

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are offered as openings into dialogue about the subject or concept. And the concept behind the readings for this Sabbath is *the last Elijah*.

Sabbath Readings

For the weekly Sabbath of October 20, 2007

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 services should read or assign to be read all of Luke chapter 1, noting especially verse 17, followed by Malachi chapter 4, verses 5 and 6.

Commentary: Luke is a very good historian, accurately recording even the accents of speakers. His account of what the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah should be treated as a foundational construct for biblical exegesis, for typology, and as an illustration of the movement that occurs between shadow and reality.

The Apostle Paul writes that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" (Rom 1:18); for what can be known about God, even the invisible things of God are clearly seen by the things that are (vv. 19-20). Elsewhere Paul writes that the physical things that are seen precede the spiritual things of God (1 Co 15:46). So biblical exegesis as practiced by Paul is governed by two principles: the visible reveals the invisible, and the physical precedes the spiritual. It is the unrighteousness of men regardless of their protestations of piety that suppresses biblical understanding. And as with the drunken priests of Ephraim, a primary way that the truth has been suppressed is through line-upon-line, precept-upon-precept exegesis, the means by which the holy nation of God was ensnared, taken, and made to fall backwards (Isa 28:13).

Because so many for so long have practiced precept-upon-precept exegesis, even the churches of God are reluctant to give it up. Many disciples cannot imagine studying Scripture by any means except through the surgical extraction of precepts, putting these precepts together, comparing them, weighing them as if they really existed outside of their context, then reinserting back into Scripture with a meaning derived from these precepts being examined outside their context. For these disciples, the Bible is a book that can be sliced apart, studied, and reassembled without harm being done to the message that disciples are today the holy nation of Israel, with those disciples that keep the Sabbath dwelling in spiritual Judea, and with those disciples that keep the weekly Sabbath and the High Sabbaths dwelling in heavenly Jerusalem. Plus, disciples are individually and collectively the temple of God, with each disciple being a living stone hewn and shaped off-site (not in heaven) so that no tear will be heard on the temple mount. The sound of tears are for living stones what the sound of hammers striking iron chisels are for physical stones. Therefore, disciples practicing precept-upon-precept exegesis look for another physical temple to be built in earthly Jerusalem, not realizing

that in doing so they cause the holy nation of God to stumble and fall backwards, away from God.

Endtime Israel is neither the peoples of Britain and the United States, as some teachers of Israel practicing precept exegesis contend, nor the modern State of Israel that now occupies earthly Judea. Endtime Israel is the Christian Church, all of it, including that portion that is today in active rebellion against God by attempting to enter His rest on the following day.

Disciples who dwell in heavenly Jerusalem are as the Levitical priesthood was to natural Israel, a nation that did not look to the tribes of Reuben and Gad that settled in the land of Jazar and Gilead (Num 32:1-5) for instruction in the things of God. Nor can disciples look to spiritual Israelites that dwell outside of God's rest for instruction in the ways of God. Nor can disciples look to spiritual Israelites that keep the Sabbath but do not come to heavenly Jerusalem on the high Sabbaths for spiritual instruction, with the Seventh Day Adventists being the prime example of a spiritual tribe that has erected altars of Baal within the Promised Land of God's rest. And in ancient Israel, many Levites served the idols that errant kings set up in Jerusalem so that in the days of Elijah, a school of the prophets was formed by Levites loyal to God—by Levites who would not serve Baal in the temple of God.

The context for God sending "Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes" (Mal 4:5) is at a time when there is again a school of the prophets formed from spiritual Levites who do not receive the tithes and offerings of Israel, but must work with their hands as the Apostle Paul worked with his (2 Co 11:7-15).

As the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, John the Baptist was a Levite who did not serve in the corrupt temple at Jerusalem, or receive the tithes and offerings of Israel. John was, with his disciples (a school of the prophet analogous to the "school" in Elijah's and Elisha's day), the one who would turn "many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God" (Luke 1:16). He was, as Jesus confirmed (Matt 11:14), a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy about Elijah, but a fulfillment as a type of the one who would restore all things (Matt 17:11). It is the glorified Jesus who restores all things before the great and awesome day of the Lord, not John the Baptist. Thus, when Jesus said, "But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands" (v. 12), both He and His cousin John are included in His statement about coming and not being recognized.

