

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 prophets and prophecy.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of July 18, 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.

The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Jeremiah chapters 21, 23, & 25.

Commentary: Three chapters is quite a bit of reading, but prophets and prophecy is the least understood of the mysteries of the God—it is only by the eloquence of the prophet that the words of God will be recognized as His words and not the words of a man (or woman) before a thing comes to pass. For until a thing happens, such as Babylon sacking Jerusalem, the true prophet of God is indistinguishable from the false prophet: both speak of future events. And it is easy to sell the emperor a new suit of clothes if others agree that the cut of the fabric compliments the emperor.

It is easy to pass a false reading of a prophecy off as true if the false prophet can get enough others to support his (or her) falseness. It is easy to pass off any false teaching as true if false teachers can be found that will support the teaching. It is especially easy to pass off the wisdom of paganism as the wisdom of God when people want to believe that they were already godly before being called by God. And that is what happened to Christendom: 1st-Century Greek converts found in Jesus the wisdom of Plato, while 2nd-Century converts found in the scribblings of 1st-Century converts the wisdom of God. By the 4th-Century, Christian bishops had sold the Emperor a suit of clothes that was “Christian” in name only, a suit without substance, a suit sewn from magic fabric that could only be seen by these bishops.

The Emperor was naked, except for his cloak of political power. Immediately after the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE), Constantine slew family members who might become political rivals; so the Emperor, in his new clothes, revealed to future generations that he was of the Adversary, and was an active agent of the Adversary post Nicea. He was not of God, and could not be of God as long as he was the Roman Emperor. And it is this concept—that a governing authority is not of God—that lies concealed in Jeremiah's prophecies, which introduces complications into what Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans (chap 13).

To inhabitants of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (a year before Jerusalem fell), it was inconceivable that Nebuchadnezzar could be used by God as an agent of their destruction, which is what Jeremiah was proclaiming. Earlier, it seemed certain that when Nebuchadnezzar temporarily lifted the siege of Jerusalem because of the advance of Egyptian forces, God would support His people and His king over His people. Hence, Jeremiah was imprisoned as a traitor, someone destroying the will of the people to fight against the Chaldeans.

In Jeremiah's prophecies are two governing authorities (actually, three, with Pharaoh being the third) and the authority that would seem to be of God (King Zedekiah) is not whereas the one that is least likely to be of God (King Nebuchadnezzar) is being used by the Lord as His agent.

Paul wrote,

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Rom 13:1–7)

An Israelite in Jerusalem could not be subject to both Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar during the siege. Both are governing authorities; therefore, according to Paul both are of God, for no authority exists except from God or instituted by God. Both Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar, then, would have been servants of God, with it humanly seeming more likely that Zedekiah was the actual servant of God at the time and Nebuchadnezzar was of the Adversary.

The above passage from Paul's epistle to the Romans has long been used to support Constantine being an agent of God here on earth, but Nebuchadnezzar as an agent of God was used by God to destroy Jerusalem because of the *polis'* continued lawlessness—and Constantine as an agent of God was used to bury from sight the corpse that was the Body of Christ. God used Constantine to remove the last vestiges of the sect of the Nazarenes, and to make sure this corpse stayed buried until God was ready to restore life to the Church.

When Israel wanted a king like the nations around Israel had, the Lord told Samuel,

Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for *they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them*. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and

servicing other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them. (1 Sam 8:7–9 emphasis added)

- Asking for a king was a rejection of God by Israel;
- Voting for a president to rule over the disciple is a rejection of God, a truism that will be initially hard to accept for isn't the disciple a citizen of whatever country, and as a good citizen should the disciple not vote in matters that affect the disciple?

Who in 6th-Century BCE Jerusalem would have selected Nebuchadnezzar as their king as opposed to Zedekiah? If inhabitants of Jerusalem would have asked to vote for either Zedekiah or Nebuchadnezzar, which king would have won the election? Who among Israel would not have fought for Zedekiah and for Jerusalem remaining an independent *polis*? But who was it that was chosen by God to rule over the remains of Israel?

