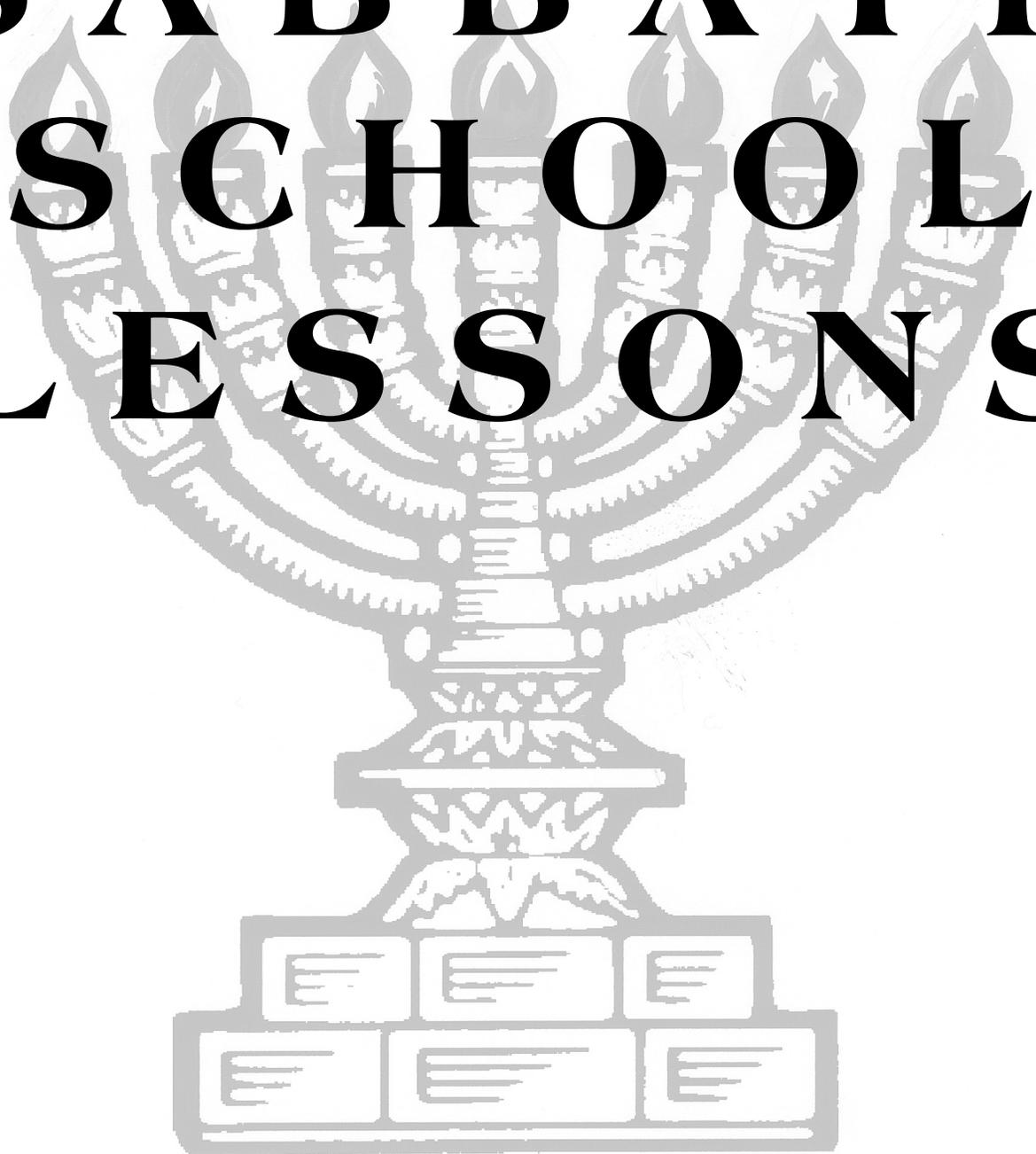


THE CHURCH OF GOD

**SABBATH
SCHOOL
LESSONS**



October, November, December

4th QUARTER - 2018

“MASTER OF THE STORM”

Lesson 1 ☐ For week ending October 6, 2018

Regardless of where you live on this magnificent planet, there will always be a storm of some type that will come your way. In some areas, it may come as a volcano. In other regions, a typhoon or hurricane. And, let's not forget the wild fires, floods, tornadoes, snow storms and other natural disasters! Every storm tests the strength and reveals the weaknesses of the environment and inhabitants it encounters. The storms of life—whether natural or spiritual—will bring about change in the lives of those who experience them.

