

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 *submission to authority*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of September 2, 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 Romans chapter 13.
Commentary: When the lawyer put Jesus to the test concerning what is required to inherit everlasting life, and Jesus responded by asking the lawyer how he read the law (Luke 10:25-26), the lawyer answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and will all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (v. 27). Jesus told the lawyer that he had answered correctly, that if the lawyer did just as he answered, he would have everlasting life. But in this lawyer's answer, loving neighbor receives less emphasis than loving God—and indeed, the lawyer had a problem with loving his neighbor, the reason Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The 1st-Century Hellenist culture that affected even Hebrews in Jerusalem was extremely competitive. Little love was shown towards neighbors who were too often perceived as competitors, a problem the Apostle Paul experienced with Asia Minor silversmiths. Centuries earlier (the age represented in the *Odyssey*), Greeks used culturally mandated hospitality as one means of pulling the fangs from Greek competitiveness. Without a central government and with only a common culture to bind the peoples together, a person would visit another for months at a time—and would leave with gifts of sufficient value to bind the two households together for generations. Political alliances were secured through the giving of gifts and the sharing of meals. The *Furies* would destroy the man who killed a former guest. Thus, this Greek culture that predated Athens' golden age was first spread across the Near and Middle East through the Greek language, then through Alexander's conquests, followed by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid reigns over the region. This culture was then absorbed by the Romans and spread with the Empire to the degree that the Apostle Paul identified attributes of this culture as *nature itself* (1 Co 11:14).

Another culture that used giving gifts to cement political alliances was that of the Pacific Northwest Coast Native Americans, from the Columbia River in the south to the Copper River in the north. The tribes within this region used *potlatches* at which the host gave valuable gifts to the heads of other households to establish authority over the

receiving houses—the one who received the gifts was obligated to the other until a gift of greater value could be given. Thus, economic resources were used to acquire and retain ruling authority, with these resources being returned with profit to the initial giver before the initial giver lost the authority to rule, the concept that was covertly concealed within the American Foreign Aid program of the Cold War era.

So, Greek households in the 6th, 7th, 8th Centuries BCE used extended visits and gifts to socially bind together a culture that had become too efficient at killing its members. Rome borrowed its pantheon and much of its culture from the Greeks. Thus, the Apostle Paul in a narrative flow about authority transforms intangible *love* into being the “thing” that Roman converts should give to one another, citing this *love* as the fulfilling of the commandments, with this *love* becoming the exchangeable gift that bound together a new culture within an existing society while establishing authority to rule in this new culture. This new culture **could not use** secular authority to establish a ruling hierarchy for disciples were to come out of the world—Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world, nor from this world (John 18:36)—and the Church ceased being of God as soon as secular authority entered into the unique culture of Christ.

The Apostle Paul’s quantifying of *love* as an object that can be owed to others (Rom 13:8) in juxtaposition to fulfilling the law, which by association becomes an object owed to God, is a masterful *tour de force* that has been seriously underappreciated by disciples. Paul makes loving God with heart, mind, and body an object that is spiritually given by a disciple to the Father and to the Son in a similar manner to how a precious graven, gold cup was physically given by one Greek to another. Likewise, Paul makes loving neighbor as self into an object that is like a crested bronze helmet given to the son of a trusted family friend—and Paul makes giving respect and honor like paying taxes (*v.* 7). Hence, to 1st-Century Roman converts who are still physically-minded, Paul made the intangibility of spiritual attributes and concepts into objects that can be given as presents: he objectified *love*, honor, respect, and submission to authority in a manner similar to how the *male gaze* objectifies women, but without the negative associations that come from a living person being transformed into a painted urn.

But an even less appreciated paradigm that Paul sought to confirm within the fellowship of Roman disciples is that of a culture and an authoritarian hierarchy for the Church of God that differs from either Roman republicanism or Greek democracy or the then existing reign of the Caesars. One impertinent but aspiring 20th-Century teacher of spiritual Israel insisted that he had restored the government of God in the Church of God, but this little man had stumbled over how the Caesars governed, and he used a governing principle similar to that of the Roman Church to establish a social organization he controlled absolutely. His restoration of the “truth” about Church government was the basis for a heavy-handed Nicolaitan-type of autocracy that has since died, thankfully. But other impertinent ones will resurrect this false system of theocratic rule for the assumption of absolute authority strokes the carnal egos of little men. None of these impertinent ones, however, will ever understand how Paul had used the Greek and borrowed Roman practice of giving objects to cement relationships: under this Greek paradigm, when *love* is given the one receiving the benefit of this *love* becomes a debtor to the one giving the gift, with the ultimate expression of *love* being the gift that God had given, the life of His beloved Son, thereby making every disciple a debtor to the Father and the Son. Through giving *love* to one another, the Church would

become an interobligated community in which the one who served the most [i.e., gave the most of him or herself] would be the greatest in authority.

