

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are offered as openings into dialogue about the subject or concept. And the concept behind this Sabbath's selection remains "*knowing God,*" *but through the prophecies of Jeremiah.*

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## Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of October 8, 2005

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 30 & 31.*

**Commentary:** The Lord (YHWH, the *Elohim* of Israel) tells the prophet Jeremiah of Anathoth that *the days are coming* when He *shall restore the fortunes of Israel and Judah*, His people. This restoration shall be after a day like none other (30:7). That day shall be a time of distress for Jacob, who shall be freed to serve the Lord, with David king over Jacob. And herewith is the passage dated, for David will be resurrected upon the coming of the Christ, when the judgment of every disciple is revealed (1 Cor 4:5). David's judgment is already known, as are the judgments of a few others. But none of these mighty men (and women) of God shall precede those who [endure to the end](#) of [seven years of tribulation](#)—all who have taken judgment upon themselves shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, the Lord's restoration and return of Israel to Judea occurred not in 1947, nor will it occur in any other year prior to the coming of the Messiah. **The return of Jews to the modern nation of Israel is not this promised restoration.**

On that spiritual day when Israel is recovered, the Lord shall be God to all the clans of Israel (Jer 31:1), indicating that before this time He is not their God. He shall make a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah (v. 31), for the fault of the first covenant was with the people (Heb 8:8). They had a law [or covenant] that would have led them to righteousness if they had pursued the law with faith, but they pursued it through works (Rom 9:30-32). This law was the second covenant mediated by Moses (Deu chptrs 29-31), which has as its preface: *when* Israel has been exiled from Judea, and *when* Israel in that far land turns to God and begins keeping His commandments and statutes, *then* the Lord will bring again Israel into His rest and will give the nation circumcised hearts and minds [*naphesh*]. Turning to the Lord in a far land and there beginning to keep His commandments which the nation had not kept when in Judea constitutes a national act of faith—the nation would have pursued righteousness by faith. The nation would have received circumcised hearts, a euphemistic expression for receiving the Holy Spirit.

A better promise added to the second covenant when the mediator changed from Moses to Christ Jesus is that the Holy Spirit is given prior to demonstrated obedience, not after (turning to the Lord and keeping His commandments in a far land is demonstrated obedience). Gentiles, who never before had knowledge of God, receive knowledge through receipt of the Holy Spirit (Jer 31:34). They, then, turn to God and begin keeping His commandments, for they are already in a far country, exiled from God. Thus, by faith, Gentiles do (or did) what was required of the natural nation of Israel to receive circumcised hearts. Therefore, the greater Church's insidious teaching that keeping the commandments is "legalism" that every disciple should avoid has condemned many in two, three, four generations of born anew sons of God to the lake of fire, for these disciples have not used the mantle of grace to practice walking uprightly before God. Walking uprightly means, among other things, keeping the commandments.

But keeping the commandments, or beginning to keep the commandments is only an act of faith when the person has not previously been keeping them, with one notable exception. When that spiritual day [seven years in length] begins upon which the Lord recovers the natural branches as well as the spiritual nation that has followed the course of the natural nation, keeping the Sabbath commandment will require faith. And it will be through keeping the Sabbath commandment that the natural branches are grafted back onto the root of righteousness. For these natural branches will not give up the Sabbath. Many in this natural nation will give up their lives before giving up the Sabbath—and for demonstrated obedience, they will receive circumcised hearts and minds in a day when the Holy Spirit has empowered the spiritual nation. They will be born anew, born without sin (for they won't have previously had life in the heavenly realm), and born empowered to overcome *self*. They will be spiritual virgins. And from all those who are born-from-above after the Church has been empowered by the Holy Spirit will come the 144,000 virgins that follow the Lamb wherever He goes during the light or hot portion of this spiritual third day.

God is not a respecter of persons: what was required under the second covenant mediated by Moses is likewise required under the second covenant when the mediator changed. The Book of Deuteronomy is the witness against every Israelite, natural or spiritual (John 5:45-47 & Deu 31:26); the second covenant is the godly accuser of brethren. For in the second covenant, good and life is set before natural and spiritual branches, as is evil and death (Deu 30:15). The Lord tells the branches to choose life, but He doesn't require that they so choose. Every disciple of Christ Jesus, every natural branch is free to choose evil. And many will, for in the light portion of the spiritual day upon which Israel is recovered, the evildoer will still do evil (Rev 22:11). Unfortunately, the greater Church today teaches disciples, intentionally or unintentionally, to transgress the commandments of God, thereby rebelling against Father and Son while professing great love for the Son. They, like the natural branches that were broken off, are an adulterous generation.