No discussion about Elijah or about a school of the prophets can occur without comprehending that "the school of prophets" was not some form of a boarding school for "the sons of the prophets," nor a school to which ancient Israelites sent their sons and daughters for training or as apprentices. Note: "Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves'" (2 Kings 4:1). This dead son of the prophets was, according to his wife, a servant of Elisha, with *servant* used in the sense of pursuing righteousness rather than following the ways of king Jehoram. This son of the prophets was not serving the king as one of the prophets of his father or the prophets his mother (2 Kings 3:13). Rather, he was serving Elisha, and by extension, God.

Also note, the son of the prophets had two children old enough to be taken as slaves: he was not a young man even though he is referred to as a "son."

The referring expression "sons of the prophets" pertains to those who still followed God rather than the idols of the kings of Israel, and too often, Judah. And under Elisha, enough more individuals had begun to serve God that the place where they dwelt became too small for them (2 Kings 6:1) ... Elisha was accorded such stature in Israel that even the king of Israel addressed him as, "My father" (v. 21).

Therefore, as the first Elijah was followed by Elisha, who did twice as many miracles as Elijah, a fact that has been noted and used to question the validity of whether Elisha really existed—and as the first Elijah was a type of the John the Baptist, with John being a type of the glorified Jesus restoring all things before the coming of the day of the Lord, an endtime Elisha will do a work like that of John the Baptist, but with twice the effect for this endtime Elisha will preach repentance in both this physical world to physically circumcised natural Israelites as well as preaching repentance to the spiritually circumcised nation of Israel.

The basis for the above typological doubling is in what Gabriel told Zechariah: Gabriel cites Malachi, but does so by moving from physical to spiritual.

Gabriel says, "And he [John] will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him [the Lord, Israel's God] in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Luke 1:16-17).

The Elijah to whom Gabriel refers will "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children" (Mal 4:6) lest these children should physically perish through neglect and disobedience—lest these children become orphans to perish for want of food and shelter, or to grow up as thieves and vagabonds. It is human fathers that are to care for their children.

Jesus asked, "Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent" (Matt 7:9-10). Only the father whose heart has been turned from his children and hates his children for whatever reason, often because of the disobedience to the child, will give bad things when it is in his power to give good gifts to his children. Thus, returning to Malachi, when God says, "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated" (1:2-3), God rejects Esau while this nation is still in the womb of Isaac (Rebekah's womb is the womb of Isaac), with nothing either good or bad yet reckoned to either son "in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call" (Rom 9:11). But Paul identifies the Church as Isaac (Gal 4:28). The womb of the Church is, now, Grace. Disciples under Grace have neither good nor evil reckoned to them, for they are covered by the righteousness of Christ. However, disciples covered by Grace are either hated or loved, with the Father of the loved son giving good gifts to this son that is not of this world and these good gifts not being of this world but are treasure that is stored in heaven.

The hated son gets the things of this world from the Father, things that perish and corrupt disciples. Money is a root of evil, with the lust for money and pride in possessions destroying most hated sons of God.

John the Baptist's preaching of repentance caused God's heart to be turned to his firstborn natural son (Ex 4:22) when these sons turned from their lawless ways and

pursued righteousness by faith; when these sons turned from their disobedience and turned to the wisdom of the just. Turning from disobedience to the wisdom of the just is turning the hearts of the children to God the Father. So Gabriel quotes both halves of what Malachi prophesied, but transposes the physicality of turning the *hearts of the children to their fathers* into its spiritual application of turning the *hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*. Gabriel quotes Malachi as the prophet's words apply spiritually.

The loved son of God—spiritual Jacob—has turned from disobedience to the *wisdom of the just* by living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). The loved endtime *sons of the prophets* are not the youth of Sabbatarian Christendom, but those disciples who have turned from disobedience; who have "renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways" (2 Co 4:2); who "refuse to practice cunning, or to tamper with God's word" (same verse). There are too many Sabbatarian disciples who tamper with the word of God: e.g., the disciple who goes to Leviticus 23:32 for a scriptural reference about when to begin the weekly Sabbath yet refuses to keep the high Sabbath which the verse addresses tampers with the word of God. Too many disciples openly hold with "the end justifies the means," a philosophical practice that permits the lawless to make disciples under the guise of doing good works in Jesus' name. Too many disciples are the "fat sheep" that tread down pastures and muddy waters with their feet (Ezek 34:18) as they shoulder aside the lean and scatter abroad the weak (v. 21) with doctrines based upon grammatico-historical or precept-upon-precept exegesis. Too many Sabbatarians are thieves and con-men, even to teaching that *the sons of the prophets* should come and learn from them how to worship God ... what will be learned is how to commit spiritual suicide.

