

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 *Salvation of the second generation*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of August 26, 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.

From last Sabbath's reading: a different situation exists with the second generation Greek disciple. Familiarity with the law will put this young disciple in a situation similar to that of the rich young ruler. The faith that parents displayed, or the faith that Abraham had will require that this second generation disciple sell all he or she has and follow Christ as, perhaps, a missionary like Timothy was. Yes, this second generation Greek disciple will have grown up hearing Moses read, and will not have matured eating blood, strangled meats, and meats offered to idols. Therefore, more is required than living by what cleansed the heart of his or her parents. If this next generation disciple does not move beyond his or her parents in knowledge and in deeds done by faith, then he or she will not have cleansed his or her heart and will, before long, die spiritually while continuing to identify him or herself as a Christian. But this is next sabbath's subject.

The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read 1 Timothy chapter 1, followed by 2 Timothy chapter 1, and Romans chapter 3, verse 21 through chapter 4, verse 25.

Commentary: Abraham is the father of the faithful because all disciples are to follow in the footsteps of the faith he had before being circumcised (Rom 4:12)—the faith Abraham had after being circumcised will be the standard of faith for the spiritually circumcised nation after this holy people are empowered by the Holy Spirit as visibly foreshadowed on that day of Pentecost following Calvary.

A divide occurs in Abraham's life when he is circumcised. The faith Abraham displayed through deeds and belief—journeying to Canaan, then believing God that his heir would come from between his loins—is the standard of faith that establishes the qualitative basis for faith to be counted as righteousness for all disciples. Yes, Abraham's faith while uncircumcised is the standard of faith that will cleanse hearts so these hearts can be spiritually circumcised.

Timothy left home and followed Paul in a journey of faith that would have been qualitatively similar to the faith Abraham displayed in journeying where God sent him. The Apostle Paul said of Timothy that he is “my true child in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2). And the endtime disciple who has grown to maturity in a household that lives by every word of God [many claim to that do not] is a *true child in the faith* when his or her faith as revealed through deeds and belief is qualitatively similar to Timothy's, to Abraham's,

and to 1st-Century Gentile converts who forsook the four things listed by the elders at the Jerusalem Council (Acts chap 15).

It wasn't enough, in the 1st-Century, for a Gentile convert to merely profess belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, what Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer—this jailer demonstrated his faith in dressing the wounds of Paul and Silas, then demonstrated it again in taking them into his home where he fed them. The jailer's faith manifested itself in deeds, in *works*, that ugly word that withers Evangelical Christianity theologians as if they were a cucumber vine in an August drought.

It wasn't enough for a 1st-Century Jew to quietly believe that Jesus was Lord, coming to Jesus by night in prayers as Nicodemus had come physically. No, this Hebrew convert must profess with his mouth that Jesus was Lord as well as believe in his heart that the Father had raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9).

Again, it wasn't enough for a 1st-Century Hellenist to publicly profess that Jesus was Lord and believe in his or her heart that God had raised Jesus from the dead. This Hellenist still had to mentally journey away from kith and kin by quitting long established cultural practices of eating blood, meats strangled, meats offered to idols, and sexual immorality, what the elders of the Jerusalem Council had determined would be works of faith comparable to Abraham leaving Haran and journeying to Canaan. For a Pharisee, publicly professing that Jesus is Lord would be as difficult of a mental journey to make.

- The Jerusalem Council established, for disciples in the 1st-Century, comparable standards of faith for Jew and Greek equivalent to the faith and belief of Abraham.
- These standards remain appropriate for the convert who has never before heard the name Jesus of Nazareth. The described four things, though, do not apply to children raised in the faith although the standards and the principle behind the standards certainly do.
- A 21st-Century young person raised in a Christian home displays no acts of faith comparable to that of a 1st-Century Greek who quit eating blood if this young person continues living and worshiping in the traditions of the home.

