

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 the Elect.

## **Weekly Readings** **For the Sabbath of October 24, 2009**

*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.*

Western culture continues its mindless trek away from God as if it were an outbound ship sailing to the edge of the world ... whether Christopher Columbus truly believed he could sail to China by sailing westward, or whether Columbus knew a land occupied by aboriginal inhabitants lay to the west will not be known for certain prior to the Second Advent: the cargo Columbus took with him would seem to belie trade with the culturally sophisticated Chinese, for he took merchandise appropriate for trading with aboriginal peoples. But Columbus' crew apparently feared sailing over the edge of the earth. Likewise, postmodern Western culture fears obedience to God: obedience to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is as terrifying to Western culture, which has journeyed so far from this "sky-God," as sailing over the horizon was for Columbus' crews, for obedience to God negates diversity and expressions of freewill. And it is this latter point—the negation of freewill—that separates the *Christianity* of Christ Jesus from the "Christianity" of the collective endtime Christian Church.

(When this reading was initially being composed, Christian leaders had not yet released the *Manhattan Declaration*, a document that promises civil disobedience rather than further compromise of God's law. Whether the Jewish and Christian leaders signing the document will actually follow through with their promised civil disobedience remains to be seen, but if they do, then their drift away from God has slowed or stopped—and when humankind collectively can get no father from God, the midnight hour of the long spiritual night that began at Calvary will be upon this world. When humankind begins its return toward God; when humankind can "sail" no farther away from God, the second Passover liberation of Israel will begin, meaning simply that firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb will perish as firstborns in Egypt not covered by the blood of a Passover lamb perished at the midnight hour of the dark portion of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib.)

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*The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Romans chapter 9.*

**Commentary:** Paul had great sorrow for "his people," the biological descendants of the patriarch Israel. Endtime disciples must assume Paul was sincere when he wrote that he

would forego salvation for the sake of his kinsmen, to whom belonged the law and the promises made to Moses and to the patriarchs from whom came Christ Jesus, the only Son of the Logos and the First of the firstborn sons of the Most High God. But as Paul noted, not all who have descended from “Israel” belong to *Israel* and not all of Abraham’s seed are the *children of Abraham*; for the children of Abraham that are heirs of promise are neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. They are not the fleshly bodies in which dwell sons of God that have been made alive through receiving a second breath [πνεῦμα] of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. They are, rather, the inner new creatures that are metonymically represented by the English word “souls.” And a person is never naturally or physically born as one of these heirs of promise: the children of Abraham that are heirs of promise are all born of God through receipt of a second breath of life.

Paul explained as best he could the contradiction between a person being born of spirit as a son God and a person born of the first Adam as a son of man, but his explanation was not well understood in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century and is not today well understood.

When a person is born of woman, the person is of two parts: the fleshly body that is represented by the Greek icon σῶμα—*soma*, and the inner creature or nature or self that is metonymically represented by the Greek icon for shallow breath, ψυχὴν—*psuche*. This icon [ψυχὴ] for shallow or human breath functions linguistically as the icon phrase “White House” does when used metonymically to represent the entirety of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Federal government in the expression, “The White House said today ...,” and this icon [ψυχὴ] is usually translated into English as the word *soul*, with the translation carrying an implication of immortality that it should not possess. Even when Jesus used the Greek icon to represent the inner life of the twelve disciples He sent forth (Matt 10:28), He said to fear the one who could kill καὶ [both] ψυχὴν καὶ [and] σῶμα so certainly Jesus did not consider the ψυχὴν [soul] immortal. Rather, because the spirit (the breath of breath of God — πνεῦμα θεοῦ) had not yet been given, Jesus used the Greek icon ψυχὴν to represent the old nature as the only inner self or “man” then in human beings, with this old nature being recorded in the Lord’s “book of remembrance” (Mal 3:16) or perishing if the person sinned without the law (Rom 2:12).

No human being is born with an immortal soul [ψυχὴ], for eternal life is “the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:23). Until a person receives a second breath of life—the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]—the person has life only from the person’s physical breath, with this “life” including the entirety of the natural *software program* that animates the flesh. It is this “life” that is crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6); that is killed by God and resurrected (v. 5) as a new nature, a new creature, a new *man* (used in the icon’s unmarked status to represent all new selves) in those individuals who are born of God. Jesus said to fear the one who could take from the person his or her old nature as King Nebuchadnezzar had his human nature taken from him for seven years.

The flesh is alive but dead when born of a woman. Likewise, the inner man or creature—everything that is metonymically represented by the Greek icon ψυχὴ—is alive but dead when born of a woman. Again, this inner man or life (that which gives to the person human nature as well as animates the flesh) is not immortal when the person is born of woman: immortal life is not received by way of fornication in the backseat of a Chevrolet; immortal or eternal life is only the gift of God in Christ Jesus, and it is this inner man or life that is made *alive* when “the Father raises the dead—ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρει

τοὺς νεκροὺς” (John 5:21); it is this inner man that is made alive through receiving a second breath of life. The outer man (i.e., the tent of flesh that the world sees) remains numbered among the dead, what Jesus said to a disciple, “Follow me, and leave [permit—ἄφες] the dead [τοὺς νεκροὺς] to bury their own dead [the (of themselves) dead—τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς]” (Matt 8:22).

