

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 typology.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of August 16, 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 service should read or assign to be read Isaiah chapter 7, followed by Matthew chapter 1, verses 18 through 25.

Commentary: Luke records the angel Gabriel telling Zechariah, a priest of the division of Abijah, a man who with his wife had walked blameless in the commandments and statutes of the Lord (Luke 1:5–6), that “your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John [Ἰωάννην]. ... And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord [κύριον] their God [τὸν θεόν], and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord [κυρίῳ] a people prepared” (vv. 13, 16–17).

Greek was the *lingua franca* of the day, and Greek was case dependent: the *word*, either as an utterance or as an inscribed symbol[s], was the linguistic icon assigned to a linguistic object. In a revealing expression of the mind of God, Gabriel speaks to posterity in Greek, not in Hebrew or Aramaic or in any Semitic language, for the Apostle John begins his gospel with *the Word* [ὁ λόγος] being God [θεός—nominative case], and in the beginning being with God [τὸν θεόν—accusative case or the direct object of ὁ λόγος]. *The Word* is not the thing [the linguistic object] that *the Word* represents in any language with onomatopoeic words being possible exceptions. In John's linguistic play, τὸν θεόν is the object of the clause but also the linguistic object that ὁ λόγος represents—and this is what the remainder of God's gospel reveals through many more words. The element of Thirdness [the linguistic *trace*] that connects the icon to the object is the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] that descended as a dove to visibly link the Father to the Son by giving to the Son of ὁ λόγος life through receipt of the divine breath of τὸν θεόν.

Prior to the confusing of languages at the Tower of Babel, all humankind spoke the language Noah spoke: linguistic objects were conjoined to linguistic icons as God is conjoined in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*. But the confusing of the languages by separating icons from objects (which remained as same as they always were) typologically represents ὁ λόγος entering His creation as His only Son—and this

typological representation, while always apparent in Hebrew, was most easily “knowable” by Gentile converts through the separation of linguistic icon from object in Greek ... every language since the Tower of Babel will have a differing (to some degree) utterance for the same linguistic object although this concept is usually expressed in the opposite direction: to linguistic icons [words] are assigned differing linguistic objects [meanings], with the particular assignment dependent upon membership in a particular reading community.

Gabriel directing Zechariah to name his son “John” now becomes of importance considering the movement of aspiration, /o^h/, from in front of the nasal consonant /n/ in “John” to behind this nasal consonant in “Jonah” [Ἰωνᾶ], with “John—Ἰωάννην” in making straight the way to the Lord functioning as the icon for which “Jonah—Ἰωνᾶ” serves as the representative sign of the Lord. Both “John” and “Jonah” function as signs (one inside the other as Jonah was in the whale) for what Jesus told Nicodemus about being born of water [of the womb] and being born of spirit.

Because of the separation of icon from object, the hermeneutics of the angel Gabriel provides the basis for spiritual understanding. And Gabriel’s hermeneutics are evident when Gabriel cites Malachi’s prophecy:

Behold, I [YHWH] will send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord [Adon] whom you seek will come suddenly to his temple. (3:1)

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord [YHWH] comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction. (4:5–6)

When moving from physical to spiritual, the angel Gabriel’s realm, Malachi’s prophetic *lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction* becomes *to make ready for the Lord a people prepared*. What Jesus said in His Olivet discourse now pertains: “And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved [alive]. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matt 24:22). *The people prepared* are *the Elect*—if *the Elect* were not to exist, then God would *strike the land with a decree of utter destruction*. So it is the messenger that God sends to prepare a way for the Lord who prepares a people so that the Lord doesn’t strike the earth with a decree of utter destruction. John the Baptist, preaching repentance, went before the Lord in the spirit but not the power of Elijah—John did not do any miracles—to prepare a people, the children of Israel [*children* not referencing physical stature but to ancestry]. Thus, John functions as a type of the one who comes in the power of Elijah to prepare an endtime people for the Lord, with “this one” being the glorified Jesus standing invisibly between the two anointed ones who are the two olive trees, the two witnesses that the world saw and that the world hated.

