

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 antiChrist*.

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## Weekly Readings

For the weekly Sabbath of January 7, 2006

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 services should read or assign to be read 1 John chapters 1 through 5, and 2 John, all.*

**Commentary:** Denying that Jesus is the Christ, denying that Jesus came as a man, denying that Jesus was flesh and blood—all make a person an antiChrist, a person who is both against Christ and comes after Christ, and comes to doubt and spread doubts. “Anti,” a Latinate prefix, means to follow as “ante” means to precede. But the prefix has come to equally mean to be against, and it being against that is the essence of antiChrist. For the person who doubts the humanity of Jesus, doubts that Jesus really was the *Logos* born as a man, doubts Jesus died when crucified at Calvary, doubts that Jesus spent three days and three nights in the grave is truly against Christ. This person could not precede Christ, but this person has placed his or her intellect ahead of faith in Jesus' words. This person either hasn't heard the words of Jesus, or doesn't believe the One who sent Him (John 5:24). Either way, the person has come under judgment because of his or her unbelief.

In his first epistle, John equates believing Jesus with keeping the commandments. The person who doesn't believe the words of Jesus neither knows Jesus, nor has perfected love towards Jesus. If a person doesn't keep the commandments, the person doesn't walk in the same way Jesus walked (1 John 1:6). And all human excuses aside—none are worth anything—the person who has Jesus within him or herself as the Bread that came down from heaven, the reality of the jar of manna inside the ark of the covenant, will make every effort to keep the commandments because the person loves the Lord. The person who loves only with lips will utter many endearing words toward the Lord, but will deny Jesus by the person judging the commandments, deciding which ones the person might keep and which ones the person will not keep. This person is an antiChrist; for inevitably, this person will spread his or her unbelief to others, teaching others to relax one [or more] of the least of the commandments (Matt 5:19). In reality, the person worships another Jesus other than the one crucified at Calvary, the one who did spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, the one who ascended to the Father on the morrow after the Sabbath as Israel's Wave Sheaf Offering. And most of

Christianity worships a man that, according to the Church's traditional teaching, did not fulfill the only sign He gave for His ministry. Most of Christianity worships a liar.

Harsh words? Even fighting words? Historical exegesis has Jesus in the heart of the earth for one day and two nights, not three days and nights as Jonah was in the belly of the fish. Historical exegesis has Jesus crucified on Friday and resurrected Sunday morning. But the disciples who practice historical exegesis also has Jesus entering Jerusalem the previous Sunday [Palm Sunday], thereby revealing that these disciples can neither read, nor count...no conciliatory words here. For it does disciples no good to assure them that they are saved when they have not eaten the body of the Lord and drank His blood on the night He was betrayed, the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month. Bread and wine (or the fruit of the vine) are only the body and blood of the Lamb of God on one night of the year, again the night Jesus was betrayed. On every other night, they are the fruit of the ground; they are Cain's offering, and they are not and will not be accepted by God even though the disciple will be accepted if he or she does well (Gen 4:7).

Unintentionally, most of Christianity denies Jesus, and makes itself into many antiChrists, for the greater Christian Church has left the faith Jesus delivered to His disciples. The Protestant Church now uses Darby's Dispensationalism to justify not believing either Jesus or the One who sent Him. Its has more faith in what Darby said, or in what Wesley said, or in what Luther said than in what Jesus said.

The Protestant Church's journey from spiritual Babylon to the Jerusalem above was mentally sidetracked before the pilgrims left Chaldea—only the Radical Reformers headed out of Babylon in the right direction. Protestant Reformers wanted to rebuild the old church (i.e., the Roman Church) from the Bible, whereas the Radicals wanted to return to the Apostolic era and rebuild the Church from the Bible. These different mental course headings had Protestant Reformers marching around the walls of Babylon for symbolic weeks in hopes these walls would fall as Jericho's had, while Radicals journeyed toward spiritual Judea, with the crossing into God's rest coming when Anabaptists such as Conrad Beissel began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. But only a spiritual remnant of the greater Church ever left Babylon, and much of this remnant, like the followers of Menno Simon, stopped in the Chaldean wilderness to build houses for themselves. We know that they never arrived in the Land Beyond the River, for they continue their attempt to enter God's rest on the following day as did the nation that left Egypt (Num 14:40-41).

Modern descendants of 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Swiss Protesters have rejected any pretense of keeping the commandments of God, or of living as spiritual Judeans, how the Apostle Peter taught Gentile converts to live (Gal 2:14 — read the verse in Greek). Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), which comes when a person denies Christ through not keeping His laws or commandments.

The reader should now read Romans chapter 5, verse 12, though chapter 7, verse 25.

