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# “REMEMBERING 9/11 – Part 1”

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Lesson 1 ■ For week ending October 2, 2021

Last month was the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 9/11—the day that our country was attacked by terrorist Muslims (Sept. 11, 2001). It was a day that changed our world. Watching all the TV footage of the attacks and people’s reactions brought back many memories for most of us. While it was a terrible day for our country, it was also the start of a prophetic event that marked the Last Days. For the next four weeks we will examine what happened on 9/11 and how it relates to Bible prophecy.

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**KEY TEXT: “You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober” (I Thessalonians 5:5,6).**

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## **1. In the key text, the Apostle Paul warns us, “therefore let us not sleep as others do.”**

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- » As we navigate our world today, we are repeatedly warned not to *fall asleep* as others are doing.
- » Consider the parable of the wise and foolish virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13.
- » Remember, this is Jesus telling this parable.
- » In the parable, there are 3 divisions of believers. Jesus tells us emphatically that the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins –who together comprise the *kingdom* of God—all fall asleep.
- » However, Jesus talks about another group in verse 6 that are wide awake. This group makes a cry at midnight: “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, let’s go out to meet Him!”
- » The Church of God believes that this group is the Bride Body—God’s Judah (Psalm 114:2).

## **2. So, what does it mean to be “spiritually awake” in the Last Days?**

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- » Jesus alludes to it in Matthew 25:13 when He instructs us to “*watch therefore*”.
- » The first step to be “spiritually awake” is to be a watchman.
- » This is especially important in the Last Days. Why? Because God prophesied that there would be a famine in the land. Read Amos 8:11.
- » Have you ever wondered how the Kingdom of God could spiritually fall asleep in the Last Days like Jesus said?
- » It’s because they believe and have accepted doctrines that have lulled them to sleep. These doctrines contain “deceptions” in them.
- » Revelation 14:1-5 describes what kind of people will make up God’s Bride Body. Notice that verse 5 says that “...in their mouth was found no deceit...”

## **3. Why are Christian’s spiritually asleep today?**

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- » One major reason that the Kingdom of God is slumbering is because they have believed a false doctrine that Jesus can return at any minute to rapture them away. Therefore, all they need to do is wait for Jesus to come. However, since Jesus hasn’t returned, they have fallen asleep (Proverbs 13:12).
- » This doctrine is derived from a dream of Margaret MacDonald in 1830. Throughout the years it has been interpreted to say that God will whisk His people away before any trouble begins in this world. Jesus tells us emphatically that it is the wicked (tares) who will be dealt with first before the believers (wheat) are gathered together. Read Matthew 13:24-30;37-43. Notice that all this takes place “*at the end of this age.*”
- » Preachers tell their people that there is nothing else to be done prophetically—Jesus could come at any moment. This simply is not accurate (II Thessalonians 2:1-5; Acts 3:19-21).
- » The Church of God does believe in the Rapture; however, it is a gathering mechanism—not an escape-to-heaven plan. The Rapture takes place at the 7<sup>th</sup> Trump return of Jesus to this earth to gather together His people from around the world (I Thessalonians 4:16-18; Matthew 24:30,31).

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# “REMEMBERING 9/11 – Part 2”

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Lesson 2 ■ For week ending October 9, 2021

Last week we talked about the need to be wide awake and watching. Watching for what? The time of “Jacob’s Trouble.” What is “Jacob’s Trouble”? It’s when God begins to remove from the earth the Gentile Babylonian system of confusion that has engulfed the entire world and oppressed His people.

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**KEY TEXT: “And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed” (Genesis 32:28).**

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## 1. What does the phrase “Jacob’s Trouble” mean?

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- » Read the Key Text again. “Jacob’s Trouble” is actually more clearly defined as “Israel’s Trouble.” Remember that Jacob represents a nation (Genesis 25:21-27).
- » As a result of Israel’s continued disobedience and rebellion, God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to conquer the land and carry Israel off to Babylon for a period of 70 years (Jeremiah 25:8-12).
- » The phrase “Jacob’s Trouble” comes from a scripture found in Jeremiah 30:7.
- » Jeremiah 30 is an amazing chapter which talks about the restoration of Israel and Judah to God. Read Jeremiah 30:1-3. God promises to bring His people back to their promised land. So, where had Israel and Judah gone?

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## 2. Part of God’s punishment towards Israel and Judah for their continued rebellion and stubbornness, was to “drive them” out of their homeland.

