

THE CHURCH OF GOD

**SABBATH
SCHOOL
LESSONS**



October, November, December

4th QUARTER - 2019

“THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS”

Lesson 1 ■ For week ending October 5, 2019

The Feast of Trumpets is the fifth festival outlined by Yahweh in Leviticus 23. With the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, it deals prophetically with the time of warning prior to the end of the age. It signals the time of preparation for the return of Christ and the establishing of the Sabbatical Millennium of the Kingdom of God.

KEY TEXT: *“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand” (Joel 2:1).*

1. The Old Testament observance of Trumpets is found in Leviticus 23:24,25. According to those scriptures, when is this Feast?

- » **LEVITICUS 23:24-25**, *“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.’ ”*
 - » Today, the Feast of Trumpets has been merged with the Jewish festival Rosh Hashanah which literally means “the head of the year”.
 - » It should be noted that Trumpets is never referred to as Rosh Hashanah in the Bible; however, Exodus 23:16 does refer to the Feast of Tabernacles (Ingathering) as occurring at the “*end of the year.*” (NOTE: Tabernacles is at the end of the Agricultural Year.)
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2. The use of trumpets in the Old Testament was a means of communicating with the congregation of Israel.

- » In Numbers 10:1-10, God gives Moses instructions on how and when to blow the trumpets.
 - » What are some of the different messages related through the trumpets?
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3. One of the major purposes of trumpets was for calling an assembly (Joel 2:15).

- » **JOEL 2:15**, *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly.”*
 - » Consider the symbolism of the historical use with the prophetic work of gathering God's people together to prepare for the return of Christ.
 - » According to Jesus, what will be used to hail His return to the earth (Matthew 24:30,31)?
 - » What happens when this trumpet is blown? This is further confirmed by I Thessalonians 4:16,17.
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4. The other major function of trumpets was for warning.

- » Study Ezekiel 33:1-6 and discuss the need to warn this world of the coming of the Lord.
 - » What does Isaiah 58:1 compare our voices to?
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5. The blowing of trumpets also signals the fall of Babylon and the time of trouble that is to come upon the world.

- » Consider the Feast of Trumpets and its impact on Babylon (Jeremiah 51:24,27).
 - » Discuss the seven trumpets that sound in the end as a part of fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets (Revelation 8:2,6).
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“THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES”

Lesson 2 ■ For week ending October 12, 2019

Tabernacles is the 7th and final feast given to Israel by God. It is the most joyful and festive of all Israel's feasts, as it came at harvest time, when the hearts of the people were naturally glad! The joyous nature of this feast takes on new symbolism when we compare it with the Second Coming of Christ, and the ingathering of the saints that will take place. What a feast that will be!

KEY TEXT: *"And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field" (Exodus 23:16).*

1. In Leviticus 23:34-44 the observance of Tabernacles is detailed.

- » One of the primary purposes of this feast was to rejoice after the harvest was reaped (verses 39-41).
- » We could refer to it as the "Thanksgiving" of the Bible.
- » The Israelites were also commanded to dwell in booths as a reminder of their sojourn from Egypt to Israel.

2. The Church of God believes that Tabernacles is significant in Bible history because of the great events that occurred during this feast time.

- » Consider the following examples:
 1. Noah's Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4).
 2. The dedication of Solomon's Temple (I Kings 8:2).
 3. The birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:5,23,36; Isaiah 9:3,6).

3. In Jesus the Messiah, we see the fulfillment of Tabernacles: Jesus, who is very God, tabernacled among men.

- » Read John 1:14 and discuss the importance of Jesus' birth during this feast.
- » Since the time of Creation, God has desired to have intimate fellowship with His people.
- » Read Genesis 3:8. It appeared to be the custom of God to have daily interaction with Adam and Eve.
- » We know that sin separated mankind from God. According to Genesis 3:14,15, what prophecy was given concerning the coming Messiah?
- » Discuss how the coming of Jesus to this earth was the beginning of the end of Satan's power over mankind's destiny (Revelation 1:18; Romans 6:23; 8:1-3,10,11).

