

THE CHURCH OF GOD

**SABBATH
SCHOOL
LESSONS**



January, February, March

1st QUARTER - 2018

“EATING THE BOOK”

Lesson 1 ❖ For week ending January 6, 2018

In order for us to become the people that will do the works of God in this generation, we must first ingest the prophetic word of God that applies to church and our time. In short, we must *eat the book*. Since we are what we eat, we must consume the Word of God and make it a part of us if we are to become that prophetic people that God desires.

KEY TEXT: *“And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book, And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey”* (Revelation 10:9).

1. Before we can be something that God desires in the earth, we must first internalize the message that describes that work.

- ▶ This was the case with the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:1-4).
- ▶ The experience of Ezekiel was parallel with that of John the Revelator (Revelation 10:1,2,7-11).
- ▶ Consider the impact of the instructions given to John to first ingest (eat) the contents of the little book before he could prophesy and fulfill the works of God.

2. When John first ate the book, it was sweet as honey; however, it soon became bitter in his stomach.

- ▶ Compare this to the way in which the prophecy is exciting and enjoyable when we first hear it, but it is often bitter when we start making it a part of us and working toward its fulfillment.
- ▶ Study James 1:21,22

3. One of the qualities of the people who do the works of God is that they are found meditating in God’s Word continually.

- ▶ Consider the value of studying and meditating upon the Word of God as you read Psalms 1:1-3.

4. Jesus declared that except we eat His flesh we have no life (John 6:55).

- ▶ What does it take to make the teachings of Jesus a part of our lives?
- ▶ According to Hebrews 5:11-14, who does the strong meat of prophetic revelation belong to?
- ▶ In the final analysis, we must become our message or our message is of little value. Discuss the process of becoming what we speak.

“THE GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD”

Lesson 2 ❖ For week ending January 13, 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 to the edification of the 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. There are many vocations within the body of Christ to which we can be called.

- ▶ Analyze Ephesians 4:1,7 and see the measure of God’s gifts that accompany every calling.
- ▶ Among the callings of God is the calling to preach the Word of God. Accompanying this call is usually one of the five gifts of the ministry.
- ▶ Discuss these gifts given to them who preach His Word (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 1:1).

3. There are many other callings in the Body of Christ for ministry that do not involve preaching.

- » The body cannot function properly without all of these callings and gifts operating.
- » Analyze I Corinthians 12:4-11.

4. 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 not be easily shaken off.
- ▶ Did Jonah’s disobedience to God’s call change what God wanted him to do?
- ▶ Running from God’s call in our lives simply brings trouble upon us.
- ▶ When God places a calling or 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: 26-29).

“THE JOY OF GIVING”

Lesson 3 ❖ For week ending January 20, 2018

One of the greatest blessings in our Christian lives is the opportunity to be a cheerful giver. When we understand God’s laws about giving and receiving and when we maintain the proper attitude in our giving, we will find God endowing us with the ability to give and the consequent blessing that comes as the reward of the Father for our generous and joyful giving.

KEY TEXT: *“Every man according as he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* (II Corinthians 9:7).

1. God’s laws of giving are found in Luke 6:38. They are the same laws of harvest that declare that we reap only what we sow and only in the proportion to the amount which we sow.

- ▶ Expand upon this truth.
- ▶ How can we change the kind of things we reap?

2. Another part of the law of giving is the *purpose* of giving.

- ▶ We should give for the support of the ministry (I Corinthians 9:13,14; Malachi 3:10).
- ▶ We should give to help the poor (Proverbs 28:27; 19:17).

3. The *attitude* in which we give is equally important as the giving itself.

- ▶ According to II Corinthians 9:7 we are to give as we have purposed in our heart with cheerfulness.
- ▶ Discuss further what the right attitude is when giving as you read the following scriptures: Exodus 25:2; Acts 20:35 and Romans 12:8.

4. In Ephesians 4:28 we are told to work so that we may be able to give, and Philippians 4:19 tells us that God will supply us more as we give to His work.

- ▶ II Corinthians 9:8 also tells us that God is able to make His blessings abound unto us that we may be able to give. Expand upon this truth.
- ▶ Confirm the fact that as we give cheerfully, God will help us to be able to give more.

5. The Heavenly Father Himself, gave us the example of how we ought to give when He gave His only begotten Son that we might have abundant, eternal life.

