into a mutant that is neither man nor God, but a hybrid creature of another biological phylum, a *Janus* with two faces, one composed of “spirit” and one composed of flesh, a gatekeeper that looks into both heaven and hell, and not a man like other men, with a human nature like other men's, differing only in that it was not consigned to disobedience from birth but was free to choose whether or not to obey God—

The Apostle John's testimony is that *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος] was God [θεός], and that this *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among men: “Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν” (1:14). “This one—οὗτος,” this *Logos*, was in the beginning with *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν] ... structurally, John separates *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος], a masculine singular noun in nominative case, from *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν], a masculine singular noun in accusative case (based on the article), an imbedded separation inherent in the plural Hebrew icon used for “God” [*Elohim*]. John further states that *the Logos* became flesh, became God in the form of flesh—and if we stopped here, the One whom *the Logos* was

with [that is τὸν θεόν] has neither a Son, nor has entered the creation Himself. The separateness that John establishes between *the Logos/Theos* [ὁ λόγος/θεὸς] and *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν] in the first two sentences of his gospel absolutely prevents *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος] from entering His creation as the son of *the Theon* [τὸν θεόν], which is what makes the Trinity an unexplainable mystery for the inherent plurality of *Elohim* is not present in a Greek masculine singular noun.

How could a Greek speaker convey both the “oneness” of God and the plurality of the Hebrew icons used for God without establishing a pantheon like that which Greeks had outwardly worshipped for a millennium and without doing serious damage to monotheism? Jesus came to reveal the Father to His disciples (John 17:25-26), with the Father not previously known in this world, and by extension, not known by Israel. Truly, the Father was the *Unknown God* that had been worshiped in ignorance by Israel.

What John writes when he says that “every spirit [πνεῦμα] that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ]” isn’t an affirmation that angels coming from *the God* confess that Jesus came in the flesh whereas angels coming from the antichrist do not so confess. Rather, every “breath” that confesses would seem to mean “every spoken word by a disciple who has been born of spirit” — note: in his gospel, Matthew does not use an article for either πνεῦμα or for θεοῦ in 3:16, whereas both definite articles are present in 1 John 4:2. Matthew’s reason for omitting the articles, added by later scribes and so noted by brackets, apparently stems from the breath of God descending as a dove not being a definite or one time occurrence—in Greek, the definite article is omitted when a noun is not used in a definite sense—but being the pattern or type of fulfilling all righteousness, meaning that every disciple will receive the breath of God in a similar manner.

Grammatically, if the two Greek nouns (πνεῦμα and θεοῦ) were “definite,” the definite article would need to be present as it is in, “τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ” (1 John 4:2) so Matthew uses “πνεῦμα θεοῦ” as two non-definite nouns, which now circles back to Jesus being a man like any other man and He received the breath of God as any other man would receive the breath of God. And if Jesus were a man like any other man, He was not fully God from birth. And as a type that fulfills all righteousness, he would have come in the flesh only.

The world listens to those who are from the world, who are of the antichrist, but only those who are of God [i.e., born of spirit as Jesus received the breath of God] listen to genuine disciples such as John. And listening or not listening to John determines who knows “the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error—τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης” (1 John 4:6). Although translators make a distinction between one “τὸ πνεῦμα” and the other “τὸ πνεῦμα” by stylistically identifying “the spirit of truth” as the Holy Spirit, John does not distinguish one breath from the other breath except as to what is uttered by the particular “breath—πνεῦμα,” with the one uttering truth and the other error; so for John, from one pool of disciples comes some disciples who hear the words of the John, Peter, Paul, and from this same pool comes a great many more disciples who are from this world and heard by this world and have gone out from those who are genuine for they were never of those who are genuine (1 John 2:19).

The difficulties caused by transcribing an inherently and structurally plural noun in Hebrew [*Elohim*] as a masculine singular noun in Greek created a separation of “Christians” by which endtime disciples can determine who is of Christ and who is of the

antichrist, the spirit of this world, with those on all sides identifying those on another side as false ... is this not an apt description of today's Christian Church?

The inherent plurality of *Elohim* is manifested when comparing familiar quotations of Jesus:

For God [ὁ θεὸς] so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

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. (John 5:21-23)

Who judges the world? Paul writes, "God judges those outside [the Church]" (1 Cor 5:13), and Peter writes, "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God" (1 Pet 4:17). So there is judgment, and it would seem that the Father has given this responsibility to the Son, who said not to be surprised when those who have done good are resurrected to life and those who have done evil are resurrected to condemnation or judgment (John 5:28-29).