But if a young person reared in a Mennonite or Methodist home were, by faith, to begin keeping the Sabbath on the 7th-day as Scripture plainly asserts should be done, this young person will have made a spiritual journey of similar length and difficulty as the journey Abraham physically made from Haran to Canaan. For this young person to believe God that disciples are to live by the precepts of the law, all of them, displays faith of a quality similar to that of Abraham's while he was still uncircumcised. Therefore, beginning to keep the Sabbath instead of the 8th-day will cleanse the heart of this young person, hence preparing the heart for spiritual circumcision. This young person will now need to enter into a fellowship that teaches disciples to keep the commandments by faith while growing in grace and knowledge.

Now, the more difficult comparison of faith: the young person reared in a Seventh Day Adventist or in a Worldwide Church of God home displays no act of faith comparable to that of a 1st-Century Greek abstaining from sexual immorality or strangled meats by continuing in the faith of his or her parents. In fact, the young person in a Sabbath-keeping Christian home inevitably remains where he or she grew to maturity, or leaves and returns to spiritual Babylon. The young person who remains dies

spiritually because of never cleansing the heart by faith; whereas the children or grandchildren of the young person who returned to Babylon might well return by faith [in a journey that cleanses the heart] to keeping the Sabbath—as might this young person when older and disillusioned with what Babylon offers.

What will seem to be a sliding scale of faith is at work, but the standard of faith is the same. What moves and what seems to make the faith scale slide is that every generation of disciples begins from a differing base. Thus, the Greek who had never heard Moses read begins from a far different baseline than does the Mennonite who professes belief in Christ Jesus and practices godliness in dress and deeds, but who doesn't live by every word uttered by God (Matt 4:4). Likewise, this Mennonite begins from a different baseline than does a United Church of God young person who has grown to maturity physically living by the word of God, almost. And it's that *almost* that has taken captive the youth of every generation.

Timothy began from a base similar to that of a young person whose parents or grandparents began to keep the Sabbath (i.e., were baptized by SDA, COG 7, or WCG ministers), for his faith first dwelt in his grandmother Lois, then in his mother Eunice (2 Tim 1:5). A person might also argue that Timothy began from a base like that of a Mennonite or Methodist youth, but such an argument presupposes that Timothy did not well understand Scripture until he became a spiritual child of Paul's. This might be the case. So without knowing how well Timothy's mother and grandmother understood Scripture, the movement is from that of the parents' faith baseline to *becoming the spiritual child of the Apostle Paul*.

- The faith of the household is the faith that forms every disciple's baseline.
 - Since God delivered all of the Church into the hands of the Adversary until the time of the restitution of all things, the faith of every Christian household forms a baseline somewhere other than on the foundation Paul laid in the Jerusalem above (1 Co 3:10-11).
 - Some baselines are closer to the foundation that Paul laid than others.
 - Baselines that have the household attempting to enter God's rest on the following day are not baselines constructed in heavenly Judea.
 - Baselines that have the household keeping the Sabbath but not the holy days are baselines located in spiritual Judea, but not in heavenly Jerusalem.
 - Baselines that have the household keeping all of the Sabbaths of God are baselines located in spiritual Jerusalem, but are not necessarily on the foundation Paul laid—for to be in the foundation Paul laid, the household must also understand spiritual birth and the cleansing of the heart by faith.
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- Only when the faith of the household firmly rests on the foundation that Paul laid has the baseline of the household become that of the heavenly house of God.
 - The restitution of all things occurs only shortly before the great and awesome day of the Lord, not fifty years earlier, or a century earlier, or a century and a half earlier, let alone four centuries earlier. So the faith of no household will firmly rest on the foundation Paul laid until the *time of the end*.

For the sake of what seems the most appropriate comparison (because only one or two generations have elapsed since parents began keeping the precepts of the law), our

sample young person will grow to maturity in a United (UCG) household, United being a derivative of the former Radio Church of God [renamed the Worldwide Church of God] and one of many Sabbath-keeping Christian fellowships that developed from schisms in the remnant that left spiritual Babylon in the 16th-Century. This remnant is identified by secular historians as the Anabaptist movement, and when this remnant entered into heavenly Judea can be determined by when factions of this never truly unified remnant began to keep the 7th-day Sabbath. The remnant's journey toward Jerusalem also caused factions to again anticipate the Second Advent of Christ. Thus, where these two factions met formed a readily identifiable marker on the remnant's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, with the next marker occurring when a faction began to keep the High Sabbaths of God.