Jesus addressed the question of who would be greatest through saying that the one who served the most would be first, thus greatest (*cf.* Mark 9:35; Luke 22:24-27).

An organization based upon giving *love* is the antithesis to the Nicolaitan-type of authority employed by the Roman Church. Any organization that is autocratic, with authority emulating from a single administrative headquarters, is not of God but of this world. Christ rules the Church through the Holy Spirit planting thoughts and desires in the minds and hearts of his servants. He doesn't rule with a heavy hand, but with the softness of His Breath on a person's circumcised heart. Therefore, as a dogmatic assertion, it can be here stated: administrations patterned after that of the Roman Church should be shunned by all disciples.

However, merely because the Church is a called-out culture that is not of this world, disciples remain in this world. As such, disciples remain under civil authority for good and bad. And Paul wants to make sure that the converts at Rome who had died to the law (Rom 7:4) did not believe that they were no longer under the legal system of *Pax Romana*; for he wrote, "[T]here is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Rom 13:1). Therefore, the Roman Emperor was in an office established by God, not something that is easy for endtime disciples to accept since its corollary is that American presidents are elected as God wills and sit in an office instituted by God.

But you will say, Satan is the prince of this world—and indeed, he is and will remain so until the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and the Son (*cf.* Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14) halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. Today, September 2, 2006, Satan is the prince of this world because God has consigned all of humankind to disobedience (Rom 11:32) until all are released through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28), an event foreshadowed by what happened on that day of Pentecost following Calvary (Acts chap 2).

Literally, God placed humankind under Satan's authority when He drove the man out of His garden—and because He placed humankind under Satan, the lawlessness of all human beings prior to the giving of the Law from Sinai was not reckoned, or counted against any person (Rom 5:13). Satan was responsible for humankind's disobedience, and remains responsible for the lawlessness of those who are not of Israel, meaning that no sin is counted against those human beings who have not yet been born of Spirit. Of course, these human beings also have no life in the heavenly realm until born of Spirit.

The defining characteristic of the Church is the appearance and rise to prominence of false prophets and false teachers, most of whom are sincere but sincerely wrong. Certainly some of these false shepherds are motivated by selfish reasons, but most are men who teach without being called by God to be a teacher of Israel. Therefore, they teach what they do not understand. They lead the sheep onto theological cliffs and into waterless deserts. For example, the one who would teach that *Yah* of the Old Testament is the Father in the New Testament is a false teacher who needs to immediately repent, for this person is without understanding, blaspheming both the Father and Son. Likewise, the person who would teach that *Theos* [from John 1:1] did not divest Himself of His divinity when He entered His creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth, a man of flesh and life through shallow physical breath [i.e., *soma & psuche*], is a false teacher and an antichrist (1 John 4:1-6) with no understanding of spiritual birth [being born of

Spirit]. And many are these antichrists, appearing even while the Apostle John lived. These antichrists flock together as starlings, blackening skies, transforming light into darkness.

Jesus said that many are called, or drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65). These *many* constitute spiritually circumcised Israel, a nation born of Spirit; i.e., the Christian Church. They have received life in the heavenly realm through the Holy Spirit—and their teachers have lied to them, telling them that they are no longer under a dispensation of law but are now under a dispensation of grace, or that the authority of the pope descends directly from the Apostles, or that Jesus was a rebel against civil authority, or that the baptism of infants enters babes into the born-again household of God. Teachers who lie about Christ—bear false witness about the Savior—include those who form the Sacred Names movement and the MIA. They include those who argue for *sola scriptura*, or for returning to *the faith once delivered* by post-Nicene fathers, or for praying through statuary. The Roman priest who first came to God as part of Calvary Chapel's Jesus Movement traded being a false prophet teaching lawlessness to be a false priest teaching disciples to remain in spiritual Babylon where they worship demons. This Roman priest might feel good about what he now does on a nationwide radio broadcast, understanding that *dispensationalists* are the scum atop the brew-kettle of lawlessness, but this Roman priest still would have disciples relax the least of the Commandments through teaching them to attempt entering God's rest on the 8th-day. What this priest did when leaving the Jesus Movement to become a Catholic was to return *lawlessness* to the grill so that it can be served "well done" as opposed to "medium rare."