If *the Theos* [ὁ θεὸς] did not send His only Son into the world to condemn it, then who did send Jesus into the world to judge it? The answer is, the Father sent Jesus into the world to judge it ... but Jesus told Pharisees, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father" (John 5:45), and there is no reason for Jesus to bring accusations against the Pharisees. The Father had already given all judgment to Jesus, and Moses stood as the accuser of the Pharisees and of every other Israelite, physically or spiritually circumcised.

The Father, by deferring all judgment to the Son, neither condemns the world nor saves the world. It was *the Logos/Theos* who sent His only Son, the man Jesus of Nazareth, into the world that the world might be saved through Him.

The Apostle John adds, "No one has ever seen God—θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται" (1 John 4:12); yet when Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us," Jesus said, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:8-10).

Once the breath of the Father descended upon Jesus as a dove, the Father was in Jesus as an indwelling breath of life in a manner analogous to a person's human nature being in the person. The mechanics of how Jesus was in the Father are more difficult to explain, but comprehensible through realizing the life Jesus had come from the Father so the Father "encompassed" Jesus, thereby causing Jesus to be within the Father ... once the breath of the Father had descended upon Jesus, Jesus' human nature, coming from *the Logos* being His first father, was replaced or overwritten by the nature of the Father so that Jesus' words were the Father's words (John 14:10-11).

In a like manner, when a person is born of spirit—that is, receives life through the indwelling of the breath of the Father—the person's human nature should be overwritten by the Father; thus, the person should walk in a newness of life, having love for one another. Note: "should" ... too often what is seen within Christendom is disciples actively practicing sinning, and John writes, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ... Whoever makes a practice of sinning is

of the devil” (1 John 3:4, 8). And out of love for one’s brothers, Sabbatarian disciples are really under obligation to try and return lawless disciples back to the truth, a task made more difficult by instructions not to cast pearls before swine—are 8<sup>th</sup>-day Christians swine? If they are not, then the obligation remains to lead, if possible, lawless disciples into the truth.

John’s testimony is that *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος] entered His creation as His only begotten Son (*cf.* John 1:1-3, 14; 3:16), that “this one” [ὁ λόγος] was, in the beginning, with *the God* [τὸν θεόν], and was Himself, God [θεὸς]. To Trinitarians, the structural separation incorporated within “*with—πρὸς*” does not produce two entities, but two manifestations of a single triune deity. To Unitarians, *the Logos* is no more of an entity than is a word spoken by a person; thus, Unitarians hold that as God spoke all that is into existence, He also spoke the man Jesus into existence within the womb of Mary, thereby explaining how it came to be that Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, the divine breath of God and the vehicle by which God spoke the creation into existence.

Whereas Trinitarians teaching that Jesus came as fully man and as fully God do a dance of deceit to covertly get around what John wrote about testing spirits (no one wants to be so easily identified as false), Unitarians definitively teach that Jesus not only came as a man [*an Adoni*] but that he remained a man until He ascended to the Father to be glorified. But here is where Unitarians step into a logical fault unless Paul’s epistles are ignored: if Jesus is a man descended from the first Adam, then He was born consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) and as such He could not live without sin. He would have been obligated, as the servant of disobedience, to sin. Therefore, if Jesus’ Father was not of the house of God and was not the creator of all that has been made—if Jesus’ Father were not *Theos*—then Jesus could not have lived without sin but would have needed a covering for sin such as an animal sacrifice until the “anointed one” came.

The teachings of both Trinitarian and of Arian Christians are false—when the spirits are tested, what is found is the presently dead Body of Christ [dead through separation from Christ] that has many, many disciples looking at the physical things of this world (i.e., those things that pertain to the flesh) as if they were spiritual things, not realizing that what they are seeing are shadows and mirror images of living realities in the supra-dimensional heavenly realm. And unfortunately, as all but a handful left the Apostle Paul because they could not understand his gospel, and as all but the women and John left Jesus because they didn’t want identified with him, all but a few will not today use the periscope of typology to peer into the heavenly realm but will stay wallowing in the mud from which the things of the flesh come.

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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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