

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 *continued invisibility*.

## Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of November 4, 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 Matthew chapter 17, verses 1 through 13.*

**Commentary:** The question asked was, *Who is the Elijah to come?* Jesus answered this question when His disciples asked it of Him. He said, "Elijah does come, and he **will** restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come" (*vv. 11-12 — emphasis added*).

If Elijah will restore *all things*, then all things were not, when Jesus spoke, yet restored. However, Jesus also said that Elijah had come, meaning that Jesus Himself is *all things*—and this is correct. Carried now a step farther, Jesus as *all things* is also the endtime Elijah who is to come, a statement that agrees with all Scriptural realities; for as the world did to John the Baptist as it pleased, so too did the world do to the man Jesus as it pleased. But the man Jesus is the uncovered Head of the Son of Man. Disciples constitute the covered or garmented [by Grace] Body of the Son of Man. Thus, the world will do to disciples when they are "revealed" (Luke 17:30) or disrobed as it did to both John the Baptist and to the man Jesus.

The above declarative sentence contains the endtime problem with answering the question of who is the Elijah to come: if what was not previously known or realized by the Church comes through a person—Jesus works through human beings—then other human beings, more physically minded than spiritually minded, will point to the person through whom revelation came and say, *So & so is the endtime Elijah who restores all things*. And by claiming the *So & so* is the Elijah to come, the person marks himself or herself as a false teacher, a false prophet. Said more plainly, Gerald Flurry, David Pack, Roderick Meredith, others—all have identified Herbert W. Armstrong as the endtime Elijah who restored all things. This is simply not the case. Armstrong added to Scripture by inserting Rome and the Roman Empire wherever he imagined they might fit; he never understood spiritual birth; he realized the high Sabbaths should be kept, but he never understood these holy days or the plan of God. He was, at best, one of many teachers on the long road from Babylon to Jerusalem, the particular

teacher to lead a remnant of the remnant into Jerusalem. But because he [through the actions of his son, Garner Ted] rejected revelation, he never located the foundation the Apostle Paul laid in this heavenly city, and his work, like so many before him, has been burned as if it were wood and straw. Thus, Flurry, Pack, Meredith, and others are false teachers, false prophets. They deceive Sabbatarian disciples through the promotion of Armstrong's errant doctrines and failed prophetic teachings. They have, today, all of the reward that they will receive. They have not been sent by either the Father or the Son as teachers of Israel. Rather, they teach by their own authority, and because they teach that Christ Jesus will return in the middle of the seven endtime years of tribulation, they have already spiritually murdered those Sabbatarian disciples who will embrace the fallen Satan as the Messiah. They are unrepentant spiritual murderers.

The position of Herbert W. Armstrong in the long trek from spiritual Babylon to Judea must be addressed before further snow flurries blind and coyote packs hamstring the scattered sheep of God: the seventy weeks prophecy given to the man Daniel should be read.

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*The reader should now read Daniel chapter 9, verses 24 through 27.*

**Commentary:** Seventy weeks are decreed concerning Israel and holy Jerusalem, with *Israel* and *Jerusalem* being reasonable and logical assignments of referents to the words of the angel, but these assignments are not the words of the angel which contain within themselves a vagueness that will allow multiple referents, considering that these seventy weeks are decreed “to seal both vision and prophet” (v. 24). Thus, the seventy weeks seal the vision Daniel received [the seventy weeks prophecy]—and seal the prophet, who isn't Daniel but Christ Jesus. And this has been partially understood by many, but not well grasped.

As overview, the seventy weeks are divided into three segments: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. Working from back to front, the one week is the week of the prophet, which began in 27 CE and continued forward three and a half years [half a week] until Calvary, then moved from being reckoned as a physical week to being reckoned as a spiritual week only. One long spiritual night began at Calvary and will continue until Christ Jesus returns to fight on a day of battle when armies surround Jerusalem (Zech 14:3-4 — note the indefinite article). The dark portion of fourth day of this seventieth week began when Jesus died; dawn comes when Jesus fights on a day of battle, His feet standing on the split Mount of Olives, His earthly ministry resuming when the 144,000 flee through the split stone and follow Him wherever He leads. And this is the informing vision that has been sealed by the decreed seventy weeks.