Understanding that God is neither three nor one, but Father and Son, was necessary for splinters of the original remnant to finally arrive at the toppled walls of the heavenly city. But failure to understand spiritual birth as real birth, not conception, prevented the early splinters from entering the city. It was the work of another generation, this present generation, to locate the foundation Paul laid so long ago, to sweep away the charred debris of 1st and 2nd Century disciples, and to begin building on this foundation.

Seventh Day Adventists called, fifty years ago, their youth group Pathfinders, but neither the Pathfinders, nor their leaders found the *path* from spiritual Jericho to Jerusalem. In fact, these Pathfinders remained firmly camped in Ellen G. White's backyard if they didn't return to Babylon, where the glitter of the world seemed to make more sense than sweeping out heaven for half an hour. So, borrowing that name from fifty years ago, latter day *pathfinders* entered heavenly Jerusalem through the narrow gate of living by every word that comes from the mouth of God, but they entered seventy-five or so years ago without the concept of hypostasis; hence they entered while still being physically minded, hearing only with their ears and not with their hearts—hearing only what could come over radio waves and through diaphragm speakers, hearing what could be received on AM signals that bounced from surface to ionosphere, skipping around the world. Therefore, those *pathfinders* of three-quarters of a century ago sought a physical nation of Israel when none seemed to exist. But in *Joseph's Birthright*, they found the lost ten tribes of the northern house of Israel. With the enthusiasm of twelve year olds, those *pathfinders* published their newly discovered good news that endtime Israel was the English-speaking nations of the world, and they sent forth baptizing tours to seal in judgment the cleansed hearts of first tens, then tens of thousands of disciples who left 8th-day fellowships as singles or doubles, beginning anew households of faith that stood with their backs to the foundation Paul laid and looked outwards towards Petra and a physical place of safety.

These born anew households, with their backs still to the foundation Paul laid, taught their children to live by the Ten Commandments while Evangelicals whispered into their children's ears that disciples were not under the Law; that New Testament Christians lived by faith, not the law. Two too many of these children believed what Paul had plainly written (Rom 6:14) without first finding the foundation Paul laid in heavenly Jerusalem, and these two too many children led a rebellious collection of households back into spiritual Babylon where they found others like themselves with which to dialogue (they were so happy) ... leave them be; leave these two too many to suffer with their friends. What they believe will not come to pass. They will physically die in Babylon; they died spiritually when they floundered back across the spiritual River

Jordan. So they are today of no consequence to the remnant that remains in the heavenly city of Jerusalem, with most of this remnant still with its back to the foundation Paul laid, only now looking at Europe, expecting it to unite into a single nation for, what, the past fifty years.

United [UCG] is one division of these latter day *pathfinders* that stands with its back to Paul as it reveres the name Herbert W. Armstrong, said in whispers so as not to attract any more lightning strikes than necessary—and “the man United reveres” did lead many disciples into the heavenly city while looking at the ground as if arrowhead hunting. But it is the concept of present day Jerusalem (Gal 4:25) being the spiritually lifeless shadow of the heavenly city—this concept best visualized through the Greek loan word hypostasis—that “the man United reveres” never understood. The shadow is beneath that which constitutes its reality. The lost house of Israel forms the lifeless shadow of Arian Christianity, while the even more rebellious house of Judah forms the shadow of Trinitarian Christianity—and what Armstrong found was the shadows of the cities of the lost houses of endtime Israel.

The journey of faith that a United young person must make isn’t back toward Babylon where the “new WCG” cavorts with lawlessness, or back into the fields of Judea where the Church of God, 7th Day, dwells, but to the temple mount where a few disciples are presently at work building on the foundation Paul laid. And this journey is not far horizontally. It is, however, a long ways above where the household of this United youth established its baseline of faith.