- ▶ The key word here is *gave*.
- ▶ When we love God and one another, we will find that love is the action of giving of our means, our talents, our time to help God’s work and those in need.
- ▶ Evaluate the blessing of John 15:11,12 upon such giving.

“WHAT WAS IN THE CUP?”

Lesson 4 ❖ For week ending January 27, 2018

“*What was in the cup?*” My friend asked me this question as he was preparing for cancer surgery. As I fumbled around for an answer, he continued, “You remember, when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, what was in the cup?” I responded with a perplexed, “Yes.” After a successful surgery, a discussion ensued and this is how the Lord and my friend inspired me to answer the question: “What was in the cup?”

– *Based on a sermon from the late Bishop Michael Markey, Sr.*

KEY TEXT: “*And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” (Luke 22:44).

1. One can't help but feel the anxiety in Jesus' words as He prayed in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. What caused such pain?

- ▶ What did Jesus see in that cup?
- ▶ He saw sin (Romans 5:12-15; II Corinthians 5:21).
- ▶ Not just some sin, not just any sin, but all the sins of the world.

2. Secondly, He saw suffering.

- ▶ Jesus was not caught by surprise by the suffering, but when He was praying in the Garden, it had all become so real because now the hour had come (Luke 9:22).
- ▶ We know in our life there will be pain and even death, but knowing doesn't make it easier to handle—even for the Son of Man, Himself.

3. Still there is more, next Jesus saw sacrifice.

- ▶ Jesus looked beyond the *sin* and beyond the *suffering* and recognized His role as the eternal sacrifice that would wash away the sins of mankind.
- ▶ He was the Perfect Lamb without spot or blemish (I John 2:2).

4. However, there is still more in the cup: separation from Yahweh God the Father. This something Jesus had never experienced before. Perhaps that's what brought the drops of sweat pouring from His body (Matthew 27:46; Isaiah 53:10).

- ▶ The anguish of being separated from the Father had to have been unbearable to Jesus. However, doing the will of the Father was His greatest desire.

5. Finally, at the bottom of the cup Jesus saw salvation and redemption for all mankind (Matthew 26:39)!

- ▶ Jesus got up from praying, dusted Himself off, and released His' disciples from the

weariness of prayer (Romans 5:8).

“ROOTED AND GROUNDED”

Lesson 5 ❖ For week ending February 3, 2018

The life of a true follower of Jesus Christ will be characterized by a stability that is the result of a strong foundation. We must *know* the One in whom we have believed. Our stability is found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ– the Living Word of God! The more we allow the Word of God to take root in our lives, the stronger we will be when we are tested by the trials of life.

KEY TEXT: *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”* (Ephesians 3:17-19).

1. Our life in the Kingdom of God starts with a seed that is planted in our hearts. If nurtured properly, that seed has potential to grow just like a tree that puts down deep roots and then shoots out great branches.

- ▶ Expand upon this concept as you study Mark 4:30-32 and Psalms 1:1-3.
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2. In order for the seed of God’s Word to take root, it must first be received into a heart that is open and willing to allow that seed to penetrate even into the deep places (James 1:21).

- ▶ Read and discuss Jesus’ parable in Luke 8:10-15. The word *keep* in this passage means *to hold down or to hold fast*. Figuratively it means *to keep in memory*.
 - ▶ Compare this to I Corinthians 15:1,2.
 - ▶ Discuss the importance of being patient as we wait on the Word to be formed in us (Hebrews 10:35,36).
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3. The Apostle Paul set an example for us of what it means to hold fast to the Word of God.

- ▶ He had complete confidence in the One that He served and instructed Timothy to do the same (II Timothy 1:8-14).
 - ▶ The word *keep* in verse 14 means *to watch or be on guard*.
 - ▶ Compare this to II Peter 3:15-18. What does Peter warn us to guard against?
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4. The goal is to become so rooted in our love for Jesus and His Word that nothing can move us (Proverbs 12:3, I Corinthians 15:55-58).

- ▶ Romans 8:35-39 describes the testimony of those who have become rooted and grounded in

“THE WATCHMEN ON THE WALL”

Lesson 6 ❖ For week ending February 10, 2018

One of the greatest responsibilities of the church today is to be aware of what is happening in the world and how it relates to Bible prophecy. It is the watchmen’s responsibility to make others aware of what is coming. The watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem must be ever-vigilant to watch for not only enemy attacks, but also the signs of the coming of the Lord.

