

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 Hybridized Gospel*.

## Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 13, 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 Isaiah chapter 24.*

**Commentary:** The Lord will empty the earth, thereby making it desolate as mountain ranges and valleys are shaken, twisted, reformed, and the earth's remaining peoples scattered. Overpopulation will not be a problem faced in the Millennium; it is not a problem about which faithful disciples need to be presently concerned. Rather, the recovery of Israel from death, from the North Country is the more pressing problem; for the spiritual nation of Israel has made a covenant with death, making lies [falsehoods] this holy nation's refuge and shelter (Isa 28:15).

How does a person make lies and falsehoods his or her refuge? Can a disciple drawn by the Father from the world do this today? And if so, why would a disciple seek protection by gathering under an umbrella of deceit? Surely the disciple will know better than to play games with God if "God" is truly real for the disciple.

Alas, God is not real for too many Christians who attend church services for social reasons. Nor is God real for scholars who teach that apocalyptic literature such as chapter 24 is *comfort food* for the minds of oppressed peoples—that is what many scholars teach, thereby destroying the faith of naïve students attending undergraduate and graduate classes in prestigious universities. Nor is God real for the many teachers of lawlessness or iniquity within greater Christendom. For these false shepherds, Christianity is an honorable vocation at which they do not have to work overly hard while receiving the acclaim of the society they "serve."

Most of today's holy nation of spiritual Israel actually believes a hybridized gospel—the gospel of Christ cross-pollinated with Greek paganism—that when planted on good soil has made wealthy those teachers of Israel who farm iniquity. This hybridized gospel is accursed, for the earth lies defiled because spiritual Israel, instead of leading the world to the Father and Son, has transgressed the laws of God, violating His statutes, breaking the everlasting covenant (Isa 24:5) accepted at baptism when the now holy nation took judgment upon itself. Yes, judgment is today upon the household of God (1 Pet 4:17). Judgment is not on human beings who are not, or have not yet been born of Spirit. They will be judged in the great White Throne Judgment when they are born anew by resurrection from death, for judgment follows the death for every person (Heb 9:27). For disciples, baptism functions as actual death, with being raised from the baptismal pool functioning as resurrection from death. Therefore, the disciple who

today believes the hybridized gospel received through historical exegesis takes refuge in lies and shelter in falsehoods, for this bastardized gospel reflects the best thinking of paganism. It appropriates the name of Jesus; then assigns personhood to His Breath and an immortal soul to every person, before it teaches infant sons of God to erase the laws of God inscribed on hearts and minds through birth from above. It is a miracle that God has waited as long as He has before opening the windows of heaven and shaking the foundations of the earth, thereby causing the earth to reel in orbit as a drunk (Isa 24:18-20).

As hillsides of barley, humankind will be harvested during the seven endtime years of tribulation. Angels will take their sickles to the standing grain, gathering the stalks into sheaves to either be burned or to be thrashed. The gospel that has bred disciples true to Christ Jesus will produce the sound body of the Son of Man, but the hybridized gospel will produce a spiritual Cain, who slays his righteous brethren and believes he does God a favor. This perverted gospel will send those disciples who have taken refuge in lies into the lake of fire, and great will be the gnashing of teeth for who knew? Which of these disobedient disciples knew that he or she was taking shelter in falsehoods? The one who sang praise music for evangelists on Trinity television? The one who taught Sunday school lessons about the Rapture? The one who borrowed against the equity of his or her home to send an even larger offering to help purchase a satellite network? Maybe the one who knew that Saturday was the Sabbath but who has been the pastor of a Sunday-observing congregation since graduating from seminary? How about a Messianic Jew who is the pastor of a Sabbatarian fellowship and of a Sunday-observing fellowship, and who lives in the parsonage for the Sunday fellowship? The Tribulation will be about the final sorting of seed, with those who have built their lives and characters on the hybridized gospel taking upon themselves the tattoo of the Cross, thereby marking themselves for the second death.

