

Bible Study



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“THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 1”

LESSON 1 • For week ending April 1, 2023

We are most assuredly living in the Last Days. We are watching our world descend into chaos on many levels. *Confusion* seems to be the order of the day. People are confused about Jesus, religion, gender, society norms, and more. We, however, as sons and daughters of God, should not be confused about what is happening all around us. God promises us that we can know the times and seasons!

KEY TEXT: *“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness” (I Thessalonians 5:4,5).*

1. TELL YOUR NEIGHBOR: “Wake up, buttercup!”

- » In Matthew 25, we find Jesus addressing the issue of the Last Days and His return. Read Matthew 25:1-13, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.
- » Jesus implies that the whole kingdom of God is waiting for His return. In verse 5, He states, *“But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.”* This is where we are today in Bible prophecy. The whole Kingdom of God is waiting for Jesus to appear at any moment, and, because He hasn’t appeared, they have fallen asleep.
- » Students of the Bible will take note that God’s Kingdom includes a kingdom (10 tribes–Israel) and His sanctuary (2 tribes–Judah). Read Psalm 114:2. The Church believes that the 2 Tribes, Judah, represent the Bride of Christ.
- » In Matthew 25:6, Jesus says that someone makes a call concerning His return. The Church believes that it is the Bride of Christ who makes that call. They are awake and alert and can identify what is happening prophetically in the Last Days (I Thessalonians 5:4-6).
- » They have their lamps (the Word of God) full of oil (truth) and are wide awake because they are watchmen as well (Ezekiel 33:1-4).

2. Can Jesus return at any moment?

- » The short answer to that question is “NO!” The Bible tells us emphatically that Jesus is being held in heaven until prophecy dictates that He can return to this earth. Read Acts 3:20-21.
- » For us to imply that God is uncertain about the time of Jesus’ return, or that the matter is not decided as of yet, is contrary to how the Bible describes Yahweh God. First of all, God is all-knowing and He has all power. He is not the God of indecision (Mark 13:32).
- » We are not the first generation to ask about the imminent return of Jesus. The Apostle Paul addressed the same issue in his day. His response is found in II Thessalonians 2:1-4.
- » Who has to be revealed before Jesus returns? The Man of Sin (or Antichrist) must make his debut on the world stage before the return of Jesus. This has not happened as of yet.

3. The Man of Sin (Antichrist) appears on the world stage after a major battle takes place in the mountains of Israel.

- » The next definitive thing that we as watchman are watching for, is for Israel to be attacked by northern nations in the Battle of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38,39).
- » What we have witnessed in Russia’s war against Ukraine is setting the world stage for this to happen. It’s interesting to note that Russian President Putin attacked Ukraine simply because he made up his mind to do so. This personality trait is very similar to the approach that the Antichrist will use in the Last Days (Daniel 11:36). Putin is not the Antichrist; however, he is demonstrating to the world how much suffering and destruction one man’s actions can inflict on others seemingly without cause.
- » A coalition of northern nations (including Turkey, Russia and others–Ezekiel 38:1-6), will attack Israel in the northern mountains (the Golan Heights region in Israel’s northern border with Syria), in order to plunder Israel’s wealth (Ezekiel 38:10-13). According to Ezekiel 38:14, the Nation of Israel will be dwelling safely in their land. Read Ezekiel 38:15,16. The result of this unprovoked war will be a demand for worldwide peace. Thus the stage will be set for a false peacemaker, the Antichrist, to arise and declare peace.

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 2"

LESSON 2 • For week ending April 8, 2023

Last week's lesson discussed the fact that the Antichrist must be revealed before the 7th Trump return of Jesus Christ to this world. As we watch the events unfolding in response to Russia's War of aggression on Ukraine, we can see the demand for peace ramping up. Recently, we have watched as China has tried to negotiate peace between Russia and Ukraine. Again, all of these events are setting the stage for what will eventually happen in the Battle of Gog and Magog found in Ezekiel 38,39.

KEY TEXT: *"Thus says the Lord God: "Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?" (Ezekiel 38:17).*

1. What in the world is the KEY TEXT talking about?

- » We must all acknowledge that God is in control. He allows and orchestrates the actions of mankind to fulfill His Word. The KEY TEXT is telling us that it is God who brings the northern nations against Israel in the Last Days. Yes, you heard it right. God says, *"...I would bring you against them..."*
- » Why would God allow a war in Israel? To show the world that He is alive and well and able to defend the Nation of Israel against a huge army. Read Ezekiel 38:23.
- » How does God defend Israel? Read Ezekiel 38:18-22. God destroys all but 1/6th of the nations that come against Israel. Ezekiel 39:2, *"And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel."*
- » God clarifies what He is doing in Ezekiel 39:21,22. God uses this battle to show the world that He is still God, and also *"...So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward."*
- » This Last Days' battle will also start the cry for "world peace" which sets the stage for the Antichrist to establish a 7-year peace treaty.