It is the dead [τοὺς νεκροὺς] that bury corpses and visit cemeteries on Memorial Day; it is the dead that stand for election to public offices; it is the dead that are photographed in ridiculous attire as they strut along red carpets at Hollywood galas; it is the dead that pose as the living during presidential photo-ops; it is the dead that the world mistakes for the living today ... is this too difficult to understand? A person is naturally born of a woman not as an immortal being, but as one of the dead [τοὺς νεκροὺς] assured of dying. There is no inner life in the person; there is no indwelling immortal soul. There is only the life that comes from physical breath, with this shallow breath [ψυχῆ] representing metonymically all aspects of inner physical life.

But the dead do not know that they are dead.

Ancient King Solomon wrote, “But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten” (Eccl 9:4–5) ... *the dead know nothing*—and so it is with those human beings who have not been born of God through receipt of a second breath of life. They know nothing! Yet they appear in this world as philosophers and scholars, Muslim clerics and Jewish rabbis, Christian theologians and Democratic politicians while knowing nothing of the Father and Son. Their ignorance would be laughable if it were not for the harm they do and have done to generations of newly born sons of God.

The least of those who have been born of God—the one who relaxes, not breaks, the least of the commandments (Matt 5:19)—has more hope than the greatest man or woman of this world; for this son of God has indwelling immortal life upon which judgment has come (1 Pet 4:17). This life has come from the Father; has come from heaven as Jesus came from heaven. And this life transforms the inner self that was of this world into a son of God. Not a son to be a servant as in the case of the angels, but an heir.

The inner son of God continues to dwell in a perishable tent of flesh. If this son of God believes the writings of Moses and hears the voice of Jesus (John 5:47–48) and believes the one who sent Jesus, whose words Jesus spoke where on earth, this son of God upon whom judgment has come will pass from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24), an oxymoron that is true because there will be no “witness” to testify against this son. Neither Moses nor the word [ὁ λόγος] Jesus left with His disciples (John 12:48) will present testimony against the disciple. Although this son of God can present testimony against this new self, no one else will—and it is on the testimony of two or three that a thing is established. Without a second witness against the disciple, the sins of the disciple pass away, returning to the Adversary for they are rightfully his.

Judgment has been given to Jesus (John 5:22), but Jesus judges no one (*c.f.* John 12:47; 3:17). He will, when He comes again, reveal that the judgment has been made (1 Cor 4:5) by the acts or works of the disciples, with the writings of Moses being one witness for or against the person (Deut 31:24–27) and with the word or message Jesus

delivered to His disciples serving as the second witness against the person who has not received and implemented Jesus' words (again, John 12:48).

The disciple knows whether he or she has sinned under the law—the disciple is not without the law—and Jesus knows what the inner new creature has done for it is the garment of His righteousness that covers this son of God. The disciple knows what the law (Torah) says and knows whether he or she is guilty of transgressing it; thus, the righteous disciple will always be a witness against the person, for the disciple who says that he or she is without sin deceives him or herself for the truth is not in the person (1 John 1:8). The word [ὁ λόγος — from *v.* 10] of Christ is not in the person, for this word of Christ [the word or message that Jesus left with His disciples] is the truth (John 18:37). And the truth is that all have come short of the glory of God” “None are righteous” (Rom 3:10 — citation is from Ps 14:1).

If, however, the disciple's desire is to keep the commandments; if the disciple strives to keep the commandments; if the disciple teaches others to keep the commandments, the disciple will be called great in the kingdom of heaven, or of the heavens (Matt 5:19) for the works of the disciple—like the works of Abraham when he offered up Isaac—will justify the disciple (Rom 2:13; Jas 2:20–24).

It is not the hearers of the law (Torah) that are righteous before God, but the person who is inwardly committed to doing what the law requires that will be justified (again, Rom 2:13). In this present era, even when through weakness of the flesh or ignorance the disciple dedicated to keeping the law fails to perform the disciple is justified by being covered by Christ Jesus' righteousness, meaning simply that it is the person's commitment to doing what the law requires that saves the person who has been predestined and called. Likewise, it is the person's unbelief or disbelief that condemns the person (2 Thess 2:10–12). And when disciples have the law in their hands even prior to when it is written on hearts, the disciple who rejects the law does not believe the Father or His Christ. The disciple who knows that the Sabbath day is the seventh day, not the following day, and who does not keep the Sabbath **does not believe God**.

While there really are no disciples ignorant of what the law requires, there are disciples that have been taught by teachers of iniquity (“workers of lawlessness” — Matt 7:23) to ignore the commandments. These accursed pastors and theologians will be denied by Christ when their judgments are revealed; they murder, and if unchecked, will continue to murder infant sons of God by teaching these sons to rebel against their Father and our Father. But because these infant sons trust their teachers more than they trust their own reading of Scripture, these infants flinch when their teachers accuse them of being legalists. They are taught to fear obeying God—these “Christians” profess love for Jesus while they rebel against Him, committing blasphemy against the Father and the Son.

