

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are more extensive for this week and next than will be usual; for the following will most likely be new and unfamiliar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is *discipleship*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of April 1, 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 service should read or assign to be read the following passages: the Gospel of John chapter 6, verses 22 through 71; John chapter 15, verses 1 through 17; and John chapter 17.

Commentary: The question of freewill has confronted Christianity from its beginning. Does a person choose to become a disciple of Christ Jesus, or is the person made a disciple despite the person's will? Does a person *make a decision for the Lord*, or does God draw and call whom He will in this day of salvation? What should a person know about *predestination*, or about *illumination*, or about *being counted among the Elect*?

If salvation depends upon the person deciding to accept Christ Jesus as his or her Savior—which would be the ultimate expression of freewill—then election depends upon the actions of the person, and really isn't "election" at all. Being called (John 15:16) or drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65) would be the universal condition of humanity even though few human beings respond to this calling or drawing. The *elect* would then be the portion of humanity that chose God, thereby reversing the ordered sovereignty of God over humankind, and producing instead the awkward situation of humanity creating God in its own image—which is what those individuals who have been educated unto unbelief contend [the expression *educated unto unbelief* should be attributed to Matthew Arnold].

A little more than a century ago, Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy* picked up a concept similar to that of the Qumran *War Scroll*: this concept has God and Satan wrestling for the souls or lives of human beings, with Satan winning more rounds than he loses. And if being called or drawn were the universal condition of humanity, then Satan would be winning, for much of humanity knows little or nothing about Christ Jesus, and even more of humanity is unwilling to live as He lived. Thus, Jesus, being given all of humanity (if "being called" were a universal condition), loses more people than He keeps.

However, when Jesus was physically with those whom the Father had given Him, He lost only the son of destruction that Scripture might be fulfilled (John 17:12).

Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, was given by the Father to Jesus to fulfill prophecy. Yes, Judas was foreknown by the Father, and drawn to betray Jesus. Thus, how much choice did Judas have in what he would eventually do? Any? Very little? Someone had to

betray Jesus, then repent of that betrayal if prophecies about thirty pieces of silver were to be fulfilled.

Certainly prophecies can fail. But they don't fail.

And Judas, after designated by Jesus to betray Him by Jesus giving Judas the piece of bread dipped in the cup, had Satan enter into him. So Judas, given to Jesus by the Father to be a son of destruction, was marked by Jesus and under the direct control of Satan—and ordered by Jesus to do quickly what he must do (John 13:21-30).

Where was Judas' freewill in any of what he did?

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The reader should now read Zechariah chapter 11, verses 4, through 17.

Commentary: The first Adam was made from red mud, or red clay—and the visual representation of what *Elohim* [singular in usage] did when He created the first Adam from the elemental elements of the earth, without consulting these elements in any way, is that of a potter working clay that will be fired into vessels. The same clay is made into plain and elaborate vessels. The same clay is given different glazes, thereby producing a rainbow of colors when fired. And the lifeless clay is to a human potter analogous to what living flesh is to God.

The same flesh, colored by a glaze of skin pigmentation, is thrown and shaped and crafted into whatever God chooses to make from that flesh. And one lump of flesh was crafted into the son of destruction that would betray Christ Jesus, the uncovered Head of the Son of Man. Many more lumps of clay have been or will be shaped into additional sons [and daughters] of destruction to betray the now-covered, but soon-to-be-revealed Body of the Son of Man. Yes, for certain, as Judas was given to Jesus to fulfill Scripture, so too have been [are] other disciples given to Jesus to fulfill Scriptures about the endtime betrayal of the saints by their brethren.

The Shepherd worthy of praise, Jesus isn't today losing disciples foreknown by the Father (Rom 8:29-30), except as necessary to fulfill Scripture which describes a great falling away when the man of perdition is revealed (2 Thess 2:3). And those who will rebel against God when the lawless one is revealed constitute "the flock doomed to slaughter" (Zech 11:4). This flock is now spiritually slaughtered by shepherds that teach newly born lambs to erase the commandments of God from hearts and minds where these commandments have been written by the Holy Spirit; these worthless shepherds go unpunished while becoming rich.

The sheep in the flock doomed for slaughter will not be ruled by Christ Jesus, or by any shepherd who would have the flock live within the laws of God. They constitute a flock of Judas'—goats instead of sheep, tares instead of wheat. They look to the world like "Christians." They profess adoration for Jesus, but under no circumstances will they live as Jesus lived...ask this flock if it will live by the commandments of God. The challenge is before everyone.

Jesus lived by the commandments of God. He fulfilled the commandments. He didn't come to abolish these commandments that moved from two tablets of stone to two tablets of flesh, the heart and mind of every disciple. And a student isn't better than his or her teacher; it is enough to be like the teacher. It is enough to live as a spiritual Judean, walking as Jesus walked.