In the physical realm, the order went out to rebuild Jerusalem in 451 BCE, but what prince comes after seven weeks [49 years]? As far as is known, the date 402 BCE is unremarkable. But when moving into the spiritual realm, the seven weeks becomes more understandable for the conflict between Arian and Trinitarian Christianity resumed ... as God sent natural Israel into physical captivity because of national lawlessness and nation's profaning of God Sabbaths, God sent spiritually circumcised Israel into spiritual captivity in spiritual Babylon, with this captivity formalized at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE). As God decreed that

natural Israel fully remain in Babylonian captivity for seventy years, God decreed that spiritual Israel remain in spiritual Babylon for 12 centuries, thus giving to civil authorities the power to kill heretics, those disciples who spiritually left Babylon. Yes, God through His agents—the kings and princes of this world—kept the Church in spiritual Babylon for a unit of time spiritually comparable to the seventy years natural Israel, which was no larger than Judah when entering captivity, was in physical captivity in Babylon.

As a remnant of natural Israel left Babylon after 70 years, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon after 1200 years. In 1525 CE, an Anabaptist remnant of spiritual Israel began a mental trek back across the centuries, revisiting each of the errors that had sent the Church into captivity—and as each of these errors trapped disciples in lawlessness in the early centuries, they caught the majority of the returning remnant time and time again. Each time caught, only a remnant of the remnant continued the trek from spiritual Babylon to heavenly Jerusalem.

In the spiritual realm, the prince who comes after seven weeks is the demon who becomes the king of the North when the great horn of the king of Greece is broken because he is first—broken when lives are again given for the ransom of Israel (Isa 43:3-4) at the beginning of the seven endtime years. This prince represents Death; he is the prince of Arians; and his coming resumes the warring between Arians and Trinitarians last seen when the Vandals sacked Rome (ca 600 CE).

In the physical realm, the anointed one cut off after sixty-two additional weeks [sixty-nine weeks] is the prince of this world, defeated when the man Jesus does not succumb to his temptations. In the heavenly realm, the anointed one is this same prince, the spiritual king of Babylon, king of the reigning hierarchy that will be toppled when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (*cf.* Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14). This anointed one **is not** Christ Jesus!

The sixty-nine weeks in the physical realm represent 483 years—and because the physical and spiritual application of the seventy weeks ends simultaneously, the suggestion certainly exists that sixty-nine weeks in the timeless spiritual realm might also be represented by 483 earth years, beginning approximately when the Anabaptist remnant left spiritual Babylon, thereby separating that remnant of spiritual Israel from the world and from civil governments representing the power and authority of the world. If this is the case as typology suggests, then Israel presently lives in that sixty-ninth week.

Understand this: Jesus' kingdom is not of this world, nor from this world. Disciples who leave spiritual Babylon do not partake in the civil governance of this world, the kingdom of Babylon. Thus, the first step out of Babylon is to end participation in the governance of this world. Disciples have to live in this world, but they **do not** have to help Satan govern; they do not have to help Satan solve his problems; and they should not help. They do not need to physically separate themselves from this world, something that cannot really be done, but they certainly need to mentally separate themselves—and if such separation causes a disciple to appear odd, so be it. So disciples need to take care of their own to the best of the ability God gives them while living as *other* in this world.

The prince to come is the lawless one, the man of perdition, the little horn on the head of Death, that prince of Arians who came after seven weeks—and his end comes with the split Mount of Olives swallowing the flood sent after the Woman (cf. Exod 15:12; Rev 12:16; Zech 14:3-5; Dan 2:34, 45). Death will be defeated, dealt a deadly wound, and its body taken to be burned. And the end made of the morning and evening sacrifices is—here wisdom is required—the great falling away of disciples who, when liberated from indwelling sin [the reason for ending the sacrifices], rebel against Christ. Those who rebel make a strong covenant with Death, not with Christ Jesus. This covenant will last one week only; it will last during the seven years of tribulation; it will last only until Christ returns. Then many shall be the slain of the Lord.

The Anabaptist remnant that left Roman Catholicism in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century began a long trek from spiritual Babylon to Jerusalem, with the marker for when this remnant crossed the Jordan being when this remnant returned to Sabbath observance. Many are the remembered ministers; many were the martyrs made as this remnant mentally crossed the territory visibly represented by western Iraq. And many have been the laity's casualties along the way as old theological errors caught disciples who did not realize where they were going, or what were the risks.

An early Anabaptist Sabbatarian, venturing ahead of the remnant, was Andreas Fischer, martyred for his beliefs in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, but for the most part, it was in the early 17<sup>th</sup>-Century in England and a little later on the Continent before a remnant of the Anabaptists accepted the Sabbath and permanently returned to spiritual Judea, entering God's rest but not journeying on to heavenly Jerusalem; for an Israelite goes to Jerusalem when appearing before the Lord three seasons a year, the high Sabbaths. Thus, the ministers and theologians who led a remnant of a remnant into Judea were servants of God who will be remembered in the age to come as epistles in the Book of Life. But not one of them would claim to be *the Elijah to come*. They were saints seeking truth in *sola scriptura* [Scripture alone].