2. The Battle of Gog and Magog is not the same as Armageddon.

- » The Church believes that there are two major battles in the Last Days. The Battle of Gog and Magog is first, followed by Armageddon—which takes place 7 years later.
- » How do we know these are two separate battles? In Gog and Magog, the armies only make it into the mountains of Israel. In Armageddon, the armies make it into the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2). The Battle of Gog and Magog consists of a limited number of northern nations (not the "all nations" required for Armageddon—Zechariah 14:2).
- » God destroys the armies of Gog and Magog with earthquakes, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone, and by turning the army against itself—a tactic He has used in the past (Ezekiel 38:21-22; II Chronicles 20:22-24). In Armageddon, the armies are destroyed by Jesus Christ at His 7th Trump Return (II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelations 19:11-21).

3. The world will demand peace.

- » The Antichrist will come to prominence when he orchestrates a worldwide peace treaty after the conclusion of the Battle of Gog and Magog. Read Daniel 8:23–25.
- » Notice the scripture says, *"He shall destroy many in their prosperity..."* It will be a time of perceived *peace* and *prosperity*. We are all adult enough to admit that we like it when there is *peace* and *prosperity*—and the world likes it as well. The Antichrist will be Satan's version of Jesus—who is the true Prince of Peace.
- » The Antichrist will appear "charming," a problem-solver, yet his actions will be ruthless and conniving. Read Daniel 11:21-24. He will appear to be "royalty" of some sort. He will be cunning, prosperous, and deceitful (a "politician" LOL), as well as self-centered (Daniel 11:37). The Church believes he will be Muslim as well.
- » The Apostle Paul gives us these instructions in I Thessalonians 5:1-11. Note verse 3, *"For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them..."*
- » In the middle of the last 7 years, the Antichrist's true intentions will be made known and God will respond by pouring out His wrath on the wicked of this world (Daniel 7:25,26; Matthew 24:21,22).

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 3"

LESSON 3 • For week ending April 15, 2023

We ended last week's lesson by stating that God will pour out His wrath on the wicked of this earth for a period of 3 ½ years. How does He do that? He places His "two witnesses" on the streets of Jerusalem to call down the plagues of God, as often as they want, for 42 months (3 ½ years). The world will respond by sending their armies to Jerusalem to kill the "two witnesses," invoking the much-talked-about Battle of Armageddon. This battle concludes when Jesus Christ returns at the sound of the 7th Trump and destroys His enemies by the brightness of His coming and with the sword of His mouth.

KEY TEXT: *"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth"* (Revelation 11:3).

1. The Book of Revelation.

- » First, it should be noted that the book of Revelations is, *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place..."* (Revelation 1:1a).
- » Revelations outlines the wrath of God that will be poured out on this world. We are currently living in the Grace Dispensation (Ephesians 3:1,2). The Church believes that the Wrath Dispensation is next. It will be a very difficult time (Jeremiah 10:10; Nahum 1:2; Zephaniah 1:15).
- » The Wrath Dispensation begins in the middle of the last 7 years when the Antichrist blasphemes the God of heaven declaring that he (Antichrist) is as God (Daniel 7:25).
- » God's Wrath consists of 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, Vials, and 3 Woes. These are defined in Revelations starting with Chapter 6 through Chapter 16.

2. What happens to believers during the Wrath Dispensation?

- » As believers, we are not appointed to God's wrath. Read I Thessalonians 5:9.
- » While believers are not appointed to God's wrath, they can be subject to Satan's wrath if they are not hid away. Some part of God's kingdom will be hid away. Consider Isaiah 26:20, *"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past."*
- » Satan will make war with those believers who are not hid away. Revelation 12:17, *"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."*
- » Consider Daniel 7:21,25, *"I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them...[25] "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. **Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.**"*

3. God's Bride will be hid away.

- » We know that God promises that His Bride will be hid away. Revelation 12:14, *"But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."*
- » What is time, times, and half a time? Consider the New American Bible version: *"But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly to her place in the desert, where, far from the serpent, she was taken care of for a year, two years, and a half-year. **It's a period of 3 ½ years.**"*
- » Some of the saints that are not hid away will be martyred for their faith (they will be beheaded). Read Revelation 6:11 and Revelation 20:4.
- » God uses two men called "two witnesses" to pour out His wrath on the earth. They will be actual men (prophets)—not angels or spirits because they will be killed—who stand in the streets of Jerusalem and prophecy God's plagues upon the land (Revelation 11:3-6; Revelation 11:7,8).
- » What happens to the two witnesses? Read Revelation 11:11-12.
- » Next week...all nations will come up to battle against Jerusalem—which will bring back Jesus! Stay tuned!

“THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 4”

LESSON 4 • For week ending April 22, 2023

Last week we mentioned that God’s Bride body will be hid away during the last 3 ½ years of the Wrath Dispensation. Today’s lesson will take an in-depth look at what that “hide-a-way” will be like. God’s Word is full of wonderful promises for His people that remain faithful. Let’s explore God’s Word together!

KEY TEXT: *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to her” (Hosea 2:14).*

1. Where will this hide-a-way be?

- » First, God’s Word does not give us the exact location of this hide-a-way. However, we can read the Scriptures and make a supposition regarding the location as *we look through this glass darkly* (1 Corinthians 13:12). It bears stating that we are not quoting Church doctrine at this point—simply a location that we are considering.
- » Using the principle of Divine Law (there is nothing new under the sun—Ecclesiastes 1:9), we can look back at the Old Testament account of Israel approaching the Promised Land of Israel after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. They approached Israel from the northeastern mountainous boundary known as modern-day Jordan.
- » This is where Moses was able to climb Mount Nebo and survey Israel (Deuteronomy 34:1-4).