The Christian Church is not restricted to just those Sabbatarian disciples that were initially baptized by ministers ordained by Herbert Armstrong, as too many of the former WCG's *walking dead* seem to believe. The Church is not limited to one sect or denomination. Rather, it consists of all who profess Christ Jesus; it is endtime Israel. But as Israel in Egypt rebelled against the Lord and would not even listen to Him (Ezek 20:8), endtime Israel in Babylon—with both Israel and Babylon being “spiritual nations”—has rebelled against the Lord and will not listen to Him, will not believe Moses nor hear the voice of Jesus. Nevertheless, the Lord intends to liberate the Church

from indwelling sin and death by filling every “Christian” with life received via His divine breath [πνεῦμα θεοῦ].

In a day, a great nation shall be born (Isa 66:8), but a nation that today fears obedience to God, a nation that is cowardly and truly the spiritual scum of this earth, having the law [the Torah] but not willing to believe it, not willing to even let its children enter into God’s presence for apparent fear of the present prince of this world whom these “Christians” serve as faithful slaves.

Israel in Egypt forms the faithful representation of the Christian Church in Babylon in this present era.

In Egypt, when Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness”” (Ex 5:1), Pharaoh came back with the cute, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go” (v. 2).

This Pharaoh, a Theban who had no love for the (by now defeated) Hyksos or any other nation of herdsmen, formed the shadow and copy of the spiritual king of Babylon, that old dragon Satan the devil ... just as King Nebuchadnezzar formed a shadow and copy of the prince of this world, so did the Theban Pharaoh, whose heart had to be supernaturally hardened before he could serve as the Adversary’s shadow.

Paul writes, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills” (Rom 9:17–18). His citation is of Moses:

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. *But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.* You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.”” Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field. (Ex 9:13–21 — Paul’s citation is italicized)

Paul’s citation sets up his analogy that the Lord will make from the same lump of clay (from humanity, the red clay used to form the first Adam) vessels for honored usage and vessels of wrath, showing mercy on those vessels that were “prepared beforehand for glory” (Rom 9:23).

Was the Theban pharaoh’s heart hardened by the plagues directly affecting him and his household and his people, or was this hardening of a different nature, not something

that could be accomplished *naturally* through harming and angering the man reigning over Egypt?

Today, a wannabe pharaoh exalts himself against the people of the Lord: he has proudly announced to the world that the United States is not a *Christian* country, and it isn't! The nation began as a "Christian" country, but even the Christianity which gave birth to the nation was counterfeit ... a Christian nation would be one that walked like Jesus walked because the nation had the mind and nature of Christ Jesus. To this world, that Christian nation would look like an odd sect of Judaism; would look like Israel living in unwalled cities; would look like a nation dwelling in security, living in peace, protected by the Lord; would be a nation without need of army or police or prisons or locks on doors. No, the United States is not a Christian nation: it is, instead, a nation of rebels, a nation at war with itself, bent on destroying itself as fast as it can. It is determined to abort the nation the Lord will bring to life in a day.

Today's Christian overseers, like the Israelite foremen whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over the nation (Ex 5:14), will issue their *Manhattan Declaration* in which they set forth their intention to resist being compelled to participate in abortions, perform gay marriages, and otherwise do what God hates. But these Christian (and Jewish) overseers have already prostituted themselves: they are the ones who have kept generations of Israel in slavery to sin, which leads to death (Rom 6:16) through rejection of grace. Yes, they freely use the word "grace" [χάρις], but none of them—no, not one—has any understanding of what *grace* is; for they preach another gospel other than the one Jesus preached, the one that Paul, Peter, John, James preached. They preach an accursed gospel of lawlessness. Whereas Peter taught Gentile converts to live as Judeans (Gal 2:14 — read the passage in Greek), these Christian overseers teach Gentile converts to continue living as Gentiles, as people of *the nations*; they teach Gentile converts to remain alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, to remain far from Christ, to continue as servants of the Adversary.

When sin had no dominion over disciples (Rom 6:14); when disciples were finally free to keep the law, free to obey God; when disciples were covered by the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness, these Christian overseers bullied disciples into rejecting grace by returning to sin through their twisting of Paul's epistles (2 Pet 3:16–17), thereby causing spiritual infants to be swept away in a rising tide of lawlessness.

God has the power to kill the inner self, inner "man." Jesus promised, "Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he [the Father] takes away" (John 15:2); for the Father is the vinedresser, the one who prunes disciples that bear fruit and cuts off disciples that do not. The Father is He who can destroy καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα—*both soul and body* ... He gave life to disciples, and He can take that life from them. He calls many, but of these "many" few are chosen. Few become the glorified Elect, for few will believe the writings of Moses and act on those writings to make their faith complete.

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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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