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- » Read Ezekiel 4:13. God’s punishment was to banish them from their homeland and cause them “to eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles.”
- » This has become known as the Jewish Diaspora and it began initially when the northern Kingdom of Israel was carried away to Assyria (approximately 732 BC read II Kings 17:22,23). It continued when Nebuchadnezzar carried away the southern kingdom, known as Judah, in 606 BC.
- » According to Jeremiah 30:3, the following events will take place when the Jews are brought back from captivity (the lands to which they were driven around the world). We know that has taken place with the return of the Jews to Israel and the formation of Israel as a nation in 1948.

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## 3. Jeremiah 30:4-9 is a prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel and Judah.

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- » Notice in verse 5 God talks about fear (not peace) coming on the land, and verse 6 talks about how that the people are distressed. Why? According to verse 7, it is the time of “Jacob’s trouble.”
- » So, what is “Jacob/Israel’s Trouble”? The answer is found in verse 8: God begins to break the yoke and bond that enslaves His people.
- » While this prophecy talks about the physical Nation of Israel, it also includes spiritual Israel—which includes you and I if we are born again (Galatians 6:15,16).
- » When 9/11 happened 20 years ago, the USA-led coalition declared war on the Islamic Empire and marched into the Iraq—the ancient site of Babylon.
- » They hunted down and killed Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein (who claimed to be a direct descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar of old). Saddam considered it part of his destiny to continue the work of Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the Jews. Saddam funded the suicide bombers who wrecked havoc in Israel for years. He even formed a “Jerusalem Army” consisting of seven million Iraqis who “volunteered to liberate Palestine from Israeli rule.”
- » Read Isaiah 13:1-10,14-16,19,22 and discuss the fulfillment of these Scriptures when Iraq was attacked because of 9/11 (see LAST DAYS’ PROPHECY SEMINAR Lesson 2 for detailed information).

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# “REMEMBERING 9/11 – Part 3”

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Lesson 3 ■ For week ending October 16, 2021

As followers of Christ, we are called to be wide awake and watching in these Last Days. Last week we discussed the time of “Jacob’s/Israel’s Trouble.” This week we will expand upon the need to be “watchmen.” What are we watching for? God’s sword in the land.

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**KEY TEXT: “And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you” (Matthew 24:4).**

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## 1. We are called to be watchmen.

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- » It started in the Old Testament. God called His prophets and He referred to them as *watchmen*.
- » Read Jeremiah 6:17. What does God instruct His watchmen to do?
- » Ezekiel 3:17-21 expands on the duties of God’s watchmen.
- » Discuss how each one of us is called to be a watchmen.
- » Jesus continued this theme in Matthew 28:18-20 when He effectively “deputized” each one of us to carry the Gospel message to all nations.

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## 2. What are we watching for in the Last Days?

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- » In Ezekiel 33, God used the Prophet Ezekiel to clarify the duties of a watchman.
- » Read Ezekiel 33:1-9.
- » In verse 2 and 3, Ezekiel identifies a particular event that we as watchmen are supposed to be watching for. He says, “*When I bring a sword upon a land...their watchman...he blows the trumpet and warns the people.*”
- » So, our job as watchmen in the Last Days is to be watching for God’s sword in the land.

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## 3. What exactly is “God’s sword”?

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- » When most people think of a sword they think of fighting and/or destruction. However, it’s important to realize that the word *sword* in the Bible can represent two distinct things: 1) The Word of God, and 2) The Wrath of God.
- » In Hebrews 4:12, God’s Word is referred to as a “*two-edged sword.*” The scripture goes on to say that God’s Word has the ability to “pierce” us.
- » Ephesians 6:17 actually calls God’s Word “*the sword of the Spirit.*”
- » So, when we see God’s prophetic Word being fulfilled, that is His sword in the land (Isaiah 14:24).

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## 4. God’s “sword in the land” can also be defined as God’s Wrath being poured out.

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- » In Isaiah 34:5,6, the prophet says that the sword of the Lord is filled with blood.
- » Jeremiah 44:13 says that the sword brings punishment.
- » So, how does 9/11 relate to God’s sword in the land?
- » If you recall the events of 9/11, you remember that President George W. Bush made a promise to the American people. He promised to seek revenge for the attacks by attacking the perpetrators wherever they were found—which included foreign countries. He also promised to punish the countries that hosted or facilitated the perpetrators.
- » This was God’s sword in the land. God used the USA-led coalition of nations to punish Babylon of old.
- » Babylon is the arch enemy of God and His people (Jeremiah 51:12). God promised judgment upon Babylon: “*And I will repay Babylon...for all the evil they have done in Zion...says the LORD*” (read Jeremiah 51:24-26).
- » Next week we take an in-depth look at how God punished ancient Babylon because of 9/11.