Apocalyptic literature isn't *Southern comfort food for the mind*, but a long-beforehand warning to repent and live within the boundaries of the laws of God. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of apocalyptic literature not of God was produced in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries CE, but then, that was an effective means for the Adversary to convince teachers of Israel to devalue all such writings and warnings.

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*The reader should now read Zephaniah chapter 1.*

**Commentary:** One of the minor prophets that Christians easily overlook, Zephaniah was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, a poet, and apparently of the royal family. The extent of his influence on Josiah, Judah's last righteous king, cannot be determined, but his prophecy seems to have been received and recorded before Josiah's religious reforms of 621 BCE. His prophecy focuses on the day of the Lord, and would have had an ante-fulfillment in Nebuchadnezzar's sacking of Jerusalem and emptying of the surrounding country of Israelites.

Again, in Hebraic poetics repetition of thought forms the darkness/light metaphoric structure that establishes the formation of typological exegesis: in verse 2 of chapter 1, the sweeping away of everything from the face of the earth by *YHWH* forms the physical fulfillment of the physical taking of life in verse 3. Together, verses 2 & 3 form the natural fulfillment of the natural cutting off of false religions in verses 4 through 6—the destruction of the earth and the taking away of physical breath forms the visible

application of what God will do spiritually during the Tribulation, just as the cutting off of idolatrous priests who offer sacrifice to Baal and swear by Milcom forms the visible application of denying teachers of iniquity in the day of their judgments. Thus, the correspondence is established that the physical destruction of the earth and the taking of life equates to the spiritual purging of the holy nation of Israel when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:30). And Israelites are to be silent for the day of the Lord is near (Zeph 1:7).

What should be simple can be made confusing by not-comprehended analysis: the day of the Lord, a day of thick darkness and gloom, didn't come with Nebuchadnezzar's armies, or with Roman legions in 70 CE. Certainly, there was gloom suspended about Jerusalem throughout Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the city, but the taking of the captives to Babylonia when Jerusalem fell wasn't God sweeping everything from the face of the earth. That day hasn't yet come. No such day has occurred since the time of Noah. Everything has gone on as it has since the time of disciples' forefathers. Thus, biblical scholars discount threats of destruction contained in godly apocalyptic literature, as does most of the Christian laity. Who wants to believe that the stern, harsh deity of the Old Testament is the same deity who came as the man Jesus of Nazareth? Certainly not the Christian who teaches that because the Church is now under a *dispensation of Grace* disciples do not have to keep the laws of God. This teacher of iniquity must do mental gymnastics to get around Jesus' teaching about not believing that He came to abolish the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:17-19)...Jesus didn't come to abolish what Isaiah or Zephaniah wrote about sweeping away life from the face of the earth. He came to establish or confirm or validate the reason why God can justly sweep away life, emptying the earth that He will cause to reel in orbit like a staggering drunk.

The day of the Lord is either near, or still far in the future. If the Bible is the Word of God, then no other option exists, for the Bible contains apocalyptic literature that promises a day of darkness and gloom, of ruin and destruction—a day when humankind will be harvested as a farmer harvests his or her fields.

How does it feel to know that you will be harvested as grain is harvested? Does it make you feel a little less important, a little less full of yourself? Does it make your 401K investments of little worth? What about those lies you told (and continue to tell) when justifying how you defrauded your brother? What do you think? Can you mock God and get away with doing so? Suppose there is no God? That might be your best hope; for if there is no God, then when you die, it's all over. Maybe no one will ever know what you did to get where you are—and that knowledge can die with you.

But you wouldn't be in a Sabbath service if you really believed there was no God. You're here because you know that there is a God who will not be forever mocked by a hybridized gospel that promises salvation for disobedience. You believe or at least strongly suspect that the day of the Lord is near in that the circular logic of the time of the end coming when sealed prophecies are unsealed (and sealed prophecies will be understood when the time of the end comes) has been interrupted by typological exegesis and rereading prophetic scriptures through the darkness/light, physical/spiritual metaphoric paradigm.