Because of heaven’s peculiar property of timelessness, the angel Gabriel knows that the Lord will not strike the earth with a decree of utter destruction, for the one sent to prepare the way for the Lord will prepare *the Elect* as the temple of God, able to receive the sudden coming of the Lord (Matt 25:6–9). Thus, Gabriel is free to ignore the physical application of a prophecy: he is of heaven and his thoughts are not on things physical as “natural” human thoughts are. Rather, when quoting a prophecy he moves the physical words into the spiritual realm as in,

- And he will *turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers* (Mal 4:6) —

versus

- to *turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just* (Luke 1:17).

Turning the hearts of the children of Israel, a nation circumcised in the flesh, to the Father is best rendered in human language as turning *the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*.

Jesus spoke only in figures of speech [i.e., in metaphoric language] for the words—linguistic icons, either uttered orally or as inscribed symbols—He used, whether in Hebrew or Greek or Aramaic, pertain to the things of this world in an arbitrary assignment of icons to objects, or said in more precise language, mimetically seek to represent “real” things that can be observed or measured. *A heart* is a real thing (an inner organ) that pumps blood. As such, it cannot be circumcised with a flint or steel knife for to cut away any portion of it will cause death, excepting of course during modern heart surgery. So for the prophet Jeremiah, in the 6th-Century BCE, to record the Lord saying that He will punish all those circumcised merely in the flesh and that all of the house of Israel is uncircumcised of heart (9:25–26), and for the prophet Ezekiel to record the Lord saying that no foreigner uncircumcised in heart and flesh shall enter the sanctuary (44:9) requires that *circumcision of the heart* not be performed with knives but by the soft breath of God when the heart has been cleansed by faith, thereby causing both the linguistic icon */heart/* and the icon */circumcision/* to have a differing assignment of meaning from any “real” thing in this world.

The “real” things of this world as linguistic objects can only serve as metaphors for the things of heaven. A linguistic icon in any language, including Hebrew, is now twice removed from the things of heaven and at best can only indirectly reference a heavenly thing.

The hermeneutics of the angel Gabriel gives disciples a better understanding of how the visible things of this world, such as turning the hearts of children to their fathers, reveal the hidden things of God: *turning the disobedient* not to a thing or to a Church in this world, but to *the wisdom of the just* becomes the reality of “repentance,” or turning from lawlessness to obedience ... *the wisdom of the just* is obedience that will cause a person to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:3–6). The Apostle Paul expressed this *wisdom* when he wrote to the saints at Corinth, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (11:1), and when he wrote to the saints at Philippi, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (3:17). He said of himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense” (Acts 25:8).

The wisdom of the just separates those who practice righteousness and are righteous as Jesus was/is righteous (1 John 3:7) from those who make a practice of sinning and are of the devil (v. 8) ... John isn’t establishing an opposition of “Christians” versus the world, but rather of obedient disciples from lawless disciples, who have twisted Paul’s epistles into instruments for their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16–17). The angel Gabriel’s focus is not upon lawless Christians—the many who are not chosen (Matt 22:14)—but on those few Christians who are *the Elect*, who are vessels sculpted for honorable use.

The hermeneutics of Gabriel should frighten every lawless Christian, but they won’t. The lawless have been sculpted into vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, endured

