

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 October 4, 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.

With every major disaster, natural or manmade, some Christians become absolutely convinced that the end is upon humankind—and Sabbatharians are the worst of all. The kingdom of God, they will almost gleefully claim, is at hand! They expect to be physically protected from the impending evil while all others suffer great calamity and personal tragedy. But to expect protection not extended to others is actually a manifestation of fear, and indeed, Sabbatharian Christians are the most fearful of all men, having been scared into obedience by this preacher or that one. With few exceptions, fear has been principle motivation for giving moneys to this ministry or that one. With even fewer exceptions, these Christians are ignorant about what Scripture actually says; they either have not or cannot closely read Scripture.

According to the popular teaching of Seventh Day Adventists, humankind is in the period identified by the *third angel's message* (Rev 14:9), but this “third angel” has been flying overhead for so long its wings are tired and its message is stale:

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.” (14:9–11)

The beast of this third angel's warning is Death, the fourth horseman (Rev 6:7–8), and its mark is $\chi\xi\varsigma'$ which is read in words as the *tattoo* [s] of *Christ's* [χ] *cross* [ξ — or in Roman iconography, *xī*], with this “mark” now incorporated into the Seventh Day Adventist logo ... the Adversary sneaked that about which Adventists have long warned into the identifying mark or logo of these Sabbatharian Christians because this sect has not been able to read what takes understanding to calculate (Rev 13:18). Their presumptiveness will lead to their torment, and there isn't anything that can be said to convince them to repent of their errant teachings. They are as a horse with the bit between its teeth and the scent of water in its nostrils.

The third angel is not today flying and has not yet delivered its message to the third part of humankind (Zech 13:9) born of spirit when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation. These endtime years of tribulation are not yet upon human beings. But all of humankind will know exactly when they begin; there will be no doubts. In a short while, in a period figuratively represented by an hour, all firstborns not covered by the blood of Christ will perish. As the firstborns of Egypt had perished when Moses led Israel out from Egypt so long ago that this exodus is considered myth, the firstborns of human beings everywhere will perish when Jesus Christ liberates Christians from indwelling sin and death ... the number of those slain will be great enough and the ensuing Tribulation will be horrific enough that Israel's exodus from Egypt will be forgotten (Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8; Isa 11:11).

What can be said? *Won't happen?* Yes, it will! *How can a person know this?* It's what Scripture reveals when closely read. *Why doesn't anyone else teach anything about a second Passover?* That is a good question—perhaps because they borrow what earlier teachers taught, suppose? Daniel's prophecies were sealed and secret until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9; 8:17, 26), so any reading earlier than “the time of the end” will have Daniel's visions still sealed and secret. Any reading from earlier than mid-20th Century or even late 20th Century would have Daniel's visions still sealed—and the reading itself would perpetuate the sealed nature of these visions.

The present financial crisis facing the United States comes from a housing fairness act passed during President Carter's administration and modified during President Clinton's administration. Many lenders redlined certain areas within cities and would not make loans inside these areas, regardless of the creditworthiness of the applicants. Plus, there was a small percentage of the population able to make payments on a house (as evidenced by making rent payments) but were without the ability to accumulate enough capital to make a significant down payment on a parcel of real estate—it just happened that many of those without a down payment lived in a redlined area. So laws made during the banking reforms of the Great Depression were modified or abolished. Paul Volcker, Chairman of The Fed under Presidents Carter and Reagan, warned against the changes made, but social engineering became the law of the land and “fairness” its guideline. And under this *fairness* banner, real property loans were made on 125% of the value of the property to individuals who only had to declare what their income was. The country set itself up for a major economic crisis, and has no one to blame but the good intentions of politicians who brought fairness with private-party dollars and used Clinton's Justice Department to threaten lending institutions reluctant to make risky loans.

Is there anything in this present U.S. financial crisis that is different from what other governments have done or have attempted to do? Not really. The crisis isn't of God's making. It is business as usual, with the rich bailing themselves out with tax dollars, using the threat of tightened credit markets to extort an obscene amount of money from an already burdened generation of taxpayers ... American taxpayers had better hope they are living in the time of the end. Otherwise, they will be saddled with the bills of the present generation for decades, and all of this is before the proposed additional social spending by one of the candidates seeking the presidency. It is as if the political campaigning can be reduced to, *Let me buy your vote with your children's and grandchildren's money.*

Jesus said to His disciples,

The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. *Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—*so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left. (Luke 17:22–36 emphasis added)

The present U.S. financial crisis is a situation typified by those of Lot's day in Sodom buying and selling, planting and building. Of itself it is not a sign or indication that humankind has entered the time of the end. It is merely business as usual, with the working stiff being fleeced by those who today promise a tax cut but tomorrow will raise taxes when, *having worked harder than they ever have in their lives*, they just cannot get those tax cuts passed by Congress ... American taxpayers heard these promises made about middle-class tax cuts in 1992. They bit into that poisoned cookie then, and they might again. Regardless, what is presently being experienced in the nation's Capital and in car dealerships across the country is the natural consequences of risky business practices.