4. Consider what Jesus did at the Feast during the ceremony of the water drawing: as water was brought in a golden flask from the Fountain of Siloam and poured into the basin near the altar, Jesus stood and cried (John 7:37-39).

- » Discuss how the feasts of the Lord stay relevant regardless of time.

5. The "Joy of the harvest" is the theme of Tabernacles (Isaiah 12:1-6).

- » Discuss the harvest of souls that will be gathered in during this time (Matthew 13:36-43).
- » There is a future celebration of Tabernacles for the saints of God to look forward to described in the New Testament (Revelation 21:3-7).
- » The Feast of Tabernacles will one day be observed by all nations (Zechariah 14:16-21).

“KEEP LOOKING UP”

Lesson 3 ■ For week ending October 19, 2019

During the season of Tabernacles, our minds turn to the reality that Jesus will one day come again to the earth to set up His kingdom and rule as King of kings and Lord of lords for a period of 1,000 years. We are reminded of the importance of staying focused on Jesus and the work that He has called us to do. It is not a time to be downcast or discouraged. It is time to lift up our heads and look up. Our King is coming soon!

KEY TEXT: *“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:27,28).*

1. From the moment that Jesus left this earth and ascended into the heavens there has been an anticipation of His return.

- » What did the angels promise the disciples of Jesus who were present at His ascension (Acts 1:10,11)?
- » **ACTS 1:10,11**, *“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*
- » Jesus will come again in the clouds in bodily form just like He left (Zechariah 14:4; Rev. 1:7).

2. Jesus will come again at the time appointed of the Father.

- » Some have foolishly tried to set dates for the timing of Christ’s return.
- » What did Jesus have to say about this (Mark 13:26-33)?

3. As we wait for the time appointed by the Father, we must stay focused on our relationship with Jesus so that we will be ready when He comes.

- » This world as it is today is not our home.
- » Discuss the importance of keeping ones eyes on Jesus as you study Hebrews 12:1,2 and Colossians 3:1-4.

4. We must also stay focused of the work that God has called us to do in His harvest.

- » As you read John 4:35, notice the phrase, *“Lift up your eyes, and look at the fields.”*
- » **JOHN 4:35**, *“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”*
- » Jesus wanted to make it clear that the work of winning souls is not something out in the future. It is the work that is before us, right in front of our eyes.
- » Jesus always had His eyes open to find a lost soul.
- » The story of Zacchaeus is a great example of the mission of Jesus (Luke 19:1-10).
- » While others would have written off or ignored Zacchaeus, Jesus looked up and saw him, resulting in his salvation.
- » There is great reward in store for those who have worked faithfully in the fields and turned many souls to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- » Examine Daniel 12:2,3.

“A PASTOR’S HEART”

Lesson 4 ■ For week ending October 26, 2019

Among the five-fold gifted ministry given to the church by Jesus, is the gift of the Pastor. The God-called, anointed pastor will be a shepherd who takes great care to nurture and protect God’s people. It is a pastor’s heart to help establish and build up the people God has placed in his care. Our pastor’s and their families need our continual prayer!

KEY TEXT: “*And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding*” (Jeremiah 3:15).

1. A true pastor is called of God.

- » This calling is an extension of God’s heart for His people.
- » The word *pastors* in our key text could also be translated as *shepherds*.
- » Discuss the role of the Lord as our Shepherd (Psalms 23:1-6; Isaiah 40:11).

2. A gifted pastor feeds his flock with the Word of God and establishes them in the Apostles’ Doctrine for their own stability.

- » Consider the Apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy in II Timothy 4:2-4.
- » This aspect of a Pastor’s ministry is very important in the lives of his flock.
- » Discuss the stability that results from the faithful preaching and teaching of sound doctrine (Isaiah 33:6; Ephesians 4:14).

3. A gifted pastor acts as a guardian or shepherd of his flock and will not flee from the enemy of their souls as an hireling.

- » **hireling** >noun chiefly derogatory a person who is hired, especially for morally dubious or illegal work.
- » Contrast the difference between a true pastor and a hireling as you study John 10:11-14.
- » Consider also **I PETER 5:1-4**, “*The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*”

4. The greatest single characteristic of a gifted pastor is his patience, the ability to reflect a victorious attitude even in times of trouble and defeat.