What Paul wrote about all governing authority being of God is true, but doesn't always seem true when that governing authority opposes its citizens and is a terror to good works. The loyal Israelite manning the walls of Jerusalem certainly would not have recognized Nebuchadnezzar as anything other than a terror to good works, for this soldier knew what to expect if Nebuchadnezzar won. The soldier's choice would have been to desert and be labeled a traitor and maybe live as a dog in Babylon, or fight and probably be killed, but killed as a loyal soldier to Jerusalem and to his God. Certainly no soldier worth his salt was going to listen to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, relaying the words of the Lord, said,

Behold, I [*YHWH*] will turn back the weapons of war that are in your [Israel's] hands and with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city. I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath. And I will strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They shall die of a great pestilence. Afterward, declares the Lord, I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people in this city who survive the pestilence, sword, and famine into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their lives. He shall strike them down with the edge of the sword. He shall not pity them or spare them or have compassion. (21:4–7)

Again, was Zedekiah not a governing authority appointed by God as Paul said all authorities were? Was Zedekiah a terror to good conduct? Would the Israelite who resisted Zedekiah have resisted whom God had appointed, and thereby incur judgment? Within the walls of Jerusalem, that would have been the case, would it not?

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, the world as he knew it was not ruled by competing authorities, but by Nero, who was not a terror to the average Roman or to soldiers in the eastern portion of the empire. But Nero became a

terror to Christians of questionable theology. And history, being unable to distinguish genuine disciples from false, doesn't disclose enough about those whom Nero persecuted to say more about those disciples whom Nero terrorized ... maybe those disciples were like the soldiers manning the walls of Jerusalem during Nebuchadnezzar's siege? Maybe they had left God, their teachers having mistaught them the mysteries of God? Maybe Nero was like Nebuchadnezzar, an agent of God used to destroy Israel (now a nation circumcised of heart) because of lying prophets and false teachers?

Ultimately, this reading will address why biblical prophecy is given ... before then, the question of governing authorities being appointed by God needs to be developed: newly elected U.S. President Obama recently said, *Elections have consequences*, when he began a program of unimaginable spending, a program that will most likely bankrupt an already bankrupt (fiscally as well as morally) nation. However it isn't Obama and his liberal cohorts' politics that will send the United States into the abyss, but the poverty of character that is worldwide, a poverty that will send all nations to their destruction; for the acts of every person have consequences, immediate and future. The Kenyans who were quick to scoop up gasoline from an overturned tanker were fried alive: poverty was blamed for their actions, and for the police official who was taking bribes so that those who could afford to pay him could steal gasoline. But it wasn't fiscal poverty that got these Kenyans killed; it was their willingness to take what did not belong to them. And the Kenyans who died were no worse than the union leaders and community organizations that turned out the vote for liberal Democrats in the U.S. 2008 elections, with these liberals promising not to raise taxes on the poor or working middle class but to sock it to the wealthy, thereby pinning the nation's entire financial structure to how a tiny percentage of the nation's population prospers or doesn't prosper, with the idea that the wealthy should involuntarily provide for the poor forming the heart of nearly a century's old progressive tax structure that is morally supported as "just" by an electorate that will personally benefit from its generational theft.

But no progressive tax structure is *just*. Every progressive tax structure is morally wrong even though Paul says to pay taxes to whom taxes are owed; for every progressive tax structure is a respecter of persons, taxing one person differently than it taxes another, favoring one person over another ... it is just as wrong to show favor to the poor and it is to show favor to the rich. A progressive tax system is an unjust set of balances or measures. And the governing authority that implements a progressive tax rate is a terror to good works, for this governing authority punishes achievers and encourages cheating, rewarding those who can best manipulate the *system*.

By giving the poor not quite enough to support life, American social programs harm the moral character of those who benefit from these programs. These programs virtually require that a recipient lie on forms, earn money under the table, and deceive social workers who attempt to audit behavior. Instead of building up the moral character of recipients, thus causing recipients to strive to keep the precepts of the law, these programs grind recipients into social fodder to be fed into political machines that crank forth aldermen and councilmen and

community organizers, each needing high-cost dietary supplements (i.e., cash) to maintain their enlarged egos.

In 2004, Obama delivered a speech to the Democratic National Convention in which he eloquently said that he was his brother's keeper, but he has a brother that lives in poverty in Kenya while he lives in the White House. If he were truly his brother's keeper, he would extend help to his brother; he is certainly well able to do so. Plus, he has an aunt that lives in public housing in Boston while he entertains other world leaders. Surely he could invite his aunt to dinner once in a while.

Paul wrote, "For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom 2:13). It is not the one who eloquently delivers the words of Cain who will be justified before God, but the one who shows that the work of the law (to love brother and neighbor as self) is written on his or her heart. It is the one who quietly shows that he is his brother's keeper who shall be saved either as one of the firstfruits or in the great White Throne Judgment.

