

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 September 20, 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 Daniel chapter 8.*

**Commentary:** Daniel's vision appeared to him after the vision of chapter 7, and appeared in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar. Thus, this vision takes place before Belshazzar sees the handwriting on the wall and before Darius the Mede received the kingdom of Babylon, thereby making the surface reading of this vision "prophetic"—the king of the Medes, the shorter of the ram's two horns before which no one can stand, will shortly come to power—and as such qualifies Daniel to be a prophet according to the criteria Moses establishes in Deuteronomy chapter 18.

The ram serves as an angelic identified metaphor for the kings of Persia as the he-goat is a metaphor for the king of Greece. The angel Gabriel makes the identification, but Gabriel doesn't say who the kings of Persia are or who the kings of Greece are. The gap between signifier and signified [icon and object] that is always present must be bridged by the reader, if it is to be bridged. Many literary theorists will argue that the inherent gap between the word and what the word mimetically represents cannot be bridged. This gap permits the word to represent many meanings, thereby preventing a person from ever saying that a text "means" this or that. The argument made here is that revelation bridges that gap. The text can be said to mean this or that. The gap, however, doesn't disappear but shifts to the authority of the prophet, both the one who initially gave the prophecy or received the word of knowledge from the Lord and the one who reads the prophecy back to the Lord—two prophets are necessary to unseal a sealed and kept secret prophecy about what happens to Israel in the latter days; thus, two sets of referents are also necessary, with the first set satisfying the criteria Moses established and the second set coming from the authority of Christ.

The words of a prophet are not open to argument. Only the authority of a prophet can be questioned.

If the prophet spoke or caused to be inscribed the words of the Lord, who is it that can say the Lord didn't say whatever was spoken or inscribed? That argument will go nowhere, for only the prophet knows what the Lord told him or her to speak or caused to be written. Therefore, the only argument to be made is whether the prophet actually speaks for God—and throughout Israel's history, the nation has wrongly answered that question, not realizing until too late that a prophet had been among the nation.

Daniel is such a prophet, but the knowledge he received was for Israel's latter days (Dan 12:4, 9; 10:14; 8:17, 26; 2:28). Daniel is told that the visions were sealed until the time of the end, and a divinely sealed vision cannot be understood earlier than when it is divinely unsealed. No human being can unseal divinely sealed visions regardless of how certain the human being is that he or she understands the vision. Only the Lord can unseal the vision, and that unsealing will come through another prophet called to the task.

Since the kings of Israel took over the administrative duties of the judges of Israel, prophets have taken over the task of speaking for the Lord to Israel. But there was no school in which prophets were trained, nor any inherent right to be a prophet. Sons of prophets were not automatically prophets. No, the position of "prophet" came by call only. Each prophet was individually called to his or her position, and the position came without secular authority and without the responsibility to *fix* what was broken. The prophet was to speak the words of the Lord, initially to the king, then later in public places. It wasn't the prophet's duty or place to organize the public in acts of civil disobedience, peaceful or militant. The prophet was not a community agitator, nor a community organizer. He or she did nothing but speak or cause to be inscribed the words of the Lord. It was always the Lord's responsibility to take care of the problem.

Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet, not a civil activist. He was the hinge prophet, the pivotal prophet, the prophet that marks the break between the initial delivery of the words of the Lord and the rereading of words already delivered. Thus, the Apostle Paul is the prototypical endtime prophet who rereads the earlier prophets and adds his commentary to the words of Scripture. Paul tells endtime disciples that the invisible things of God are revealed through the things that have been made. And as Paul had to unlearn what he had been taught and assign a new set of signifieds to the signifiers inscribed by the former prophets, those who come after Paul and build on the foundation Paul laid also have to unlearn what they have been taught and assign new meanings to the same words that were previously read and reread. Until the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Christ (Rev 11:15), endtime prophets do not receive additional words of the Lord but must reread existing words until those words are "understood." In a comprehensible sense, endtime prophets read back to Christ the words the Lord inspired earlier prophets to inscribe until these endtime prophets get those words right—as a first or second grade student struggles to read a book that is easily read by an adult, when first called by the Lord endtime prophets struggle while reading otherwise familiar texts. Although there is much to unlearn, this struggle to reread Scripture only lasts for a short while. Then the authority problems faced by earlier prophets return: has the

person truly been called by God to do the task being done? And again, Israel's history of getting this question right is abysmal.

When the prophet Daniel received this second vision, he was overcome: why? Was he overcome because of having spoken with Gabriel? The kings of Persia had not yet come to power, so was he worried about his position or the welfare of Israel? What was it about this vision that would overcome a person? Unless it was the intensity of the vision, an intensity lost in its inscription, there really doesn't seem to be a reason to be overcome; thus, as this vision is read, the reader should attempt to create in his or her mind a better context for this vision than the text provides when read unemotionally.