2. This location agrees with the words of Psalm 91—divine protection in the midst of trouble.

- » Most of us know the opening phrase of Psalm 91:1, *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* While this Psalm has benefits that we can claim throughout our lives, it also has a prophetic identity that applies to the hide-a-way of God’s Bride. Read Psalm 91.
- » Let’s establish up front that these benefits are specific to the people to whom: *“...He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge”* (verse 4). The reference to “cover you with His feathers” is more than just a reference to a *chicken protecting her chicks*. According to Ezekiel 16:8, it denotes that God is “married” to this group of people. He has established an oath and a covenant with them and declares that, *“...you became Mine,” says the Lord GOD.*”
- » Notice in Psalm 91:7,8 that God specifies that we will be able to SEE the destruction that is happening all around us. What destruction are we talking about? First, God’s wrath being poured out on the wicked and the armies of this world preparing for the Battle of Armageddon. Even today, when standing on Mount Nebo in Jordan, they say you can see the city of Jerusalem.

3. What can we expect in the hide-a-way?

- » God gives us a great description of what happens in His hide-a-way in Hosea 2. Read Hosea 2:14-15 and compare that with Revelation 12:14. The “Valley of Achor” is located near Jericho in the northeastern section of Israel—another reference to the Jordan location.
- » Read Hosea 2:16. Discuss the fact that the status of those in this wilderness setting changes. They are now instructed to use the phrase, *“That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master.’”*
- » Verse 17 tells us that false/pagan gods will no longer be an issue. Verse 18 talks about a new covenant with the beasts of the field. In verse 19, we see the marriage vows that are made. In verses 21-23, God shows us how the earth will help the Bride just like it did in Revelation 12:15-17. The *“rest of her offspring”* noted in verse 17 is a reference to those who are not hidden during this time of tribulation.
- » As always, we must have more than one scripture reference to establish a teaching. Read Isaiah 26:20, 21, *“Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; **Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.** For behold, the Lord comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.”*
- » Next week we will discuss what happens when Jesus returns at the 7th Trump. Come Lord Jesus!

“THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 5”

LESSON 5 • For week ending April 29, 2023

The gathering of all nations for the Battle of Armageddon will be the last event to take place before the return of Jesus Christ at the 7th Trump. Again, this will be a battle that God has foreordained to show His power and might on the world stage. The gathering of every nation to attack Israel will usher in the 7th Trump return of Jesus Christ. He will defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom on this earth to rule and reign for 1,000 years! Come Lord Jesus!

KEY TEXT: “*And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon*” (Revelation 16:16).

1. Let’s set the scene for the return of Jesus Christ at the 7th Trump.

- » First, the world will have endured the Wrath Dispensation which is a period of 3 ½ years when God pours out His wrath upon the wicked of this world (Psalm 9:7,8).
- » Billions of people will die during this time. According to Revelations 6:3,4, *peace* will be removed from the earth. One-third of the trees—and all the green grass—will be burned up (Revelation 8:7). One-third of all living creatures in the sea have died (Revelation 8:8,9). One-third of the waters have been made bitter causing many deaths (Revelation 8:10,11). There will be darkness where there used to be light (Revelations 8:12). Also, the economy will be ruined (Revelation 18:9-11).
- » The world will be utter chaos; however, men will not repent, they will continue to blaspheme God (Revelation 16:9).

2. “We interrupt your regularly scheduled broadcast.”

- » We live in a world of constant access to news and the broadcasting of events around the world on our TVs and smart phones. Picture in your mind the scene of the *two witnesses* standing in the streets of Jerusalem calling down the plagues of God whenever they want. Read Revelation 11:3-6.
- » So, everyone around the world will see these *two witnesses* and they will see the destruction that they cause. Talk about *global warming!* Eventually, the leaders of this world will devise a plan to stop these *two witnesses* in an attempt to stop the devastation they are causing. All of this is foretold in God’s Word (Revelation 16:12-16.)
- » It should be noted that ALL NATIONS will participate in this planned attack on Jerusalem, Israel. Read Zechariah 14:1,2.

3. An evil army makes plans to attack Jerusalem.

- » Again, lets set the stage for what is happening in the world at this time. First, the world has endured 3 ½ years of God’s wrath being poured out. Billions of people have died. The waters are bitter. The trees and grass have been burned up. Destruction is everywhere. And, the people who remain are not repentant, they continue to be evil and perverse (Revelation 9:20,21).
- » The remnant of those who are left decide to put together an army to attack Jerusalem. Read Revelation 9:16. An evil army of 200 million is assembled. Read Revelation 9:17. While John described this army the best he could, consider that “*out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone*” may well be a description of the weapons they are carrying.
- » This evil army brings destruction as they march towards Jerusalem (Revelation 9:18,19). They don’t realize that they are being led there by God so that they can be destroyed.

4. The stage is set.

- » At the end of the last 3 ½ years, all the nations of the world (what’s left of them), have gathered in Jerusalem to finally kill those *two witnesses* to try and stop the destruction they have caused.
- » What happens next? Read Zechariah 14:3,4. God will fight the battle and He will not be deterred.
- » Next week we will outline what happens during this great battle—stay tuned!!!

“THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 6”

LESSON 6 • For week ending May 6, 2023

All the nations of this world will gather together to attack Jerusalem, Israel. They don't realize that they are being set up to be destroyed by God once and for all. We concluded last week's lesson by reading Zechariah 14:3,4. These scriptures state that the Lord goes forth and fights against these nations. Today's lesson will investigate what Holy Scriptures declare will happen.

KEY TEXT: “...Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You” (Zechariah 14:5b).

1. Today's the day!

- » Let's read Zechariah 14:1,2. The nations of this world have sent their army of 200 million men to attack Jerusalem, Israel for the purpose of killing the *two witnesses* who have called down the plagues of God upon this world for 3 ½ years. It will appear at first that they are winning. The scripture says that, “*The city shall be taken...*”
- » According to Revelation 11:7, what happens to the *two witnesses*? Again, your regularly scheduled broadcast will be interrupted when they show live videos of the *two witnesses* lying in the streets of Jerusalem (verse 8,9).
- » Now it is party time! Read verse 10. The world will rejoice at their fleeting victory.
- » Their victory is short-lived! Read Revelation 11:11-13. After 3 ½ days, the *two witnesses* are resurrected—their bodies were still laying on the street—and they are caught up to heaven in the Rapture.
- » Now read Zechariah 14:3,4. This is when Jesus Christ shows up on the scene. The 7th Trump has sounded (Revelation 11:15), and Jesus Christ returns to this earth with His army (Revelation 19:11-16).
- » Jesus defeats His enemies (Isaiah 66:15,16; Zechariah 14:12).

2. God's plan for the Nation of Israel.

- » We've established that chaos will grip the entire world for the last 3 ½ years before the return of Jesus at the 7th Trump. It will be a time of great sorrow as God pours out His wrath and judgment upon the wicked of this world. However, there's another event that we as believers are watching for as well: Israel's Day of Salvation.
- » As students of the Bible, we recognize that the Nation of Israel has been under the punishment of God because of their disobedience in the Old Testament and their rejection (as a nation) of Jesus Christ the Messiah. NOTE: While Israel as a nation rejected Jesus, individual Jews can (and have) accepted Him as their personal Savior (Romans 11:5).
- » Does this mean that God has rejected the Nation of Israel forever? The answer is NO. Paul addresses this issue in Romans 11:1-7. What was the punishment God enacted on Israel? Read Romans 11:8-10.
- » Paul continues to tell how that because of the Jews “fall,” salvation has come to the Gentiles (Romans 11:11). He continues his discourse stating that we (as Gentiles) have been grafted into this Jewish Tree (Romans 11:12-21).

3. Israel's punishment ends during the last 3 ½ years.

- » God's punishment/slavery of Israel has always had a time period associated with it. Israel spent 400 years in Egyptian slavery (Genesis 15:13,14). They also spent 70 years in Babylonian slavery (Jeremiah 29:10).
- » So, when will Israel's punishment end? Paul addresses this issue in Romans 11:22-25. It ends when, “*the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*” We've already established that the Gentiles—all the nations of this world that come to attack the *two witnesses*—have gathered in Jerusalem, Israel in the Last Days.
- » This is where Jesus picks up the story in Luke 21:20-24. The Church recognizes that prophecies can have multiple interpretations: *historical, spiritual, and future national* (Manual, V,A,2-3). While Jesus was foretelling the fall of Israel to the Roman General Titus in 70 AD, He also alludes to Israel's punishment in verse 24. He says Jerusalem will be, “*trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*”
- » The “Gentiles” have gathered (trampled) Israel for the last time! Next week we will discuss what we know about “Israel's Day of Salvation.” Stay tuned!

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 7"

LESSON 7 • For week ending May 13, 2023

All the Gentile nations of this world will gather together to attack Jerusalem, Israel in the Last Days. They will be fulfilling Bible prophecy by *trampling Jerusalem* as Jesus prophesied in Luke 21:24. It is at this time that Israel's punishment (as a nation) is completed. Once the punishment is finished, a day of salvation will be offered for the Jewish people.

KEY TEXT: "...The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins" (Romans 11:26b,27).

1. God has not abandoned or rejected the Nation of Israel.

- » When talking about the Nation of Israel, it's important that we recognize that although Israel as nation is under punishment, individuals Jews have access to Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Many Jewish people were saved in Jesus' day, and many have been saved throughout the 2,000 years that followed. Salvation is open to everyone: Jews and Gentiles!
- » It was because of Israel's punishment that they did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah when He came some 2,000 years ago. However, God still has a plan to restore the Nation of Israel. The prophet Zechariah talks about such a time of restoration approximately 500 years before Jesus was born (Zechariah 13:1).

2. Let's go back to the *two witnesses* in Revelation.

- » Last week we talked about the death of the *two witnesses* and the fact that their dead bodies lay dead in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days (Revelation 11:7-10).
- » We pick up the story in Revelation 11:11,12, when the *two witnesses* are resurrected and caught up into heaven. Again, can you see an aged David Muir (from ABC Nightly News) breaking into your regularly scheduled broadcast with a live video feed from Jerusalem, Israel?
- » It's the next verse in Revelation 11:13 that has caught our attention concerning Israel's National Day of Salvation.
- » What happens in verse 13? First, the *two witnesses* have resurrected and been raptured. Second, a great earthquake takes place in Jerusalem causing the city to fall. Thousands of people are killed. Now, notice the next phrase: **"...and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven."**
- » This is the first time that those suffering in the Wrath Dispensation stop blaspheming God (Revelation 16:9) and suddenly *gave glory to the God of heaven*. Is this the window of salvation open to the Nation of Israel?

