A background image featuring an open Bible with aged, yellowed pages. The text "BIBLE STUDY" is overlaid in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

BIBLE STUDY

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“RUSSIA/UKRAINE WAR SERIES – ECONOMIC SANCTIONS”

Lesson 1 ■ For week ending April 2, 2022

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin attacked the sovereign nation of Ukraine. The question amongst believers was, “Is this war prophesied of in the Bible?” We believe this war fits into the warning Jesus gave in Matthew 24:1-7 when He warned His disciples about “wars and rumors of wars.” However, another aspect of this war has developed in the form of “Economic Sanctions” against Russia. Today’s lesson will examine this aspect and its role in Last Days’ Prophecy.

KEY TEXT: “*This is what the Sovereign Lord says: At that time evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme. You will say, ‘Israel is an unprotected land...I will capture vast amounts of plunder, for the people are rich...’*” (Ezekiel 38:10-12, NLT, *partial quote*).

1. In response to the war, economic sanctions have been adopted against Russia with the intent to destroy their currency and pressure Putin to end his invasion.

- » These sanctions have eroded the value of the Russian Ruble. In 2008, an American Dollar could purchase 25 rubles. In March, 2022, the dollar could purchase 137 rubles.
- » In addition, the sanctions have frozen approximately one-half of Russia’s monetary assets in sanctioned banks. Thus, Russia cannot access its own funds to help with the economic meltdown.
- » What does this have to do with Bible prophecy?
- » The next war to take place according to prophecy is the Battle of Gog and Magog found in Ezekiel 38,39.
- » The catalyst to start this war is GREED (*def. intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food.*)

2. It has already been established that Russia will play a part in this Last Days’ war.

- » Can we recognize that this economic meltdown in Russia may well play into the motivation for the Battle of Gog and Magog?
- » Gog and Magog begins when a peace treaty involving Israel is violated. Read Obadiah 1:6,7.
- » This “peace treaty with a trap” is further defined in Psalm 83:1-8.
- » Notice verse 8, “*Assyria has joined them, too, and is allied with the descendants of Lot.*”
- » Assyria is modern-day SYRIA. It is well-established that Russia and Syria are allies.
- » According to a March 20, 2022 article, “*Syrian President Bashar al-Assad promised the Kremlin leadership to make around 40,000 militants available for the war in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry also claimed in a statement on Thursday afternoon. According to Ukrainian intelligence, weapons and other equipment will be shipped from Syria to Russia and Belarus in the near future, the statement said.*”

3. Russia will be drawn into the Battle of Gog and Magog because it is part of a confederacy with Syria and other Muslim nations.

- » These nations are identified in Ezekiel 38:1-6. In verse 3, God says that He is against, “*the prince of Rosh.*”
- » Scholars believe that *Rosh* became *Russia*. *Gog* literally means *name of a northern nation*. And, *Magog* means *barbarous northern nation*.
- » Is God against Russia? Consider this: “*Only around 4% of the people are evangelical Christians...Adding to this problem, a law was put into place in 2016 that attacked religious freedom. While freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed in Russia, the relevant legislation names Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism as the country’s four traditional, protected religions...This law, nicknamed the “Yarovaya law,” bans most missionary endeavors with the risks of fines. Obviously, this is a horrible threat to the spread of the Gospel as Christians are persecuted.*” (“*Russia: A Christian Nation?*” by Vanessa Hall 08-19-21).
- » In Matthew 24:1-7, Jesus told His disciples that these activities are the “*beginning of sorrows.*” In other words, these are the beginning of the Last Days. What is the purpose of the Battle of God and Magog?
- » Read Ezekiel 38:23. This is the primary purpose. However, as result of this battle in the Golan Heights Mountains of Israel, there will be another worldwide clamor being made: “PEACE!”
- » Next week we will examine what happens at the conclusion of the Battle of Gog and Magog.

“RUSSIA/UKRAINE WAR SERIES – PEACE!!!”

Lesson 2 ■ For week ending April 9, 2022

When Russia invaded Ukraine, it effectively destroyed “peace” as we knew it. While there have been small-scale invasions and wars in the Middle East and other nations, Russia’s full-scale invasion of a neighboring sovereign nation has effectively put an end to the post-Cold War peace arrangement between the United States and its allies. While the war is still raging, soon the cry will be heralded for PEACE! As students of Last Days’ Prophecy, we know that the demand for worldwide peace will play a major role in the establishing of the Antichrist and his one-world government.

KEY TEXT: “Then he [Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering...” (Daniel 9:27a).

1. Satan is an imitator of God. He plans to offer his imitation “prince of peace” before the return of Jesus Christ, the true “Prince of Peace.”

- » At the conclusion of World War II, representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco, California to draw up the Charter of the United Nations. The world was convinced that an international organization was the best means to prevent future wars. The Charter was ratified on July 28, 1945 and the United Nations came into existence. In other words, the world DEMANDED PEACE after being at war.
- » Bible prophecy points to this same type of scenario at the conclusion of the Battle of Gog and Magog.
- » Read Daniel 8:23-25. This is the introduction of Satan’s Antichrist onto the world stage.
- » Read Daniel 9:27. According to this scripture, the Antichrist will “confirm a covenant with many for one week.”