Knowing God through receipt of the Holy Spirit and birth-from-above is not a teachable endeavor. The second covenant as mediated by Moses offered the Holy Spirit to those who by faith demonstrated

love for God by keeping His commandments and precepts when not previously doing so. Abraham received the Holy Spirit when ninety-nine years old—received the Breath of God [*Pneuma 'Agion*] after decades of demonstrated obedience through faith. Noah had more than a century of such demonstrated obedience. And during the [seven endtime years of tribulation](#), the natural branches will have the opportunity for such demonstrated obedience. They will collectively form the spiritual Abel that the firstborn son of the last Adam will slay. And they will know God without any teacher but Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God.

The restoration of Israel on the third spiritual day of a seven day spiritual creation week does not involve the return of English-speaking peoples to their homelands after some form of a German captivity, as is taught by the splintered Churches of God. No doctrine, no dogma can place disciples farther from understanding endtime biblical prophecies about the return of Israel from Assyria and the four corners of the earth than Herbert Armstrong's teachings about the United States and Great Britain falling captive to a United European superpower.

The Lord tells Jeremiah, “In the latter days you will understand this” (Jer 30:24). Indeed, in the latter days—at the time of the end when the sealed and secret prophecies of Daniel are comprehended—understanding shall come. These latter days are now here. They were not here in 1927, or even in 1957, '67, '77, '87, '97. Daniel's visions remained sealed by the earthly shadow of the foretold spiritual events until, after the turn of this century, the spiritual *sar* of Persia pushed against the spiritual *sar* of Greece, who flew out of the west to trample this *sar* of Persia. This trampling is on-going, and will take about as long as it took Alexander to defeat the Persians; so a few more years will pass before the first king (of five), the great horn of the *sar* of Greece is broken. But the course of events that will see the restoration of Jacob has begun. Humanity is now in *the latter days*.

Restored Israel isn't a physical nation, isn't the natural branches grafted onto the root of righteousness; rather restored Israel is a spiritual nation, a royal priesthood, a holy people who were not before a nation until born-from-above (1 Pet 2:9).

The spiritual nation of Israel was, like its physical counterpart, sent into Babylonian captivity for its lawlessness. It could not go unpunished (Jer 30:11) when it rejected the law of God that was neither far from it, nor too difficult to keep (Deu 30:11). Thus, what the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon (chapter 29) pertains equally to the post-Nicean Church, which was to seek (and has sought) the welfare of the spiritual city of Babylon. Indeed, spiritual Israel built houses in Babylon, but the house of God in the Jerusalem above lay deserted and in shambles for a spiritual seventy years, a centuries long period during which infant baptism kept the streets of the glorious city silent and empty.

But the seventy spiritual years passed nearly five centuries ago. A decree went forth from the spiritual *sar* of Persia. The house of God was to be restored by a remnant of the spiritual nation then

in Babylon—this remnant of disciples, never many, but the few who willingly took judgment upon themselves, is now known as Anabaptists. And their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem was fraught with peril. Most never arrived, but settled in houses along the way. Only faint historic traces braid together adult baptism with commandment keeping and understanding the nature of God to mark the trail followed. Thus, this remnant that left Babylon followed a narrow pike to roadhouses named the Seventh-Day Baptists, the Church of God Seventh-Day, and the Radio Church of God. If this remnant had remained on this narrow path, it would have arrived at Jerusalem. But radio, then later television allowed the Gospel to be marketed as if it were laundry soap. More money came to the remnant than it knew how to spend. The remnant imploded. The larger fragments of the remnant retreated towards Babylon, but a shower of miniscule splinters flew in all directions, and the merchandising of disciples began. A thousand disciples would buy a television broadcast. Another thousand would buy a slick magazine. A third thousand would support a tiny college. And the hunt was on. Open season was declared on every disciple who had been in the imploded remnant, and a flurry of activity left disciples packed into united chaos as the spiritual remnant is aptly described in the last lines of Judges: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg 21:25).