What would Jesus do—this has become the byword that will condemn the flock doomed for slaughter to the lake of fire, for Jesus lived by every word of God. He was without sin. It is enough for the revealed Son of Man (Luke 17:30) to be without sin, its

already glorified Head and its yet-to-be-glorified Body covered by its obedience to the laws of God. And the implication is correct: before glorification, the revealed or stripped naked Body must cover itself with its obedience. The garment of Christ (i.e., the mantle of His righteousness) will be stripped away when the Church is physically liberated from the law of sin and death that presently dwells in the flesh of every member (Rom 7:25). The minds of disciples were liberated from sin and death when given to Christ Jesus (Rom 8:2), but the Body remains covered by Grace, which isn't unmerited pardon but the garment of Jesus' righteousness, put on daily as natural Israel offered a lamb morning and evening as its *daily*. And if Christ is put on daily, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness can be stripped away in a moment, leaving the Son of Man revealed or naked, with its lawlessness apparent to man and God, faithful and fallen angels—lawlessness presently not seen and not necessarily known because of the Body being “cloaked” by Grace.

Jesus' betrayal by someone was foretold. The endtime falling away of the Church is also foretold in Scripture. The endtime betrayal of saints by their brethren is sure to occur. And as Judas was given to Jesus as one of the Twelve, so too have been endtime disciples drawn from the world and made part of the Church—literally, given to Jesus—for the expressed purpose of fulfilling Scripture as sons [and daughters] of destruction.

Therefore, being called or drawn in this era is not a universal condition. Becoming a disciple places the person in opposition to *the world* (Eph 2:1-3). And being called from the world so that Scripture can be fulfilled should send shivers through the lawless person, who will die the second death as part of the flock doomed to slaughter.

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The reader should now read Jeremiah chapters 18 & 19.

Commentary: The Father can do with a drawn disciple what He will—and this includes drawing the disciple for the expressed purpose of that disciple betraying his or her righteous brethren.

On the night that He was betrayed, Jesus as the sacrificial Passover Lamb of God did not pray for the world, but for those disciples that had been given to Him by the Father (John 17:9).

- Twelve men had been given to Jesus by the Father.
- One of the twelve was given so that Scripture might be fulfilled.
- Did Judas, then, have any choice about what he would do?
- Do disciples given to Jesus so that endtime Scripture will be fulfilled have any choice about what they do? Or are they predestined to damnation?

The message taught by the greater Christian Church is one of condoned lawlessness, even to the day on which the greater Church attempts to enter God's rest. Thankfully, the greater Church poorly teaches what it doesn't understand. As a result, its message is being rejected by the generation that will constitute the majority of the harvest of firstfruits.

The fulfillment of Scripture calls for many to fall away and betray one another and hate one another (Matt 24:10). It calls for many false prophets to arise and lead many astray (*v.* 11). It calls for the love of many to grow cold (*v.* 12). And in each sentence, the “many” are disciples of Christ Jesus, or Christians. Therefore, the implication is that many converts will be drawn or called for the expressed purpose of fulfilling Scriptures that will cause *the many* to be condemned—many disciples are, thus, like Judas, in that

they are sons [or daughters] of destruction. And since few disciples will be chosen (Matt 22:14), *the many* constitutes the majority of endtime Christianity, and indicates that most Christians have been called to fulfill Scriptures about betraying brethren in a manner analogous to how Judas betrayed Jesus.

The word of the Lord that came through the prophet Jeremiah had him say that if a condemned nation turns from its evil ways, the Lord would relent of the disaster He had intended. Moving, now, from physical to spiritual, if a disciple turns from his or her lawless ways, the Father will release the disciple from being predestined to be a son or daughter of destruction. But today's lawless disciple will, with very, very few exceptions, remain lawless, convinced that if he or she were to live as a spiritual Judean—again, literally live as Jesus lived—the disciple would be *legalistic*, and by extension, would no longer be under Grace.

There really is no way for disciples foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified [when Jesus returns] to influence those disciples who have been given to Jesus for the expressed purpose of fulfilling Scriptures about brethren betraying brethren.

Two sets or categories of disciples, one the firstborn spiritual Cain, the other his righteous younger brother—both sets of disciples have been drawn by the Father. Both sets consist of disciples with spiritual life through receipt of the divine Breath of God [*Pneuma 'Agion*]; today is the day of salvation for both sets. But both sets will not be saved, or enter into the kingdom of heaven; for one set consists of hypocrites, disciples knowing to do right, knowing to keep the commandments of God, knowing God, but bent on worshipping God on their terms and in their way. This set attempts weekly to enter God's rest on the following day, the 8th-day, and this set will slay its righteous brethren when the Son of Man is revealed.

When a disciple remains in a fellowship that compromises with the laws of God, the disciple condemns him or herself to the flock doomed for slaughter—and every disciple knows whether the fellowship he or she attends compromises the Law. Really, every disciple does, for Holy Writ is not silent about what is expected of those human beings who have been born from above in this era to be special vessels, shaped by the Master Potter to fulfill Scripture.

We should not be surprised when many disciples are resurrected to condemnation (John 5:28-29); for today we see “many” who absolutely refuse to live by the law of God, which when broken in one point is broken! (Jas 2:10)

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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