The young adult in a United household needs to cleanse his or her heart by looking over this young person’s shoulder, seeing the work being done on the temple mount, and turning toward this work, joining in, becoming an endtime *spiritual child of the Apostle Paul* as Timothy was in the 1st-Century, then going to work at Ephesus, the first named Church on the endtime mail route that stands atop [as in hypostasis] the 1st-Century mail route, and where Paul charged Timothy to remain in his first epistle to his young spiritual son (1 Tim 1:3). For this United young person, the degree of faith necessary to move beyond where United households stand at the walls of the heavenly city may or may not cleanse the young person’s heart, but remaining by faith in a spiritual Ephesus, charging certain individuals whom this young person has known and has heard speak throughout the young person’s life not to teach a doctrine different than that which Paul taught will make the entirety of Abraham’s journey from Ur to Canaan seem easy, regardless of the physical obstacles Abraham faced. The degree of faith necessary for, say, Mr. Raymond Dick’s grandsons or perhaps now great-grandsons to respectfully tell his father or uncle [Mr. Dick’s sons] that they teach speculations (*v.* 4) rather than being good stewards of the mysteries entrusted by Christ Jesus to the Apostle Paul will take courage that can only come from the type of faith necessary to cleanse a heart.

[As an aside, Mr. Dick grew to maturity in a Mennonite household, heard Armstrong on the radio in the 1950s, became convinced of the Sabbath and began keeping all of the Sabbaths of God; and for forty years, he alone carried the revelation of Christ Jesus necessary to unseal the visions of Daniel at the time of the end—for all of those forty years, no one other than a daughter-in-law believed the revelation with which Mr. Dick had been entrusted. So only when those forty years were completed, to the day in 2002, did the clearing of the charred debris covering the foundation Paul laid resume.]

No young person can cleanse a heart by faith by remaining in the household of his or her parents. In the heavenly realm, Christ Jesus stood back and watched as that old

serpent Satan the devil tempted the last Eve. As the first Adam was present when the serpent told Eve that she would not die (Gen 3:4), Christ Jesus was present when the Adversary told the last Eve that she would not die, that she had an immortal soul. As the first Adam did nothing to stop the serpent even though he was present throughout the temptation (v. 6), the last Adam did nothing to stop the serpent even though He, too, was present. He had already delivered to the Woman the words necessary to rebuke the serpent—if the Woman would only hear what He said and believe the One who sent Him (John 5:24). But the Woman would not hear; she refused to learn from her Husband. Thus, when God sought a man to stand in the breach between His wrath and the Woman's lawlessness (Ezek 22:23-31), no man was found. God delivered Israel to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the Spirit might be saved—the Apostle Paul understood what God had done, hence, his decision concerning the man living with his step-mother (1 Co 5:5). And because God delivered the Church into the hands of Satan, every young person in every generation can mentally make a journey of faith comparable with the physical journey of faith that Abraham made (Heb 11:8-10), thereby cleansing this person's heart in anticipation of spiritual circumcision.

But without a journey of faith comparable with Abraham's, no heart will be cleansed. The young person will be a Christian in name only, and within a very few generations, the fellowship will be spiritually dead or back in Babylon, singing praises to its king. That is, assuming that the fellowship ever left Babylon.

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The reader should now read the remainder of both 1 and 2 Timothy.

Commentary: The latter day *pathfinder* will do as Timothy did: he will teach as Paul instructed Timothy to teach, while understanding the cultural signs that are at work in what Paul writes about women. He or she will understand what Paul writes about the person who would oversee a fellowship. He or she will understand hypostasis and how this concept is manifest in typological exegesis. He will rebuke those who attempt to bring into endtime fellowships built on the foundation Paul laid debris found elsewhere in Judea, especially the teachings of that woman prophetess Jezebel [let him who reads understand by looking out across spiritual Judea]. He and she will fight as good soldiers, as approved workers in the godlessness of the last days, reproving, rebuking, exhorting as appropriate, knowing that they will be among the Firstfruits, many of whom desired to live in the heavenly Jerusalem but never made it that far even though they had, by faith, cleansed their hearts.

In the 1st-Century, Nicodemus' journey was upward from where he and his household lived. For a 21st-Century *pathfinder* whose ancestors used *sola scriptura* to again locate the heavenly city, the mental journey is like that of Nicodemus, who didn't understand spiritual birth even though he was a teacher of Israel (John 3:10-12). *Sola scriptura* will only get a disciple back to the 1st-Century, and the spiritual milk fed to suckling babes. The disciple who would grow in grace and knowledge will, in Jerusalem, now look upward at a spiritual Jacob's ladder.

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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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