- » He is always careful not to wound or destroy the sheep of God for whom he is appointed to care.
- » He has the ability and determination to defend and encourage his flock rather than seeking out their faults.
- » Discuss this characteristic as you read II Timothy 2:24,25.
- » **II TIMOTHY 2:24,25**, “*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.*”
- » How can we in turn be a blessing to our Pastor (Hebrews 13:17,18)?

“THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK”

Lesson 5 ■ For week ending November 2, 2019

As a part of the Law of God, Moses was commanded of God to construct a 7-branch candlestick (Menorah) after the pattern of that which he had seen in a vision of the heavenly things. It was constructed of beaten gold and placed in the Tabernacle of Witness. It is one of the most complete revelations of the pattern and structure of the church and its ministry that is found in the Holy Scriptures.

KEY TEXT: "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same" (Exodus 25:31).

1. Since the events and programs of the Law were only shadows of good things to come in the Dispensation of Grace (Hebrews 10:1), the candlestick which God commanded Moses to construct was symbolic of the better things to come in the New Covenant.

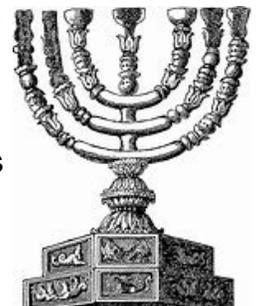
- » What is the significance of the material things of the Tabernacle of Witness of the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:23)?
- » In Hebrews 9:2-5 the candlestick was among the patterns of the heavenly things which are those spiritual fulfillments in the Dispensation of Grace that were purified by the blood of Jesus.
- » Discuss the candlestick as a part of the furnishings of the true tabernacle, the Church (Hebrews 8:1,2).

2. Jesus at no time in His earthly ministry attempted to build a material tabernacle or temple, therefore the temple that He built had to be the Church.

- » Peter confirmed this in I Peter 2:5.
- » Jesus emphasized the importance of the light of the candlestick in Matthew 5:14-16.
- » Where did Jesus say the light of God should be placed in order to properly serve the household of God?

3. The candlestick—which was revealed to Moses with a specific pattern and design—is symbolic of the pattern of government Jesus set forth in the New Testament Church.

- » The central shaft represents the anointed leader of the church through whom God gives meat in due season (Matthew 24:45-47).
- » The foundation was constructed of twelve sides (as depicted on Titus' Arch of Triumph in Rome) and represents the twelve apostles (Ephesians 2:20).
- » There are seventy-two bowls, knops, and flowers representing the 72 elders or prophets that were sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1).
- » The seven lamps represent the seven men of wisdom appointed by the apostles (Acts 6:3).



4. Zechariah saw a vision in which the candlestick was to be sponsored among two different peoples, represented by the olive trees (Zechariah 4:2,3,11-14).

- » The first tree was the Jews of the Early Church who made the light shine.
- » Discuss the need for the Last Days' Church to restore the candlestick pattern so that it might shine as the light of Jesus to a very dark world (Isaiah 62:1).

“ALL SCRIPTURE”

Lesson 6 ■ For week ending November 9, 2019

The Holy Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, are the inspired Word of God. In order to fully understand the plan of God, a student of the Word must gain a comprehensive knowledge of both the Old and New Testaments. When studied as a whole, the Word of God agrees together revealing the will of God to man. The Word of God was given to point us to Jesus Christ—the Savior of our soul!

KEY TEXT: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

1. In II Timothy 3:14-17, Paul exhorts concerning the importance of the inspired Word of God.

- » The "*all scripture*" to which Paul referred was the Old Testament, for the writings of the New Testament had not yet been compiled.
 - » Would it be possible to fully understand the reasons for the events which take place in the New Testament without a working knowledge of the Old Testament (Jeremiah 6:16)?
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2. The Old Testament contains types, shadows, allegories, and prophecies of the Grace Dispensation which was to come.

- » Consider this as you read Hebrews 10:1 and Colossians 2:16,17.
 - » It also sets the stage for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the provisions of the perpetual atonement (Galatians 3:24).
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3. Paul made it clear that the knowledge of the mysteries of God's ever-unfolding program of the ages is revealed and proclaimed only through the Scriptures of the prophets.