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# “REMEMBERING 9/11 – Part 4”

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Lesson 4 ■ For week ending October 23, 2021

Last week we ended by saying that God used 9/11 to bring forth punishment on Babylon of old (modern-day Iraq). This week we will expand upon that theme and also deal with Old Testament prophecies that describe what happened on 9/11 in great detail. These lessons should remind us that God is in control, He always has been, and He always will be. Let’s take a look at what God’s Word says about 9/11.

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**KEY TEXT:** *“The great day of the Lord is near...A day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers” (Zephaniah 1:14,16 partial quote).*

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## 1. Read Zephaniah 1:14-18.

- » This passage of Scripture is an eery depiction of what transpired on 9/11 although it was written some 2,600 years before it happened.
- » On 9/11/2001, two hijacked jet airliners crashed into the World Trade Towers in New York City. The Towers were at one time the tallest buildings in the World. 50,000 people worked in the Towers and 200,000 people visited it daily.
- » Read verse 16 and 18 again. Verse 18 makes reference to “silver and gold” and its inability to stop the attack. The Towers were located in the heart of New York City’s financial district. They housed the offices of approximately 500 companies—the majority of them were financial firms.
- » The terrorists’ goal was to cripple the monument of Western capitalism. They didn’t realize that they were being used by God to set in motion world events that would fulfill God’s prophetic Word.
- » Daniel 2:21a, NLT, *“He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings...”*

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## 2. What about the “fortified cities”?

- » Read verse 16 again. We’ve identified the “high towers” but what about the “fortified cities”?
- » After the two hijacked jet airliners crashed into the Towers, another hijacked jet airliner crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia.
- » The Pentagon is the centerpiece of the USA’s defense system. The building is a 5-sided structure with 7 levels (5 above ground and 2 underground) and is one of the largest office buildings in the world with 23,000 employees. It’s the size of a small city. It’s built like a fortress.
- » The terrorists wanted to shut-down our military control center, or at least damage it beyond repair.

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## 3. Was 9/11 God’s punishment being poured out on the USA? No.

- » What happened to the USA was the result of terrorist Muslims led by Osama bin Laden who hates America and everything that it stands for. They struck New York City because it was the financial district, they attacked the Pentagon to punish the military, and they had plans to attack the Capital Building but that was thwarted by heroes who rose up and sabotaged the last hijacked plane (crashed at Shanksville, PA).
- » It was what happened AFTER THE ATTACK that fulfilled Bible prophecy. God used President George W. Bush to attack Iraq: the site of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 13:1-5).

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## 4. God’s Word has prophesied destruction upon Babylon.

- » The ancient city of Babylon is located approximately 55 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq. The city now lies in ruins, but it is considered to be one of the most famous ancient cities in the world. The last dynasty at which Babylon achieved its zenith, is well known particularly of its 2<sup>nd</sup> king, Nebuchadnezzar (605-563 BC), to whom most of Babylon’s existing buildings belongs.
- » Babylon was renowned for its high, well-fortified walls and for the magnificence of its temples and palaces. It was the site of the tower of Babel referenced in Genesis 11:9 where God confused the language of the earth and scattered the people over the face of the earth.
- » King Nebuchadnezzar was responsible for the fall of Jerusalem after which he carried away the people of Israel together with the contents of God’s Temple to Babylon (II Chronicles 36:15-21). Is it any wonder God wants to avenge Himself for Babylon? Read Jeremiah 51:6,12.

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# “THE PANDEMIC – Part 1”

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Lesson 5 ■ For week ending October 30, 2021

It’s interesting how deceptive and creative Satan is in his tactics to deceive and destroy us. God’s Word tells us that he is the father of all lies (John 8:44). The truth is that he is a *master of deception*. Genesis 3:1 uses the word “cunning” to describe him in the Garden of Eden setting. *Cunning* is an adjective which means *having or showing skill in achieving one’s ends by deceit or evasion*. Today’s lesson will examine how Satan has used this pandemic to attack God’s people.

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**KEY TEXT: “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made...” (Genesis 3:1a).**

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## 1. Most of us know what the word “deceit” means, but what does the word “evasion” mean?

