

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 mind of Christ*.

Sabbath Readings

For November 24, 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 many prophecy pundits or prophecy based ministries that are of this world and not of God routinely identify the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven as the Roman Empire and its many revivals, but nowhere in the visions of Daniel is Rome or the Roman Empire mentioned whereas Babylonia is named as are the Medes and Persians as well as the Greeks, who would not reign over Judea for nearly two centuries. These prophecy ministries will identify the two iron legs of the humanoid image King Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision as the Roman Empire, for historically Rome divided into an Eastern kingdom, with its capital at Constantinople [named for Emperor Constantine], and a Western kingdom, with its capital remaining at Rome. But the division of Nebuchadnezzar's image occurs in the bronze portion, not in the iron portion, if iron were to represent Rome (which it doesn't). The division occurs before Rome divides if bronze represents Greece and if iron were to represent Rome; for Rome conquers Greece centuries before it divides into two kingdoms.

Nebuchadnezzar saw a standing human-like image that has been represented for the past century by a painting of a standing Chaldean, arms crossed, scowling, with the focus of the painting being the Chaldean's feet, and with a brick-shaped stone sailing downward toward the feet.

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The person conducting services should read or assign to be read Daniel chapter 2.

Commentary: Nebuchadnezzar suspected that his mystics would, from their own imaginations, produce meaning for his troubling vision, and the king had reason to be suspicious: since God revealed the vision to Daniel and Daniel gave the king its interpretation, mystics of all sorts have assigned various meanings to the humanoid image, for Dan's interpretation contains vague referents that tickle human imaginations, thereby causing too many prophecy pundits to treat secular history books as canonical Scripture. Imagine what the king's mystics would have claimed about the vision if the king had not concealed the vision from them ... the king sealed his vision by not revealing it to his mystics while demanding that they produce an interpretation. Rightfully, they said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand ... no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (Dan 2:10-11).

The king's vision could only be unsealed by God, for it was given by God and it was for the latter days: "[T]here is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (Dan 2:28). Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know what would happen after the king's reign, and God made known to the king what would occur (v. 29).

The basis, therefore, exists in Scripture to use Nebuchadnezzar's vision as a roadmap of world history, as has been done ever since. But note: Daniel says, "[T]his mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind" (v. 30). ... The interpretation of the vision the king saw was given for two reasons:

- The interpretation was given by God so that Nebuchadnezzar would know what came after him.
- The interpretation was given so that the king might know the thoughts of his own mind.

Although someone will argue that these are not two reasons, but one—knowing the thoughts of his mind is knowing what will come after him as revealed in the humanoid image—that argument is without understanding: there was no need for the king to not reveal his vision to his mystics if the vision only revealed the future. More was at stake. Why would a thought of his mind be to not disclose his vision? He had to suspect that he had been told lies; he had thoughts that caused him to question whether he was being told the truth by those who advised him—and that thought would have been more troubling than knowing or not knowing the future with certainty.

If Nebuchadnezzar believed that his advisors "have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before" the king "until times changed" (Dan 2:9), then palace politics were filled with intrigue and Nebuchadnezzar's reign was not as politically stable as historically perceived. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar mentioning *until times changed* suggests that he suspected a coup was about to happen, a logical reason for wanting to know what "shall be after this" (v. 45). So from the perspective of literary criticism, tumultuous times were occurring within Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar had defeated distant kings and kingdoms, but war exacts a financial toll on the victor, with the cost of war being born by taxpayers. A kingdom left in economic ruin such as the Chaldeans left Israel is unable to pay tribute and becomes a drain of the victor's treasury. Thus, the *peaceniks* gain political support while the leader has to justify the expense of a standing army, hanging gardens, and harems. Too often biblical students forget to place political states in contexts that reflect the realities of regional [or global] politics.

Nebuchadnezzar believed that his mystics would lie to him—and that would have troubled him. So when he is given a vision in which a humanoid image has its feet crushed by a stone cut without hands, his first thoughts must have been that he is about to be overthrown in some sort of a trap that ensnares his feet, leaving him to dry up and perish with his gold, silver, bronze and iron. It is no wonder that he will not reveal the vision to his mystics, for they might well be behind an effort to depose him.