KEY TEXT: *“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6-7).*

1. The call to be a watchman is a calling from God. He is the One who places them on the walls.

- ▶ They are to keep watch on the walls of Jerusalem.
- ▶ Discuss Jerusalem as a type of the Church, the Bride of Christ, as you read Hebrews 12:22,23 and Revelations 21:2,9,10.

2. The responsibility of the watchmen is prophetic in nature.

- ▶ They are in a position to see things before every one else, so that they can sound the alarm of warning.
- ▶ Consider this aspect of the watchmen’s calling as you discuss Amos 3:6,7; Jeremiah 35:15; and John 16:13.

3. Often times it would also be the responsibility of the watchmen to call out the hours of the night as they looked forward to the approaching dawn (Isaiah 21:11,12).

- ▶ This required the watchmen to stay awake while every one else had gone to sleep.
- ▶ The time just before the coming of the Lord is described as a very dark time. It is a night in which many will fall asleep spiritually. God’s watchmen, however, will be wide awake (I Thessalonians 5:1-9; Matthew 25:5,6)!

4. If the watchmen did not do their job, they would be at fault for the destruction of those that they did not warn. Confirm this from Ezekiel 3:17-21.

- ▶ Discuss the importance of ministry today that instructs and warns the people—both the

“JESUS, THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES”

Lesson 7 ❖ For week ending February 17, 2018

There are many prophetic types in the Old Testament which help us to understand more clearly the reality of the New Testament. Such is the case with Moses: The prophet who casts one of the clearest of prophetic types and shadows that can be found in the entire Bible. Jesus was the prophet like Moses.

KEY TEXT: *“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me...Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you” (Acts 3:22,26).*

1. Jesus Christ was indeed the fulfillment of the prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15.

- ▶ Those who would not hear Him were cut off from being a part of God’s chosen people.
- ▶ This prophecy was preached extensively in the Early Church as evidenced by Acts 3:22 and Acts 7:37.

2. The interesting thing about the prophecy was that Jesus was to be like Moses.

- ▶ Consider how at His birth, Jesus was like Moses (Matthew 2:15,16; Exodus 1:22; 2:3,4).
- ▶ Both Moses and Jesus were led of God into the wilderness to fast for 40 days. Compare these events (Exodus 34:28; Matthew 4:1,2).
- ▶ Both Moses and Jesus were lawgivers (Deuteronomy 9:10; John 1:19; Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34).

3. Moses delivered the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage while Jesus delivered the whole world from the bondage of sin and death.

- ▶ Discuss this prophetic shadow which Moses cast for the Messiah, the Son of God (Exodus 3:9-10; Hebrews 2:9,14,15).

4. Moses chose twelve leaders of the tribes and seventy two elders of the people (Numbers 17:2; 11:16).

- ▶ Jesus fulfilled this work in choosing Twelve Apostles and Seventy-two Prophets (Mark 3:13,14; Matthew 19:28; Luke 10:1).
- ▶ Notice also that Joshua (not Moses) chose seven (Joshua 6:4) and James (not Jesus) chose the seven of the Early Church (Acts 6:3).
- ▶ Compare the fact that Moses established the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38; Matthew 16:18).

- ▶ Discuss this amazing parallel.

“PROPHETS AND PROPHESYING”

Lesson 8 ❖ For week ending February 24, 2018

A lot of Christians today have come to rely on a “word from the Lord” from various ministers or prophets to chart their Christian journey. It is important that the believer understand what the Bible says about prophets and the prophecies they bring forth. If God is speaking, the message will always line up with His Word—the Holy Bible.

KEY TEXT: *“Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 23:32).

1. In Deuteronomy 18:13-22, there are two kinds of prophets identified.

- ▶ According to verse 18, what does a true prophet do?
 - ▶ While this scripture is a prophecy foretelling the coming of Jesus Christ, it is also the requirement for prophets of God.
 - ▶ According to this passage, how do we judge between true and false prophets?
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2. Deuteronomy 13:1-10 gives us instructions regarding false prophets.

- ▶ According to verse 3, why does God permit these false prophets to carry on?
 - ▶ Study verse 8 to see what our attitude should be towards anyone who speaks a word in an attempt to draw us away from faithfulness to God.
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3. One of the reasons some people follow false prophets is because they are successful and rich. This is the subject of Jeremiah 5:26-31.