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- » **EVADE** (*verb*) – *escape or avoid, especially by cleverness or trickery*.
- » One of Satan’s strengths is to attack us *without us even knowing that we are being attacked* (II Corinthians 11:3).
- » Consider the story of King David and Bathsheba. Read II Samuel 11. David embarked on a series of actions that affected him, Bathsheba, her husband (Uriah), men in Israel’s army (and their families), and ultimately Bathsheba’s firstborn son who died.
- » All of this resulted from King David watching Bathsheba bath one evening.
- » Discuss King David’s wakeup call from the prophet Nathan (II Samuel 12:1-15).

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## 2. Sometimes we are so focused on one thing (Pandemic), that we don’t realize something else is happening as well.

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- » **DISCLAIMER** – The purpose of this lesson is not to politicize the pandemic or the government’s response. **PURPOSE** – The purpose of this lesson is to identify the effect this pandemic has had on God’s people and His Church.
- » Barna researchers has reported: **ONE IN THREE PRACTICING CHRISTIANS HAS STOPPED ATTENDING CHURCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**
- » Now, we are not suggesting that we should dismiss pertinent recommendations/precautions for groups gathering together (Romans 13:1,2). What we are saying is that we should be aware that Satan would like for us to get in **the habit of not attending church—at all.**

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## 3. With regards to the Last Days, God’s Word talks about a “great falling away”.

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- » II Thessalonians 2:3a, **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first...”**
- » Paul’s instruction concerning *being deceived* mirrors the words of Jesus found in Matthew 24:4, *“And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.”*
- » How do we combat being deceived? We follow the example of Jesus Christ found in Matthew 4:1-11. Notice that Satan tempted Jesus with things that pertained to His flesh to begin with. Satan tempted Jesus with bread because he knew that Jesus was hungry. In other words, Satan used Jesus’ physical circumstances to try and deceive Him.
- » Jesus overcame the temptations/deceptions of Satan by quoting God’s Word to him (John 17:17).
- » For the first time in our lives we have been told by the government that we cannot attend church. And, to be truthful, that was good advice while the pandemic was raging. Some of us have had to cancel services again with the Delta variant surge. We are not condemning those actions.
- » Let’s just make sure that we do not get into the habit of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. Consider the admonition found in Hebrews 10:23-25.

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# “PANDEMIC – Part 2”

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Lesson 6 ■ For week ending November 6, 2021

Last week we talked about the importance of not being deceived and the importance of attending church (when it is safe to do so). Today we want to discuss the importance of gathering together as a body of believers. While we have had to become “creative” in the way we come together via videos, Facebook LIVE, etc., we should realize the importance of the “body ministry” now more than ever.

**KEY TEXT: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).**

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## 1. If you know Jesus, you are never alone.

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- » One thing that this pandemic has brought into our lives is the concept of “quarantine.”
  - » **QUARANTINE** (noun) – *a state, period, or place of isolation in which people that may have been exposed to infectious disease are placed.*
  - » Most of us have probably experience being quarantined for the first time in our lives. As we discussed last week, this pandemic has had “side effects” for all of us. One of them is being forced to be *isolated and alone*. Let’s establish for the record: If you are a believer, you are never alone. God promises to always be with you (Hebrews 13:5).
  - » Not only are we not alone, Jesus promises to bear our burden and give us rest (Matthew 11:28-30).
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## 2. Discuss these 8 incredible benefits of going to church.