3. While God's Temple in heaven has been closed throughout the Wrath Dispensation, suddenly, it's open again.

- » When God began to pour out His wrath upon the earth (Revelation 8:1), there was silence in heaven for *"about half an hour."* (NOTE: half-an-hour is equal to 3 ½ years because one hour equals 7 years—Revelation 17:12).
- » Because God's temple was silent/closed (Revelation 15:8), no one was able to be saved during this time (Revelation 22:11; Genesis 6:3). However, something changed before the return of Jesus. Read Revelation 11:19. God's Temple is reopened making it possible for people (Nation of Israel) to call upon their Messiah and be saved.
- » This is what Zechariah prophesied about 500 years before the time of Christ. Read Zechariah 12:10. Notice the specification that the Jewish people would *"will look on Me whom they pierced."* This is a reference to the Jewish people (as a nation) looking upon Jesus their promised Messiah.
- » So, sometime between the end of the Wrath Dispensation and the coming of Jesus Christ at the 7th Trump, a Day of Salvation—the Spirit of grace and supplication—will take place for Israel.
- » The Church does not understand exactly what will happen and/or when it will take place. The purpose of this lesson is to identify that *something will take place* according to Bible Prophecy and our job is to be watchmen who are wide awake with our Lamps burning.

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 8"

LESSON 8 • For week ending May 20, 2023

We've been talking about the last 3 ½ years for the past couple of months. We've talked about God's wrath being poured out and the effect it will have on the earth and the people therein. Today, we will talk about what we as believers will be experiencing during this difficult time. The Church believes that God's Bride will be hid away during this time (here on earth), and we recognize that other believers will be alive and remain on the earth throughout the Wrath Dispensation. Let's see what God's Word has to say about the matter.

KEY TEXT: *"He [Antichrist] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25).*

1. What about the followers of God? What will happen to Christians at the return of Jesus?

- » In Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus talks about the Last Days before His return. In this parable, Jesus talks about 3 divisions/elections with the Kingdom of God. First, one-half of God's Kingdom will be *wise*, and one-half will be *foolish* (Matthew 25:1-4). Jesus says they all fall asleep (Matthew 25:5). A third group is introduced in verse 6 making the midnight cry: *"Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!"* (Matthew 25:6). The Church believes that the third group/election is the Bride of Christ.
- » The Church believes God's Bride is in the wilderness hide-a-way (Revelation 12:14; Isaiah 26:20,21). The rest of God's kingdom is surviving in the world although a number of them will be martyred (by beheading) because they refuse to partake of the Mark of the Beast system (Revelation 20:4).
- » According to Jesus, God's people will be scattered to the four corners of the earth (Matthew 24:31).

2. Jesus returns at the 7th Trump.

- » Jesus will return and stand upon the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (Luke 21:25-28).
- » According to II Thessalonians 2:8, the Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed (Revelation 19:19-21). The slaughter will be so great that a river of blood will flow from the city (Revelation 14:20).
- » Satan will be bound and imprisoned for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).
- » As for Christians, those that are alive and remain will be caught up together in the air with the resurrected saints who are returning with Jesus (The Rapture—I Thessalonians 4:13-17). Believers will be changed from corruptible to incorruptible (I Corinthians 15:50-54).
- » God will simultaneously gather His elect (surviving Christians plus His hidden Bride) from the four corners of the earth (Mark 13:24-27).

3. What happens next?

- » Jesus will set up His Kingdom in Jerusalem, Israel (I Kings 11:36).
- » According to Matthew 25:31,32, what will Jesus do?
- » Notice that Jesus doesn't ask us to explain His pattern government, or perhaps explain the importance of the keeping the Sabbath. The fact is that Jesus asks us to give an account of how we have treated other people. While these other issues are important, showing our love for others is the most important thing we can focus on (I Corinthians 13:1,2).
- » Jesus will rule and reign the world from Jerusalem, Israel for a period of 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4; Philippians 2:9-11).
- » The Church believes that His Bride, which consists of 144,000 Jews from the Early Church (Revelation 7:4-8) and 144,000 Gentile-Era believers who were redeemed *"from the earth"* (Revelation 14:1-5), will help Him rule the earth.
- » That was the promise that Jesus made to His Disciples in the Early Church. Read Matthew 19:27-30.
- » Scriptures make it clear that some "sinners" will make it into the Millennial Reign. That's the message of Zechariah 14 (last 6 verses).
- » Read Zechariah 14:16. It is obvious that we will still be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in the Millennial Reign. What happens to those people who refuse to join the celebration (Zechariah 14:17-19)?

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 9"

LESSON 9 • For week ending May 27, 2023

Our lesson last week ended with Jesus Christ returning at the 7th Trump to set up His Kingdom on this earth. What will that Kingdom look like? What will our life be like during this time? The Bible doesn't give us many details about this great time but this lesson will look for clues as to what we can expect. Fasten your seatbelts as we take a closer look at the promises of God to all His believers. We are the champions my friend!