If humankind has arrived at that generic period identified as *the time of the end*, then the day of the Lord is now near—and if the day of the Lord is near, then the cutting

off of humanity from the face of the earth is a real-time event that a single generation will see to its conclusion. Yet, most human beings will not believe that catastrophic events will shortly come to pass. Most will believe that nothing will greatly change, that since of the days of their fathers the doomsayers have prophesied destruction but life has continued, with glitches, yes, but with survivable obstacles...the day of the Lord will not be survivable for those human beings who practice lawlessness; for those who are in rebellion against the Lord; for those who will not live by the commandments of God; for those who profane the Sabbaths of God. Human thought, human artifices will not save human beings. It will be God who brings the destruction, and it will be God from His supra-dimensional heavenly realm who will save.

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*The reader should now read Zephaniah chapters 2 & 3.*

**Commentary:** The day of the Lord is a day of terror for those who are out of covenant with God. It is a day of godly anger that is as destructive to humankind as is combining a field of grain to the ripe grain stalks, dead on their feet. And this is the image that needs to be remembered: ripe grain is no longer vibrantly living grain, but dried up and stooping. It is still standing, or it couldn't be combined. But the stalks have served their purpose of bringing forth seed. All that remains is the harvesting and thrashing of sheaves, with the deformed or hybridized seed discarded, and burned so that it cannot reproduce.

The humble of the land, those disciples that sought or seek righteousness, will be hidden on the day of destruction and anger (Zeph 2:3). Hybrid disciples will, however, take the brunt of the Lord's anger, for these are disciples who pledge allegiance to Jesus, yet worship the Cross, having made a covenant with death (i.e., the Cross).

If Jesus had been hung, would disciples venerate the gallows? If Jesus had been shot, would disciples venerate *Saturday Night Specials*? So why venerate the means by which Jesus was killed? Why venerate the cross-shaped fourth beast, the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, the personification of Death?

Truly, hybridized Christendom has made a covenant with death, and has made lies its refuge and falsehood its shelter. The gospel it delivers pleases, for it promises salvation through Jesus dying on the Cross—disciples do nothing. And to the extent that this gospel goes, this gospel is as true as hybrid corn seed is corn seed. The way of salvation has been secured. When a person is drawn from the world and born from above through receipt of the Holy Spirit, the person has life in the heavenly realm, and is as such, saved. This newly born infant son of God is swaddled in the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness so no sin is imputed to this son of God just as no disobedience is imputed to a newly born human infant. Now this infant is to grow in grace and knowledge—it must grow in grace, for it becomes larger as it matures, thereby needing a larger garment to cover its nakedness before God. And this son of God, like a human toddler learns to walk, must learn to walk uprightly before God. And herein is where the hybridized gospel doesn't produce "true" seed: if a son of God is a hypocrite, knowing to do right but not doing so, this son will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20 with Matt chap 23), but will die the second death. Thus, there is a criterion by which disciples will be judged to determine whether they are or are not hypocrites. Natural Israelites were condemned by Moses, upon whom the nation set its hope (John 5:45 &

Deu 31:26-27). The world is condemned by the natural law within every person. And disciples are condemned by the laws of God written on hearts and minds through receipt of the Holy Spirit. So the disciple who does good, does what these inner laws command will pass from death to life (John 5:28-29), for judgment is today upon disciples. Disciples who do evil, who do those things that are contrary to the laws of God will be resurrected to condemnation...there is no *dispensation of grace* that allows disciples to willfully sin. Rather, there is the learning of obedience under the cloak of Jesus' righteousness, where no sin is imputed. If there is no growth, no learning of obedience, then there is no overcoming of the flesh; there will be no glorification. So the hybridized gospel looks like the real thing, but doesn't breed true disciples. Instead, this bastardized gospel produces the hated firstborn son of a spiritual Rebekah, and verses 1 through 4 of Zephaniah chapter 3 aptly describes this hated child of God as the harvest stands with bowed heads.

Zephaniah concludes with the good news of the endtime harvest.

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