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

KEY TEXT: *“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distresses. He hushed the storm to a gentle whisper, so that the waves of the sea were still. Then they were glad because of the calm, and He guided them to their desired haven” (Psalms 107:28-30 AMP).*

1. According to Romans 1:20, the purposes of God are seen and understood by things that are made.

- Since natural storms bring about many changes in the areas that are affected by them, we must concede that a spiritual storm can do the same.
- During a storm, things are sometimes destroyed and completely devastated. However, after the storm has finished, many miraculous things happen as a result of people coming together.
- Discuss the many benefits of various storms.
- According to Jesus, how should we prepare for the storms of life (Matthew 7:24-27)?

2. What lessons can we learn from life's storms? Let's examine some of the spiritual lessons we can learn from a natural storm as we analyze a harrowing storm Paul faced in one of his many missionary journeys.

- The story begins in Acts 27:6-9 where we find the Apostle Paul embarking on a ship to Italy.
- The first purpose of the storm is to teach us obedience (Acts 27:10-12).
- The second lesson is to teach us to bring up the lifeboat—our means of escape—and to let down the anchor so we can stop running or wavering. We must hold on to Jesus and be anchored in Him (Acts 27:16-17, Hebrews 6:18,19; Ephesians 4:14)!
- The third lesson is to get rid of all the stuff that is weighing you down (Acts 27:18-20; Hebrews 12:1).
- Finally, we are reminded of the consequences when we make unwise decisions (Acts 27:21-22; Galatians 6:7).

3. The storms of life will test our faith and will reveal what is in your heart.

- However, there is no need for fear if we know and have faith that the Lord is with us.
- Jesus is the Master of the Storm!
- Discuss the difference that His presence makes in the midst of the storms of life (Mark 4:35-41).

4. After Jesus awoke and calmed the raging storm, He had a little talk with His followers.

- The storms in our lives often reveal areas of weakness. What was their weakness? A lack of faith.
- Jesus used this revelation to teach them and to bring about change.
- Have there been times when the Lord has calmed your storm and afterward you have been humbled by your lack of faith?
- We must know by faith that our God will bring us to the other side (Isaiah 43:2).

“BE YE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER”

Lesson 2 ☐ For week ending October 13, 2018

One of the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit is GENTLENESS. To be gentle, is to be kind. Loving kindness is an attribute of God and refers to God’s longsuffering love. Because God has been gracious toward us, we should treat all people with kindness. To be kind one to another, we must forgive one another, be merciful, slow to anger, agreeable, pleasant, friendly, generous and warm-hearted.

KEY TEXT: *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).*

1. God wants us to be kind, loving, and understanding with each other.

- This is not always the easy road at first and will require us to be led by the Holy Spirit rather than by our own selfish inclinations.
- Discuss the importance of identifying with each other’s feelings and situations (Romans 12:15-21).

2. There are many ways that we can reach out to one another.

- As followers of Christ, it will be our joy to show hospitality to those we meet.
- Read the following scriptures and discuss the ways we can show kindness: Romans 12:13; I Peter 4:9; and Hebrews 13:16.

3. Our words must be carefully chosen so that we can be a blessing to one another.

- This means that we must learn to think before we speak.
- Have you ever started a forest fire with your unbridled tongue (James 3:6)?
- Before we react to any given situation, we should ask ourselves: “Are my words motivated by love?” Or, “Will what I’m about to say make things better—or worse?”
- Read Proverbs 15:23; 25:11 and Psalms 19:14.
- Discuss practical applications of these scriptures to our daily lives.

4. It is certain that you will not get through this life without being hurt or offended by someone.

- It is in these times that we have an opportunity to let the light of Jesus Christ shine brightly through our reaction to such situations.
- A forgiving spirit shows that one is a true follower of Christ (Mark 11:25,26; Ephesians 4:32).
- What is the consequence of harboring unforgiveness?
- How many times should we forgive each other (Matthew 18:21-22)?

5. Because God is merciful, He expects His children to be merciful as well. Remember, we are created in His image!

- Read the following scriptures and discuss the blessings associated with being merciful: Matthew 5:7; Psalms 37:26 and Proverbs 11:17.
- Being kind to one another is pleasing to God.
- When we feel we have the right to “tell someone off,” or to “give them a piece of my mind,” we must remember how longsuffering, patient and gentle God has been to us when He has had every right to cast us aside.
- When we consider the unconditional love and kindness that God has shown to us, we can love others unconditionally, and they will be recipients of the kindness that flows from true love.
- When we allow the Holy Spirit to operate in our lives fully, this fruit of the Spirit will show forth Christ in us.