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1. **REDUCE STRESS** – Attending church regularly has mental health benefits. You will have less anxiety, worries, and fears. When we stand in the presence of God, we have hope. Read Psalm 71:5-7.
2. **COMPANIONSHIP** – There are people in the church. If you attend regularly, you will make friends, find godly mentors, and other like-minded people to be with (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 10:23-25).
3. **CORPORATE WORSHIP** – While salvation is individual, worship is communal. We benefit from worshiping with others. God put us in community because He knows that it is the best way to increase our faith (Matthew 18:20; Psalm 100).
4. **OPPORTUNITIES TO USE YOUR GIFT** – Being part of the church gives us opportunities to use our gifts. In fact, when we become members of the church, God gives each of us a spiritual gift (I Peter 4:10). Your local congregation needs the gift God has given you (I Corinthians 12:7).
5. **A CHANCE TO INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO GOD** – The church is a great way to introduce children to the love of God. Many people think children don’t understand what is being taught in church, but children with faith often lead members of their family to Christ. Jesus told us we need to become like little children (Matthew 18:3). Don’t deprive your children of the chance to fellowship with the family of God (Proverbs 22:6).
6. **FOR ENCOURAGEMENT** – Let’s face it, at some time in your Christian journey you’re going to feel like giving up. If you say this to someone in the world, they may encourage you to walk away from God. Spending time regularly with your brethren will remind you that the trials of this life are but for a short time (II Corinthians 4:17).
7. **TEACHES YOU HOW TO LOVE** – One of the greatest benefits of going to church is to learn how to love others. If we are to be like Christ, we have to spend time with the people He spent time with. We have to love the people He loves (John 13:35). And in learning to love them, we learn how God loves us.
8. **INTRODUCES PEOPLE TO THEIR SAVIOR** – Let’s not forget the most incredible benefit of going to church: Jesus! The church teaches people about God (II Timothy 2:15). Through the programs of the church, we learn to study our Bibles and pray. We also learn more about our Heavenly Father. We become a part of the living, breathing body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12; I Peter 2:4,5).

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# “FIREPROOFING YOUR LIFE”

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Lesson 7 ■ For week ending November 13, 2021

The life that we are living will be tried by fire. There are the fiery trials that we face in life and then there is the fire of God’s judgment. This being said, the wise person will take the necessary steps to be sure that they are prepared for the fire. We must fireproof our life! When something is fireproof, it cannot be burned. Jesus Christ is our only protection from the fire!

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**KEY TEXT:** *“When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you”* (Isaiah 43:2, New Living Translation).

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## **1. Preparing for the test of fire requires that we examine every part of our lives.**

- » Only those things in our lives that have been given fully to Jesus Christ will survive the day of fire.
- » A fireproofed life is a life that has been completely surrendered to Jesus.
- » Read and discuss Matthew 16:24,25.

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## **2. One of the greatest examples in the Old Testament of lives that were fireproof because of their complete surrender to the Lord, is the three Hebrew men.**

- » They were willing to be thrown into the fiery furnace rather than bow down to the false god.
- » Their faithfulness to God preserved them (Daniel 3:23-28).
- » The only things that burned in the fire were the ropes that had them bound.
- » It was the fact that they yielded their bodies and lives to the Lord that made them fireproof.
- » They already had their minds made up to serve the Lord no matter what the consequences (Daniel 3:16-18).

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## **3. This same scenario is going to play out again in the Last Days.**

- » Satan knows he has but a short time.
- » He has gone out to deceive the whole world—including the very elect if possible.
- » We are going to have to make some very important decisions regarding whether or not to walk in truth because of our love for Jesus.
- » How will we overcome (Revelation 12:11)?

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## **4. God has a way of refining our lives with fire so that we will become as pure gold.**

- » When all impurities have been destroyed, there is nothing left to burn.
- » Discuss the purifying effect of the fire of God as you read I Peter 4:12,13; Zechariah 13:9 and Isaiah 1:25,26.

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## **5. We just be careful what materials we use to build our lives and our ministries.**

- » We need to ask, “Is this fireproof or will it burn?”
- » If it does not line up with the Word of God, it will burn.
- » If it is not what Jesus wants, it will burn.
- » **1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-15**, *“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”*

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# “SANCTIFICATION”

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Lesson 8 ■ For week ending November 20, 2021

Due to the fall of Adam, all mankind is cursed with the nature of sin. It is this nature which causes us to sin in spite of our desire not to do so. Sanctification is the second definite work of grace wrought by the blood of Christ, which purges us from the nature of sin. Through Christ, we can know freedom from sin as we walk in the newness of life!

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**KEY TEXT: “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:30).**

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## **1. In order to understand the need for sanctification, it must first be established that man has a sinful nature that causes him to sin.**

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- » Confirm this from Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12-15,19.
- » **ROMANS 5:12-15,19**, *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many...19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”*
- » The ineffectiveness of the Old Testament sacrifices of the Law is revealed in the fact that, although they provided atonement and justification for sins, they did not destroy the nature of man that caused him to sin.
- » Read Hebrews 9:13,13; 10:1,2.
- » Could the Law purge the conscience?
- » The purging the conscience from dead works is sanctification.