2. What is the covenant that the Antichrist confirms?

- » With the world clamoring for peace at end of this huge battle in the mountains of Israel, Satan will introduce his imitation “prince of peace” to establish worldwide peace and usher in a one-world government.
- » Read Revelation 13:11. According to this scripture, the Antichrist will look like a “lamb.” Again, this is Satan’s attempt to replicate Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. However, the last part of this scripture says that he will speak like a dragon.
- » The establishment of a worldwide government is found in Revelation 13:7.

3. What do we know about the Antichrist?

- » Read Daniel 8:17,19,23-25. We know that he will be a king (a leader), and he will rule by deception.
- » Last week we talked about the economic sanctions that have been levied against Russia and the economic meltdown that has resulted. Part of the Antichrist’s rise to power will be that he will promise economic prosperity. Daniel 8:25 says that, “he shall destroy many in their prosperity.”
- » People are very susceptible to promises of prosperity—including Christians! Consider the pain we are feeling right now at the gas pumps. Commentators are predicting that Americans will vote with their wallet in the upcoming elections in November, 2022 because of record high inflation and rising prices.
- » Another deception is that He will promise “peace,” but will later declare “war” against the people of God (Daniel 7:21,22).
- » In fact, the Antichrist will wage war against God’s “saints” for 3½ years (Daniel 7:25).

4. The rise of the Antichrist on the world stage will signal the beginning of the last 7 years before the return of Jesus Christ at the 7th Trump.

- » The Antichrist will rule the world for 7 years (the “one week” found in Daniel 9:27).
- » In the middle of the 7 years, he will commit the “Abomination of Desolation” talked about in Daniel 7:25; 9:27 and Matthew 24:15,16 which will usher in the beginning of the Wrath Dispensation.
- » The Wrath Dispensation is a 3½ year period when God’s wrath is poured out on this world (Rev. 11:3-6).
- » According to II Thessalonians 2:1-8, the Antichrist will be destroyed by Jesus Christ at His 7th Trump return.

“RUSSIA/UKRAINE WAR SERIES – MAKING GOD KNOWN”

Lesson 3 ■ For week ending April 16, 2022

We are living in unprecedented times. We are watching a major war between Russia and Ukraine. We sit in our living rooms and watch the war play out on our TVs and Smart phones. The truth is this: A dramatic change has taken place. After 2 years of being in a worldwide pandemic, we are now watching the peace in Europe be shattered. This is fulfillment of Jesus’ warning found in Matthew 24:6,7. Does this mean the end is here? NO! According to Jesus, this is only the “beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8).

KEY TEXT: “Thus I will **magnify Myself and sanctify Myself**, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 38:23).

1. Many people think that God is dead—or at least that He has been “silent.” Has God ever been “silent” before?

- » The answer is YES! The **INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD**, or the time "between the testaments," occurred between the end of the writing of Malachi in the Old Testament and the beginning of the events described in Matthew in the New Testament.
- » This was a period of about 400 years and is also known by some as the "400 years of silence."
- » The changes culminated with the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, who declared that He was the Savior, One with God, and then backed up His claims by resurrecting from the dead after a horrific execution.
- » During the 400 years before Jesus, God was silent in the sense that He did not give a prophetic word to His people, but He was actively carrying out His plan to deliver a Messiah for all people.

2. Let’s examine the story of Ahab and Jezebel where God sets up a showdown between Himself and the pagan god Baal.

- » If you have read any part of the Old Testament, you know that there were seasons when God blessed Israel, and there were seasons when God punished Israel because of their disobedience.
- » In I Kings 18, we find the story of the Prophet Elijah, King Ahab, and his wicked wife, Jezebel. Israel was suffering from a severe drought because of Ahab’s wickedness and devotion to the pagan god, Baal.
- » God was preparing to “magnify and sanctify” Himself to King Ahab and Israel. He ordered Elijah to assemble all of the people for a “showdown” between Himself and Baal on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:19-24).
- » Elijah instructed the followers of Baal to go first (I Kings 18:25-29)—just like Satan will go first in the Last Days. God demonstrated through this activity the ineffectiveness and absurdity of worshiping a pagan idol.
- » Next, it was Elijah’s turn at the altar. Read I Kings 18:30-38. What did this demonstration do for the people of Israel (I Kings 18:39)?

3. God is preparing to “magnify and sanctify” Himself in these Last Days.

- » While the world may think that God has been silent for hundreds of years, we as believers know that God has a master-plan for humanity and this earth and that He has been at work “behind the scenes” preparing for the end-times (Acts 15:18).
- » According to Ezekiel 38:4, who is it that brings these armies against Israel in the Last Days?
- » God is able to use whomever He chooses—including wicked, evil men—to do His will. Consider the account of Nebuchadnezzar. God referred to him as “My servant” in Jeremiah 27:6.
- » God will supernaturally destroy the armies that come against Israel in the Battle of Gog and Magog.
- » Read Ezekiel 38:18,19. God wants us to understand that He is showing His wrath against the enemies of Israel. This is the signaling of a new era. This battle ushers in the last 7 years before Jesus’ return.
- » How does God destroy the enemies of Israel? Read Ezekiel 38:19-22. Notice in verse 22 that God specifies, “I will bring him to judgment.”
- » In verse 22, God tells us the reason for this battle. NOTE: God does not say that the purpose of this battle is to establish Jesus’ reign on this earth (as in Armageddon). The purpose is to **MAKE GOD KNOWN** in these Last Days. What an awesome day that will be!