From a neo-typological perspective, what Daniel tells the king about knowing his thoughts has significance, for thoughts grow or pop-up from a mental topography as weeds or wheat grow from geographical landscapes. Thus, thoughts develop from a landscaped that is presently ruled by the prince of the power of the air, thereby causing all human beings to be sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3). After Adam's disobedience,

God delivered humankind into the hand of the prince of this world, who has been defeated but not yet replaced—God did what the Apostle Paul commanded the saints at Corinth to do with the man who had his step-mother; i.e., deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved (1 Co 5:5). This is also what God did with Israel: He delivered Israel into the hand of the king of Babylon that Israel might be spiritually saved (Jer 25:8-11). And as God delivered a physical nation into physical captivity when He sent Israel to Babylon as captives, He delivered all descendants of the first Adam into a mental captivity when He consigned [“concluded” – King James translation] humankind to disobedience. He, God, delivered men [and women] wherever they lived to the prince of this world for the destruction of their flesh so that they might be spiritually saved on the day of the Lord—and the means of delivering humankind to the Adversary was through giving the prince of this world control over the mental topography from which thoughts sprout and grow. Therefore, the person who sins without the law will perish without the law while the person who sins under the law will be judged by the law (Rom 2:12), but the person who does by nature what the law requires [this will require that the person amends his or her mental landscape as a person might physically amend garden soil to make it more productive] shows that the person is a law unto him or herself; the person shows “that the work of the law is written on” his or her heart (*v.* 15). And this person will accuse and even excuse him or herself on the day when “God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (*v.* 16).

A person’s thoughts come from the subconscious mind that is under the dominion of the prince of this world until God draws the person from the world (John 6:44) by giving the person a second birth through receipt of the Holy Spirit. But when born of Spirit, sin [disobedience] no longer has dominion over the person through having control of the person’s subconscious mind. The born of Spirit disciple is no longer a son of disobedience; is not under condemnation (Rom 8:2) even though the law of sin and death continues to dwell in the flesh of the person (Rom 7:21-25).

So from the neo-typological perspective, the vision Nebuchadnezzar receives is as much about “knowing his thoughts” as it is about what comes after his reign.

In the interpretation, Daniel tells the king, “[Y]ou are the head of gold” (Dan 2:38), but this gold that he is (i.e., the gold of the head) shall be present when the stone smashes the toes of mixed iron and clay (*vv.* 44-45); so “what shall be after this” (*vv.* 45 & 28) becomes problematic if Nebuchadnezzar is as Daniel tells him, the head of gold “into whose hand [God] has given, wherever they dwell, the children of men, the breasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making [Nebuchadnezzar] rule over them all” (*v.* 38).

Nebuchadnezzar did not rule over China or over Chile, where men then dwelt. In fact, China became an empire that was as large and as technically developed as the Roman Empire was during the reign of the Romans around the Mediterranean. China was every bit the equal of Rome, and might well have prevailed against Rome if this rival were not geographically separated from Rome by India and the Parthian Empire, which itself was another successful rival of Rome for several centuries. Thus, no Middle East or Near East king or empire ruled over men wherever they dwelt during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, nor since. Human beings have never been under one king’s physical rule since the beginning of recorded history, and men have never reigned over the birds of the heavens that migrate where they will, when they will. Therefore, Daniel either

does not speak literally in his interpretation, using hyperbole instead, or he addresses a different king of Babylon, one of which Nebuchadnezzar is only a type.

The prophet Isaiah writes, “When the Lord [YHWH] has given you [Israel] rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon” (14:3-4), with this *king of Babylon* identified as a spirit being that fell from heaven and laid low the nations (v. 12), who shook kingdoms and overthrew cities (vv. 16-17), who destroyed his land and slew his people (v. 20). This king of Babylon is the current prince of this world, the Adversary, Satan the devil, that old serpent that will be cast to earth when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Christ (Rev 11:15-18; Dan 7:9-14). And this spiritual king of Babylon does reign over men wherever they dwell through having control of their mental topography. Only those individuals whom God has withdrawn from the world [from subservience to the spiritual king of Babylon] are not presently the bondservants of the prince of disobedience.

Psychologists do not speak in terms of a spirit being having control over a person’s subconscious mind—the concept would be foolishness to someone with clinical training. “But God,” according to Paul, “chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise” (1 Co 1:27) so that no person can boast in the presence of God (v. 29) about human intellect or goodness. Thus, the psychologist who would examine a disciple to determine if he or she is sane is a bondservant to disobedience, and will not be capable of understanding the things of God. Likewise, the tenured university faculty member who can read and write ancient languages but who perceives Scripture as a collection of myths cannot understand the mysteries of God, or even earthly representations of spiritual matters. It is not from them that a disciple should seek answers about the thoughts of men, or the mind of God.

For the person who practices typological exegesis, Nebuchadnezzar is a shadow and type of the Adversary as earthly Babylon was a shadow and type of spiritual Babylon, the single spiritual kingdom of this world that will fall when that kingdom is given to the Son of Man ... Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world or from this world (John 18:36); rather, His kingdom will be this world, and He will reign by having control of the mental topography of humankind. Human beings will then have the mind of Christ in them as they presently have the rebellious nature of the Adversary—when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) the predatory natures of the great predators will be changed (Isa 11:6-9). Likewise, human nature is a received nature that, like Nebuchadnezzar’s mind (Dan chap 4), can be instantly taken from the person by God.