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## **2. Paul explains this purging of the conscience further in Colossians 2:11,12.**

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- » Discuss the way in which spiritual circumcision removes the nature of sin, the very cause of sin.
- » Paul describes this spiritual circumcision as a baptism in which we are buried with Christ.
- » This baptism is further clarified in Romans 6:1-8.
- » In this passage Paul describes the destruction of the nature of sin in us.
- » This is not to say that temptation is destroyed; however, the inherent desire to sin is removed.

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## **3. It is necessary for every man to continue to renew his sanctification progressively.**

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- » Discuss the necessity of personal ongoing accountability in order to live a set apart life.
- » **I CORINTHIANS 9:27**, *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”*
- » **II CORINTHIANS 7:1**, *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

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## **4. Another facet of sanctification is found in the statement of Jesus in John 17:17.**

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- » **JOHN 17:17**, *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*
- » Sanctification comes through the Word of God. The truth of this statement is found in Ephesians 5:23-27, where Paul explained the relationship of Christ and the Church.
- » The nature of sin must be cut away with the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

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# “ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION”

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Lesson 9 ■ For week ending November 27, 2021

*Temptation* is the opportunity to do or say something that we should not. It is everywhere—all the time! Temptations and trials go hand-in-hand, for it is when we are tried, that we are tempted to wander out of God’s will. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome and live victoriously in Christ!

– Deaconess Kimberley Combs

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**KEY TEXT:** “*Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak*” (Mark 14:38, New Living Translation).

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## 1. Temptation is a part of lives and spiritual growth.

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- » It is not always in escaping temptation, but rather in *enduring* and *overcoming* it that we develop maturity in Christ (James 1:12).
- » Temptation comes in all forms and fashions, yet it should be viewed as an opportunity for growth and therefore be received with joy (James 1:2).
- » As you study I Corinthians 10:13, discuss some of the common temptations the enemy uses as stumbling blocks.
- » What does this passage promise us concerning temptation?

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## 2. As we walk with the Lord, we will grow stronger.

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- » However, this does not mean that Satan and his minions will simply stop trying to tempt us.
- » Even Jesus endured temptation from Satan.
- » The good news is that temptation comes in cycles and then the enemy will step away for a season. Confirm this from Luke 4:12,13 and James 4:7.
- » **LUKE 4:12,13**, “*And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’ Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.”*
- » **JAMES 4:7**, “*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”
- » Discuss the importance of fully submitting to God to gain the power to overcome the Devil.

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## 3. As God’s spirit-filled children, we do not fall blindly into temptation.

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- » We have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth.
- » The unfortunate truth is this: It is more likely that we sneak or stroll into temptation of our own accord (James 1:13,14).

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## 4. Satan’s task is to tempt us to do or say something we should not.

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- » Many times he succeeds; nonetheless, we have a Deliver (II Peter 2:8,9 and Matthew 6:13).
- » Examine the danger of habitually remaining among those who walk after the flesh (I Corinthians 15:33).
- » Temptation is not our enemy!
- » It is rather a teaching tool for every believer.
- » Without it, we would never fully understand what the power of the Holy Spirit can do through us in overcoming the flesh.
- » **ROMANS 15:13**, “*I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.*”

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# “LIVING IN READINESS”

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Lesson 10 ■ For week ending December 4, 4021

It is easy to fall into a rut in our spiritual life. It is for this reason that we all need a little *stirring up* sometimes. The Scriptures remind us over and over again that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again! When He comes, He is going to be looking for a people—a Church—who has made herself ready. We must arise, shake ourselves from the dust, and be about our Father’s business!

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**KEY TEXT:** *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Luke 12:40).*

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## 1. Jesus once asked the question, *“When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”*

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- » It seems that the longer the Lord tarries, the more we see a spirit of slumber falling on much of the Kingdom of God.
- » Read Matthew 25:1-13. Jesus tells us emphatically that ALL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD will fall asleep while waiting for Jesus in the Last Days.
- » However, in verse 6 we see that there is one group of believers who are awake and watching. What cry did they make?

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## 2. There is a false sense of security with many who think they have much more time than they actually do.

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- » This is the plan of Satan to deceive people into believing they can live however they want without fear of accountability. The truth is, none of us are promised tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1).
- » Part of living in readiness for His return is living a pure life that is free from Sin.
- » Confirm this as you read II Peter 3:1-11.

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## 3. One of the greatest dangers facing believers in the Last Days is being caught up in the cares of this life.