“I WILL BLESS THE LORD!”

Lesson 3 □ For week ending October 20, 2018

We have so many reasons to give God the highest praise! Not only did He send His only-begotten Son to redeem us, we have now been delivered from death—through the atoning death/burial/resurrection of Jesus Christ—and we can now enjoy abundant life in Him! Yippee! Are we in turn living the life that God has given us in such a way that He is being glorified and blessed? Our greatest desire should be to bless the Lord!

KEY TEXT: “I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalms 34:1).

1. When we bless God, we are expressing our thankfulness and praise to Him because He is the source of all of our blessings (James 1:17).

- The Psalmist David praises the Lord and encourages others to do the same.
- Read Psalms 34:2-10.
- Consider some of the reasons David gives for blessing the Lord.

2. The very life that we live as a follower of Jesus Christ can be a blessing to the Lord.

- We always love our children; however, there is such a blessing that comes to us as parents when we see our children doing what is right, making good decisions, treating others right and loving the Lord.
- We were created to bless the Lord! Study Ephesians 2:8-10 and Hebrews 13:20-21.

3. Have you ever thought about the fact that the way you live your life has an effect upon God?

- You can bring joy or sorrow to the very heart of God (Zephaniah 3:17; Ephesians 4:30).
- It is very easy to become self-centered, being only concerned with what makes us happy.
- Our church experience becomes all about us—what we can receive or how we can be blessed.
- While there is nothing wrong with wanting to be blessed, the truth is that the greatest blessing we can receive is when we find ways to minister to the Lord and be a blessing to Him (Psalms 100:1-5).

4. What is more effective when your children come to you: Constant begging? Or, a little thankfulness and praise?

- It is much more effective to come before God with thanksgiving and praise.
- Consider the words of the Psalmist in Psalms 63:3-5.
- When we live our lives to bless the Lord, Psalms 84:11b says, “no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly”.

“CALLED TO HOLINESS”

Lesson 4 □ For week ending October 27, 2018

There is still a high call of God in Christ Jesus today. God is looking for people who will be separate from the things of this world that stand in contradiction to His Word. One such practice is the worldly celebration of Halloween. It is sad when people teach their children to take pleasure in glorying death, the occult, witchcraft, and all kinds of mischief and works of darkness. God wants His people to be a holy people who will point others to Christ.

KEY TEXT: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:17,18).

1. All the ungodly practices that are involved in the modern-day celebration of Halloween are in reality nothing new at all.

- The instructions that God gave to the Children of Israel as they prepared to go into the Promised Land still demonstrate God’s will for us as His people today (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

2. For some, the idea of separating themselves from worldly holidays such as Halloween seems a little extreme.

- They say, “Ah, it’s just a little innocent fun.”
- The truth is that God does call His people to be extreme when it comes to our being separate from paganism.
- Consider the instructions given by God to His people in Deuteronomy 7:1-6.
- Pay close attention to verse 4, “For they shall turn away thy son from following Me.”

3. All of the practices that God forbids His people to be involved in—such as witchcraft, fortune-telling, and speaking to the dead—are Satanic in nature and origin.

- They involve the worship of false gods, and they promote seeking the dark side of the spiritual realm for answers to life.
- Through these practices, people open themselves up to hear from none other than the Devil, who is a deceiver (John 8:44).
- Satan has never had an original idea. He has been an imitator of God from the beginning.
- Discuss the way in which he counterfeits the things of God in order to draw people away from God (John 10:7-10).
- This is nothing new for Satan, consider what happened in heaven before the Creation (Isaiah 14:12-15).
- Satan was so crafty in his rebellion that he deceived one-third of the angels in heaven (Revelation 12:4).
- What was the fate of these fallen angels (Jude 1:6)?

4. As God’s people, we must stand out so that we can shine the light of Jesus into the darkness of this world (I Peter 2:9-12; Matthew 5:14-16).

- We will never be effective if we look and act like everyone else.
- As we walk in truth, we are “preparing the way” for others to walk that same path (Isaiah 62:10-12).
- As the world celebrates Halloween, remember the prayer that Jesus prayed for His Church found in John 17:14-23.

“A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP”

Lesson 5 □ For week ending November 3, 2018

There is a great lack of commitment in the generation in which we live. What ever happened to *"til death do we part"*? People are reluctant to take vows of any kind, including marriage vows. God, however, is a God of covenants. Throughout the Scriptures, we see the plan of God to have a covenant people.