- » To confirm this study Romans 16:25,26 and Acts 24:14; 28:23.
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4. The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets all agree together and point to Jesus as the Messiah and Savior of the World.

- » Jesus used these scriptures as a witness to proclaim His authenticity.
 - » Read the account found in Luke 24:14-32,44-48.
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5. Jesus came into this world as the Word of God made flesh.

- » He came in fulfillment of the prophetic Word that had been written concerning Him (Matthew 5:17-19; Hebrews 10:5-7).
 - » Through the study of God's Word we can have the confidence that Jesus not only fulfilled the prophecies concerning His first coming but that He will also come again to receive His people in fulfillment of all Scripture that has been written of Him.
 - » According to Revelation 19:10, what was the testimony of Jesus?
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6. While some would contend that God is finished with the Old Testament and with Judaism, what does God's Word say about the matter (Malachi 3:6)?

- » Judaism is God's system of praise, worship, and service. When Jesus came some 2,000 years ago, He did not do away with Judaism, He simply *reformed* it.
 - » According to Hebrew 9:6-10, Old Testament Judaism was simply "*symbolic*" until "*the time of reformation.*"
 - » Read Hebrews 9:11-15. What makes the new covenant so much better (Hebrews 10:19-22)?
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“HOW LONG WILL YOU LOVE SIMPLICITY?”

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending November 16, 2019

If Satan would have a motto it would be: “Ignorance is bliss!” The word *bliss* means *perfect happiness, great joy*. Let’s set the record straight: Ignorance is not bliss! In fact, ignorance is a very dangerous thing and will lead to the exact opposite of bliss (great misery and sadness). *Ignorance* means *lacking knowledge or awareness in general*. Ignorance of the law is no excuse in any country—nor is ignorance of God’s Law a viable excuse with God.

KEY TEXT: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6a).

1. In Proverbs 1, we are given great instruction about knowledge and wisdom.

- » Read Proverbs 1:1-7. Discuss how God is the beginning of knowledge.
- » Read Proverbs 1:20,21. What is wisdom? The simplest explanation is this: *wisdom is knowledge applied*.
- » It’s not enough to just *have* knowledge—you must *apply* knowledge (Proverbs 2:10-12).
- » Knowledge can exist without wisdom, but not the other way around. One can be knowledgeable without being wise. Knowledge is knowing *how* to use a gun; wisdom is knowing *when* to use it and *when* to keep it holstered.

2. Proverbs 1:22, “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge.”

- » The Hebrew word which is translated as *simple* actually means *silly, that is seducible*.
- » God is very concerned that we as His creation aren’t seduced.
- » *Seduced* means *persuade to do something inadvisable*. The original Latin *seducere* means *lead aside or away*. When we are *lead aside or away*—it means we have been DECEIVED.
- » Satan deceived Eve and caused her to be lead away from eternal life, the Garden of Eden, and, sadly, away from intimacy with God (Genesis 3:1–7).
- » When the disciples of Jesus asked Him about the future, Jesus replied, “*Take heed that no one deceives you*” (Matthew 24:4b).
- » The word *deceive* means *to (properly cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue). Go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way*.

3. Proverbs 1:23, “Turn at My rebuke; Surely I will pour out My spirit on you; I will make My words known to you.”

- » God rebukes or disciplines us because He loves us (Hebrews 12:6). Just as we as parents discipline our children to protect them and teach them right from wrong (Proverbs 3:11,12).
- » Notice that true repentance requires that we *turn*. If we don’t *turn* after we have repented, then we have only *apologized* to God—we have not repented because we have not turned.