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- » Sometimes we are so busy living our lives that we forget about the Lord (Luke 21:34).
- » Consider Paul’s exhortation in Colossians 3:2-4.
- » The life that we are living now is directly tied to what will happen to us at the return of the Lord.
- » We cannot afford to let down our defenses and become lax in our walk with God.
- » We need to serve the Lord today—and every day—as if it was our last.
- » Discuss this as you read Matthew 24:36-44.

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## 4. There is a darkness that is falling across the world today.

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- » Prophecy declared that it would happen (Isaiah 60:2).
- » This is the darkness that Paul writes about in I Thessalonians 5:1-11.
- » Expand upon what it means to be “children of the light”.

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## 5. There will be a Bride-body that is wide awake in these Last Days.

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- » They will be watchmen that are awake, watching, and praying!
- » This group will be full of God’s Spirit and walking in the Light of His Word (Revelation 19:7).
- » **REVELATION 19:7**, *“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”*
- » We must continually work and pray that we may be that people!

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# “HOW CAN I KNOW THE WILL OF GOD?”

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Lesson 11 ■ For week ending December 11, 2021

Many think of the will of God as some mysterious thing that cannot be known to them until they see many signs pointing them in the right direction. The will of God is simply that which is pleasing to Him. If you know what pleases God, then you can know His will for your life.

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**KEY TEXT:** *“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter” (Matthew 7:21, NLT).*

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## **1. There is nothing more important than knowing the will of God for your life.**

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- » It will drive you in the right direction, and without this knowledge, you will flounder.
- » Asking that the will of God be done is one of the five appeals of the prayer that Jesus taught His Disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-15.
- » If His will is to be done on earth, it must first be done in each life.

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## **2. Our human nature often puts us in direct conflict with the will of God.**

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- » Read Romans 8:7.
- » If even Jesus had to bring His will under subjection to the will of the Father (Luke 22:42), how much more must our will be surrendered to His will?
- » Recognizing His will is a stumbling block to many Christians, who simply do nothing while waiting for God to thump them on the head!
- » The best thing to do is whatever God lays in front of you however simple it may be.
- » Read and discuss Ecclesiastes 9:10; 11:3,4,6 and Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:6-7.

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## **3. Much of God’s will for us can easily be found in His Word—which is the manual for our lives.**

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- » I Thessalonians 5:16-22 gives us an example of the basics of God’s will for mankind.
- » An employer will not promote someone who will not perform the duties given to him, likewise God cannot put greater things into your hands if you are not well-grounded in the basics (Luke 16:10).

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## **4. There is great promise to those who find God’s will for their lives and obey it.**

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- » Read I John 2:17.
- » Want a promotion in your life? Submit yourself to God and He will lift you up!
- » **JAMES 4:7-10**, *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

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## **5. Remember that God’s will for you is what you are striving for.**

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- » To obey His will is better than to do what seems right in your own mind.
- » Read I **SAMUEL 15:22**, *“So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.”*
- » God’s will is not the complicated riddle some people make it out to be.
- » Much of it is simply obedience to God’s ordinances and bringing our fleshly will into subjection to His perfect will.
- » As God’s people, let’s strive to work hard on truly becoming God’s people.

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# “WE WILL OVERCOME!”

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Lesson 12 ■ For week ending December 18, 2021

It is not God’s will for us as His children to continually be in a place of struggle. There is a battle to be fought but it is a battle that we have been promised to win if we are faithful. It is a spiritual battle. In this battle there are times in which we will have to press through into our victory. Satan is real and there are demonic spirits that come to stand in opposition to our breakthrough in Christ. We must hold on. God has heard our prayers and we will overcome!

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**KEY TEXT: “...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 3:5b).**

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## **1. No matter what the situation one is facing in life, prayer is the key to victory.**

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- » Read Philippians 4:6,7.
- » However, the victory may not come without a battle.
- » Study what happened to Daniel when he set his heart to seek the Lord (Daniel 10:1-6,11-14).
- » How long did Daniel pray before his answer came?
- » What was it that hindered his prayers?

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## **2. Daniel’s experience reveals to us that there is an element of spiritual warfare involved in our prayers.**

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- » Discuss the need to press through in our prayer life as you read Ephesians 6:10-13,18.
- » Notice that the strength to win the battle comes from the Lord (Romans 8:26).
- » One of the elements of Daniel’s prayer life that brought him the victory was his persistence.
- » Compare this with the parable of Jesus found in Luke 18:1-8.