Sabbatarian Anabaptists became Seventh-Day Baptists, English and German, in the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century. Then in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century, Sabbatarian saints seeking truth became aware that Christ Jesus would return [the Second Advent] to begin a Millennium reign here on earth, and that there would be an endtime nation of Israel. But with this renewed awareness came false teachers who led a large number of Sabbath-keeping Adventists to the teachings of demons, leaving again a remnant of a remnant to enter into the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century as the Church of God, 7<sup>th</sup> Day. And when the Church of God, 7<sup>th</sup> -Day, did not embrace British Israelism, Herbert Armstrong led a new remnant of disciples into keeping the high Sabbaths, into Binitarism, and away from human beings having immortal souls, three steps closer to the house of God, the foundation of which the Apostle Paul laid in the heavenly city (British Israelism is **not** a step closer but a step in the wrong direction). But Armstrong never fully understood the nature of the Father and the Son, never understood spiritual birth, and he borrowed heavily from the errant prophetic teachings of Ellen G. White. Plus and most importantly, he was guilty of hubris in that he made disciples for himself, not Christ Jesus. He apparently began to believe that he was God's essential endtime man; he

permitted his ministers to preach that he was the Zerubbabel who would finish building the house of God—his death made that claim obviously false. So Armstrong is one of a long line of ministers whom Christ has employed to lead a remnant of Israel back to the heavenly city where the foundation Paul laid was covered by the charred debris of generations.

Armstrong was not—emphatically shouted—*God's essential endtime man*. Such a claim is unbelievably presumptive. Armstrong was merely the minister who got that Anabaptist remnant of Israel that left spiritual Babylon early in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century to heavenly Jerusalem, where much work remained to be done in restoring all things. In fact, it can be strongly argued that he failed to complete the work given to him to do, that he got sidetracked by physical things, that he was never spiritually minded, that he saw only with his eyes and heard only with his ears. But as the Apostle Paul wrote: the work of every man will be tested by fire. “If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Cor 3:15). Most of Armstrong’s work has already been burned up, but the man will be judged by his relationship with Christ Jesus; for there really is no doubt that Herbert Armstrong was called to do a job. There is equally no doubt that he will not teach Israel during the Millennium, for he, himself, was in severe need of a teacher. He wrote and spoke about being humbled, not something the person who was truly humbled would do.

The contention of *The Philadelphia Church* is that a remnant of the Anabaptists has now located the foundation Paul laid, has cleaned off most of the charred debris, and has resumed construction of the house of God. The argument of Scripture is that those who are of Philadelphia will be pillars in the temple of God (Rev 3:12) ... pillars stand on the foundation laid, and connect the roof to this foundation. The roof of the house of God is the great endtime harvest, that third part of humankind born of Spirit when the Holy Spirit is poured out unto all flesh. Christ Jesus’ return will cause Jesus to be the capstone as well as the cornerstone—the entirety of the Church is encapsulated by Christ Jesus being its beginning and its end. And the resolution to the argument made in Scripture that every disciple who encounters *The Philadelphia Church* will have to address is whether this fellowship is endtime Philadelphia.

*The Philadelphia Church* is the antithesis of, and repudiation of Armstrong’s teachings about church governance.

Armstrong’s top-down administrative teachings came from Armstrong correctly perceiving that a human organization must be centrally controlled and administered to effectively compete in the world. But that was also the failing of his work: it was built on principles of human governance. It was his work, not Christ Jesus’ work. And the failings of his teachings became very apparent upon his death. When the administration of the Worldwide Church of God changed following Armstrong’s death, the Church’s teaching about eating clean meats also changed. It was suddenly all right to eat vermin—and when this announcement was made from pulpits, many members rushed from services to *pig out* on shrimp and lobster, revealing that these many members were only physically connected to the teachings of Armstrong. Once these physical [of this world] connections were broken, these many members were set adrift to fend for

themselves in the arena of ideas. Most have since drowned. But they feel so much better about themselves: they should, for they are spiritually dead.

*The Philadelphia Church* has no fellowship to fellowship connections in this world; thus, it can never be anything other than of little strength. It is only connected ideologically, theologically. That, however, is enough connection to deliver a message that must be accepted by faith, not because of the *showiness* of the organization, not because of fear, not because there is a rush to join, but because the message is the soft voice of Christ Jesus speaking to His disciples.

The *Elijah to come* came when the *Logos* entered this world as His Son, His only, to be the cornerstone for the house of God built as the restoration of all things—and this *Elijah to come* will come again as the capstone to this house when the restoration of all things is complete. Therefore, the *Elijah to come* is not a human being but the Son of Man, Head and Body, with the next visible focal points being the two witnesses, who will do a spiritual work foreshadowed by the physical work of John the Baptist.

*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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