“OUR UNBELIEF TIES GOD’S HANDS”

Lesson 4 ■ For week ending April 23, 2022

We’ve all done it. The Bible gives us a promise, yet we convince ourselves that it does not apply to us or our situation. We fail to believe that God really means what He says in His Word. Do we understand that we have just fallen into the same trap that Eve fell into? Satan convinced her that God didn’t mean what He had said. Wow! Doesn’t that bring it close to home? It’s time we understand that our unbelief ties God’s hands on our behalf.

KEY TEXT: “Now He [Jesus] did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58).

1. We have not because we ask not!

- » One of the biggest ways we express our unbelief in the power of Yahweh God, is when we make major decisions without consulting Him or His Word.
- » Satan convinces us that we do not need to ask God about the decisions we make in our lives (James 4:1-3).
- » If we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and have asked Him to be the Lord of our lives, why wouldn’t we consult Him when we are making decisions that affect our lives?
- » The decisions that we make on a day-to-day basis are the ones that affect our lives the most (Joshua 24:15).
- » According to Deuteronomy 30:19, what does God tell us to choose?

2. What not to do.

- » Most of us have made bad decisions and have had to suffer the consequences they produced.
- » We are not the first ones to do that! Consider the story of King David. He was a man of God. He was the anointed of God. He had a heart for God. Yet, he also jeopardized everything by giving into the lusts of his flesh.
- » David lusted after Bathsheba. He ended up committing adultery with her. Then, to disguise his sin, he orchestrated events to have her husband, Uriah, killed. His actions resulted in the death of Uriah (and others soldiers). David then took Bathsheba for his own wife.
- » It wasn’t until the Prophet Nathan told David a story that he seemed to realize what he had done (II Samuel 12:7,8). David broke 5 of the 10 Commandments in this story. Which ones did he break?

3. I don’t believe that!

- » Read the KEY TEXT again. Our unbelief, stops Jesus in His tracks.
- » Read Hebrews 12:1,2. What is the sin that so easily besets us?
- » What is any easier than failing to believe? Our sinful flesh leans that way already.
- » Read Hebrews 11:1-3. Do we have a right to demand that we see everything—before we step out to do it?

4. Our unbelief is a sin.

- » Read Hebrews 3:12,13. This passage equates unbelief with “evil.”
- » Discuss the story of the Israelites when they were supernaturally delivered from Egypt yet failed to believe that God could give them the Promised Land. What did their unbelief cost them?
- » Read Hebrews 3:16-19. God has good things for us (Jeremiah 29:11).
- » Don’t let unbelief hinder God on your behalf (Mark 9:24; Isaiah 55:8,9)!

“YOU, ME AND THE TREE OF LIFE”

Lesson 5 ■ For week ending April 30, 2022

When Satan deceived mankind in the Garden of Eden, he robbed us of many things. He robbed us of our innocence, he robbed us of a paradise made just for us, and he robbed us of our access to eat from the Tree of Life, which was in the middle of the Garden. However, that is not the end of the story! God—Who is the Giver of Life—had a plan to rescue mankind from their fallen state and to restore their access to Jesus Christ—the true TREE OF LIFE.

KEY TEXT: “*Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (John 14:6).”

1. In the beginning.

- » Read Genesis 2:8,9. God created the heavens and the earth and everything that we now see and enjoy in less than a week. On the sixth day, He created mankind (Genesis 1:27). What was Adam’s job (Genesis 2:15)? God also gave Adam dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28).
- » God gave Adam one rule found in Genesis 2:16,17.
- » Later, because Adam was lonely, God made him a helper named Eve (Genesis 2:18-25).
- » Read Genesis 3:1-7. Discuss the fact that people today still choose to believe Satan over God!

2. What happened after Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree?

- » Immediately after Adam and Eve ate of the tree, sin began its reign on mankind and its effects were felt throughout the earth.
- » One of the most catastrophic effects—that occurred immediately—was mankind’s separation from God. Read Genesis 3:8-13.
- » Discuss the introduction of “fear and being afraid” into mankind’s relationship with God. With the fear, came “blame.” Adam even managed to blame God for what had happened!

3. How did God react to mankind’s dilemma?

- » Read Genesis 3:14-21. Because of their sin, an innocent animal was sacrificed to cover their sin/shame and they were barred from the perfect garden that God had created for them (Genesis 3:20-24).
- » Note in verse 22 that they lost their access to the Tree of Life. What happens when you eat of the Tree of Life?

4. While Satan’s schemes got mankind barred from the Tree of Life, God’s plan for mankind will again give him access to eat from the Tree of Life again.

- » Jesus Christ came some 2,000 years ago to redeem mankind from his fallen state. While man’s sin initially separated him from God, God sent His only-begotten Son to allow man to be restored to right fellowship with his Creator through Jesus Christ.
- » Part of this restoration is restored access to the Jesus Christ—the true “Tree of Life.”
- » Read Revelation 22:12-14; 2:7; and John 6:56.
- » What are the benefits of eating of the Tree of Life? Read Revelation 22:1-5.
- » Jesus is our true “Tree of Life.” He is our Healer. He is the one who was sent to heal our diseases and to restore our broken hearts (Isaiah 61:1; Malachi 4:2).
- » What does Jesus tell us in John 15:5?
- » Isn’t it interesting that Jesus purchased eternal life for us by dying on a tree? Read I Peter 2:24.