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## **3. There is power and strength to be given to those who will diligently seek the face of God.**

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- » It is in the presence of God that your life is changed.
- » It is the place we receive victory over sin and the flesh.
- » It is the place of transformation in which our will is conformed to be like His, but we have got to be willing to hold on to the Lord until we receive our breakthrough.
- » In the book of Genesis, Jacob wrestled with God all night and would not let Him go until he got a blessing.
- » Discuss the transformation which took place in the life of Jacob as a result.
- » **GENESIS 32:24-28**, *“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” 27 So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” 28 And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”*

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## **4. We must be persistent.**

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- » We must see the will of God with such vision that we prevail with God in prayer to see it come about.
- » Discuss the importance of watchmen who have a spirit of prayer to prevail with God in order to see His power and glory manifest in the Church (Isaiah 62:6,7).
- » James 5:16b says, *“...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*
- » The word *availeth* here means *“to have by force.”* We shall overcome!

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# “WATCH YOUR MOUTH!”

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Lesson 13 ■ For week ending December 25, 2021

The human tongue is the most formidable weapon for both good and evil in the world. It can be used to galvanize public opinion to do great acts of benefit to mankind, but it can also be used to incite hatred and bring death and destruction. Since our bodies are the temple of the Lord, we must be very careful that we harness our tongues as instruments of peace. Tell your neighbor: “Watch your mouth!”

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**KEY TEXT: “If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless” (James 1:26, New Living Translation).**

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**1. In the writings of James, he discusses the great potential for good and evil that is in the tongue of man.**

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- » Consider the truth of James 3:9-12 in examining the possibility of having a tongue that brings forth both blessings and cursings.
- » **JAMES 3:9-12, NLT**, “*Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can’t draw fresh water from a salty spring.*”

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**2. James 3:13,17,18 reveals how a righteous man should bring through his words the things that are good and edify others.**

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- » Is it essential that our tongues be instruments of cursing, or is it possible for us to make them into instruments of blessing and edification to others?
- » According to Philippians 4:8, what are we as believers supposed to be focusing on?

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**3. When Jesus was confronted with the question of what was unclean to the degree that it defiled the body, He declared that what goes out from the body is the defiling element.**

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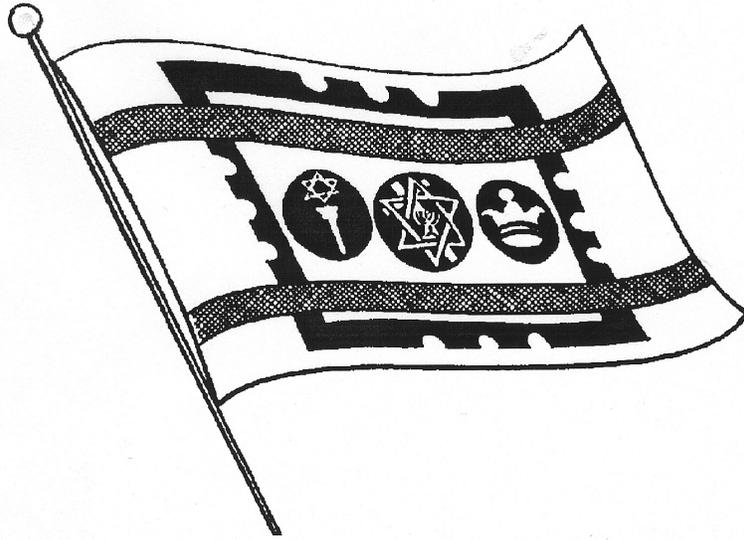
- » Confirm this truth from Matthew 15:11,17-20.
- » Gossip, talebearing, outbursts of anger, “telling someone off,” and sometimes thinly-disguised “constructive criticism” are examples of using the tongue for destruction.
- » Read the following scriptures: Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 18:8; 25:23; Romans 3:13-18 and Psalm 10:7.
- » Discuss the tongue as an instrument of death.

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**4. The tongue can also be an instrument that brings life to ourselves and to others.**

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- » Proverbs 15:4 declares that a wholesome tongue is a tree of life.
- » Consider how positive words can have life-giving powers through faith.
- » Nowhere is this more evident than in how we speak to our children. When we speak words of life to them, they grow into well-equipped adults. When we speak detrimental words to them, they become wounded and ill-equipped to function as well-adapted adults.
- » Since no man can tame the tongue, God has chosen this part of the body to signal to us when we are fully subject to His Holy Spirit. Discuss the speaking with tongues as the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 10:45,46).
- » If we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, our tongues will always be fountains of life.



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