In vision, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was told that the Lord sets over the kingdom of men the lowliest or basest of men (Dan 4:17), and a quick survey of world leaders in the 20th and now 21st Centuries reveals that this is the case ... but Paul said that every governing authority was of God. If, now, God sets the basest of men over human kingdoms, God doesn't seek high moral character in these men (and women); so not being a terror to good works while being the basest of men presents a challenge to human kings, emperors and presidents—and a challenge to those who would call, say, President Obama the basest of men, for how is honor and respect given to one whom God has identified as the lowliest of the low? How does one show respect to a president that disowns his brother?

Many would-be prophets and prophecy pundits use biblical prophecy as an astrological chart by which they attempt to plot the course of nations, but all of them seem to forget that until the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation, all authority in this world comes through the present prince of this world, Satan the devil, the reason why the Lord sets the basest of men over kingdoms and principalities ... is the preceding stated plainly enough to be understood? The Lord sets the basest of men over the kingdoms of this world, for all of these kingdoms, nations, and principalities have been given to the Adversary when the Lord drove Adam from the Garden of God. Righteous men (and women) cannot faithfully serve the Adversary, or under the Adversary. They are stifled by the disobedience in which they are surrounded.

Yes, a person of high moral character is stymied by the womb of disobedience in which this person fights, as if in a paper bag, against the moral failures of world and community leaders. Therefore, it is only the basest of men (and women) who are able to rise as scum to the surface of humanity to be world leaders. Understand, these basest of men—with Obama being a prime example—do not consider themselves as scumbags even when a biological half-brother lives in abject poverty (the brother would be an embarrassment so he is left in a hut to fend for himself, which is perhaps better than being killed as many *brothers* of world despots were killed in earlier generations). These base men consider

themselves as *special, privileged*, often *God's gift to the world*, whereas they are as Pharaoh was in Egypt.

But really, do disciples whose focus should be on God and the Kingdom of God need to know which worldly despot will do what, whether it is to steal an election as has occurred in the United States or to rig an election as recently happened in Iran, when it comes to these disciples' personal behavior? Do disciples whose citizenship should be in the Jerusalem above need to be concerned about the course of nations here on earth? A question for American disciples: is Obama your president? You continually hear his political opponents say that *he is my president*, but is he your president? Did you vote for or against him? If you did vote, then he is your president and your citizenship is in this world; for by voting either for or against him, you rejected God as your king. You made yourself an agent of the Adversary in helping select the basest of men to rule over you. You made yourself into a soldier manning Jerusalem's walls during Nebuchadnezzar's siege, in that you are fighting against what God will cause to happen and that is the toppling of every government of men, all of which have been organized under the Adversary, the present prince of this world.

Disciples don't need biblical prophecy to know that America and Americans cannot spend its/their way out of debt; likewise, Christians cannot practice sinning and become righteous. Spending is spending, and sin is sin. More governmental spending doesn't lead to more prosperity, for the government (any government) does nothing to generate money other than to sell its assets, tax its citizens, or take what belongs to other peoples. So government spending comes from money that has not been earned through the production of goods, but from a percentage of its citizens' prosperity, this percentage hopefully being small enough as to not interfere with the orderly production of goods.

If money were like water, a good example of governmental spending would be what occurs in Eastern Idaho, where the Snake River is used for irrigation—flood, hand lines, or pivot point—and has been on occasion pumped dry for a ten mile stretch near Blackfoot, leaving dead fish on the gravel riverbed, a river management miscue that can be likened to a government going bankrupt. Water taken from the Snake River, as expended irrigation water, enters the ground throughout eastern Idaho's potato growing district and trickles down to encounter a wide lava flow that prevents further downward movement, and this irrigation water originally taken from the Snake upstream from American Falls reemerges in the Thousand Springs area near Twin Falls, where the Snake River is replenished and returns to being a river rather than a desert slough. If money were like the water of the Snake River, ideal government spending would be like irrigation waters, with spending entering the economy where it trickles down to a basalt shield that prevents further downward movement and directs ground water westward into the Thousand Spring area. If this underground lava flow didn't exist, the water would have to be pumped up from a deep aquifer before it could be reused, prompting a one time use of this water, but as it is, the farms from Twin Falls to the Oregon border are able to take water from the replenished Snake River and use the same water as farms in the Rexburg, Idaho Falls area (near the Wyoming border) previously used.

What if a large amount of additional irrigation water was applied to the fields of Idaho, would more potatoes be grown? Perhaps, but certainly potatoes could be planted on more acres, which would result in more potatoes being harvested, but potatoes for which no market exists so the price per hundredweight would drop from, say, \$20 to \$6 (historic prices), or down to the point where farmers would again burn their potatoes in fields rather than send them to market. The additional water would harm the potato farmers, as more than necessary governmental spending harms the nation's citizens.