The kingdom of this world is not given to Christ many times, but once. When the stone cut without hands (Dan 2:45) breaks to pieces the metal kingdoms of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed and a kingdom that shall not be left to others. This is when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High. So the image that Nebuchadnezzar sees is broken at the same time [same moment] as when the court of the Ancient of Days sits in judgment and dominion is taken from the four beasts of Daniel chapter seven (vv. 9-14), and at the same moment as when the one who rises up against the Prince of princes is broken but not by human hands (Dan 8:25)—and at the same time as when “the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end” (Dan 12:7), and the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ (Rev 11:15-18).

There is only one time in the affairs of humankind that dominion is taken from the prince of this world and given to the Son of Man by the Ancient of Days. There is only one time when Michael and his angels cast the old dragon, Satan the devil, out of heaven and into time (Rev 12:7-10). And it is Satan who has deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9) into believing that the visions given to the prophet Daniel cannot be understood.

Daniel's visions were sealed until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9; & 8:17, 26; *et al*), but once humankind entered into this seemingly mythical period that Israel thought it entered two and more centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, those seals came off ... how does one know for certain that the visions are no longer sealed and secret? Or better, how does a person know that he or she is alive and isn't part of a *Matrix*, as described in the movie by that name? And the answer is that faith is required to believe anything. Faith is required to believe that a person is today alive. Faith is required to believe that God exists, or that God rewards those that seek Him. Equal faith is also required to believe that God does not exist, or that Christ Jesus is not the firstborn Son of many sons of God. And it is the person's faith that will be counted to the person as righteousness (Gen 15:6) or unrighteousness; for the person who hears Jesus' words and believes that the Father sent Him (John 5:24) will also believe Moses (*vv.* 46-47), who wrote of Jesus (Deut 18:15-22)—and according to Moses, “[W]hen a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord [YHWH] has not spoken; the prophet has spoken presumptuously” (*v.* 22). And Daniel reported that the vision Nebuchadnezzar saw was for what came after the period in which they then lived, and the crushing of the toes of mingled iron and soft clay would bring about the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ.

Daniel either spoke presumptuously when he said that his visions were sealed and secret until the time of the end, or he did not—and if he did not speak presumptuously, then the visions of Daniel could not be understood by anyone before the time of the end. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar could also not be understood before the time of the end; for Daniel tells the king that he is the head of gold and that the gold will be among the metals blown away as chaff when the humanoid image is broken and the kingdom is taken by God.

Nebuchadnezzar thought highly of himself: he defeated the Egyptians, who believed that their pharaohs would, in their afterlife, become stars in the heavens. He could well believe that he would rule over the stars in his afterlife, for he was concerned about “what came after this” (again Dan 2:29, 45)—this expression can well refer to what comes after this life, after death, something that only the Most High could reveal to him, not something human imaginations can deduce through logic or by the spots on a goose's liver. So Daniel's explication of the vision pertained to the afterlife, not this life or the course of human affairs. And if it pertains to the afterlife, or spiritual realm, then the Babylonian Empire that sacked Jerusalem and took Israel captive is not the entirety of the kingdom ruled by “king of Babylon” against whom Israel will take up the taunt, “You said in your heart, / “I will ascend to heaven; / above the stars of God / I will set my throne on high. / I will sit on the mount of assembly / in the far reaches of the north; / I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High.” / But you will be brought down to Sheol, / to the far reaches of the pit” (Isa 14:13-15). Nebuchadnezzar can only be a type of one who thought to make himself like the Most High. He was, figuratively, a tree whose crown reached to heaven (Dan 4:11), for God

used Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans to punish nations, especially Israel, but the king also acknowledged his humiliation while he still lived (v. 37). He is not the king of Babylon who is like “a loathed branch” (Isa 14:19).

The traditional explanation for Nebuchadnezzar being the head and the toes of the image being crushed by a stone cut without hands is that the image represents the course of human kingdoms between Babylon and the coming of the Messiah, but the traditional explanation is given to a sealed and secret vision. This traditional explanation is the best that human imaginations can produce; this would have been the best explanation that Nebuchadnezzar’s mystics could have given him. But this is not the explication that comes from the unsealed visions of Daniel.