“HOW TO DE-ESCALATE CONFLICTS IN YOUR MARRIAGE”

Lesson 6 ■ For week ending May 7, 2022

When you get married, you become a unit and become one. This is not an easy process. Yelling, silence, long talks, nights sleeping on the sofa and feelings of under-appreciation are all included in the cycle of marriage. But when you get to the other side, you will have built a strong, beautiful marriage. We are called to love each other the way that Jesus loves us. The question now becomes: How does Jesus love us? It's called AGAPE LOVE.

KEY TEXT: *(Jesus speaking)* “**This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you**” (John 15:12).

1. Why is marriage sometimes painful?

- » All relationships can be painful, whether child-parent, student-teacher, employee-employer, brother-sister, friend-friend, or husband-wife. If we accept that pain will come, it will be easier to process that pain when it does occur (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
- » Just because this pain exists does not mean there isn't hope. Pain doesn't mean you married the wrong person. In fact, think of pain as a sign that something is alive and needs attention.
- » Are you in a painful day of your marriage? That's okay. It is a sign that your marriage is alive. These painful events will spark one or both of you to mature, and you will become even closer to each other than before. It's important that we always address each other in love—even when what we are saying is true or needs to be said. Read Ephesians 4:15.

2. Conflict is a precursor to change and inward growth.

- » When you marry another person, a whole entire universe of separate ideas, experiences and agendas must merge into one with yours (Genesis 2:24). This process of exposing your competing ideas to each other will bring eventual agreement (1 Peter 3:7). But there will be conflict in the process.
- » To de-escalate your future conflicts, establish biblical guidelines and principles in the early stages of your marriage to which you both promise to adhere. Example: Don't bring up issues from the past that have already been settled (1 Corinthians 13:4,5).

3. Learn to listen.

- » It's important to learn to hear each other out—to completion—before tackling a conflict. Isn't that what James tells us in James 1:19,20?
- » Also, deal with one conflict at a time. When we fight about several problems at once, we are rarely effective at finding a resolution (Proverbs 29:11).

4. Jesus tells us to love each other the way He loves us. So, how does Jesus love us?

- » It's called **♥AGAPE LOVE**. It is a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return.
- » One of the reasons we have conflict in our marriages, is because our fleshy, unregenerate love is conditional and self-serving (Ephesians 5:33). Left unchecked, it will make demands and manipulate our spouse to fulfill our warped identifications of love thus causing conflict, anger, and possibly separation.
- » All unregenerate love is USE, MANIPULATION, EXPLOITATION, DEMAND, and CONTROL.
- » The word UNREGENERATE means *not reforming or showing repentance; obstinately wrong or bad*.
- » True love lays down its life for others (John 15:13). Unregenerate love lays down the life of others for itself (Matthew 5:9). True love sets the other free to become all the other can become. Carnal love imprisons the other so that they cannot become who they truly are (Romans 12:10).



“THE NATION OF ISRAEL - Part 1”

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending May 14, 2022



Today marks the 74th anniversary of modern-day Israel becoming a state. On May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Jewish Agency Chairman David Ben-Gurion proclaims the State of Israel, establishing the first Jewish state in 2,000 years. Ben-Gurion became Israel's first premier. Today's lesson will focus on the Nation of Israel.

KEY TEXT: “Because I, the Lord, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed” (Malachi 3:6, CSB).

1. Are natural-born Jews today still God's chosen people today?

- » There's a lot of confusion about the Nation of Israel and the Jewish people. The truth is, understanding God's relationship with the Jews today can be confusing.
- » The fact is this: Salvation is open to everyone (including Jews). However, the natural Jews (by means of family descendants) are not God's chosen people if they have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
- » God's Word makes this clear in Galatians 6:15,16, “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [being a circumcised Jew] nor uncircumcision [being an uncircumcised Gentile] avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*”
- » This scripture is clear. In order to be part of God's Israel today, you must be a *new creation*. Paul clarifies the phrase *new creation* in II Corinthians 5:17a, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...*” God's Israel today consists of everyone—whether Jew or Gentile—that has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and have become a *new creation*.

2. Is there coming a day when every natural-born Jew will be saved?

- » The answer is NO. The only way for anyone to be saved is by accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior (John 14:6). We are no longer saved because of nationality or family pedigree (Romans 2:28,29).
- » This concept has been broadly accepted because of a misunderstanding of Romans 11:26 which states, “*And so all Israel will be saved...*” The Apostle Paul is simply saying that everyone who has accepted Jesus as their Savior—*will be saved*. These people constitute, “*All Israel.*”

3. Has God turned His back on the Nation of Israel?

- » Again, the answer is NO. Read Romans 11:11,12.
- » So, what is happening with Israel? The truth of the matter is this: The Nation of Israel is under a punishment enacted by God upon them. That's what Paul is saying in Romans 11:8-10.
- » Why was Israel being punished? Because of their disobedience and “adultery” in the Old Testament.
- » What is the punishment? Read Isaiah 6:9,10 and Isaiah 65:2.
- » The Prophet Jeremiah further explains their trespass against God in Jeremiah 3:6. Notice the reference to “*committed adultery with stones and trees.*”
- » Jesus recognized this punishment when He walked the earth some 2,000 years ago. Due to this punishment, He spoke to the Jews in parables. Read Matthew 13:10-13.