At some point, national or international markets for potatoes will be saturated. Additional production will depress prices so that no one makes any money, but that additional water did what it was supposed to do in growing additional potatoes.

If additional government spending of debt-based money occurs, more debt exists ... that is simple enough for everyone to understand. The U.S. dollar is a debt-based commodity. Its value is now based on its scarcity or its abundance, not on the number of grains of silver it represents as was previously the case: when the economy has more dollars available to buy the same amount of goods and services than were previously purchased, prices rise as the value of the currency falls, and the money, like the Snake River, flows westward where the money returns to China from where it originally came as loans to the American government. The idea is that in the flow of money, everyone prospers, just as homeowners have prospered when investing in real estate since WWII, going from owing a small mortgage on a "starter" home to owing an amount that cannot possibly be paid for a home that requires both husband and wife to hold fulltime jobs to pay lifetime mortgage payments.

Wait a minute: if more debt-based dollars pursue the same amount of goods, prices rise as debt rises, but the dollar shrinks in value so long-term contracts are paid off in nearly worthless money, the reason why a government would choose to deliberately seek fiscal inflation. But isn't this morally stealing from those who initially loaned the government money? It is, isn't it? So isn't the present heavy borrowing by the Obama administration a precursor to intentional inflation and government-from-government theft, with each of these governing authorities being of God? Or is it that only the United States is of God, and Communist China is of the Adversary—this seems to lie at the core of Evangelical Christendom's world view.

The society that promotes moral compromises in its citizens will also compromise moral obligations.

The artificial prosperity that permits homeowners to live in houses six, ten, twelve times their annual incomes also enslaves the homeowners so that they are not free but are slaves to the debt-based economy ... some will argue that they are not "really" slaves but freely and voluntarily entered into contracts from which bankruptcy is their most probable escape. And that is partially true. But if spending were compared to sinning—an association exists—as the practice of sinning spawns industries based on lawlessness, from pornography to Halloween to Christmas celebration, spending spawns industries based upon consumer credit, with the largest of industries being the ones previously mentioned. Businesses orient themselves around holiday spending, with none of these

holidays being of God and all of these holidays being based upon pagan antiquity. Soft porn is used to sell everything from hamburgers to new cars; so from Wal-Mart to the local adult bookstore, everyone prospers when consumers spend beyond their means, everyone that is except consumers who voluntarily enter into fiscal bondage.

But is prosperity based on debt, or debt-based dollars real? Does the person who has ten million in assets and ten million in indebtedness have as much money as, say, an Amish farmer who has a thousand dollars in his pocket and his property taxes paid? Certainly the one who has ten million in assets will seem to have much more than is possessed by an Amish farmer.

Is money only a way to keep score in the game of life ... what if life was not a game? What if a person really being his or her brother's keeper determines whether the person lives or dies? What if President Obama's life depended on the life of his brother in Kenya? Would he be as cavalier about his brother's poverty?

Spiritually, President Obama, even as an agent of the Adversary, can turn from doing what is dishonorable and do what is honorable by caring for his brother, but that is not who he has become as he takes Chicago thug politics to the world stage. But his election was apparently necessary to bring this age to an end; for when the second Passover occurs, the world will not have the financial means to recover from the below-the-belt blow that God delivers to the hierarchal kingdom of Babylon. And democracy must be shown to be a failed political ideology ... that's not what Americans or Europeans want to hear, but that is the truth. And telling Americans that democracy is of the Adversary will make a prophecy pundit in the United States about as popular as Jeremiah was in Jerusalem during the siege, but whenever the citizens of a democracy discover that they can legally steal the assets of the wealthy by voting, it is only the moral character of these citizens—their refraining from voting for bread and circuses—that permits the democracy to continue. So the fiscal poverty of a democracy becomes a reflection of the nation's moral poverty; for no king or tyrant spent the nation's wealth. The people themselves spent it in voting for leaders who promised to make the rich provide bread to the poor.

Almost without exception, Sabbatarian disciples (if they voted in the 2008 election) voted against Obama and were as soldiers manning the walls of Jerusalem during the siege. They were on the wrong side of what God intended; for it is now apparent that Obama was placed in office to bring the world to its financial knees and thereby set the stage for the second Passover when he will be as the Pharaoh was. The lure of investing in U.S. securities is too great for moneylenders to resist as America sops up the world's disposable cash, money that will be needed by every governing authority following the second Passover liberation of Israel.