KEY TEXT: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31, 32).

1. The only scriptural way in which two or more people may be joined together into one body for a particular purpose, is by the making of a covenant by all those who are a part of it.

- The word *covenant* means a *binding agreement between two or more parties for the performance of some action.*
- What covenant did God make with Noah in Genesis 9:15,16?
- How important is keeping one's word in regard to a covenant?
- According to Hebrews 6:18, what is one thing God cannot do?

2. It was through a covenant that God chose Abraham and his descendants to be a special people unto Himself (Genesis 17:5-8).

- Read Genesis 12: 1-3 and discuss what Abram had to do in order to receive the blessing of God.
- The same is still true today. If we want God's blessings, we must be willing to walk by faith (Galatians 3:6,7; 15-18).

3. When God delivered the Children of Israel from Egypt, He brought them unto Himself in the wilderness of Sinai.

- It was there that He gave the covenant by which He chose Israel to be a nation above all the nations of the earth (Exodus 19:4-6).
- What was Israel required to do?
- In the New Testament Dispensation, it is the covenant of grace that unites all those who believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins into one nation (Hebrews 8:7-10; 12:24).

4. Another covenant that is manifested in the Dispensation of Grace is the covenant of membership in the church.

- Read and discuss Isaiah 62:5 and Jeremiah 50:5.
- Notice that in these prophecies, the children of Zion would be joined to the Lord *and to one another* in a covenant.
- This covenant is for the purpose of joining together into one body all those who will accept the Bible as the Word of God and walk in the light of it to the best of their knowledge and ability.
- Read Ephesians 4:11-16.
- According to verses 11-13, what is the purpose of gifted and anointed ministries within the church?
- What happens when believers sit under the leadership of Godly apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (verses 14,15)?
- How can individuals "supply" anything to the Church body if they are not part of the body?
- Read Hebrews 10:24,25 and discuss the benefits of gathering together with God's people.

"BY FAITH"

Lesson 6 ☐ For week ending November 10, 2018

One of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit is FAITH. The Bible tells us that without faith, it is impossible to please God. As Christians, we must place our trust fully in God and realize, by faith, that He is able to take care of us. God promises that if we are faithful, He will guide our footsteps.

KEY TEXT: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

1. What is faith?

- Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1-3.
- Discuss the faith that is necessary to believe in the Biblical account of Creation and the formation of everything that we see around us today.
- Read Ephesians 2:8. The act of salvation requires faith.
- John 3:16 tells us that we are saved *if we believe*.
- Discuss the word *believe* and the action that accompanies this word.
- Are we saved if we merely confess with our mouth (James 2:19)?

2. The opposite of faith is *unbelief*.

- The word *belief* is defined as (1) *a feeling that something exists or is true, especially one without proof*, (2) *a firmly held opinion* (3) *trust or confidence in* (4) *religious faith*.
- So, it goes without saying that *unbelief* is the exact opposite of the definition of belief.
- When we choose not to believe God's Word, we are in fact saying, we don't believe God really exists, we don't believe what He says is true, and we don't have trust or confidence in His Word as well.
- Can we see how we limit the power of God in our lives by our lack of faith?
- How was the ministry of Jesus hindered because of unbelief (Matthew 13:54-58)?
- We must realize that our refusal to believe God's Word automatically disqualifies us from the blessings and/or benefits promised to believers.

3. The Bible instructs us that we should live by faith (Romans 1:17).

- Is it possible to live by faith and not pay our tithes and give offerings to God (Malachi 3:10,11)?
- When we do not give of our finances to the Lord, who are we placing our trust in?
- How does God view our lack of tithing or giving of offerings (Malachi 3:8,9)?

4. True faith in Jesus Christ creates deeds, or works.

- Can we believe that Jesus Christ is God of the universe and then disregard His instructions to us?
- Read James 2:14-18. Verse 18 tells us that we can see what people believe by what they do.

5. How can we get more faith?

- Read Romans 10:17. Discuss the necessity of daily reading the Bible and feeding our spiritual needs as we do our physical needs.
- Can we depend on the Word of God for direction (Psalm 119:105)?
- "*Faith in God sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible.*"

“DRAW NEARER TO GOD”

Lesson 7 ☐ For week ending November 17, 2018

Our Heavenly Father is compassionate and kind. His desire is for us to have a close personal relationship with Him. This is the reason He sent Jesus into the world to shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. Through the precious blood of Jesus, we are set free from our sins and now have the opportunity to draw near to the presence of the Living God.