KEY TEXT: *"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9).*

1. The world (our planet Earth) is a mess!

- » We've spent 6 weeks talking about the last 3 ½ years and the destruction that occurs when God pours out His wrath upon the wicked of this earth.
- » We've detailed in one lesson all that has happened to the actual planet—water turned to blood/bitter, trees destroyed, grass burned up, mountains brought down, moon/sun diminished, and more! So, what is the state of the earth when Jesus returns? It is a mess!
- » While most Christians think we all go to heaven—some distant place with streets of gold—the truth is that Jesus said that we as believers would inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).
- » We inherit this present earth for 1,000 years, and then we will receive a new heaven and a new earth for all eternity (Revelation 21:1).

2. We must never forget that it was Jesus—the very Word of God—that spoke everything we see into existence.

- » When we think of the destruction our planet will endure, we may begin to wonder will it even be inhabitable when Jesus returns? The answer is clear: YES!
- » Remember, according to John 1:1-5, it was Jesus who spoke everything we now enjoy into existence.
- » He was the One, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who took the chaos of this planet and formed the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:1-3,8,9).
- » The Bible does not say much about the post-Wrath Dispensation world, but it gives us a few glimpses of hope. One such scripture is found in Revelations 22:1-2, *"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*
- » When Jesus Christ sets up His throne in Jerusalem, Israel, this scripture says that a *"pure river of water of life"* proceeds from that throne. He also talks about the Tree of Life—which produces fruit EVERY MONTH OF THE YEAR (as opposed to 1 or 2 harvests per year). Notice that verse 2 ends by saying, *"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."* Some people attribute this scripture to the time of the new heaven and new earth. However, why would the nations need *healing* if we were in the new heaven and earth which have never be tainted by sin?

3. The healing waters from the throne of God.

- » Did you know that Israel is one of the world's top 10 exporters of flowers? Why? Because their soil is so rich and full of nutrients. It's a desert now because of the lack of water. Once water is supplied, the soil is rich and ready to bear fruit.
- » Remember the account of the Children of Israel when they approached the Promised Land after leaving Egypt? The report of the 12 spies was that the land flowed with milk and honey (Numbers 13:17,23,27).
- » Another scripture that gives us insight is found in Genesis 8:22. According to God's Word, as long as the world exists, there will be agriculture—the planting and harvesting of food.
- » Next week we will discuss what we as believers will be like in the Millennial Reign Dispensation. Satan will be bound y'all! No more temptations, no more sin, no more sinful flesh to put up with!

"THE RETURN OF JESUS Series – Part 10"

LESSON 10 • For week ending June 3, 2023

Now that we have made it into the Millennial Reign Dispensation, what will we be like? Will we all be skinny? Will we have to eat to survive? Will our teeth be good? How will we recognize our resurrected loved ones? These are just some of the questions we may have about this glorious time. Let's see what God's Word has to say about this 1,000-year period.

KEY TEXT: *"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).*

1. As believers, we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

- » One of the greatest promises—and greatest hopes—that we as believers have is the promise that one day we will be changed from the sinful creatures that we are (Romans 5:12-15; Romans 3:23). We find this great promise in I Corinthians 15:50-54. Paul sums up the situation in verse 57 when he says, *"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- » This is the same Apostle Paul who talked about our sinful nature in Romans 6,7. He's the same man who said we now have to *die daily* in order to be victorious over our sinful flesh (I Corinthians 15:31).
- » During the Millennial Reign, our tempter, who is Satan, has been bound and imprisoned serving a 1,000 year sentence according to Revelation 20:1-3.
- » We, as faithful believers, have now been changed from *corruptible* to *incorruptible*. We are no longer sinful by nature. Paul tells us about this new body in II Corinthians 5:1-4.

2. We can get another glimpse at what our new bodies will be like by reading how Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden.

- » First, it goes without saying that we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27). While this is a scriptural fact, it should not be minimized that we were originally created perfect and for God's glory. Our new body will be a restoration of how God originally created us.
- » Listen to what the Apostle Paul says about our new body in Philippians 3:20,21, *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."*
- » So, the question becomes: What was the resurrected body of Jesus like?

3. The resurrected Jesus.

- » Paul tells us that our new incorruptible bodies will be like Jesus' body. Let's examine what Jesus did after His resurrection as a blueprint of what we will be like.
- » First, we must acknowledge that Jesus' followers had a difficult time recognizing Jesus in His resurrected body. We see this example in the account found in Luke 24:13-27. Jesus walked with His followers yet they did not recognize Him. It wasn't until their eyes were opened that they saw it was Jesus (Luke 24:28-35). Note also that Jesus broke bread with them.
- » Later, Jesus appeared to His Disciples but they failed to recognize Him as well (Luke 24:36-43). Again, note verse 43: *"And He [Jesus] took it and ate in their presence."* So, obviously, we will still be eating in our new bodies!
- » We find another account of the disciples not immediately recognizing Jesus in John 21:1-14.
- » Also, John 20:19-23, Jesus *appeared* to His disciples while they were in a room with the doors shut. Jesus obviously had the ability to travel through physical barriers in His resurrected body.
- » According to Luke 20:34-36, Jesus says that those who are resurrected shall, *"neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*
- » One thing is certain: *"...Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him"* (I Corinthians 2:9).