The now unsealed visions of Daniel can be aligned by when they conclude, with this alignment being by the witness mark of the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of the Father and His Christ. Events occur within the other visions of Daniel: one thing follows another thing. And then the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man. But in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, the only thing that happens is the taking of the kingdom of this world by the Most High through crushing the toes of iron and clay, thereby toppling the entirety of the humanoid image that has one kingdom arising after another to form, altogether, one image that is intact and apparently living until the toes are crushed by the split Mount of Olives, a granite monolith cut without human hands (Zech 14:3-4), swallowing the armies of the lawless one (Rev 12:16) as the Sea of Reeds swallowed the armies of Pharaoh (Ex 15:12).

How can one kingdom arising after another form one living humanoid image that pertains to the afterlife or to the spiritual realm? It can through perceiving the inter-dimensional relationship between the mindscape (thought-field) produced by physically living entities and the geological surface of the region between the Tigris and the Nile. As physical shadows (areas of darkness) are cast to the side of objects farthest away from the light in this world, spiritual shadows (again, areas of darkness or unrighteousness) are cast onto the interlinked mental topography of living entities, with the thoughts and attitudes sprouting from these areas of spiritual darkness controlling the behavior of the living entity within the area covered by the shadow. And to the person who has not truly been born of Spirit (it matters not whether the person believes he or she has been born again; it only matters whether the person has spiritual life, with this determination made through whether the person is hostile to God, not keeping His laws – Rom 8:7) – to the person without the mind of Christ, the concept of living entities having a mental landscape that can be darkly seen through the geological terrain of pre-Flood Eden’s plains, hills, and valleys is confusing at best. The concept is usually dismissed as foolishness by those still consigned to disobedience. Only a few in this endtime era are able to perceive that the physical things of this world reveal the invisible aspects and attributes of God (Rom 1:20).

But for those who can understand: the standing humanoid image that Nebuchadnezzar saw stood in the realm of spirit and cast its shadow across the mental topography of living entities. This image blocked the light that was/is God, and where the shadow of the head of this single humanoid image lay was over the thoughts of the king, who was, thus, the head of the image. The shadow of the arms and chest lay over the reign of the Medes and Persians; the shadow of the belly and thigh lay over the reign of the Greeks; the shadow of the legs of iron lay over the reign of the Seleucid and Ptolomaic kingdoms; and the shadow of the crushing of the toes lay over *the sons of*

light making war against Seleucid kingdom. But here the shadow ends, for Christ will destroy and smash the reign of Satan's hierarchy differently than did the Maccabees defeat the Syrian-Greek kingdom that was a far cry from the size and splendor of Nebuchadnezzar's empire.

It is Satan that reigns as the present prince of the power of the air. But his reign over the mental landscape from which thoughts sprout and grow will end when he is cast from heaven. He will then attempt to recover his former bondservants by requiring that they take upon themselves the mark of the beast to buy and sell (Rev 13:17).

Today, the psychologist who explains human behavior, and human thought and emotions by physical and biological means is a mental bondservant of the Adversary, regardless of how intelligent the person is. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know his thoughts, and he was given what he needed to know to explain why palace politics exist: both he and his adversaries have the mind of Satan, who is brilliant but a rebel (Ezek 28:11, 15). The person today who is genuinely born of Spirit will, as the infant son of God now dwelling in the tent of flesh of the *old man* matures, realize just how greatly influenced all of humankind has been by having Satan's nature—the person with the mind of Christ **does not** think like others do, for his or her thoughts sprout and grow from a differing mental territory. And there is no good way to convey this difference in “human nature” to the person who has not yet experienced a second birth.

A person who has been born of Spirit cannot biologically pass on this birth or the mind of Christ to his or her sons and daughters. This is why Christ sets a father against his son and a daughter against her mother, making a person's adversaries those of his or her own household (Matt 10:35-36).

Nebuchadnezzar sought to know his own thoughts. Daniel revealed the vision he received to him, and that was probably enough for the king. But for the person who has been genuinely born of Spirit, what Daniel revealed was the territory over which Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords will reign when this kingdom of the world is taken from that old dragon, Satan the devil. Nebuchadnezzar's humanoid image isn't the revealing of world-ruling empires between Babylon and the coming of the Messiah, but the shadow of the Adversary's ruling hierarchy over living creatures. And power is given to the bronze portion (Dan 2:39): the belly and the groin, the appetites of the flesh (hunger and sexual satisfaction). The continued exercising of this power is easily seen today through the commercials and programming of American television.

In his vision, the angel tells John the Revelator, “Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy” (Rev 22:11) ... being holy is a mindset, a state of existence, that is the antithesis of being filthy. This is a mindset that cannot be produced naturally, or by efforts towards self-improvement. This is a mindset that only comes from God when the figurative “soil” in which a person's thoughts sprout and grow belongs to God and not to the Adversary. Having the mind of Christ doesn't mean thinking His exact thoughts, but means having a person's thoughts rooted in the same mental turf.

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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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