- ▶ Discuss the way in which the Word of God is often compromised in order to attract the people and wealth of the world.
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4. Some prophets are successful because they tell their congregation what they want to hear: Promises of peace, prosperity, blessings, etc.

- ▶ This is nothing new as you can see from Jeremiah 14:13-16.
 - ▶ Discuss the danger of prophets distorting the Word of God and failing to prepare God’s people for the events that are to take place in the Last Days.
 - ▶ Will God forget what these false prophets have done (Jeremiah 23:1,2)?
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5. Christians today often become mesmerized when a prophet/preacher says to them, “Thus says the Lord God unto you.”

- ▶ Some even consider it disrespectful to judge a prophecy that is given. However, this is contrary to the Word of God. Prophets can be motivated by many things (Ezekiel 13:1-10).
- ▶ Discuss the instructions given by the Apostle Paul concerning prophets and prophesying (I

Corinthians 14:29-33). The wise Christian will judge every prophecy by the Word of God and promptly disregard what is not scripturally sound.

“A PASSION FOR SOULS”

Lesson 9 ❖ For week ending March 3, 2018

The Christian church needs a burden for the salvation of the souls of men now more than ever before. Millions of people are being deceived by Satan and are perishing for the lack of prayer, concern, and witnessing of Christians. We should pray that the Lord would burden our hearts with the weight of souls who are going into eternity unprepared to meet God.

KEY TEXT: *"Say not ye, There are four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).*

1. The prime example to us of the concern which we should have for the souls of men was set forth in our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ▶ Jesus, because of His great love, emptied Himself of all His heavenly splendor and power to become a man and to die for the sins of the world so that He might restore fallen man to God (John 3:16).
 - ▶ During His humanity, Jesus was burdened for His people, the Jews. Consider the sorrow and agony which He experienced in Matthew 23:37.
 - ▶ Should we not have this same concern for our loved ones?
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2. We often fail to recognize the fact that as Christians, we are sent forth in the stead of Christ to reconcile the world to Him.

- ▶ We cannot possibly accomplish this unless we have a burden for souls (II Corinthians 5:20).
 - ▶ Paul was an example of a man who went to all lengths to carry out Christ's ministry of reconciliation.
 - ▶ Analyze his testimony in II Corinthians 6:1-10 and compare to the dedication to this work that we manifest today.
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3. The Great Commission of our Lord is an all-encompassing commandment.

- ▶ We have the responsibility to take the Gospel to everyone possible (Mark 16:15,16).
 - ▶ This should be a demanding burden on our hearts.
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4. It is the work of the Spirit and of the Bride to say to the world, "Come!" (Revelation 22:17)

- ▶ The extent of our reward that is laid up in heaven will be determined by our burden to win souls for Christ.
- ▶ Consider the Apostle Paul's motivation for preaching the Gospel as you study I Corinthians 9:16.

- ▶ We must seek God's face that He will impress upon us as never before the need of standing in the stead of Christ, reconciling the world to God.

“MINISTERING WITH LOVE”

Lesson 10 ❖ For week ending March 10, 2018

There are times that we must check our hearts to be sure that our motivation in serving the Lord is right and holy. It is possible to be doing the right thing with the wrong motivation! We are excited to tell people what we know about the Lord and His Word, but are we doing that because we love people and want them to come to the saving knowledge of God's Word, or are we at times motivated by some self-serving purpose? People will not care how much you know until they know how much you care! God has called His Church to demonstrate His love in the world!

KEY TEXT: *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently”* (I Peter 1:22).

1. Ministry that is centered in the love of God will be focused on placing the needs of others ahead of the needs of ones' self. This type of love is defined in I Corinthians 13:1-3.

- ▶ Notice that all of the things mentioned in this passage are good in and of themselves. The thing being questioned is our **motivation** in doing those things.
- ▶ Paul is conveying to us that love is just as important as knowledge or revelation and that our acts of martyrdom must be motivated by love—or they are worthless!
- ▶ An example of this might be in our motivation for witnessing. Do we witness only to fill our own church or ministry with numbers or do we witness to build up the Kingdom of God in any way that the Lord sees fit, trusting that the Lord will build the Church?

2. Ministering to the needs of others requires a spiritual maturity in our lives through which we are able to demonstrate the same love our Heavenly Father has shown to us.