How does God set the basest of men over the kingdoms of this world? Does He hand-select each of these men (or women), or does He allow the Adversary to set in place political machinery that will assure that only the basest of men rise to the surface?

In the case of the United States, the nation gets the leaders that reflect the nation's character at the time, democracy's only redeeming feature.

Returning to prosperity derived from government spending: if every human being is born into this world as a bondservant to sin (is born into this world in slavery to the present prince of this world), and is thus consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), then no government of this world is presently of God. All are of the Adversary, with what Paul wrote in Romans chapter 13 about all authority being from God being necessarily stated. Once a person is born of God, the person is no longer the bondservant of sin but is free from bondage to Satan and his agents, a reality that could be construed to mean that the king or emperor or president no longer has any authority over the disciple. Paul needed to make sure that disciples did not mistake their spiritual freedom for political freedom from human rulers—

One of the major expectations in the 1st-Century (and into the 2nd-Century) was the coming of Judaism's Messiah to deliver the nation from its oppressors. Jesus was this Messiah, and even the expectation that John the Baptist apparently had (Matt 11:3) of the Messiah was that Jesus would lead a rebellion against Roman rule. But as Paul seemed to understand, human rulers derived their authority from the prince of this world who derived his authority from the Lord having given him humanity as his bondservants in a manner expressed by Paul when he commanded the saints at Corinth to deliver the man who was with his father's wife to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved when judgments are revealed (1 Cor 5:5). The Lord delivered Adam and his descendants to the Adversary as slaves (bondservants of disobedience) for the destruction of the flesh so that some might be saved when judgments are revealed, and it is this delivery to the Adversary that has been the subject of the two previous Sabbath readings.

The "freedom" that has come to humanity with democracy is negated by debt-based economics that descend from governments spending more money than the government takes in ... if a person must borrow money for first a house, then a car, and eventually for groceries, the person is not free but is under obligation to the lender; the person is the bondservant of the lender, regardless of whether that lender is a company store or many banking institutions. Early 20th-Century American coal mines and fish canneries kept their work force in tact through providing company housing and credit at the company store. Mills of all types seemed to be in cahoots with local lenders as these lenders gave to mill workers so much credit that workers were not free to quit the mill or to even take a day off, but vied for overtime. Free Americans became wage-slaves, punching time clocks as compliant servants, each imprisoned by a psychology derived from "the democracy of goods" that allowed the poor of the nation to eat the same breakfast cereal as the rich and brush their teeth with the same toothpaste, with the poor becoming debtors to the rich and the rich becoming debtors to governments that promulgated debt-based economies.

If a person accepts a gift from another, especially as in a potlatch gift, the person receiving the gift is under obligation to the one who gives the gift (a major cause of political corruption). Although the person receiving the gift thinks that he or she is free, the simple act of receiving support from another places the person under a psychological obligation to the other; so the poor receiving support from the government intuitively causes the poor to feel an obligation to

the government, an obligation that morally corrupts the poor while keeping the government in power for as long as support is given ... being *my brother's keeper* bestows upon both brothers mutual obligations, which people and disciples can keep but which governments by their very nature cannot long fulfill. Instead of a brother to brother relationship, any relationship with a government is that of master to serf, even in a democracy when surrender of privacy rights is necessary to get a *clunker rebate*.

Therefore, the implied freedom of an enlightened democracy is compromised by the economic system of that democracy so that the *free* are not really free in this world, but as long as they sincerely believe that they are “free” they will not tug against the bonds that imprison them in disobedience and make them the slaves of the Adversary. It is only when they have been “liberated” from sin that they must be told as Paul wrote that they are not yet free to form their own governments—they won’t be free from the governments of the Adversary prior to when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man; for when the Lord drove Adam from the Garden, He delivered humankind to the Adversary, who does not have to steal or capture every generation of human beings (or win them in a crap game) but “owns” all sons of disobedience until a ransom is paid for one of these sons that he owns. Adam and his descendants were given to the present prince of this world as his slaves; for it was through Adam’s unbelief that death entered the world, not through Eve’s disobedience.