4. The Nation of Israel rejected the Messiah some 2,000 years ago and have suffered because of it.

- » A cursory reading of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) will show you that the ruling faction of Israel rejected Jesus and opposed Him at every turn. Ultimately they offered Him up to be crucified.
- » Jesus gave a great summary of what happened with Israel as a nation in the parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (Matthew 21:33-46). Jesus summarized the parable in verse 43. This “new nation” consists of people—both Jew and Gentile—who accept Jesus as their Savior.
- » Next week we will talk about the Jewish Elect and the end of punishment for the Nation of Israel.



“THE NATION OF ISRAEL - Part 2”

Lesson 8 ■ For week ending May 21, 2022



Last week we discussed the Nation of Israel with respect to its punishment and rejection of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. This week we will continue to study what God’s Word says about Israel and its place in Bible prophecy. God always has a “remnant.” He talks about this repeatedly in the Old Testament. Also, there will come a day when Israel’s punishment is fulfilled and they will be able to see Jesus for who He really is.

KEY TEXT: “*And I will pour on the house of David [Israel] and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son...*” (Zechariah 12:10a).

1. The Tale of Two Olive Trees.

- » In Romans the 11th chapter, the Apostle Paul discusses the unique situation between Jesus and the Nation of Israel as well as Gentiles role in God’s plan.
- » Read Romans 11:11,12. Paul makes it clear that God is not finished with Israel as a Nation.
- » Now read Romans 11:13-18. Paul’s desire was that his people, the Jews, would accept Jesus as the Messiah. In verse 16, he begins to talk about a tree—a tame tree—which he refers to as the Jews.
- » First of all, he makes it clear that the *lump, root, and branches* are HOLY. In other words, Judaism is God’s system of praise, worship, and service. It is a holy system authored by God.
- » He was making the point that although some of the branches *were broken off*, which means that some Jews rejected Jesus, but he reminded the Gentiles that this is a Jewish Tree when he said, “you [Gentiles] do not support the root, but the root [Judaism] supports you.”



2. The Wild Olive Tree.

- » The “root” of modern-day Christianity is Judaism (the Tame Tree). Paul begins to explain the process of the Gentiles (the Wild Tree) being grafted into the Tame Tree.
- » So, what is *grafting*? Grafting is a horticultural technique used to join parts from two or more plants so that they appear to grow as a single plant. In grafting, the upper part of one plant grows on the root system of another plant.
- » Read Romans 11:19-23. According to verse 20, what was the main reason the Jews were *broken off* of the Tame Tree? Discuss the power of unbelief (Matthew 13:54-58). Paul makes it clear in verse 23 that salvation is still available to the Jewish people. If they accept Jesus, they are part of God’s Israel today (II Corinthians 3:14-16).
- » Read Romans 11:24, “*For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature [Gentiles], and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree [Jews/Israel], how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*”

3. Let’s look at one of the most confusing scriptures regarding the Jews/Israel.

- » As stated in last week’s lesson, God’s relationship with the Jews and Israel can be confusing at times. There is also much confusion and misinterpretation about Paul’s discourse in Romans 11.
- » Let’s read a particularly confusing scripture found in Romans 11:28, “*Concerning the gospel they [Jews/Israel] are (a) enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are (b) beloved for the sake of the fathers.*” How can Israel be an *enemy* and *beloved* at the same time?
- » (a) **ENEMIES** – Paul is simply saying that at the time he was writing this text, the Nation of Israel was against Jesus and were enemies of His Gospel. They were persecuting the “Christians” and denouncing that Jesus was the Messiah—thus, they were “enemies” of the Gospel.
- » (b) **BELOVED** – However, Paul is also acknowledging that there is an “election” (a group of Jewish believers) that are “beloved” because they have embraced Jesus and His Gospel. Included in this group are the 144,000 Jews that make up the Jewish Dispensation Bride of Christ found in Revelation 7 (12,000 from each tribe of Israel). Paul confirms this truth in Romans 11:7.



“THE NATION OF ISRAEL - Part 3”

Lesson 9 ■ For week ending May 28, 2022



We have been studying God’s relationship with the Jews and the Nation of Israel. We have been dissecting the Apostle Paul’s discourse on the subject found in Romans 11. Hopefully we have cleared up some of the more confusing scriptures and clarified God’s stance with Israel today. God’s Word is clear that God still loves Israel and the Jewish people. And, prophecy states that in the Last Days, God will open up a “fountain” for the house of David [Israel] and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Let’s explore God’s plan for Israel in these Last Days.

KEY TEXT: “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1).