4. The importance of truth in the Last Days is vital to our existence.

- » According to Daniel 8:25, what will prosper under the AntiChrist’s rule in the Last Days?
- » Again, the word *deceit* means *to roam from safety, truth, or virtue*.
- » After the Battle of Gog and Magog, the AntiChrist will stand up on the world stage and he will look like a lamb and talk about peace and prosperity (Daniel 9:27; I Thessalonians 5:3; Revelation 13:11-14).
- » Since many Christians will think that the battle in Israel must be Armageddon, they may also believe that this man who stands up looking like a lamb and declaring peace—just might be Jesus Christ (the true Lamb of God and Prince of Peace).
- » So, how do we safeguard against deception? We develop a love for God’s Word and Truth.
- » Read II Thessalonians 2:1-4,6-12.
- » Ignorance is not bliss! Ignorance is a tool that Satan uses to deceive people (Proverbs 1:28-31).
- » Knowledge of God’s Word and will preserve you in troublesome times (Proverbs 1:33)

“GIVE THANKS”

Lesson 8 ■ For week ending November 23, 2019

Are you thankful for the blessings that God has given into your life? We should take every opportunity that we can find to direct our attention and the attention of others to the reality that there is a loving God who is the source of every good and perfect gift. One of the marks of godly people will be that they are a thankful people.

KEY TEXT: “O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy” (Psalms 107:1,2).

1. The book of Psalms is full of exhortations that when read will help us to develop an attitude of gratitude.

- » Our appreciation should be directed towards the Lord.
- » If God has blessed us—then we should say so! It is by *saying* so that God receives the glory (Psalms 105:1-5).

2. The statement, “Remember His marvellous works that He hath done,” is very important.

- » We are living in a time when people are forgetting to be thankful and much more than that they are forgetting God Himself!
- » Consider what Paul had to say about the Last Days (II Timothy 3:1-4).
- » The word *unthankful* should not be a word that describes a believer.

3. The fact is that prosperity has a way of breeding pride within mankind.

- » When things are going well, man has a tendency to think of himself as self-sufficient.
- » He has a tendency to forget that God is the one-and-only source all his blessings.
- » God gave the Children of Israel very strong warnings about the dangers of prosperity (Deuteronomy 8:10-19).

4. Those who are godly know who is the source of every good thing (James 1:17).

- » This is a good reason to pause before we eat and simply say *thank you* to the Lord for His provision.
- » Discuss the instructions found in I Thessalonians 5:16-18.

5. There is great power in those two little words, “Thank You!”

- » All parents have experienced encouraging their children to say *thank you* for some thing nice someone has done for them. It is just the right thing to do!
- » Shouldn't we give that same courtesy to the Lord (Luke 17:11-19)?

6. One quality of a godly person is that no matter what the circumstance, they will find a reason to give God praise! Why? Because they know that God loves them and has a purpose in all that He does (Psalms 140:13).

- » Read Psalm 100. How are we instructed to act when we come into the house of God (verse 4) ?
- » It's important that we lift our voice to recognize and acknowledge that every good thing that has happened in our lives is because of our loving and merciful Father, Yahweh God!

“I’LL SEE YOU AGAIN!”

Lesson 9 ■ For week ending November 30, 2019

As Christians, we have a tremendous hope in this life. What is the hope? We believe in the resurrection of the righteous dead. In other words, if you are a believer and you die—that is not the end of your story! While our physical body may be decaying, our Father in heaven is preparing a new body for us—one that will never decay! Let’s see what the Scriptures have to say about our resurrection from the dead.

KEY TEXT: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (I Peter 1:3).*

1. The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun. In the days of Jesus, there were two groups of believers within the Jewish scholars. One group believed in the resurrection from the dead (Pharisees) and the other group did not (Sadducees). The same argument exists today.

- » The Apostle Paul addresses this issue in I Corinthians 15:12,13.
- » Paul goes on to state that the resurrection of the righteous dead is the zenith of the Christian faith (I Corinthians 15:14-19).
- » What did Jesus have to say about the subject? Read John 11:25,26.
- » How does Paul conclude this discussion about the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20-28)?

2. What does God’s Word promise to believers concerning the resurrection?

- » God promises that we will have a new body (I Corinthians 15:35-49).
- » Will those that are resurrected still be married? Read the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:23-30.
- » God does promise that our rewards will follow us (Matthew 19:27,28).

3. How and when does the resurrection of the righteous dead occur?

- » First, let’s deal with *when* it occurs. The righteous dead are resurrected at the sound of the 7th Trump at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 11:15).
- » When does the 7th trump occur? At the end of the Last 7 Years when the Wrath Dispensation is over (the 3 ½ year period when God pours out His wrath upon the wicked of this world).
- » What happens at the sounding of the 7th Trumpet? Read I Corinthians 15:50-57.