In order to understand what is happening here on earth, a disciple must understand that every person is born a slave to the Adversary, in whose person is the personification of disobedience (i.e., sin). It is not politically correct to mention color in the same context as slavery, for slavery remains a heinous scar on the American landscape, but death is spiritually a synonym for darkness: every person, worldwide, is born into death, into darkness, as the slave of the Adversary. No person is born free to keep the commandments until born of God (a second birth). Thus, involuntarily, American Federalists were active agents of the Adversary when the U.S. Constitution was written: the perceived greatness of the Constitution comes with a significant flaw, slavery and black males being counted as six-tenths of a person. But because the United States was a nation formed under the Adversary, the Constitution could not be without flaw. And when one flaw was corrected, another had to be introduced or developed ... any document that is “read” in such a way as to give social cover to killing the nation’s most vulnerable citizens, the unborn, is fundamentally flawed, but it isn’t a found right to privacy that is the central flaw in the Constitution; it is democracy itself, and the right of the people to take the assets of one segment of the population for the support of another segment. For if the wealth of the rich can be taken for the support of the poor, the lives of the poor can be taken for the defense of the rich—a military draft can be structured so that only the sons of the poor are entrapped by it.

Ancient Israel’s prejudice against the *Uncircumcised* was roughly comparable to White America’s prejudice against Black America throughout the 19th and early 20th Centuries, with the rebound of this prejudice aiding in the election of Barack Obama as U.S. President (the rebound causing the election of Obama to be White

America's anti-prejudice statement, with this statement having more importance than Obama's Marxist politics).

But Obama's election reflects what happened to Christianity in the 1st and 2nd Centuries, when Greeks took over the sect of the Nazarenes ... the extreme prejudice of the *Circumcised* against the *Uncircumcised* ran out of energy as more and more Greek converts accepted Christ Jesus as their personal savior, with few if any of these converts truly born of God — the ideology Israel received from Moses, like America's foundational precepts, was *reinterpreted* and *redefined* and *rewritten* until it was no longer of Moses but was an extension of Greek paganism. Thus, the Body of Christ died just as Jesus' physical body died; for when the Father no longer draws individuals from this world (John 6:44, 65), giving to this individuals His breath (πνεῦμα θεοῦ), then with the physical death of those whom He had previously drawn from this world came the death of the Church. Additional converts to *Christianity* would not know that they were not truly born of God: all that would be noticed is that the age of miracles came to an end, with the age of miracles returning when the Body is restored to life.

- The death of the Church was historically evident when miracles ceased.
- The Church will have been restored to life when public miracles resume.
- Thus, by the presence or absence of public miracles, a disciple can historically track the living Church, with the Church being returned to life following the second Passover liberation of Israel from sin and death.

There are spiritually ignorant Christians, many of whom hold theology degrees from major and minor divinity schools, that say the Passover occurred and is in Israel's past so endtime disciples don't have to keep the Passover ... how many prophets supported King Zedekiah? How many agreed with Jeremiah?

Even through this reading is becoming long and three chapters were read at its beginning, consider the following:

And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the Lord." Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king." But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?" And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so." Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah." Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron and said, "Thus says the Lord, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" And all the prophets prophesied

so and said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the Lord will give it into the hand of the king."

And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." But Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak." And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go up and triumph; the Lord will give it into the hand of the king." But the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, 'These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.'" And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.' Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has declared disaster for you." (1 Kings 22:5–23)

Who told the truth? The four hundred prophets that encouraged King Ahab to make war against the king of Syria, or Miciah? And if Miciah told the truth about Ahab being killed—and Ahab was slain in battle against the king of Syria—then did Miciah tell the truth about the Lord having sent a lying spirit to the four hundred prophets of Israel? And if Miciah told the truth about the Lord having sent a lying spirit to the four hundred, then could the Lord send a lying spirit upon the many prophets and prophecy pundits that add Rome, the Roman Empire, and the Roman Church to the previously sealed and secret visions of Daniel? And if a lying spirit has come over the many prophets and prophecy pundits within Christendom and Judaism, then is one prophet enough to deliver the message God wants delivered at the end of the age?

But picking up what Paul wrote about all governing authority being of God, was King Ahab not then of God? Was the Syrian king not of God? Certainly the Syrian king would be used by God to remove Ahab from his throne. So we return to a situation very different than the one Paul addressed when he wrote his epistle to the Romans—and the only conclusion that can be drawn is that disciples are not to participate in this world's politics, that God will set over disciples those who will either protect or persecute disciples, and disciples are to respond by staying or fleeing. Disciples do not need to know which nation will do

what in advance of the nation doing whatever; for God will take care of those who are His, even though He will periodically prune them, which usually means losing physical goods, or those things or individuals that compete with God for the disciple's attention.