1. If you have done any reading in God’s Word, you understand that God always preserves a “remnant” for Himself.

- » Although the Nation of Israel as a whole rejected Jesus, Paul says in Romans 11:5 that there is still a remnant according to the election of grace.
- » What is a remnant? It literally means *a small remaining quantity of something*.
- » Read Isaiah 10:20-23. God promises that one day the remnant of Israel will depend on Him alone.
- » In the first lesson of this series we referenced the punishment that God enacted on Israel as a nation (Isaiah 6:9,10, Jeremiah 3:6)
- » Another part of Israel’s punishment was that God permitted them to be driven from their homeland and scattered amongst the nations. This punishment is defined in Ezekiel 4:13.
- » Its relevant to note that when it comes to punishing Israel, God defines a time period for the punishment. When they went into Egyptian captivity, God dictated that they would be there for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). When it came to the Babylonian captivity, God specified it would last for 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10).

2. God promises to restore the remnant of Israel at the end of their punishment.

- » God promises to assemble the outcasts (scattered Israel) and return them to Israel (Ezekiel 11:16,17; Micah 2:12,13).
- » So, when will Israel’s punishment end? Paul addresses this issue in Romans 11:25,26. Paul says that Israel’s punishment—blindness in part—will continue until “*the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*”
- » Salvation became available to the Gentiles after the death and resurrection of Jesus some 2,000 years ago. The Apostle Paul was leader of this outreach. In Romans 11:13, he referred to himself as “*an apostle to the Gentiles.*” The term refers to God’s time frame regarding His plan for the Gentile people.
- » The Church of God believes that the phrase *the fullness of the Gentiles* is completed at the end of the last 7 years at the 7th Trump return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

3. When Israel’s time of punishment is complete, what will change?

- » That is an excellent question! This question is still being studied and discussed in the Council of Apostles and Elders. While we don’t know everything about *how* and *when* everything changes, we do know the following according to scripture:
- » Zechariah 12:9,10, “*It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem [Battle of Armageddon]. 10 And I will pour on the house of David [Jews/Israel] and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced.* Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”
- » The Church of God recognizes that a window of salvation is opened for the Nation of Israel (Zechariah 12:9,10; 13:1) after the 7th Trump return of Jesus Christ because their punishment of being blind has been lifted when the fullness of the Gentiles is complete (Romans 11:25) and they are able to look upon their Messiah.
- » Zechariah 13:1 specifies that there is now a remedy for Israel’s sin and uncleanness. That is Jesus!

“THE FEAR DANCE – Part 1”

Lesson 10 ■ For week ending June 4, 2022

Fear is from Satan. We should not accept fear in any form in our lives. When we realize that the root of fear is from Satan, and that fear in our lives causes us to sin, we should expose any fear in us and refuse to let it rule in our lives. God’s Word tells us that the opposite of fear is power, love, and A SOUND MIND!

KEY TEXT: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7).

1. Let’s examine the first introduction of fear into mankind.

- » Fear entered into the picture after Adam and Eve disobeyed God. When God approached Adam in the Garden of Eden later that evening, Adam responded by saying, “...I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:10).
 - » When God asked Adam how he knew he was naked and whether or not he had eaten from the forbidden tree, Adam refused to take responsibility for his actions and instead blamed Eve, “...The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12). When God asked Eve what she had done, she responded by blaming the serpent!
 - » Adam and Eve felt an EMOTION they had never experience before—FEAR! They are now hiding from God—they never had to hide from God before. They had a perfect loving relationship that has now been shattered by their disobedience.
 - » So, right from the beginning, we can see the damaging effects of fear: 1) Fear causes separation from God; 2) Fear causes us to refuse to take responsibility for our actions; 3) Fear causes us to blame others—including God; and, 4) Fear causes a rift in our relationships with God and others.
-

2. The core or root problem is fear.

- » The external problem is rarely the problem. Have you ever looked at someone and said, “What are we arguing about?” Usually the external problem—the “issue”—has touched one of our fear buttons.
 - » The core problem is fear. Most men have a core fear of helplessness or feeling controlled. They feel failure or getting stepped on. Most women have a core fear related to disconnection—they fear not being heard, not being valued, or somehow losing the love of another.
-

3. The four steps of the “Fear Dance.”

- » **1ST STEP: “I HURT.”** What does your hurt look like? How do you feel when your fear button is pushed? What is our fear button? Whatever it is that you are afraid of. Examples: failure, exposure, weakness, dishonor, rejection, disconnection, being devalued, etc. When our fear buttons are pushed, our inner emotions come to the surface.
 - » **2ND STEP: “I WANT.”** When you hurt, you want a solution—you want to feel better. In an attempt to feel better, we often seek some very destructive outlets: compulsive shopping, overeating, alcohol or drugs, adultery, divorce, etc. Mostly we want the other person to change so we can feel better. We see the other person as both the problem and the solution!
 - » **3RD STEP: “I FEAR.”** In any relationship there are certain needs we want, but we FEAR just the opposite: We want acceptance, so we **FEAR REJECTION**. We want love, so we fear **BEING SCORNED**. We want respect, so we fear **BEING DISRESPECTED**. We want commitment, so we **FEAR ABANDONMENT**. We want success, so we fear failure. These fears prevent us from having a happy, healthy relationship.
 - » **4TH STEP: “I REACT.”** We scream, we hit, we sulk, we withdraw, we run out the door, When our fear buttons are pushed, we often react in a very harmful way in an attempt to erase the hurt—to protect ourselves. The reality is our harmful reactions don’t solve anything. They only make matters worse. We find ourselves doing things we never thought we would do. We say things we should not say. At times we lose control of our actions—and the results are not good!
-

4. Our fears actually create the very result we fear the most!

- » The 4 curses of fear: 1) Fear makes us **SELFISH**. When you live in fear, your are not thinking about other people; 2) Fear makes us **SINFUL**. We often try and placate or pacify our fears with things that momentarily make us feel better or distract us; 3) Fear makes us **SAY DAMAGING WORDS**. We become sarcastic. We fear being attacked so we attack first; and 4) Fear causes you to do what makes your **FEARS COME TRUE**. Being controlled by fear guarantees that you will spend the rest of your life experiencing fear.
- » Next week we will talk about how to **BREAK THE RHYTHM OF THE FEAR DANCE**.