“MAKING DISCIPLES – Part 1”

LESSON 11 • For week ending June 10, 2023

The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20, “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” Today we will discuss *what* Jesus was commanding us to do and *how* to do it.

KEY TEXT: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

1. The Great Commission.

- » We have often rightly interpreted this passage as a clarion call to believers to spread the good news of salvation to everyone around the world (II Peter 3:9). However, Jesus gives us another equally important command in the Great Commission: It’s a command to TEACH (II Timothy 3:16).
- » The word *teach* comes from the Greek word *matheteuo* (math-ayt-yoo'-o) which means *to become a pupil; to disciple, that is, enrol as scholar: be disciple, instruct, teach* (Colossians 3:16). If you read the same passage in the NEW KING JAMES VERSION it says it this way: “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*”
- » We realize that salvation is the top priority; however, we are also commanded to teach these nations about Jesus Christ (II Timothy 2:1,2). We are to treat these new converts as “pupils” or “students” that need to learn about Jesus Christ—the Savior of the world (Titus 2:7,8).

2. What do we teach them?

- » Where do we start in teaching the nations of the world about Jesus Christ? What does Jesus, Himself, identify as being the most important? In Matthew 22, we find Jesus talking with various members of the Pharisees and the Sadducees—the ruling religious faction of the Jews.
- » It appears that the Pharisees and Sadducees were trying to trap Jesus. Consider Matthew 22:15, “*Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.*” They would ask Jesus loaded questions about hypothetical scenarios hoping to ensnare Him with His own words (Matthew 23:27).
- » In Matthew 22:34-40, we see this scenario being played out. When we start to teach people about Jesus, we should teach them about *His love*. We should tell them how much He loves them (John 3:16,17). Consider the words of Jesus, Himself, found in John 13:33-35.

3. What’s new about this commandment?

- » When Jesus instructed His followers to love one another, He added an interesting phrase beforehand. He said, “*A new commandment I give to you...*” One could argue: *Haven’t we always been commanded to love one another before Jesus came? What’s new about this commandment?*
- » The “new” part is added at the end of verse 34 when Jesus said, “*...as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*” In other words, Jesus is now instructing us to love one another as *He has loved us*. So, how does Jesus love us? **HE LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY.**
- » The love of Jesus can be best defined as **AGAPE LOVE: a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return.**
- » The love of Jesus is the exact opposite of mankind’s love (Luke 10:27). Mankind’s love is selfish, self-serving, demanding, unpredictable, irrational, and unregenerate (Philippians 2:3; Galatians 5:16-21).
- » In the Old Testament, God instructed His people to love one another. However, they were also allowed to take revenge upon one another. In the New Testament, Jesus changed all of that (John 10:10)!

“MAKING DISCIPLES – Part 2”

LESSON 12 • For week ending June 17, 2023

Last week we talked about the Great Commission. Not only is it a clarion call to spread salvation to every man/woman/child, it is also a call to TEACH the nations about the goodness of God and His love. This week we will continue to expand upon this theme.

KEY TEXT: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

1. An eye for an eye.

- » In the Old Testament, they were under the dispensation of the Law. It was all about trying to control our sinful flesh. Read Exodus 21:23-25 and Acts 15:10.
- » In the New Testament, we see a dispensational change. Now it is all about the Grace of God which we call the Grace Dispensation (Ephesians 3:2).
- » Jesus begins to identify a new type of love. Consider His words found in Matthew 25:38-48.
- » It's no longer okay to seek revenge on our enemies.

2. Jesus said: “Love like I have loved you.”

- » When we start talking about loving one another unconditionally, the story of the Prodigal Son comes to mind. This story is found in Luke 15. While we usually start reading this story in verse 11, it's helpful for us to see to whom Jesus was speaking to that day. Let's read Luke 15:1-3 to understand exactly who was in the crowd.
- » Jesus was talking primarily to sinners and addressing the Scribes and Pharisees as well. In verses 4-7, Jesus tells the Parable of the Lost Sheep. He talks about the importance of seeking out the one who has gone astray. He reiterates this point in verses 8-10 when He tells the Parable of the Lost Coin and how God rejoices over a sinner who repents.
- » The Parable of the Prodigal Son addresses both the Pharisees and the sinners. Notice that the repentant sinner (younger son) is celebrated and the older son (type of Pharisee) is chastised. God is a loving Father who loves saints and sinners unconditionally and celebrates when a wayward son/daughter is saved and restored to the family (Acts 10:34,35). This is what we need to teach the nations.