with much patience for a season—the lawless are secure in their lawlessness, smug in their teachers’ assurances that heaven awaits them when what actually awaits them is condemnation and the lake of fire; for when these lawless disciples could have chosen to walk as Jesus, an observant Jew, walked, they chose instead to walk as the Gentiles of this world thereby reintroducing the division between circumcised [now of the heart] and uncircumcised, with themselves though born of spirit being the uncircumcised that have not cleansed their hearts by a journey of faith equivalent in length to the patriarch Abraham’s physical journey of faith from Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] to Haran [Assyria or death, symbolized by baptism] then on to Canaan, the Promised Land of God’s rest—or in the hermeneutics of *the Elect*, Sabbath observance; i.e., the new creature born of spirit as a son of God bringing the tent of flesh [the temple] in which he dwells into the presence of God on the Sabbaths of God. As the Lord entered the Holy of holies of the temple Solomon built one day a year (*Yom Kipporim*), bringing His presence into the earthly temple on this most holy of the high Sabbaths, disciples are to bring the spiritual temple (themselves) into the Lord’s presence on the Sabbaths of the Lord. The new creature born of spirit is not the tent of flesh in which this new creature dwells, for this new creature is not male or female, Jew or Greek; yet the tent of flesh remains male or female, Jew or Greek, free or bond And while this new creature can enter into the Father’s presence at any time because of Christ Jesus being this new creature’s high priest, this new creature remains under the obligation to bring the temple [the body in which this new creature dwells] into the presence of the Father on the Sabbaths of God, and to neglect so great a responsibility—to treat this responsibility as a trivial matter—discloses to the Father how little this new creature wants to be with Him and how much this new creature desires the company and acclaim of this world ... this new creature will receive what it desires, the fate of this world that is passing away.

The hermeneutics of Gabriel enter into Matthew recording what the angel of the Lord told Joseph about Mary’s pregnancy:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus [Ἰησοῦν], for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, / and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus [Ἰησοῦν—*Jesoun*]. (1:18–25)

The angel of the Lord, probably Gabriel, tells Joseph to call the boy Jesus [Ἰησοῦς/v], meaning among other things, *Son of the Most High God* [Ze-] in Greek and when translated into Hebrew, *in Yah is salvation*. Therefore, considering how the Septuagint’s translators identified the young woman [עלמה—’*almah*] that Isaiah verbally brings before King Ahaz (7:14) as a virgin [a possible rendering of /’*almah* /] who will bring forth a son to be named Immanuel, meaning *God with us*, it is reasonable for

Matthew, following in the hermeneutics of Gabriel, to apply this prophecy to Mary and Jesus, whose name in Greek would have God [θεός], in the form of His Son, being with Israel ... when moving from Greek into English, /θε-/ is usually pronounced as /the-/, with the /theta—θ/ having the /th/ pronunciation, a different but not distant phoneme from /Ze-/.

The Hebrew icon /'almah/ has a usual assignment of meaning close to the archaic assignment given to the English /maiden/, a young woman presumed not to be sexually active. Hebrew has an icon that is assigned to a woman who has not had sexual intercourse: /bethulah/. So presumably if Isaiah intended to reference a virgin as opposed to a young woman who might or might not be a virgin, he would have used /bethulah/ instead of /'almah/—and this is in line with the adjective /harah—Strong's #2030/ referring to a present pregnancy (Gen 38:24) instead of “will conceive” as in a distant future pregnancy. So in Isaiah 7:14, the passage that Matthew assigns to Christ's birth could well be translated as, “the young woman is pregnant,” or “the young woman is about to conceive.” In either case, Mary living centuries in the future is not the physical referent for Isaiah's citation, and the referent for the vague pronoun “he” in verse 13 now becomes at issue for Jesus upon His Ascension to the Father tells Mary to tell His disciples that He is going to His Father and to His God (John 20:17). The vagueness of referent for “he” in Isaiah 7:13 permits this “he” to be ὁ λόγος, which actually makes more sense than for Isaiah to say, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?” The prophet is not speaking before Ahaz answers, and it would be presumptuous for Isaiah to speak of wearying God unless he was directly uttering the words of God.

The young woman about whom Isaiah writes might be a member of the royal family, or might be Isaiah's wife (less likely): she is of nobility either of the royal family or of the Levitical priesthood. But there no child name Immanuel recorded in Isaiah's lifetime—and in the hermeneutics of the angel Gabriel, a disciple would not expect the young woman to be a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah, or for the “sign” to pertain to a physical emptying of Syria and Samaria, the lands of the two kings that Ahaz feared.