Leaving the one financial crisis behind and looking at the damage done by several hurricanes, what is being seen is the steady erosion of accumulated prosperity ... Christians pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, but they pray without thinking about for what they are asking. The arrival of the Kingdom will be preceded by seven endtime years of tribulation, a time like no other in human history. And those who pray for this worldwide calamity to befall humankind usually believe they will escape harm: they believe *they will be raptured to heaven*, or that *they will go to a place of safety*. But the truth is that they will have to live through these seven years if they can, and most likely they will not make it through the first three and a half years. Their faith will be tested as they never imagined that it could be. Their prayers will not be answered. They will be on their own, and will before long know that they are on their own. And most will curse God before they die physically.

An easy, smooth transition between this world and the world to come would be welcomed, but then what would God do with all of those Christians who will not heed His words? Should He slay them forthwith for their disobedience? That is what they deserve. *Fairness* would see them slain. God certainly cannot let them into heaven

where they would become a billion little Adversaries in a very short while. So what is He to do, considering He has love for them?

The answer is what He did before with the first Adam and what the Apostle Paul commands the saints at Corinth to do with the man with his father's wife:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (1 Cor 5:1–2)

For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, *you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.* (vv. 3–5 emphasis added)

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.” (vv. 9–13)

The Church is to judge the Church, with God to judge those outside the Church ... does the Church judge itself, and if it does, with what judgment does it judge? Does it call disciples who transgress the commandments sinners? It doesn't, does it? Rather, it calls them Catholics or Lutherans or Baptists or Methodists or any number of other names, but it doesn't call them sinners, nor does it say as John did that whoever “makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning” (1 John 3:8). So let it here be said, the person who makes a practice of sinning, with sin being lawlessness (v. 4), is of the devil and is not of God. This person will be of the synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9; 3:9), and this person will be made to come before those who tried to get them into covenant with God.

Because the Church will not judge the Church, but is collectively as the saints were at Corinth, God will deliver the Church into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit might be saved in the day when judgments are revealed (1 Cor 4:5) ... this is what the Tribulation is about, and this is why Christians will not escape living into and through at least a portion of the Tribulation.

So that no one misunderstands: Christians born of spirit will be empowered by or filled with the Holy Spirit at the second Passover liberation of Israel, that moment in human history when the death angel passes over humankind, slaying firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. These firstborns belong to God to do with as He pleases, and He will seal them in death so that they will not suffer harm during those seven endtime years of tribulation—

Think about the above! If God removes those who are His but who have not yet been born of spirit from experiencing the horrors of the Tribulation, just exactly how bad do you think these seven years will be? Do you really believe that these years will be like no

other years that humankind has experienced? That is the promise of Scripture. The horrors of the Holocaust will be repeated. The cannibalism that occurred during the siege of Leningrad will be repeated. The loss of life characteristic of the Black Plague will be repeated. And this is for what the Christian prays when praying, *Thy Kingdom come*. Well, it will come and there is nothing anyone can do to stop it from coming. But those seven years that separate this world from the Kingdom are not years anyone should welcome.

The problem with Scripture is what is revealed.

Jesus said to His disciples before He sent them out,

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. *But the one who endures to the end will be saved*. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matt 10:16–23 emphasis added)

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (vv. 24–25)

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (vv. 34–39)

Whoever doesn't take up whatever it is that tethers the person to this world, including the person's own death, and follow Jesus is not worthy of him—and yes, a person can take up his or her own death and follow Jesus.

If disciples are to be persecuted and driven from town to town, betrayed, beaten, and put to death—beaten and put to death as Jesus was—then where is a place of safety or rapture seen in Scripture?

In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus said to His disciples,

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be

famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (Matt 24:6–8)

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. *But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* (vv. 9–14 emphasis added)

When the good news that the one who endures to the end shall be saved (Matt 10:22; 24:13) is proclaimed throughout the world, the end will come. This good news or gospel has been, admittedly somewhat weakly, delivered to all the world since 2002/2003. Therefore, the only requirement for the end to come is being met, with the delivery of this gospel to increase in power once the seven endtime years of tribulation—seen in Matthew 24, verses 9 through 12—begin following the second Passover liberation of Israel.

The current U.S. financial crisis, hurricane relief measures, and threats in Iran, Georgia, and Pakistan fit under “rumors of wars” that should not alarm disciples for the end is not yet.

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The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Isaiah chapter 24.

Commentary: If on “that day the Lord will punish / the host of heaven, in heaven, / and the kings of the earth, on the earth” (Isa 24: 21), when do you suppose this day will be? This didn’t happen in the prophet Isaiah’s day ... it will happen during the seven endtime years of tribulation, when God makes men few on earth. There will not be an over-population problem to begin Christ’s millennial reign.

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The reader should now read Isaiah chapters 25 through 27.

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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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