KEY TEXT: *“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...” (James 4:8a).*

1. In order to understand why we need to draw near to God, we must first understand why we have been separated from Him.

- The answer is found in Isaiah 59:1,2.
- What happen to Adam and Eve when they sinned (Genesis 3:22-24)?
- The sinful nature is in direct opposition to God (Romans 8:6,7; James 4:4).
- Before Adam and Eve were separated from God and barred from the Garden of Eden, what promise was made to the one who deceived them (Genesis 3:14-15).
- Even as mankind chose disobedience and sin, God was already preparing a plan to bring restoration to His creation. What a loving God we serve!

2. Jesus came to set us free from the power of sin so that we might be restored to a right relationship with the Lord and Creator–Yahweh God.

- Consider the lengths that God went to restore us back to right fellowship with Himself (Colossians 1:12-14,20-23).
- When did God orchestrate this plan of restoration (Revelation 13:8)?

3. The separation that man brought upon himself was manifest in the design of the sanctuary in which the Holy of Holies was separated by a thick veil (Exodus 26:33).

- In the Old Testament, the Holy of Holies was off-limits to man except for one day per year—the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:30,32).
- Why was it so restricted? Because Yahweh God Himself appeared there (Leviticus 16:2).
- What happened to the veil of the Temple when Jesus died (Matthew 27:50,51)?
- Through the blood of Jesus, we now have access to the very presence of God (Hebrews 10:19-22).
- It’s also interesting to note that the separation between God and the Gentiles came to an end at this time as well (Ephesians 2:11-18).

4. God has made the way for us to draw near to Him. The question remains, “How do we draw near to God?”

- Drawing near to God requires us to turn from our sins and seek the Lord.
- Examine James 4:8-10.
- The following passages also give us insight into what takes to draw near to God: Isaiah 55:6,7 and Psalms 145:18.
- The Lord stands ready. When we make the effort to draw near to Him with a true heart of humility and repentance, putting our faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, He will draw near to us!
- God’s ultimate restoration with redeemed mankind occurs at the end of the age when we are restored to intimate fellowship with Yahweh God (Revelation 21:3).

“REMEMBER THE SABBATH”

Lesson 8 ☐ For week ending November 24, 2018

The Sabbath is the day that has always been set apart by the Creator to be remembered by His creation. As a weekly memorial, it reminds us that we have life solely because Yahweh created us and our world, that we have spiritual life and rest only through Messiah Jesus, and that we will have eternal rest with Him beginning with the Sabbatical Millennium. The New Testament Sabbath is a wonderful day of communing with God and allowing our bodies to rest as well. God’s Sabbath is a delight!

KEY TEXT: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God” (Genesis 20:8-10).

1. Some have mistakenly thought that the Sabbath is a Jewish day. Study Genesis 2:1-3 and confirm the truth that the Sabbath was blessed and set apart (sanctified) as a memorial to the creation of man and the world.

- Discuss the commandment of Exodus 20:8-11. Give emphasis to the word, *remember*. How could they remember what had not already been in existence?
- Analyze the meaning of the words, *hallow* and *sanctify* and their relation to the Sabbath day.
- In Leviticus 23 we see the seven annual feasts of God outlined.
- Read Leviticus 23:1,2. Notice that God listed the observance of the weekly 7th day Sabbath–Saturday–as part of His holy feasts.

2. The reformation which Jesus brought to Yahweh’s religion caused conflict, particularly in the question of Sabbath observance.

- Discuss the addition of human customs to God’s commandment and the bondage that they brought in the light of Matthew 12:1,2 and Luke 13:10-13.

3. Analyze the position which Jesus took in relation to what could be done on the Sabbath day with God’s blessing.

- Read Matthew 12:10-13, Mark 2:27 and John 5:8-12,18.
- By what authority could Jesus reform the Sabbath day from a day of required rest to a day of service to God and mankind (Mark 2:28)?
- Jesus reformed the Sabbath–just as He reformed the Judaism of the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:9-11).
- He changed it from a religion of fleshly works to a faith-based system of belief in Himself as the one true sacrifice for all of mankind (Hebrews 9:28;10:12).
- The Bible refers to this faith-based system as a “better covenant” (Hebrews 8:3).
- In The Church of God, we refer to this faith-based system as New Testament Judaism.
- Neither Jesus, nor His disciples, changed the 7th Day Sabbath to any other day. We choose to honor God’s Sabbath in obedience to His Word and because of the blessings associated with choosing to do so (Isaiah 58:13,14).