**Commentary:** Paul writes that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Rom 7:12), but until the law came to Israel (i.e., was uttered from Mt. Sinai), sin was not reckoned against Israel, or against anyone even though all died as a result of sin. So the giving of the law ends “natural” grace, with sin not being reckoned as sin would be. And because Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of God before they could eat of the tree of life (Gen 3:22-23), they had no life but that which came from their physical breath [*psuche*]. They were *naphesh*, as were the other breathing creatures. Hence, they and their descendants would die when their physical breath expired. All died between Adam and Moses, who was the mediator of the second covenant by which circumcised hearts and minds [*naphesh*, usually translated in Deuteronomy as “souls”] were promised to Israelites, who, when exiled in a far country, returned to keeping the laws of God (Deu 30:1-6). Returning to keeping the commandments of God when in a far country is an action of faith—and without faith, no one can please God.

Physical circumcision causes a male to appear naked before God, who sees what is underneath the outer garments that robe the person. The circumcised male’s only “covering” is his obedience to the laws of God; his only covering is the obedience that comes from faith. And when Moses was the mediator of this second covenant, a covenant made in addition of the covenant made at Sinai (Deu 29:1), a circumcised heart and mind [a euphemistic expression for receiving the Holy Spirit] were given only after demonstrated obedience. An Israelite male was born under the law, circumcised on the eighth day, and physically matured as the firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22), holy to God (Exod 19:5-6). But this male grew to physical maturity in a household that either was observant and obedient, or in a household that practiced lawlessness, worshiping sticks and stones and the works of hands. With few exceptions, the Israelite who matured in a household that practiced lawlessness also practiced lawlessness. Likewise, the spiritual Israelite who grows to spiritual maturity in a household [Church] that practices lawlessness will also practice lawlessness.

Although circumcision of the heart and mind were offered to the children of the nation that left Egypt, the history of natural Israel discloses that very few Israelites ever obeyed God. Thus, the nation with its promise of spiritual birth, the promise confirmed by Jesus’ answer to the lawyer (Luke 10:25-28), remained spiritually lifeless, and serves as the lively but lifeless shadow of the greater, born-from-above Church, with each spiritual Israelite now housed in a tent of flesh and robed by Christ’s righteousness. The physically circumcised Israelite was under an external law, inscribed by the visible finger of God on two tablets of stone and housed in a wood ark of the covenant that was, itself, under the mercy seat. The spiritually circumcised Israelite is not under an external law written on stone tablets, but under the same law written on two tablets of flesh. This spiritually circumcised Israelite has not been born of physical breath, but of the Divine Breath [*Pneuma 'Agion*] of God. This spiritual Israelite is not of this realm, but of the heavenly realm. However, this spiritual Israelite is presently confined within this realm that is governed by change, with one moment inevitably becoming the next moment. Without the mechanics of change, this spiritual Israelite could not mature as a son of God in a model patterned by physical maturity. Thus, a natural Israelite, a Levite to be specific, prior to the

construction of the stone temple by Solomon entered a fabric tabernacle that housed the wood Ark of the Covenant to serve God. But a spiritual Israelite serves God within a fleshly tent that houses the promise of resurrection; Jesus, the Bread that came down from heaven; and the two tablets of flesh upon which the invisible finger of God has written His commandments. The heart and mind of the spiritual Israelite are as the wood Ark of the Covenant was. They are, themselves, spiritually lifeless natural containers as the crafted wood boards of the Ark were physically lifeless.

It is as spiritually dishonest to teach that because disciples (spiritual Israelites) are no longer under commandments written on stone tablets that they do not have to keep these commandments that are now written on their hearts and minds as it was in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century to teach that disciples had to be physically circumcised. Such teachings are the two sides of the same error. Flip this coin. Heads or tails? Both sides are grievous errors that will send disciples into the lake of fire. For the infant spiritual Israelite who matures in a lawless household will be mostly lawless and deny Christ to the same extent as those of the circumcision faction denied Christ through teaching that a Gentile had to first become a physical Israelite before he could become a spiritual Israelite. In both cases, disciples become antiChrists of the type about which John said, “[M]any antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18).

Again, an antiChrist is someone who denies the words of Jesus either through unbelief, or by teaching contrary dogma. Only John uses the phrase—and he uses it to describe those who would not admit that Jesus came in the flesh.

Today, few skeptics or scholars doubt that Jesus came as a flesh and blood human being. Doubts are about whether He was ever anything more than a man who, through His intellect and humanity, taught a differing and at times original philosophy of social interaction. These doubters obviously deny Christ, and are, by extension, antiChrists. But a more troublesome category of doubters exists: ones who profess adoration for Jesus, but will not fully hear His words or truly believe the One who sent Him. These doubters subtly deny Christ by not walking as He walked, by not living as spiritual Judeans. They live as Greeks, proudly proclaim themselves to be Gentiles, and demand that God accepts them as they are. They are without spiritual understanding.

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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