The two kings that threaten spiritually circumcised [i.e., circumcised of heart] Israel are Sin and Death, the third and fourth horsemen of the Apocalypse, and the “lands” [as in mental landscapes] of these two kings are Trinitarian and Arian Christendom, respectively. It is these *lands* that will be emptied when the Lord empties the earth and makes it desolate (Isa chap 24). It is throughout these *lands* that the one who makes straight the way to the Lord preaches repentance. It is to these cities of Israel that disciples during the first half of the Tribulation are to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is at hand—and these endtime disciples will not have gone throughout these cities/denominations of Israel before the Son of Man comes (Matt chap 10). The kingdom of heaven will then truly be at hand. Whereas a ministry preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand decades ago when it was not at hand, thereby deceiving two and three generations of saints, the kingdom of heaven will be at hand when the Son of Man is suddenly revealed (Luke 17:30). The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of the Father and His Christ halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation. The Messiah will come at the end of these seven years. And the mental landscape of Trinitarians will be emptied when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh, with the landscape of Arian Christendom emptied when “many” are the slain of the Lord (Isa 66:16).

Again, Isaiah writes of a young woman [*'almah*], so translated into English by Jewish scholars and by some Christian translators, with the icon's Aramaic and Ugaritic cognates used for women who are not virgins. But in the hermeneutics of the Septuagint's translators, who rendered /*'almah*/ as “παρθενος—*parthenos*” which refers to an actual virgin, the young woman pregnant or soon to be pregnant would have borne the child centuries earlier and that sign had not happened; thus, the “literal” rendering of the passage could not be the intended meaning. Only a spiritual application of the passage could be the intended sign, for Isaiah hadn't named his son Immanuel or Emmanuel nor had any relative of King Ahaz. God as a human being was not with ancient Israel. Therefore, what Isaiah wrote about a sign had to be a future prophecy referencing not a young woman about to conceive, but a virgin that would conceive the Son of God.

A controversy has developed about how Matthew presumably mistranslates and misapplies Isaiah's prophecy when he does no such thing: because of inherent immediacy of Isaiah's prophetic sign if a physical application of the sign were the intended meaning, the Septuagint's translators, having more spiritual understanding than most scholars of today, passed over the physical application and moved to a spiritual application as if Gabriel himself had inspired them. Then Matthew, writing after Jesus' crucifixion, has confirmation that, indeed, Isaiah's sign pertained to a virgin, and to Mary in particular, with this confirmation coming first through what the angel Gabriel told Mary and what the angel of the Lord told Joseph.

The hermeneutics of the angel Gabriel always moves from the physical [the visible] to focus on the spiritual [the invisible], using the visible only to “set up” or reveal the invisible—and it is this movement that forms the central metaphor of typological exegesis. Those scholars and disciples who only permit the use of “typological exegesis” to reference New Testament *intertextual* use of types badly miss the *hypertextuality* of the angel Gabriel. They also miss the significance of the Tower of Babel when brick masons, handling the same bricks as they handled the day before, find these bricks called by many differing names, with each linguistic community asserting the correctness of its naming of the bricks. And when they could not agree upon what to call a brick, they separated and went their separate ways, absolutely convinced that what the particular community called the brick was the only “proper” name for the brick ... does this not sound like what has happened to Sabbatarian Christendom, with those holding the Sacred Names heresy being absolutely convinced they call the Father by His proper name when they know neither the Father nor the Son as the linguistic objects of their utterances. They are as spiritually blind men and women reaching out to grasp any sound that might lead them out of the darkness into which they willingly ventured. But an “utterance” cannot be held in hands, so that which they grasp is phantoms as they meander through the valley of death. They are truly disciples “Missing In Action [MIA].”

Whenever a disciple clings to a physical object as the referent for a scriptural prophecy, the disciple wrongly understands the prophecy. Disciples do not need biblical prophecies to comprehend the danger Iran (Persia) poses to the modern State of Israel, or the danger Syria poses. Disciples do not need biblical prophecies to understand that they live in a dangerous world, afloat in war and rumors of wars, plagued by earthquakes and climate fluctuations that make famine a real possibility despite an ongoing worldwide fattening of the population as if God were preparing a people to survive soon-to-occur famine.

It isn't a man or many men and woman who prepares a people for the Lord, but the glorified Christ Himself.

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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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