Authority in the Christian Church does not come from ordination by men or even from recognition by men. It comes from serving, from giving the gift of love to God and neighbor. It comes from a concealed culture within the larger culture called Christianity. It comes through being among the *few* who will be chosen (Matt 22:14). That is correct: of the *many* who are today born of Spirit, only a *few* will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Most will not—and not because they are not sincere, but rather because they are sincerely lawless or sincerely blasphemous or sincerely idolatrous or sincere Nicolaitans. There is no place in heaven for most Christians just because of how their teachers taught them to worship God.

That Roman priest with a well worn Scofield Reference Bible needs to again apologize for being a false prophet; he needs to mentally leave Babylon and return to spiritual Judea "while the promise of entering [God's] rest still stands" (Heb 4:1); or he will spiritually die for his lawlessness when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:30) through all of Israel being empowered by the Holy Spirit. However, for him and for many others, the promise of entering may no longer stand for they have taught Israel to sin before the Lord. And if this promise no longer stands, then they await a fearful end to a short life of sincerity.

Understanding Scripture requires holding two or more thoughts in the mind's foreground, with these thoughts having hypotactic relationships. Such is the case concerning the kingdom of the world. God placed humankind under Satan's authority when He drove the man from His garden—and not until Satan's hierarchal governing structure, Babylon, with him as its king (reigning over the earth through him also being the prince of the power of the air), falls will the new governing structure, the Son of Man, come to power. The glorified Christ is the Head of the Son of Man; glorified disciples will be the Body, a relationship foreshadowed by disciples today forming the

Body of Christ. And as Lord of lords and King of kings, Christ Jesus will reign over the kingdom of the world not from within the creation, but from heaven in a manner similar to how Satan presently reigns. The difference will be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: until born of Spirit, no human being today has any life but that which comes from the cellular oxidation of sugars, and then this new life is imprisoned in a tent of flesh that remains consigned to disobedience. But when the Son of Man is revealed, all human beings born of Spirit from that moment henceforth will be born empowered [filled] by the Holy Spirit. Thus, when the Kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and the Son, every human being will have spiritual life, and Christ will rule over this world through the Holy Spirit. He will rule from heaven, not from anywhere on earth, just as Satan rules over humankind from heaven and will continue to rule until he is cast from heaven (Rev 12:9-10). Satan doesn't presently rule from the United Nations Building, or from the Kremlin, or from the Vatican, or from the White House. Satan rules by controlling how people think, just as Christ Jesus will rule by controlling thoughts and desires. Human nature is a received nature as evidenced by what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan chap 4), who was instantly given the "nature" of a beast for seven years.

In an instant halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation, the "human nature" of every human being will be similarly changed when the world is baptized in Spirit, with every person receiving the mind of Christ. This is why the good news that must be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to every nation is that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13-14), for everyone will have been born of Spirit and will have been given the mind of Christ when Satan is cast to the earth. Satan will be given the mind of a man as Nebuchadnezzar was given the mind of a beast. Even though Satan will continue to have the power of an angel, he will no longer think like an archangel. Therefore, every person will be able to mentally defeat Satan but not physically prevail over him, the reason for the call of enduring to the end. Disciples are not to fight, but to endure. Disciples today are not to fight against the government established by God; they are to endure even evil. Christ Jesus and His angels will do the fighting. Vengeance belongs to God, and to His ministers of wrath—and God has endured vessels of wrath in order to use these vessels for His purposes (Rom 9:22-23) now and when He returns, with many being the slain by the Lord.

The above concepts must be held in mind when understanding the subservient authority invested in human kings and princes, authority that comes from God to His servants here on earth, even though each of these kings remain consigned to disobedience and are under Satan's broadcast of lawlessness. God uses human kings as He sees fit without removing them from disobedience. Therefore, to resist governing authorities is an usurpation of power ... unless God has obtained a change, which He sometime does and reveals to the parties involved (*cf.* 1 Sam 16:1-13; 1 Kings 11:29-35), human rulers hold power because God wants the individual in power for good or for bad.