4. Further confirm the truth of the spiritual Sabbath rest that we experience in Jesus from Hebrews 4:3 and show how this rest overlaps into the eternal rest of which the Sabbatical 1,000-Year Millennium is the beginning.

- Evaluate the concept that man’s history of 6,000 years and that the reign of Christ is the Sabbath of this earth (II Peter 3:8; Revelation 20:4).

“JESUS: THE ETERNAL GOD”

Lesson 9 □ For week ending December 1, 2018

Jesus was much more than just a man. Though He was fully man, He was also fully God. There are certain prophetic declarations in the Old Testament which speak specifically of Yahweh which were fulfilled in the New Testament by Jesus Christ. This is perhaps the most conclusive evidence which could be presented to confirm the fact that the Son, Jesus/Yahshua, the Eternal Word, is God.

KEY TEXT: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

1. Revelation 19:10b tells us that *“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*

- It was prophecy that Jesus used to confirm His purpose and identity (Luke 24:44).
- Why did Jesus give three proofs—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms—of who He was (Deuteronomy 19:15; II Corinthians 13:1)?
- Discuss the effectiveness of prophecy as a witness to the authenticity of Jesus’ claims as you read II Peter 1:16,19-21.

2. One such prophecy is found in Isaiah 40:3.

- The word LORD in this passage is a translation of the word YAHWEH—the name of God.
- The fulfillment of this prophecy can be found in Matthew 3:3.
- Who did John the Baptist come to prepare the way for?
- Jesus, then, was the Yahweh (Lord) of whom Isaiah prophesied.

3. Another such scripture to which Jesus became the fulfillment of is Isaiah 8:13,14.

- There is no doubt that many in Israel did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah and Savior of the world.
- Expand upon how Jesus was the Yahweh—who became the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense—as you read I Peter 2:7,8 where Jesus is declared by Peter to be the fulfillment of this prophecy.

4. The prophets—under the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit—foretold in vivid detail the events of Jesus’ life.

- Zechariah 12:1,10 described a day in which they would look upon Yahweh, *“whom they have pierced...”*
- As John beheld the crucifixion of Jesus, he wanted to make it very clear to all that Jesus was indeed the Christ of the Scriptures.
- Confirm this by reading John 19:32-37.

5. Jesus is the Eternal God and one day every knee shall bow before Him.

- Consider the words of Jesus and His conversation with Philip found in John 14:7-11.
- In verse 9, Jesus states emphatically, *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”*
- Read Isaiah 45:21-23 with Romans 14:10,11.
- We shall all stand before God at the judgment seat of Christ.
- Jesus is the one declared to be, *“a just God and a Savior.”*
- When Jesus returns at the 7th Trump, He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords and He will rule the earth with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15,16).

“THE POWER OF JESUS’ NAME”

Lesson 10 □ For week ending December 8, 2018

The name Jesus or Yahshua literally means, *I Am Savior*. The name of Jesus is synonymous with power. It is through the name of Jesus that we receive deliverance, salvation and healing. As believers, we need to understand that through His name, Jesus has given us all power and authority. There is victory in the name of Jesus!

KEY TEXT: “*And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*” (John 14:13).

1. In order to better appreciate the name of Jesus, we need to recognize that He was more than just a man.

- He is the Eternal Word of God (John 1:1-4,14,15).
- Jesus has the power to speak things into existence. He spoke everything that we see into being. Jesus can do the impossible (Colossians 1:16)!
- Isaiah prophesied of the day when God would become flesh (Isaiah 9:6,7).
- Discuss the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus Christ as you read what the angel of the Lord declared to both Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1:19-23; Luke 1:30-33).

2. The reason Jesus came into this world was to take back the authority over the earth which Satan had stolen from mankind (I John 3:8).

- According to Revelations 5:5-10, it was Jesus who appeared in the throne room of God to redeem us by His blood!
- The power of Jesus’ name and the work that He accomplished while on earth is summarized for us by Paul in Philippians 2:5-11.
- We were once in darkness—but no more! Jesus has delivered us (Colossians 1:12,13).
- When Jesus commissioned the church to go and preach the Gospel, they were to go forth in His name and authority (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:17,18).