4. After the resurrection, will we know and recognize our loved ones that have died in the faith?

- » The implication of Scripture is that we will know our loved ones. Exactly “how” we will know them is somewhat unclear.
- » Consider the example of Jesus when He returned with His resurrected body. Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus at the tomb—she thought He was the gardener (John 20:11-18).
- » The Disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus (although they felt a comradery with Him). The Disciples did know Him immediately—some thought they had seen a spirit. Jesus had to show them His hands and feet (Luke 24:36-43).
- » The Scriptures tell us that when we receive our immortal bodies, we will be like Jesus (Philippians 3:21; I John 3:2).
- » As believers, we have a great hope ahead of us. Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

“NINE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT LOVE”

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending December 7, 2019

People are hungry for love. Unfortunately, the world has sold them a poor excuse for the real thing. We need to be aware of the mistaken beliefs about love. Consider these misconceptions and the truth that corrects them.

1. **Love is thought of as something that happens to us, but it is an intentional decision.**
 - » *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”* (John 13:34 ESV).
2. **Romantic love is portrayed as belonging to those who are young. Faithful romance lingers long after our bodies begin to fail.**
 - » *“So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth”* (Malachi 2:15 ESV).
3. **A loving marriage is often depicted as being all about making us happy. But the Bible tells us it’s a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church.**
 - » *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church”* (Ephesians 5:31-32 ESV).
4. **Love is associated with “whispers of sweet nothings.” But true love is seen as well as heard.**
 - » *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”* (I John 3:18 ESV).
5. **Hollywood convinced an entire generation that “love means never having to say you’re sorry.” True love means we’re the first to apologize.**
 - » *“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love”* (Ephesians 4:2 ESV).
6. **In our me-first society, the goal of love is to make us feel special, rather than putting the other person’s needs before our own.**
 - » *“By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers”* (I John 3:16 ESV).
7. **Our culture teaches us that we should limit our love to those who love us. The Bible teaches us to love even our enemies.**
 - » *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”* (Matthew 5:43-44 ESV).
8. **Even in our relationship with God, many believe love is our idea, but love did not originate with us.**
 - » *“We love because He first loved us”* (I John 4:19 ESV).
9. **And the biggest misconception about love? Love has been relegated to a mere emotion, but the Bible tells us that Love is a Person.**
 - » *“God is love”* (I John 4:8 ESV).

The greatest expression of love occurred when God gave. He gave the life of His Son so we could be restored to Him through the sacrifice of Christ. Receiving His love is what enables us to give others the real thing.

“THE SPIRIT OF HEAVINESS”

Lesson 11 ■ For week ending December 14, 2019

The spirit of heaviness can have the following effect on a person: It darkens our countenance. Our hearts are downcast. It dims our vision, robs our hope. The room may actually look darker. It brings a heavy, oppressive feeling. This feeling can be felt by others. It quenches our faith. It causes us to isolate ourselves, steals our love, and makes us feel alone. Is it any wonder that God wants us free from the devastating effects of this spirit?

KEY TEXT: “To console those that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...that He may be glorified” (Isaiah 61:3).

1. What is the spirit of heaviness?

- » First, we must acknowledge that according to the Key Text, heaviness is a “spirit.”
- » We know its not God’s Spirit, nor can it come from God.
- » It’s a demonic spirit that comes from Satan. The spirit of heaviness is a demonic attack that leaves a person depressed, oppressed, and robbed of the joy of life.
- » NOTE: This lesson is not addressing clinical depression which results from improper hormone levels in the brain that should be addressed by a physician.
- » There is a difference between being POSSESSED by a spirit and being OPPRESSED by an evil spirit.
- » **possess >verb** 1 *have as property; own.* 2 *(of a demon or spirit) have complete power over.* 3 *dominate the mind of.*
- » The Church of God does not believe that a born-again, spirit-filled believer can also be possessed by an evil spirit; however, we do believe that sinners can be possessed by evil spirits (Matthew 6:24; 8:28).
- » While believers are not possessed by evil spirits, they can be oppressed.
- » What does *oppressed* mean? *To keep in subjection and hardship; cause to feel distressed or anxious.*