“THE FEAR DANCE – Part 2”

Lesson 11 ■ For week ending June 11, 2022

Last week we talked about the 4 steps of the Fear Dance: 1) “I Hurt,” 2) “I Want,” 3) “I Fear,” and, 4) “I React.” We talked about the damaging effects fear can have in our lives, our relationship with one another, and most importantly our relationship with Yahweh God. Today we will talk about how we can break the rhythm of the Fear Dance.

KEY TEXT: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, **but of power and of love and of a sound mind**” (II Timothy 1:7).

1. We need to identify our feelings.

- » What are my emotions, feelings, fear buttons in this moment? Ask yourself: Why does this make me so angry?
- » We must identify that the source of fear is Satan! So, nothing good comes from us when we live in—or react in—fear! Fear is a product of our sinful flesh. Read Galatians 5:19-21 and discuss the fruit that our sinful flesh produces.

2. We must take personal responsibility for our own emotions.

- » I choose to respond positively. I take control of my emotions. I exercise self-control.
- » In fact, self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).
- » Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. This is how we are supposed to love and live our lives.
- » Ask yourself: “How would God want me to respond to my spouse, my child, my boss, my co-worker, my fellow-Christian?”

3. Fear is the opposite of having power, love, and a sound mind.

- » When we are controlled by fear, we are not letting God’s Spirit control us (I John 4:18).
- » Through God’s love, we can experience the very things that we are fearful we will never have—**POWER, LOVE, and a SOUND MIND!**
- » The truth is, we must renew our minds. Although we have all been trespassed, wronged, abused, used, or just plain been done wrong, we do not allow ourselves to be a victim for the rest of our lives. Read Romans 2:1.
- » Most of our fears are based on things that we have experienced ourselves or witnessed, and have **PASSED JUDGMENTS ON**. The truth is this: 1) We need to **FORGIVE** anyone who has trespassed against us; 2) We need to **FORGIVE** anyone who has abused us in any manner; 3) We need to **STOP JUDGING** others—because we become what we judge; and 4) We need to **LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY**—just like Jesus has loved us!

4. Don’t give up—keep renewing your thinking!

- » We are all in the process of having our minds/sinful flesh transformed and sanctified by God through His Word. It’s a daily, lifelong process. Read Romans 12:2.
- » Once we have forgiven those who have trespassed against us, we must take authority over what you think about. Read II Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 4:8.
- » How can we live in peace? Read Romans 8:6. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are not powerless. In fact, you have access to all power.
- » Read Romans 6:14,18. You do not have to let your fearful mind control you!
- » According to Romans 8:13-15, we do not have to live our lives “*bondage again to fear.*”
- » Choose to walk forth in power, love, and a sound mind!

“SATAN’S DOMINION OF DARKNESS - Part 1”

Lesson 12 ■ For week ending June 18, 2022

We are living in a world that is getting darker by the minute. As believers, we see this darkness creeping into almost every aspect of our society. Satan is working overtime at eroding the fundamental teachings of Yahweh God under the cloak of keywords like *inclusion* and *acceptance for all*. Brother and Sisters, it’s time for Spirit-filled Christians to arise and let God’s glory be seen in us!

KEY TEXT: “*Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you*” (Isaiah 60:1,2).

1. Satan does not just want to have a *good time* with you, he wants you to be part of his “Dominion of Darkness.”

- » What does that mean? He wants to control every part of your life and he wants you to be subject to him—and his darkness—in all matters of your existence.
- » In Matthew 4:1-11, Satan even tried to deceive Jesus! How did Jesus stop Satan?
- » Satan wants to have *dominion* over you. Definition of “dominion” – *sovereignty; control*. The word comes from the Latin *dominium*, from *dominus* which means ‘lord, master.’ Definition of “sovereignty” – *supreme power or authority*. In other words, Satan wants all of you—he wants to be your master.
- » While he lures you away—promising you “freedom”—he, himself, is bound (II Peter 2:19; Jude 1:6).
- » His ultimate purpose for existence is to take as many people with him as possible into the lake of fire and brimstone—which is his final destination (Revelation 20:10).

2. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be lulled into the belief that we can handle a “little bit” of Satan—our his darkness—in our lives.

- » If we truly think this way, we have already allowed ourselves to be deceived (Ephesians 5:11).
- » Satan is **THE FATHER OF ALL LIES**. That’s why Jesus gave these instructions when asked about the Last Days: “*And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you”* (Matthew 24:5).
- » We tell ourselves that “nobody will get hurt” in our self-indulgences (John 3:19-21). In fact, we often convince ourselves that there is nothing wrong with what we are doing (II Corinthians 11:14; Proverbs 16:2; 21:2). What does God’s Word say about us and darkness? Read II Corinthians 6:14.