- ▶ Study the characteristics of love described in I Corinthians 13:4-7 and apply them to the demands of ministry.
- ▶ Consider other attributes that servants of the Lord must put into action as you read II Timothy 2:24-26.

3. Ministry often requires that we meet people where they are. We have to find common ground on which to build a relationship. The goal is to find opportunity to lead them to Jesus.

- ▶ What was the Apostle Paul's strategy for winning people to Christ (I Corinthians 9:19-23)?
- ▶ *Love* may compel us to leave our comfort zone to help someone else find their way to Christ.

4. Jesus loved those to whom He ministered. He saw each individual as someone precious to the Father—a *soul* in need of a *Savior*.

- ▶ Jesus did not identify people by their sin or position in society. He called people by their name.
- ▶ Discuss why this is important as you study the story of Zacchaeus found in Luke 19:1-10.

- ▶ We must be thankful that Jesus loved us enough to look beyond our faults and see our potential in Him. Then we must extend that same love and grace to others.

“LEARNING TO BE MERCIFUL”

Lesson 11 ❖ For week ending March 17, 2018

"Lord, have mercy!" This is an expression that we all have heard at different times and under different circumstances; however, if it were not for God's mercy towards the children of men, we all would be in terrible circumstances. We have a great lesson to learn from our Creator, for if He is plenteous in mercy and He certainly expects no less of us who serve Him.

KEY TEXT: "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*" (Matthew 5:7).

1. The act of showing mercy is the voluntary withholding of some penalty from one who deserves to have it imposed upon him.

- ▶ We find this to be the case with Yahweh, who, despite the fact that His people deserved punishment, often withheld that punishment (Nehemiah 9:15-22).
- ▶ Yahweh God is always ready to forgive.
- ▶ This is what is meant by the phrase of scripture, "*...for His mercy endureth for ever.*"
- ▶ Discuss the merciful nature of God (Psalm 86:5; 118:1-4,29; Nehemiah 9:32).

2. The example of mercy which God set for us reached its zenith in that one unfathomable act of mercy that He manifested when He sent His Son to save us while we were yet sinners.

- » Read I John 4:9,10 and Titus 3:4-7.

3. If God has withheld a just eternal death from us by His mercy through Jesus Christ, should we not then be equally anxious to show mercy one to another.

- ▶ Even when others have wronged us, we should have the Godlike attitude of being ready to forgive (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
- ▶ Mercy and forgiveness that spring from the heart are expressed cheerfully and willingly, without pretense or demand.
- ▶ Expand upon the true Godly expression of mercy (Romans 12:8).

4. The showing of mercy is one of the qualities of the wisdom that comes from God. If our lives are led by the Spirit of God, we will be full of mercy and easy to be entreated (James 3:17,18).

- ▶ The most immediate advantage of being a person who is full of mercy is the Divine Law principle that declares that those who *show mercy* will *receive mercy*.
- ▶ Discuss this reciprocal principle (Matthew 6:12,14,15; 18:21-35).

“THINGS WE DO NOT DESERVE”

Lesson 12 ❖ For week ending March 24, 2018

Someone once said, “I want everything that’s coming to me. I want everything that I deserve.” That’s a dangerous statement if you stop and really think about what we deserve outside of the grace of God. There are so many things that God has done for us that we—by our own merit—do not deserve. A greater understanding of the grace of God will help us to be truly appreciative of just how good the Lord has been to us.

KEY TEXT: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

1. We must be on guard against wrong attitudes that try to rise up in our lives and in the church.

- ▶ One such attitude is the feeling of *entitlement* which acts as if God owes us something because we have made the choice to serve Him.
- ▶ The truth is that if we got what we truly deserved in life, we would not be happy with the results. It is only because of God’s grace that those who have received Jesus Christ have been spared the punishment of sin.
- ▶ Discuss this as you read Psalms 103:8-12. Did we deserve such forgiveness?

2. Grace is defined as God’s unmerited favor. In other words, He, in His goodness, gives us what we truly do not deserve.

- ▶ “It is the gift of God.” We did not deserve to have our sins forgiven and yet He has forgiven us.
- ▶ Consider the weight of sin that would be stacked against us if not for God’s loving forgiveness (I John 1:9).
- ▶ Our debt of sin was paid in full by Jesus!
- ▶ Did we deserve such love (Romans 5:6-8)?