*The reader should now read Jeremiah chapters 11 through 19.*

**Commentary:** The words that the Lord caused Jeremiah to speak against Judah came to pass, but the physical fulfillment of these prophecies forms a copy and shadow of the spiritual fulfillment. What Jeremiah spoke against the house of Judah and against Jerusalem also happened to the greater Christian Church. Only, the Lord has not yet restored either the natural nation, or the people of spiritual Israel. He has not yet caused Israel to pay double for the nation’s iniquity (Jer 16:18).

The prophets or preachers of the spiritually circumcised nation that today say the Church is on the verge of a tremendous revival have not been sent by Father or Son although they speak words that will seem to come to pass. But what they speak will cause the holy nation to rebel against God. They will cause empowered disciples to attempt to enter God’s rest on the following day, just as the circumcised nation that Egypt tried to enter on the following day (Num 14:40-41). And when liberated or empowered disciples trespass against God, they will have no covering for their sin. They will be spiritually sentenced to death, as the circumcised nation in the wilderness of Paran was sentenced to death for its disbelief (Heb 3:19 & Num 14:35). God will send a great delusion over rebelling disciples so that they cannot repent (2 Thess 2:11-12). Unfortunately, the firstborn son of the last Eve is as the firstborn son of the patriarch Abraham, Ishmael, whose mother was an Egyptian, who married an Egyptian, and who died in the wilderness of Paran.

The texture of Holy Writ has the same story repeated as the story moves from physical to spiritual, from visible to invisible. The rebellion of the firstborn son of God, the holy nation that left bondage to Pharaoh, is repeated in Israel’s rebellion in the days of Samuel. The nation wanted a king like other

nations had. It wanted what it could see. And it placed itself in bondage to a human being; it rejected God as its sovereign. Likewise, the majority of empowered disciples will reject God the Father as their sovereign when the man of perdition is revealed—this man of perdition, a human being coming by the workings of Satan, will appear as a great religious leader, not as a sinister villain. He will appear as *light*, not as *darkness*. And the false prophet, performing miraculous deeds, will support him.

Everything Jeremiah prophesied against Jerusalem has happened to the Church in the spiritual realm, and will happen again. The Church, which rebelled against God as Israel rebelled in the wilderness of Paran and in the days of Samuel, will again rebel against God 220 days into the seven endtime years of tribulation. Thus, the fulfilled prophecies of Jeremiah have application in this age, immediately prior to when a great delusion is sent over empowered disciples who don't love the truth enough to walk uprightly before God when they have the power to do so.

The task of *The Philadelphia Church*, which this church accepted before its conception, is as Jeremiah's obligation was: this church is to tell the holy nation of God that it is to hear the words of the covenant and do them, and not to walk in the evil ways of its stubborn heart. The "why" is in what happened to the natural nation.

*The reader should now read Jeremiah chapter 23.*

**Commentary:** The teachers and pastors of the holy flock of God have scattered the sheep into hundreds of denominations, have destroyed innumerable sheep through teaching disciples to neglect the laws of God.

The recovery of Israel, natural and spiritual, will not be from sin [Egypt], but from death [Assyria]. The price for sin has already been paid. This price was paid by the firstborn of Egypt (Isa 43:3-4), and by the firstborn Son of God the Father. The price or ransom for the recovery of Israel from death, however, has not been paid. It will be [paid by the firstborn](#) of spiritual Babylon at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation, and [by the firstborn sons](#) [Cain and Abel] of the last Adam during the first half of these seven endtime years.

What the teachers and pastors of the holy flock of God have not taught is that all but a remnant of the Church will die, spiritually [from rebellion] or physically [from persecution], during the night portion of the third spiritual day. During this period of *twisting away* from God, from Light, the Son of Man will be revealed. The Church as the Body of Christ will be revealed, will be spiritually naked, with obedience to God as its only covering for sin.

Knowing God today is knowing that disciples are to practice walking uprightly before God under the cloak of Grace, of Christ Jesus' righteousness, thereby redeeming their time. Soon enough this cloak

will be removed to reveal the body of the Son of Man, either naked through disobedience or clothed through obedience.

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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