3. Satan is working overtime eroding the fundamental teachings of Yahweh God under the cloak of keywords like “inclusion” and “acceptance for all.”

- » Satan is preying upon those in our society who have embraced unbiblical lifestyles and yet crave acceptance by God while refusing to change (John 1:5). While they may experience “acceptance” here, they will be judged by God if they embrace sin and refuse to repent.
- » Consider the welcome/introduction found on the “Centers for Spiritual Living” website: “*We teach the Science of Mind, which offers a practical spiritual teaching that draws on the wisdom of the ages and New Thought principles, in order to promote awakening and personal growth. Whatever your lifestyle or spiritual path, you are welcomed. Our spiritual communities are ready to embrace, love, and accept you as you are. **Everyone is included on the path to God!***”
- » There is only one path to God. John 14:6, “*Jesus said to them, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**”*”
- » We cannot just “think” or “will” ourselves into salvation—it only comes from Yahweh God through Jesus.
- » Psalm 18:28, “*For You will light my lamp; **the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.**”*
- » While God wants us to come to Him as we are, He loves us enough to know that left unchecked, our darkness will destroy us (I Thessalonians 5:5). Having a relationship with Jesus Christ will drive the darkness from us. Read John 8:12 and I John 1:7.
- » Next week we will discuss how a personal relationship with Jesus dispels the darkness in our lives.

“SATAN’S DOMINION OF DARKNESS - Part 2”

Lesson 13 ■ For week ending June 25, 2022

Last week we talked about the darkness that is engrossing our world. As Bible students, we know that prophecy said it would happen. This week we want to focus on how we can overcome Satan’s darkness in all areas of our lives. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, we became victorious over Satan and his sinister plan for our lives. We have been rescued from darkness and welcomed into God’s Kingdom of light.

KEY TEXT: “*For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves*” (Colossians 1:13, NIV).

1. Once we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are now a *new creature*—a new man (or woman) in Christ.

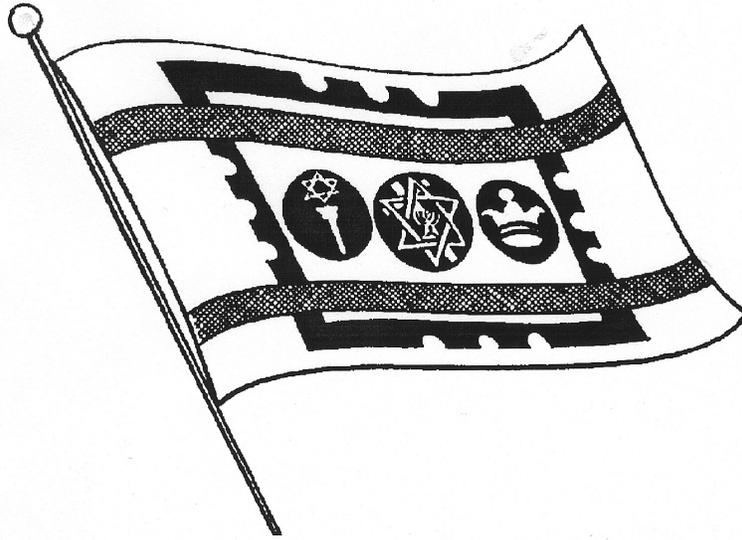
- » While its true that we were born with a sinful nature, and our flesh—left unattended—will naturally gravitate towards darkness, we do not have to continue in that state.
- » Why? Because Jesus came to rescue us (Matthew 4:16; John 8:12).
- » Now that we are a new creation (Galatians 5:15,16) in Jesus Christ, we should no longer walk as the rest of the people do (Ephesians 4:17-24).
- » How do we navigate this world now that we are saved? We read and apply God’s Word to our life and daily activities and let it wash us clean (Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 5:24-27).

2. We are overcomers through Christ Jesus because He is the light!

- » Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, has set us free from Satan’s darkness (II Corinthians 4:6).
- » Colossians 1:13,14, (NIV), “*For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*”
- » In fact, we are told specifically that God has *called us out* of the darkness of this world (I Peter 2:9).
- » When we accepted Jesus as our Savior, we received the tools we need to dispel darkness in our lives.
- » II Peter 1:3-7, “*As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.** 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*”
- » Not only has He set us free from darkness, He gave us gifts! Read James 1:17 and Ephesians 4:7,8.
- » The greatest gift that we have been given is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ruach Hakodesh). The Holy Spirit’s job is to lead us into all truth (John 16:13) and to give us power over our flesh (Galatians 5:16).

3. Our job is to be ministers of Jesus Christ – God’s Light. Instead of becoming darkness, we should share light wherever we go!

- » While Satan wants you to join him for an eternal swim in the lake of fire and brimstone, he also wants to “snuff out” your light of witness to others.
- » According to Jesus, we are now the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-18).
- » Look at what Jesus told Paul (while he was still “Saul”) on the road to Damascus in Acts 26:15-18, “*So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, **in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God,** that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*”
- » Listen to the instructions of Jesus found in John 12:35, “*Then Jesus said to them, “**A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.**”*”



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