God's decision to deliver Jerusalem into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar wouldn't have been interpreted during the siege as God setting His governing authority over Israel ... a prophet was needed to clarify who was of God and who wasn't. But no one needs biblical prophecy to know that a nuclear armed Iran poses risk to the modern State of Israel as well as to every other nation in the world; no one needs biblical prophecy to know that a nation cannot spend its way out of debt, that the present fiscal policies of the United States are destined to cause the demise of the nation. Biblical prophecy isn't needed to know that all or most life on earth could be lost to an asteroid strike or to the eruption of a super volcano or to a gamma ray burst. But biblical prophecy is needed to know that there will be a second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death, with all uncovered (by the blood of the Lamb of God) firstborn human beings struck down as the firstborn of Egyptians and their livestock were struck down in Egypt three and a half millennia ago; for the death of firstborn and not second or later born human beings cannot be predicted by earthly events or knowledge. There is no logical justification for the death of all uncovered firstborns and not the death of others, other than these deaths are acts of God.

What is it that men cannot know without biblical prophecy? Men can know the things of this world, but they cannot know the things that occur in the heavenly realm or in that portion of the heavenly realm within the bottomless pit (the Abyss), for human beings (i.e., flesh and blood) cannot enter heaven to make observations or to take measurements.

Prophecies such as Nostradamus' Quatrains are worthless when it comes to understanding future events: they are too vague to affect the course of human behavior, and even if accurately foretelling events, they can only from hindsight be applied to the events, *old lion* and *young lion* notwithstanding. And it is to affect behavior that biblical prophecies are given—

Understand, biblical prophecy is given for only one reason: to affect behavior. Jeremiah told the people of Judah,

For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, saying, "Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm." Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. (Jer 25:3–7)

The Lord sent prophets to Israel to cause the nation to turn from its evil (unbelieving) ways: Israel's unbelief provoked the Lord to anger, thereby causing Him to harm the nation in an effort to establish belief.

Is that a viable premise? Can a person (a nation is a person grown large) be persuaded to believe another through fear of the other? Can one person compel good behavior in another through doing harm to the person in whom good behavior is desired? Does spanking a child work? Spanking is doing harm to another in an attempt to promote good behavior, is it not? And modern child psychologists contend that spanking doesn't work; so was the Lord doomed to failure when trying to compel good behavior from Israel through sending afflictions upon the nation?

When the men of Nineveh heard the preaching of Jonah—when the men of Nineveh heard Jonah, a man they recognized as a spokesman for their god Dagon, a man spewed out of the mouth of the great fish, declare to them, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jonah 3:4), the people of Nineveh believed God. The city from the king down humbled itself before God and turned from its evil ways and from violence so that perchance God would repent of what He proclaimed and the city might not perish.

Why would Israel not believe the prophets, spokesmen for the Lord their God, when the men of Nineveh believed a man (a Hebrew even) whom they saw as a spokesman for their god Dagon? Was it that so many came in the Lord's name, claiming to be His spokesmen? Is it that four hundred prophets delivering the same message are more believable than one prophet? Is it that prophecy pundits in four hundred (or four thousand) denominations are more believable than one person saying something contrary to what the *many* teach?

The prophecy of Jonah did not contain an “or else” clause, but there was an implied *or else* in that, prophecy can fail if the purpose of the prophecy is served (the purpose being to affect behavior) with the delivery of the prophecy. With Israel, however, prophecies do not fail for ancient Israel in its actions formed the shadow and type of the Christian Church. Only if the Church turned from its lawless ways could ancient Israel have turned from its lawless ways. But prophecies delivered to ancient Israel seem to Christians to have no application to the Church; thus, as God delivered ancient Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, God delivered the Church into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa chap 14). And with the delivery of ancient Israel into the hand of the earthly king of Babylon, the prophecies of Jeremiah were established and the Church's fate was sealed—the Church would be delivered into the hand of the prince of this world for the destruction of the flesh in a manner declared by Paul when he commanded the saints at Corinth to deliver the man who was with his father wife to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (again, 1 Cor 5:5).