2. A spirit of heaviness will often cause us to isolate ourselves. This oppression wants to make you hide from God and others much like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

- » There is a built-in factor in heaviness that opens the door for our enemy, the Devil, to come in. That factor is *isolation*.
- » When our heart and mind are heavy, our emotions say, “Leave me alone. I don’t want to talk or see anybody—I just want to be alone.” Read Psalm 69:20, Proverbs 15:22 and James 5:16.
- » When people are shut off from others, their anger, sadness, and depression begin to interfere with their thinking process. They fear being hurt again and feel they can’t trust anybody, which thoughts bring even further isolation because they begin to avoid people. Read Proverbs 18:1-2 and Ecclesiastes 4:9,10.
- » When people isolate themselves they become disconnected from God and feel very empty—this is exactly what the Devil wants so he can fill that emptiness with bitterness and hatred (Hebrews 12:15).
- » A spiritual warfare is going on inside their mind (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

3. The way to escape the heaviness trap is to bring our heavy thoughts out of the gloomy darkness and into the marvelous light of the words of Jesus.

- » Psalm 119:130 AMPC, “*The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.*”
- » When we find ourselves with a spirit of heaviness over our failures, fatigue, sin or sickness, our prayer should be as David’s was when he was in heaviness for committing adultery with Bathsheba, and for disobeying God’s commandments. Read Psalm 51:10-12.
- » According to Isaiah 61:1-3, Jesus came to minister to those who are broken-hearted, bound and imprisoned, and struggling with heaviness.
- » Listen to the words of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28-30.

“NO TRESPASSING”

Lesson 12 ■ For week ending December 21, 2019

The word *trespass* comes from the Greek word *paraptoma* (*par-ap-to-mah*) which means *a side slip (lapse or deviation) unintentional error or wilful transgression, fall, fault, offence, sin, trespass*. In our modern language the word *trespass* is defined as *to enter someone’s land or property with out their permission, make unfair claims or take advantage of, (archaic) commit an offense against, pass over*. God’s Word tells us that we are to forgive those that trespass against us—on a daily basis!



KEY TEXT: *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).*

1. Have you ever had someone trespass against you? In other words, has someone violated you in any way? When someone trespasses against us, we often feel that we have the RIGHT—some would even argue “scriptural right”—to be upset with the trespasser.

- » The truth is that many times people trespass against us with their words.
- » Read **JAMES 3:2-6**. A great fire can be started by words that are spoken and used to trespass against us.
- » While we may think that we are powerless to stop such a wildfire, the fact is that we often become participants in the disaster by **our reaction to the original trespass**.
- » There are three elements that are needed to start a fire: oxygen, heat and fuel. These three elements are part of the fire triangle, which illustrates the interdependence of the ingredients that are necessary to start and sustain a fire.
- » When we choose to forgive our trespasser quickly, **we take the oxygen out of the fire triangle**. While we may not be able to control the trespasser, we are able to control our response and participation in the matter!

2. Our maxim should be, “Forgive fast!” Let’s take a look at the example that Jesus gave us.

- » Consider the account of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary.
- » Jesus was innocent—yet He was convicted and sentenced to die a very cruel death. While many of us would be indignant and very vocal about the unfairness of the matter, how did Jesus respond? Read Luke 23:32-34.
- » The life of Jesus was our example of how to be successful in this life. Everything that Jesus did was for a purpose. If Jesus can forgive those that trespassed against Him in the most egregious way, what should we do? Read I Peter 2:19-24.

3. When we fail to forgive those that trespass against us, we are actually adding fuel to the fire.

- » We never have the right to hold unforgiveness or hurt in our heart against anyone. Even if we determine that someone is our worst enemy, Jesus instructs us to love them (Matthew 5:44,45).
- » In Matthew 5:23,24, Jesus also addresses the issue of unforgiveness and the resulting bitterness found in our hearts.
- » If we fail to forgive those that have trespassed against us, are our trespasses (sins) against God forgiven? Read Matthew 6:14,15.
- » Forgiveness is not a work by which we earn God’s forgiveness. It flows from a heart satisfied with the mercy of God and rejoicing in the cancellation of our own debt.