3. Can I love you and hate you at the same time?

- » Since Jesus said loving God and our neighbor with all of our heart is one of the most important things we should do, what's next? It is equipping the nations with the tools they need to overcome the daily trespasses of this world (Matthew 6:12). One of those tools is the Inner Healing teachings (Hebrews 12:15).
- » Let's review the greatest commandment found in Matthew 22:37, “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” How can I love God with all my heart—if my heart is full of bitterness and hurt because I have not forgiven those that have trespassed against me (Matthew 5:23,24)?
- » This is why we are so passionate about Inner Healing. We can't be all that God wants us to be until we forgive those that have trespassed against us (I John 1:9). Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 6:14,15.
- » If I don't forgive my trespassers, then my heart is not right. If my heart is not right, then I cannot love God with all my heart. If my heart is defiled, then I cannot love my neighbor as myself. Forgiveness is the key—and Inner Healing is a tool that helps locate/identify trespasses.
- » Once the trespass is identified, it is then hauled to the Cross of Jesus for forgiveness. Next, the area that it occupied in our heart is bound according to Matthew 16:19 and Isaiah 61:1. Remember, each trespass is like a seed planted in our heart. Once it is bound and removed, a void is created. We loose God's Holy Spirit to fill that void with His unconditional love.
- » God's Word tells us to examine ourselves (Hebrews 12:12-15). How do I know if I have bitterness in my heart? I listen to what comes out of my mouth (Luke 6:45). Where there is fruit, there's a root!

“THE GREAT FALLING AWAY”

LESSON 13 • For week ending June 24, 2023

In the Book of II Thessalonians, we find the Apostle Paul writing to the church at Thessalonica. In Chapter 2, verse 3, Paul makes a ominous statement which talks about the “falling away” which happens before the Man of Sin [Antichrist] is revealed. In today’s lesson, we will talk about this subject and what it means to God’s Church in the Last Days.

KEY TEXT: “*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*” (I Timothy 4:1).

1. Our society is changing.

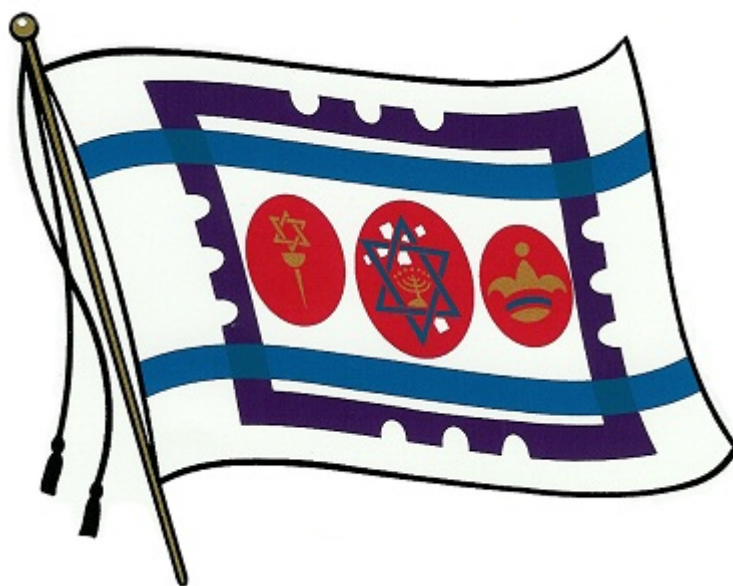
- » Most of us can agree that our world is changing rapidly. Our government is becoming increasingly defiant against the Word of God. They are engaged in making laws that violate God’s Laws. We have become a country that embraces teachings and “doctrines” that embrace confusion, rebellion, and sedition (II Corinthians 11:3).
- » Jesus warned us of this very thing in the Last Days (Matthew 24:8-14).
- » In II Thessalonians chapter 2, we find the Apostle Paul addressing the issue of the Last Days (II Thessalonians 2:1-4). Paul talks about the great *falling away*, and He talks about the Man of Sin (Antichrist). Now read verse 7. Paul says that the work of the Antichrist is already happening.
- » What is the work of Satan/Antichrist? Paul tells us in verses 9 and 10. Discuss the deception/confusion that is taking place in our modern-day society.

2. Where do these false doctrines come from?

- » Timothy addresses false teachings in I Timothy 6:3-5. Where do they originate? From man’s sinful flesh. Timothy continues in verses 9-10.
- » We find Timothy continuing to address the times in which we now live in II Timothy 3:1-7. Verses 2-4 contain a list of ungodly attributes/characteristics that describes our society today.
- » What does the Bible say about the nation that forgets about God (Psalm 9:17)? As a nation, we cannot make laws that defy God and still expect God to bless us and protect us.
- » Not only are we facing secular opposition on every hand, we are also experiencing deception within the kingdom of God because of false teachers and false doctrines. Peter warned us about this as well in II Peter 2:1,2.

3. How do we guard against false teachings and doctrines of deception?

- » Timothy addresses this issue in II Timothy 2:15. It’s time that you and I take responsibility for our personal spiritual growth and health.
- » It’s time to make sure that the Church we attend studies and searches God’s Word for relevant answers to today’s questions. Jesus warns us against churches that “*allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce servants to commit sexual immorality...*” (Revelation 2:20 *partial quote*).
- » This is exactly what is happening today. We have churches embracing homosexuality and even permitting clergy to be involved in such sin—while promoting/teaching that God accepts this lifestyle. What does God say will happen to these churches/clergy (Revelation 2:22,23)?
- » We have just come through 2-3 years of Covid and its effect on our society. People have replaced *coming to church* with *watching church online* (Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 4:16).
- » Now is not to the time to *do less* (Revelation 3:14-19). Now is the time to be zealous and vigilant because we have an adversary that is dangerous and he’s after our very souls (I Peter 5:8)!



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