3. Still today, our battle with the kingdom of darkness can only be won by the authority of Jesus’ name.

- The name of Jesus is not, however, a magic incantation to get whatever we want.
- A good example of this is the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16).
- These men knew His name, but did not have a firsthand relationship with Jesus.
- Compare this with what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21,22.
- Paul did know the Lord and had authority through Jesus’s name over the demonic (Acts 16:16-18).
- Read and discuss Luke 10:17-20. Should we be afraid of our enemy Satan?

4. God’s power is not available to just anyone.

- What is required of those who claim to be Christians (II Timothy 2:19)?
- His power is only delegated to us as we believe in Jesus and obey His word (John 14:12-14; 15:7).
- We are not here to represent or build our own name—only His!
- Discuss Peter’s response to those who were amazed at the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:12-16).

“THE GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD”

Lesson 11 ☐ For week ending December 15, 2018

Among the most important things in our lives are the gifts and callings which God bestows upon us. Our response to these determine to a great degree our sense of fulfillment and completeness. Our most gratifying times are those that we spend in harmony with the calling of God, using those gifts which He has given us for the edification of His Church.

KEY TEXT: *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”* (II Timothy 1:9).

1. Our very salvation by grace through faith is a part of the calling of God.

- It is by the invitation of the Holy Spirit that we are drawn to God to accept His gift of eternal life (John 6:44; I Timothy 6:12).

2. Among the callings of God is the calling to preach the Word of God.

- Accompanying this call is usually one the five gifts of ministry.
- Discuss the gifts given to them who preach His Word (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 1:1).
- Just as Jesus chose the common man to be His Apostles, so God equips those that He calls.
- Discuss how the baptism of the Holy Spirit empowered and emboldened Peter to become a powerhouse minister of the Gospel (Acts 2:14,38,41).
- Remember, it was Peter that denied even knowing Jesus during the time of His crucifixion (John 18:25-27; Acts 4:13).

3. There are many vocations within the body of Christ to which we can be called. These include ministries of all sorts.

- Analyze Ephesians 4:1,7 and see the measure of God’s gift that accompany every calling.
- There are many other callings in the Body of Christ that do not involve preaching.
- The body cannot function properly without all of these gifts and callings operating.
- Analyze I Corinthians 12:4-11.
- We should also realize that God has called us and placed us in the body as He sees fit (I Corinthians 12:12-20).
- When we “bloom where we are planted” then the body comes together and every need is supplied (Ephesians 4:16).

4. When God places a calling or a gift in a life, He does not withdraw that calling. Compare this with the long-standing call of God upon Israel of which He did not repent (Romans 11:29).

- A good rule of thumb for evaluating a calling is that if one can do anything else and be happy and fulfilled, he is not called.
- A calling of God will be like that on Jonah’s life and will be easily shaken off.
- After Jonah’s period of disobedience, did God change His mind about Jonah’s mission (Jonah 3:1,2)?
- Discuss ways in which we can seek to develop the callings and gifts of God in our lives and in the lives of others in the Body of Christ.
- How may we encourage one another to be fulfilled?

“THE RESTORER OF PATHS TO DWELL IN”

Lesson 12 □ For week ending December 22, 2018

If there is one word which encapsulates the work of God in the Last Days, it is the word RESTORATION. The work of the Church today is that of bringing about a complete restoration of all the things that the Early Church believed and practiced that were destroyed or tarnished during the Dark Ages. It is through restoration that the way is prepared for the coming of the Lord!

KEY TEXT: *“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Isaiah 58:12).*

1. According to the Word of God, Jesus will remain in heaven until the time when all of the things that God has spoken by all His holy prophets have been fully restored to the Church (Acts 3:20,21).

- Included with that restoration should be every doctrine and practice, and every office and gift, of the Early Church.
- Part of that restoration includes the pattern ministry government that Jesus used when establishing the Early Church.
- According to Ephesians 2:19-22, what is the foundation of the Church?
- In Matthew 10:1-4, Jesus set forth the 12 Apostles of the Early Church—part one of the foundation.
- In Luke 10:1, Jesus sets forth the 72 Prophets—part two of the foundation.
- And, of course Jesus Christ is the cornerstone that makes sure the foundation is straight!

2. The prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6 makes the declaration that Elijah would come before day of the Lord’s coming.

- Elijah represents a ministry of restoration for it was Elijah of old who restored the altar of the Lord after it had been broken down by the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:31-33).
- In a parallel operation, it is the work of the Last Days’ Church to bring about a complete restoration of those things that the false prophets of spiritual Babylon destroyed or polluted during the Dark Ages.
- What was the result of the completed restoration (I Kings 18:38; Acts 2:3,4)?