“YIELD”

Lesson 13 ■ For week ending December 28, 2019



The word *yield* is a very demanding word. It is a verb that means *to surrender or relinquish to the physical control of another*. The entire journey of our life is determined by the things that we “yield to” and the things that we choose to “yield not”. Who are you yielding yourself to today?

KEY TEXT: *“Then there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, My Chosen One or My Beloved; listen to and yield to and obey Him!”* (Luke 9:35, AMPC).

1. The Bible tells us emphatically: Yield not to temptation!

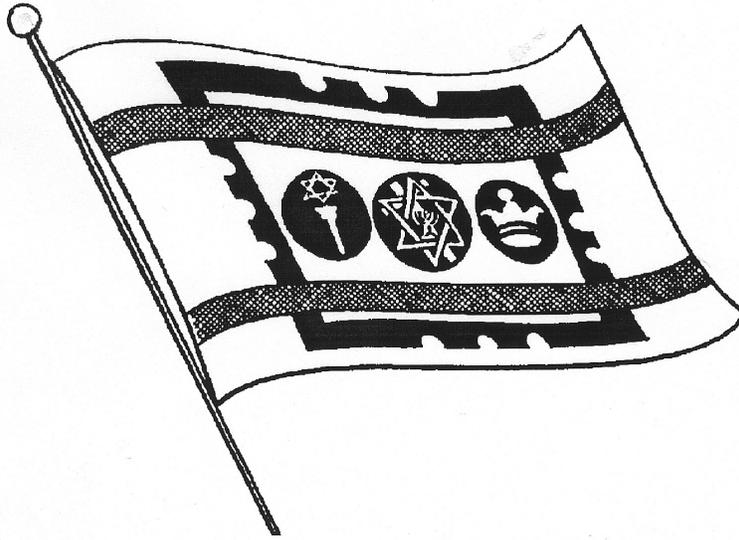
- » **MATTHEW 6:13, NLT**, *“And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”*
- » Read **ROMANS 6:16**, *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”*
- » Temptation is the fire that brings up the scheme of the heart.
- » It’s one thing to be tempted, it’s another thing to fall.
- » Read Genesis 3:1-5, the temptation of Eve. Satan convinced Eve to yield to temptation by convincing her that God did not mean what He said. Discuss the disastrous results that ensued.
- » Joseph refused to yield to Potiphar’s wife and he ended up in jail (Genesis 39:7,8,21-23).
- » Balaam yielded to greed and provoked God against him (Numbers 22:17; Revelation 2:14).
- » How did Jesus deal with temptation? Read Matthew 4:1-11.

2. So, how do we exit from temptation? It’s simple: Flee Sin, Follow God, and Fight!

- » Read **I TIMOTHY 6:11,12**, *“But thou, O man of God, **FLEE** these things; and **FOLLOW** after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. **12 FIGHT** the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”*
- » We have to learn to **RESIST** the ways of the flesh (Romans 8:5,6).
- » **resist >verb** 1 *withstand the action or effect of.* 2 *try to prevent by action or argument.* 3 *refrain from (something tempting).* 4 *struggle against someone or something.*
- » According to James 1:12-15, there is a process regarding temptation.
- » How do we get control of our thoughts? We must not yield to them but instead take them captive (II Corinthians 10:15).

3. Finally, to be overcomers and victorious in this life, we must YIELD to the truth.

- » Yielding will set you free (John 8:32,36). Discuss the freedom that results from being a born-again, spirit-filled believer.
- » Yielding will stabilize your faith (Acts 15:11; Ephesians 4:13,14).
- » Yielding one’s will and learning to serve God faithfully (Acts 9:6; Acts 26:19).
- » Yielding will sanctify you fully (Romans 15:16; I Thessalonians 5:23).
- » Learn to **YIELD** to the tug of God in your life (Isaiah 1:18). When God deals with us, He reasons with us.
- » Even Jesus, the very Son of God, had to yield His personal desire to the desire of the Father.
- » Read **LUKE 22:42, NLT**, *“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”*



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