The angel Gabriel gave to Zechariah the understanding necessary for endtime disciples to read the prophets of old. The first portion of a prophecy is physical; its second portion is spiritual even when recorded in words that have physical referents. The "children" of Malachi 4, verses 5 and 6 are the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3) who were consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) by the transgression of the first Adam (Rom 5:12-14). They are *the disobedient*. And when their hearts are turned to their Father, they are turned to *the wisdom of the just*, with this wisdom coming from those who have been called (or sent) to preach the word of God (Rom 10:15). But not all who have been called to preach have obeyed the gospel (v. 16). Too many of even these disciples practice or have practiced underhanded ways, and certainly too few of them work on the same terms as the Apostle Paul worked. Paul wrote, "And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone ... I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way ... what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (2 Co 11:9, 12-13). The person to claims to work on the same terms that we of *Philadelphia* do had better not have his [or her] hand in the pockets of disciples, sending out appeal after appeal for money. Rather, let this person accept what offerings that are given to supply their needs as Paul accepted help from those who came from Macedonia rather than becoming a burden to those who are being taught the ways of God. The endtime sons of the prophets know that those who teach also have needs: let these sons of the prophets give as they are motivated by God to give. It is

not right that those who have received knowledge of God as the servants of the young nobleman received a *mina* [pound] each (Luke 19:11-27) should bury this knowledge, neither doing business with it themselves (having their own ministry) or putting it out to the moneylenders (giving offerings to another's ministry). Let every person be as the nobleman's servants who brought forth a tenfold or a fivefold increase. Be especially not like the seven servants who would not have the nobleman rule over them; for these seven represent Christendom's false apostles and deceitful workmen who make disciples for themselves and not for Christ Jesus. These seven represent every teacher of lawlessness who will be denied when judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21-23), as well as every lawless teacher who would have disciples keep the commandments but who does not himself [or herself] keep the commandments.

When a son of the prophets lost a borrowed axe head, Elisha cut off a stick and threw it in the place where the axe was lost. The iron head floated to the surface as if it were a stick. The buoyancy of the wood was transferred to the iron head—the stick is not again seen in Scripture. The implication of the passage is that the stick sank as if it were iron. And this brings disciples to the parable of the wedding supper (Matt 22:1-14): those who were lost will be found, but only at the cost of those who were invited to the Wedding being rejected. It isn't endtime natural Israelites who are the invited guests as is usually taught, but those of *the nations* [Gentiles] that are the invited guests. They are the sticks, the wild olive shoots that were grafted onto the root of righteousness (Rom 11:17-18). And they are *the many* who have been called, but they are presently too busy accumulating the wealth of this world to be bothered about keeping the commandments of God. Thus, those natural Israelites who were lost as the iron axe head was lost will be, by the last Elisha, recovered at the cost of wild olive sticks thrown into a swollen Jordan as the endtime sons of the prophets cut logs for a larger dwelling, a house of God built in heavenly Jerusalem.

The last Elisha will serve the glorified Christ Jesus as the first Elisha served Elijah, with the first Elisha commissioned to kill those who escape Hazel and Jehu (1 Kings 19:17). The seven thousand whom the Lord reserved for Himself in the days of the first Elijah become the seven named churches in the days of the endtime Elijah. Everyone else in spiritual Israel has bowed down to serve the prince of this world and his henchmen. Therefore, many are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14). Few will serve God. Few will be like the two servants of the young nobleman who went into a far country, only to return and demand an accounting of what was done in his absence.

Again, endtime sons of the prophets are those Israelites who have circumcised hearts as "the sons of the prophets" in the 1st-Century CE were physically circumcised Israelites (Acts 3:25). And as Peter preached repentance to these 1st-Century sons of the prophets, servants of the endtime Elijah will, as John the Baptist did, preach repentance to the endtime Church, which is today more concerned about calendar issues than making disciples for Christ.

*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

* * * * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[[Home](#)] [[Sabbath Readings](#)]