3. When the disciples of Jesus understood Him to be the Messiah, they asked Him about Malachi’s prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah.

- Study Jesus’ answer in Matthew 17:10-13.
- Jesus identifies a two-fold fulfillment by saying Elijah will come but then declaring that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist.
- John ministered *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. He was not Elijah but the same spirit of restoration that God had placed in Elijah now worked in John.
- Discuss the prophetic ministry of John to *“prepare the way of the Lord”* (Luke 1:13-17; 3:2-6; Isaiah 40:3-5).

4. Jesus said, “Elijah truly shall come first and restore all things.”

- According to prophecy, the spirit of restoration will be at work in the Last Days in preparation for the Lord’s coming.
- Discuss the following passages: Micah 4:1,2; Isaiah 62:5-12.

“DON’T BE DECEIVED”

Lesson 13 □ For week ending December 29, 2018

As we see the Day of the Lord approaching, we as Christians must wake up and identify the devices that the enemy will use in these Last Days. According to Daniel 8:25, the Man of Sin will use deceit in his ascent to rule the world. As Christians, we must watch and be sober. In other words, we must be on guard against the subtle attack of Satan.

KEY TEXT: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11).

1. **Deceit is not a new device of Satan.**

- He deceived one-third of the angels in Heaven (Revelation 12:9), he deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6), and he can deceive you—if you let him.
- Sometimes he deceives us into thinking that we are too smart to be deceived!
- Examine the story of King Solomon and how he was deceived.
- Identify the two major areas where Solomon was deceived (I Kings 11:1,2; 11:6-8).
- Solomon’s deception began when he flagrantly disobeyed God’s commands.
- Read God’s description of Solomon in I Kings 3:12.
- If Satan could deceive Solomon, are we exempt from deception?

2. **How can you tell if you are presently being deceived?**

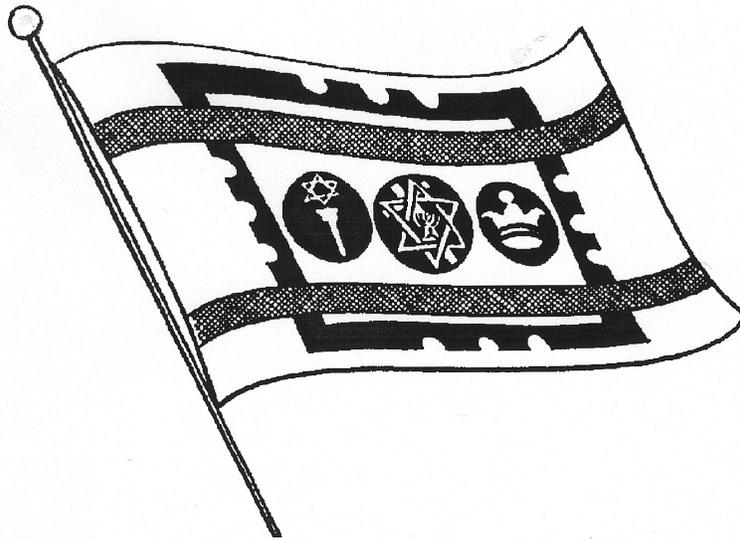
- Here are a few signs:
 - 1) You are involved in something that is contrary to God’s Word;
 - 2) You exempt yourself from Bible teachings that you know apply to you; and
 - 3) You justify wrongdoing.
- If we have been deceived, what should our attitude be when we see the light?
- Discuss Saul’s reaction in Acts 9:3-6.

3. **What can we do to guard against deceit?**

- Bring every thought into subjection to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).
- Don’t let the cares of this life choke us (Matthew 13:22).
- Seek the safety that comes from the multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14).
- Develop a love for the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10).
- There is a process involved to allowing sin/deceit into one’s life.
- James outlines the process in James 1:12-18.
- Notice the instruction given in verse 16, “*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*”

4. **Satan uses cunning devices to deceive God’s people.**

- Satan made a concerted effort—through Constantine and the Roman Empire—to extinguish the Judaic roots of the church.
- Jesus referred to this attack as the “*gates of hell*” coming against His Church (Matthew 16:18).
- Discuss how he has manipulated Christians to accept erroneous teachings regarding Christmas, Easter, and the Secret Rapture.
- Discuss the deception involved when many Christians will not be able to identify the Man of Sin because they are still waiting to be raptured away (II Thessalonians 2:3).



A quarterly publication of

THE CHURCH OF GOD

— Jerusalem Acres —

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