Now, the reader must proceed slowly: if all governing authorities are from God and if biblical prophecy is given to affect behavior, then what purpose is served in sealing and keeping secret a prophecy? Clearly, the visions of Daniel were sealed and kept secret until the time of the end: Daniel 12:4, 9; 8:26. These visions are for the end of the age: Daniel 10:14; 8:17; 2:29, 44–45. ... If the visions of Daniel were sealed and kept secret until the time of the end, and if these words that Daniel received are true, then his visions could not be understood in the 1st-

Century BCE or CE, nor in the 19th or 20th Centuries. They could not reveal governing authorities or affect behavior earlier than the time of the end if they were sealed until the end of the age. Thus, every “reading” of Daniel’s visions prior to the 21st-Century (if the time of the end comes in the 21st-Century) are of men and are not of God: they are therefore worthless when it comes to revealing governing authorities or affecting human behavior although they have spawned an immense amount of speculation and the careers of innumerable prophecy pundits. But every prophecy pundit or biblical scholar who “finds” Rome or the Roman Empire or the Roman Church in the visions of Daniel is a liar! For the visions of Daniel are not like Nostradamus’ Quatrains: the Lord will unseal Daniel’s visions at the end of the age so that they can reveal governing authorities and affect human behavior (i.e., the behavior of those who listen to the voice of Christ Jesus). Therefore, what Paul couldn’t know about governing authorities over Israel at the end of the age will be known.

The Most High and His Christ are not “got yah” deities that give prophesies that can only be understood when looking back on them. Rather, they do nothing without revealing the matter to the prophets (Amos 3:7) who have no choice but to deliver the words they, the prophets, have received (v. 8). And the age of prophecy did not end with the construction of the second temple, either in its lifeless state or in its living state.

Jesus sent out His disciples, saying to them,

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matt 10:16–23)

What Jesus told His disciples when He sent them out didn’t happen to them: He told His disciples not to go to the Gentiles (Matt 10:5) and to enter no town in Samaria, so how were His disciples to bear witness before kings and governors and the Gentiles? They didn’t. What Jesus told His disciples was prophetic knowledge that should cause endtime disciples to flee from town to town to escape persecution. The promise of the prophecy is that Jesus will return before disciples run out of towns.

Yes, what Jesus told His 1st-Century disciples before sending them out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was prophetic and applies to disciples at the end of the age when the Son of Man comes, for the message that all who endures to the end shall be saved (Matt 10:22; 24:13) is the good news of the kingdom that

must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations before the end of this age comes (24:14). Thus, Jesus' prophecy about enduring to the end should dictate behavior: once born of God, the person becomes a firstborn son and part of the Body of Christ, but even at the end of the age the disciple must still endure to the end to be saved. Being born of God does not "save" the disciple, but only gives life to the spiritually dead, life that can be lost if the disciple doesn't endure to the end when dragged before governors and flogged and hated by all nations for Jesus' sake ... if enduring to the end is necessary for salvation, and if that end is when the Son of Man comes, then what about disciples that died in the 4th-Century, or in the 20th-Century? Does "the end" mean the disciple's personal end, as in physical death, or were there no disciples born of God in the 5th-Century or in the 15th-Century? And it is this question that is indirectly but prophetically addressed in Peter's vision (Acts chap 10).

In His instructions to His disciples before sending them out, Jesus said, Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. *The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward*, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. (Matt 10:40–42 emphasis added)

If a prophet is received because he (or she) is a prophet [this is the important caveat] when Jesus sends out His disciples, then there will be prophets at the end of the age that receive a prophet's reward ... Paul writes, "And he gave the apostles, *the prophets*, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:11–12 emphasis added), strongly suggesting that the office of prophet is a position in the Christian Church when the Church is restored (i.e., returned to life).

As miracles will return with life, prophets and those who prophesy will return to the Church as Jesus breathes life into a now dead corpse. But if the visions of Daniel are to affect behavior, they must first be understood ... if today's prophecy pundits agree that the two legs of iron of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision are the eastern and western Roman Empires, and that the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven is the Roman Empire, does their agreement make the two legs of iron the divided Roman Empire, especially considering that the visions were for the end of the age? Or does their agreement disclose that these pundits—all of them—have stolen words from one another; for neither Rome, the Roman Church, nor the Roman Empire are mentioned in Daniel's visions and none have a role in biblical prophecy that reveals what cannot be otherwise known.

If a person receives a prophet because he (or she) is a prophet, then the act of receiving the prophet places the prophet under the obligation to give to the one receiving him (or her) the words that the prophet has received from God. An odd application of this principle is seen in King Ahab supporting those prophets into whose mouths a lying spirit came ... when Micaiah recounts the vision he had, neither Micaiah or the Lord deny that the prophets of Ahab were "prophets" (1

King 22:22). But these prophets are Ahab's prophets, not the Lord's, and so it is within the Christian Church, where "prophets" such as Perry Stone are supported by those who believe him to be a prophet.

What the unsealed visions of Daniel reveal is the spiritual governing authority that God placed over humanity. And this will be the subject of next Sabbath's reading.

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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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