The ram charges to the west, to the north, and to the south (Dan 8:4); thus, the ram stands to the east. To get at the ram, the he-goat must fly out of the west. This he-goat cannot get at the ram from any other direction.

Imagine seeing the he-goat flying out of the west, his feet not touching the ground. This is no goat like any you have seen before. This is not a "real" goat but a terrifying image—

The he-goat flies across the face of the whole earth ... Alexander the Great came from the west to attack Darius III, king of Persia, but it cannot be said that Alexander flew across the face of the whole earth. Any such statement would be hyperbole and would invite prophetic deconstruction. The statement cannot be taken literally, but must be taken figuratively. Alexander first fought Darius' army at Granicus in the spring of 334 BCE after he crossed the Hellespont into Asia—the battle was fiercely fought near the ancient city of Troy and can only be considered as flying out of the west in that it took Greeks ten years to defeat Troy in the Trojan war whereas the battle at Granicus took a day[s].

Alexander then journeyed south, not west, to next fight against the main army of the Persians at Issus, in the northeastern part of Syria. Seeing Darius in the field, the Greek king charged toward him. But Darius, in his golden chariot, saw Alexander coming after him and fled, abandoning his mother, wife, and children, whom Alexander took into his custody (and treated well).

After his victory at Issus, Alexander marched his army south, not westward, to receive by the hand of the Persian governor Mazaces all of Babylonian Egypt when he reached the fortified coastal city of Pelusium. Mazaces handed to Alexander the treasury of 800 talents of silver, the moneys needed to pay for Alexander's eventual westward foray. Alexander then installed his own governor, Cleomenes, although he also kept on Mazaces ... during his tenure, Cleomenes amassed a personal fortune of 8,000 talents of silver but always remained loyal to Alexander.

Alexander installed a garrison at Pelusium. Then instead of immediately turning northwestward, he ordered his fleet to sail south up the Nile to Memphis—two years would pass before he again engaged the Persian army.

In terms of the Greeks' ten-year-long war against and defeat of the Trojans six or seven centuries earlier, Alexander's ten-year-long war against and defeat of the Persians can hardly be called flying out of the west, his feet not touching the ground. Yes, Alexander defeated the Persians in far less time than the Persians imagined possible. But Daniel's vision begins with seeing the ram—identified as the king of Persia (Dan 8:20), in this case the same king or prince of Persia as

withstood the angel bringing Daniel his long vision (Dan 10:13)—with two horns, one higher than the other, charging towards the three compass points and no beast able to stand before him. This ram did as he pleased ... was any Mede or Persian a real ram? Of course not! The prophecy is given in figurative language and must be read as a metaphor even when Gabriel tells Daniel that the ram with the two horns “are” [note the plural] the kings of Media and Persia. The ram is not one king, but the multiple kings of Media and Persia. And in Daniel 10:13, disciples again see the plural kings of Persia.

When the ram is a metaphor, the king of Persia also becomes a metaphor: the words of this world name and identify the things of this world, and cannot directly or literally name the things of heaven. For example, John begins his gospel with the claim that in beginning was *the Logos* [ὁ λόγος] who was *Theos* [Θεός], and who was with *the Theon* [τὸν Θεόν] in the beginning. But Zeus is also *the Theos* [ὁ Θεός], and the Ptolemaic Emperor Ptolemy Theos Philopater [Πτολεμαῖος Θεός Φιλοπάτωρ] claimed to be God [Θεός] as did the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus Theos (286–246 BCE), the younger son of Antiochus Soter and princess Stratonice. Only as a metaphor is “God” God, for the same linguistic icon or signifier /Θε—/ pertains to men and to the deities of the Greek pantheon.

There is a gap between the linguistic icon /Θε—/ and the objects that the icon names. There is no hard connection between icon and object, or signifier and signified, and there has not been since Babel. This gap, however, both prevents and permits human beings interacting with God, for it is the Father who reaches across this gap to draw to Himself those whom He will by giving to them life in the heavenly realm.

Again, no hard link exists between *the Creator of all that is* and the Greek signifier /ὁ Θεός/. The link is by association, or said another way, comes by way of the structure of Scripture to sons of God. The signifier, itself, has a multitude of meanings, all valid, but with only one signified (or meaning) representing *the Logos* and only one signified representing the One who was with *the Logos* in the beginning. It is the structure of the language—not the word play—that identifies who is the Most High and who is the man who stands next to this Host of heavens (Zech 13:7). It is in structure that disciples find the Father and the Son, both of whom are God.