When *hypotaxis* is combined with *hypostasis* the subservience of human authorities to Satan and to God becomes apparent: even before the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and of the Son, God can use human kings to execute His judgments here on earth without, and/or prior to removing Satan as the prince of this world. That the Roman Emperor acted both as an agent of disobedience and as an agent of God is a completely compatible concept that can be seen through the scriptural use of

the linguistic icon /*Babylon*/, where Nebuchadnezzar as the human king of Babylon was used to punish nations, executing God's wrath on these nations, while he also served as a type and shadow of Satan, the spiritual king of a supra-natural ruling hierarchy identified as Babylon, that presently reigns over the single kingdom of the world.

Disciples who through spiritual immaturity would be tax protestors or war protestors or abortion protestors or environmental activists show their love for this world through what they perceive as well-doing—and yes, they love this world and the things of this world enough to seek political and civil change. It isn't as though they are sighing and crying for the abominations committed within the Church, spiritually circumcised Israel, a nation foreshadowed by an equally evil physically circumcised nation (Ezek chap 9, chap 20 & 23). No, they are akin to a circumcised Israelite who might have protested a bull publicly mounting a cow or two dogs knotted together. Sabbatarian disciples who are, say, abortion protestors will band together with lawless disciples to publicly condemn the dead burying the dead whereas the lawlessness of those doing the protesting should be first condemned. The dead will receive spiritual life in the future. Until then, they are to disciples as beasts were to ancient circumcised Israelites, whereas lawless disciples are to disciples in spiritual Judea as Egyptians were to ancient Israelites—and many Egyptians left Egypt and the Pharaoh when God liberated Israel. Today's task for Sabbatarian disciples is to bring from sin as many lawless disciples as possible. Spiritually circumcised Israel is to sigh and cry for the abominations committed by lawless disciples in greater Christianity, for the world is passing away as are its problems. But the will of God abides forever as will the lawless disciple who turns from his wicked ways, from his idolatry, from his plaster virgins, from his used Scofield Reference Bibles, from his *dispensationalism* without falling into pits dug by Missing In Action fundamentals tired from digging Hebrew roots as if selling ginseng. Too few disciples will sigh and cry about the sins of Israel, that holy nation of God. Too many will protest the flaws in Satan's kingdom as if their love for this world will somehow hasten the coming of Christ's kingdom.

Constantine and Nebuchadnezzar functioned in the same capacity and completed similar assignments for God. Both served to remove Israel from Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar from the physical city; Constantine from the heavenly city. And in both cases, God caused Israel to be removed from Jerusalem through His use of authority He had established on earth even while the human authority remained a bondservant to Satan.

God established authorities not to be terrors to good works, but to bad (Rom 13:3). However, these authorities sometime become terrors to good works ... when human authorities that God has established cease working for Him, God removes these authorities, usually through the actions of other men, once in a while by direct intervention. But always, God determines when an authority that He has established should be removed, democratic elections with term limits notwithstanding. Likewise, God determines when a new creature born of Spirit should be removed from here on earth—and for the new creature that surrendered to the flesh, death should be fearfully anticipated.

For too long, scores of Sabbatarian disciples have blasphemed the Father and the Son through their resistance to all authority. These range from the Libertarian without a driver's license who seeks to change a state government by being elected to public office to the gullible disciple who swallows every new conspiracy theory as a bass does a plastic

worm. Too many independent Sabbatarians form a sorry lot of unruly disciples headed for the second death—but maybe that’s how Satan will keep very poorly taught disciples in 8th-day fellowships from entering into God’s rest while the promise of entering still stands. Maybe these scattered independent fellowships, especially the ones Missing In Action, exist to block the way into spiritual Judea, using protests of all sorts to hinder disciples who would enter into God’s rest. Maybe these fellowships’ hatred of authority—as so many stone forts assembling together—reveals that these disciples never were of God, but have been tares from the beginning; for if they were of God, their authority over one another would come through giving and outgiving *love* to one another, not from deceit and lies, the treachery of those who say they are Jews but are not.

The disciple who would be first will choose to be the servant of every other disciple.

And being the servant of all means, among other things, sighing and crying for the abominations of all Israel—means preaching repentance to the holy nation of Israel, a wanton woman who doesn’t believe she needs to repent. Again, many are called, but few will be chosen. Few will be ruled by God, or by His ministers.

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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](#)]