3. Another result of God’s grace is that He chooses to use us to do His work on the earth.

- ▶ God does not use us based upon who we are or what we think we have to offer.
- ▶ We do not *deserve* to be used by God, and yet He uses us!
- ▶ Consider the testimony of the Apostle Paul.
- ▶ He had been a persecutor of the Church.
- ▶ He was very aware that he was who he was only by the grace of God (I Corinthians 15:8-10).

4. All the abilities and talents that we have are also gifts that have been given to us by God (Ephesians 4:7-11, Romans 12:3-8).

- ▶ A gift is not something that can be earned.
- ▶ Neither is it given because it is deserved.

- ▶ It must simply be sought for and received (I Corinthians 12:31).
- ▶ God places gifts in our hands so that we can bring glory to Him!

“THE CHURCH – AN HABITATION FOR GOD”

Lesson 14 ❖ For week ending March 31, 2018

The heaven of heavens cannot contain the fulness of God; however, He has chosen to indwell the hearts of those believers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Those who will be yielded to His will are to be fitly-framed together into a holy temple to be the spiritual habitation of God by the Spirit. What a challenge and opportunity we have as God's house!

KEY TEXT: *"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21,22).*

1. While there was a time that the Shekinah presence of Yahweh dwelt in the holy of holies in the Temple, in the New Testament era He dwells in the hearts of His people.

- ▶ Confirm this truth from Acts 7:48; 17:24. The Church is the spiritual temple of God in the Grace Dispensation. I Peter 2:5-9 reveals this truth.
- ▶ I Corinthians 3:17 adds confirmation.
- ▶ Discuss the role of the Church as the assembled people who offer worship.

2. The Church is also the City of God in which Yahweh dwells.

- ▶ This is the message of Hebrews 12:22,23 and Revelation 21:9,10.
- ▶ Consider the parallel between the city of Jerusalem and the Church.

3. The Church is the Body of Christ in which He dwells through the Spirit. This truth is established in Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:16; and I Corinthians 12:12,23,27.

- ▶ Compare the human body and its various members with that of the Church as the Body of Christ in which He dwells.

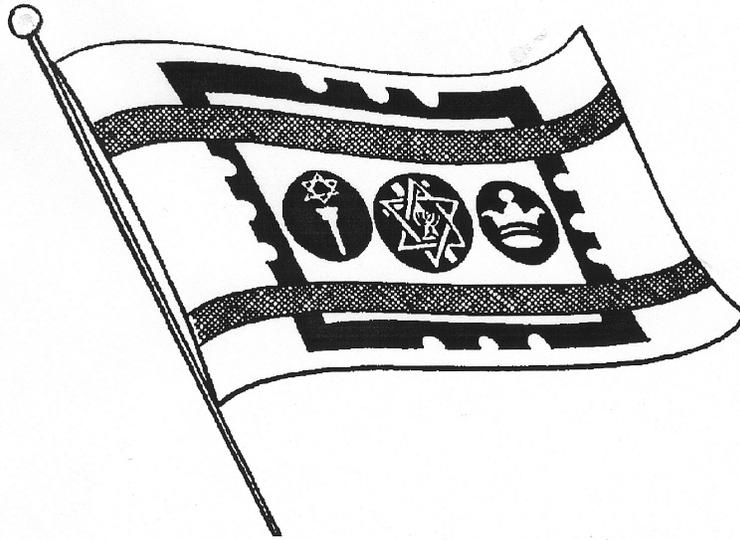
4. Since the Church is compared in Scripture with the building of God, it must be built like a physical structure.

- ▶ Its basis is a solid foundation. Discuss the foundation of the Church (Matthew 7:24,25; I Corinthians 3:11).
- ▶ There are also foundational pillars on which the Church rests.
- ▶ These are the apostles and prophets and the responsible officers that are revealed in Ephesians 2:20; I Corinthians 12:28; and Proverbs 9:1.

5. What Jesus was individually in the world (Colossians 2:9), the Church is to be collectively.

- ▶ In Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead; in the Church dwells the fulness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 3:19).
- ▶ Discuss the way in which the eternal God works through the agency of human

instruments to accomplish His will in the earth.



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Post Office Box 1207

1826 Dalton Pike, SE

Cleveland, Tennessee 37364-1207, USA

Phone: 423/472-1597 or 423/476-5596

Fax: 423/478-5572

E-mail: TCOGJERACR@AOL.COM

Website: thechurchofgodntj.org

Email: thechurchofgodntj.com