It is through ignoring structure that Christendom constructed for itself a triune deity that never existed.

The structure of Daniel’s vision that has the he-goat flying out of the west presents two prevailing ruminants that sequentially cannot be stopped, that can do as each pleases. A ram is like a he-goat although not a goat—and it is here where last Sabbath’s reading must be remembered: the four metals collectively form one humanoid image of decreasing economic worth but increasing structural strength. The relationship between a ram and a he-goat is one of decreasing economic worth and increasing strength in a ratio somewhat comparable to the worth of a silver coin to a bronze coin.

The angel Gabriel identifies the he-goat as the king of Greece (Dan 8:21) ... the angel who brings Daniel his long vision tells him that when he leaves Daniel he will return to fight the prince of Persia, then the prince or king [sar] of Greece:

- The kings of Persia are demonic angels that collectively form the two arms and chest of silver of the human image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision.
- The prince or king of Greece is a federation of demonic angels under the authority of its great horn or first king, with the first king occupying the position of an erect penis on the human image Nebuchadnezzar saw.
- Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that the third kingdom, the bronze kingdom, shall rule over the earth (Dan 2:39)—and this kingdom rules through the appetites of the belly and the loins.

From Nebuchadnezzar to Alexander, no king over Babylonia ruled the children of men in China or Chile. If Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold and if Alexander was the great or first horn of the king of Greece, then what Daniel tells the king cannot be literally true but can only be figuratively true or can only pertain to non-physical referents; i.e., angelic beings.

It will here be asserted that the vision is about dual referents, with the primary referent being spiritual entities. Like Daniel's long vision, this vision is sealed and kept secret until the latter days or the time of the end by the shadow of the primary referent seeming to fulfill the vision ... scholars move the writing of the book of Daniel forward in time so that *their Daniel* lived early in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Century BCE, sometime shortly before the Maccabean Revolt. But these scholars, in spite of their expertise, are simply wrong. Their adoption of the concept that has "apocryphal" thought and texts developing to answer the question of why doesn't God save Israel or hurry to Israel's rescue comes from poorly understanding the texts.

The prophets set up an "if/then" correspondence that had evil befalling Israel because Israel was evil in that Israel had transgressed the laws of God. When Israel abandoned God, God abandoned Israel—or worse, strengthened Israel's enemies. But in the post-Babylonian captivity period, Israel did not see itself as committing evil even though none of the Pharisees kept the law (John 7:19) or had circumcised hearts, the promise of the Moab covenant. Therefore, according to these modern scholars, Israel had to come up with another reason to explain why *bad things happen to good people*. That reason has an endtime plan existing which will see Israel reigning over the world under the Messiah, the anointed one. There was a "revealing" not just of what would happen to Israel but also of why the unrepentant nation was not then being blessed by God. Apocryphal texts permitted Israel to escape the *if/then* paradigm that had, so many times before, explained why the nation was smitten by its neighbors.

But this late dating of Daniel is without justification ... when a person no longer believes that Scripture is the inspired word of God but instead finds in Scripture many voices, each that of an individual addressing the problems of Israel, it will not be long before this person loses what little understanding the person might have previously possessed—and yet the person will absolutely not believe that he or she has lost anything but rather, has become enlightened, now understanding how, when, and why men inscribed their thoughts in what others recognize as Holy Writ. Once a person loses faith, it does no good to reason with, or to argue with the person. He or she cannot renew what has been lost. Faith

cannot be again found as if it were a pocket knife. Keeping the commandments by faith is no longer important. Being a “good person” is enough as the person lives for the day, believing that all else is vanity. And this *good person* will not keep the commandments, especially the first four.

Throughout their ministry, the two witnesses will be garbed in mourning attire for these two will know how many there are that cannot be renewed to repentance but await a second death in the lake of fire. The 1260 days of their ministry—half of the seven endtime years of tribulation—will see most of Israel, physically and spiritually circumcised, take the second death onto themselves as faith is lost, or traded for a bowl of lentils. Endtime disciples have a very short window in which to get Israel into covenant with God: 220 days, or 2520 minus 2300 days.

Christ is the reality of the morning and evening sacrifice; He is the reality of the paschal lamb and of every sin offering. In prayer, disciples put on Christ daily as if His righteousness were a garment. Mornings and evenings, they cover themselves with His obedience. But following the second Passover liberation of Israel, disciples will be filled with or empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Son of Man will be revealed or disrobed. Grace will end. Disciples will no longer put on Christ’s righteousness as a garment. It will no longer be needed for sin and death will no longer dwell in the fleshly members of disciples. Every disciple will be an acceptable sacrifice to God, and every disciple will have the ability to cover him or herself with his or her own obedience to God. And the exercise of that obedience will cover the disciple as Christ’s righteousness had previously covered the disciple and as the morning and evening sacrifice had formerly covered ancient Israel.

The morning and evening sacrifice is today represented by putting on Christ’s righteousness as a garment morning and evening, this covering coming through prayer. Following the second Passover, the morning and evening sacrifice will be represented by the disciple’s obedience in rising and in laying down. Hence, the morning and evening sacrifice will end when disciples take disobedience or sin back inside themselves.

When first liberated from indwelling sin and death, Christians everywhere will want to obey God. Why? Because the lives of firstborns not covered by the blood of the paschal Lamb of God will have been given as their ransom—but 220 days after the second Passover liberation of Israel, the lawless one or man of perdition will be revealed and the great falling away will occur (2 Thess 2:3) ... because every born of spirit Israelite will, following the second Passover, be filled with the Holy Spirit the disciple who transgresses the law of God, breaking even the least of the commandments, will commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. By transgressing a commandment, the disciple will take sin back inside him or herself when no sacrifice remains. This sin will not be forgiven: there was no reason for it other than a lack of belief, a lack of faith. And without faith, no one can please God.

At the second Passover, the great horn of the king of Greece will be suddenly broken because he is “first.” Four horns will spout from around its base, one horn to each of the compass points (Dan 8:8). Gabriel tells Daniel that these four horns are four kingdoms (v. 22). They were also the four satraps appointed to

rule Alexander's Babylon, and as Alexander's generals fought among themselves, so too will these four spiritual kings fight among themselves.

Of the four horns that appear when the first king is suddenly broken, the northern horn has a little horn come from it, with this little horn growing exceedingly great ... there is in biblical prophecy a shortage of "little horns," with the little horn of chapter 7 being the other little horn that quickly comes to mind—

If the four horns are four kingdoms (Dan 8:22), and if the four beasts of Daniel chapter 7 are four kings (7:17), and if a little horn appears on the head of one king and comes from one kingdom, then it is reasonable to assume that these two little horns are really the same little horn. It will here be asserted that this is the case. The fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7 is the northern king and kingdom of chapter 8, or more simply put, the king of the North of chapter 11. The little horn is not now a human being—no human being will speak great words against the ancient of days (7:11)—but Satan himself, with the reasoning supporting this outside of the scope of this Sabbath reading but the subject for next week's reading.

The angel Gabriel tells Daniel to seal up the vision (8:26) ... how is Daniel to seal up this vision? To truly seal it up would be not to write it down. It would then die with Daniel. But by Daniel committing the vision to writing, Daniel does the one thing that will cause the vision not to be sealed, for at some moment in the future a prophet would be called to reread the vision, thereby unsealing the previously sealed vision, if the vision were truly sealed.

The argument here is that the vision was sealed and is now unsealed: the vision was sealed by Darius the Mede, the shorter of the ram's two horns, receiving the Babylonian kingdom the night of the handwriting on the wall. Alexander, the first king of the Macedonian kingdom, then defeated Darius III two centuries in the future. This necessitates the vision having dual referents, with the first but not primary referent being the human kings of Persia and Greece and the latter referent being the demonic kings that prevented for twenty-one days the angel from delivering to Daniel knowledge of what is written in the book of truth. It is this latter referent that is of importance to spiritually circumcised Israel, for the war typified by Alexander's campaign against Darius is presently occurring in the heavenly realm. We see the fallout or spillover of that war in the present U.S. presidential race, in Russia's actions in Georgia, in China's movement towards capitalism, in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Kenya, Columbia. There is an ideological values war being fought everywhere, with the mind of every person a battlefield. And the spiritual king of Greece will win this war. However, with that win the second Passover liberation of Israel can occur. This second Passover liberation will not occur, though, until the war is won by the first horn of the spiritual king of Greece. This horn will be broken as suddenly as Alexander was broken.

The Maccabees looked at the structure of the Roman Republic and liked what they saw—but they did not see Roman muscles for Rome did not reign over Jerusalem when physical sons of light defeated the Seleucid administration of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire. The shadow that sealed the visions of Daniel ended with the rebellion of the Maccabees, but spiritual sons of light will

defeat the forces of the king of the North in a different manner than how the Maccabees defeated the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes. Hence, the historical account of the Maccabean victory is not canonical Scripture, for the Bible represents the spiritual shadow of the Son of Man, the soon to come reigning spiritual hierarchy that replaces the humanoid metal kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision.

The mental kingdom is spiritual Babylon, and in Daniel chapter 7 and in Revelation, Israel sees Babylon fall just as the physical kingdom fell and has been no more.

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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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