

BIBLE *Study*



WEEKLY SABBATH LESSONS

- LESSON 1 ■ UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MASTER PLAN - Part 1
- LESSON 2 ■ UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MASTER PLAN - Part 2
- LESSON 3 ■ THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR - Part 1
- LESSON 4 ■ THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR - Part 2
- LESSON 5 ■ THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR - Part 3
- LESSON 6 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 1
- LESSON 7 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 2
- LESSON 8 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 3
- LESSON 9 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 4
- LESSON 10 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 5
- LESSON 11 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 6
- LESSON 12 ■ THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE - Part 7
- LESSON 13 ■ OUR JOB IN THE LAST DAYS

1st QUARTER - 2024

A quarterly publication of

THE CHURCH OF GOD – JERUSALEM ACRES

PO BOX 1207 ■ CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE 37364-1207

ON THE WEB AT www.thechurchofgodntj.org

“UNDERSTANDING GOD’S MASTER PLAN – Part 1”

LESSON 1 ■ For week ending January 6, 2024

Have you ever heard the statement made, “If we as Christians would get our act together then Jesus could return to this earth”? (Or something similar concerning that subject). This statement implies that Jesus could come at any moment or that He is being hindered. The truth of the matter is this: God has a master plan concerning mankind, His Church, His impending judgment, and even His ruling of this earth. This series of lessons will focus on understanding God’s plan for mankind and this world.

KEY TEXT: “Known to God from eternity are all His works” (Acts 15:18).

1. Before we can understand where we are going, we have to understand where we have been.

- » Let’s take a look at the timing of some prominent Old Testament events:
 - 4000 BC » God begins to reform the earth and creates Adam. Read Genesis 1:1-26.
 - 2400 BC » God floods the earth but saves Noah and his family. Read Genesis 7:1-15.
 - 2092 BC » God chooses Abram to be the Father of His chosen people. Read Genesis 12:1-3.
 - 2024 BC » Jacob and Esau are born to Isaac the son of Abraham. Read Genesis 25:23-34.
 - 1900 BC » Joseph, son of Jacob, is carried away captive into Egypt (Genesis 37:27,28).

2. Joseph now finds himself carried away to Egypt. We learn a very important lesson from the story of Joseph: Even when we are “not in control” of what is happening to us, God is always “in control!”

- » God is allowing Joseph to be carried away into Egypt in order to provide for His people, Israel.
- » The Israelites ended up being captives in Egypt for 400 years; however, God had a plan to rescue His people.
 - 1527 BC » Moses is born (Exodus 2:1,2).
 - 1447 BC » God uses Moses to deliver His people out of Egyptian bondage (Exodus 13:17,21,22).
 - 1407 BC » The Children of Israel enter the Promised Land (Joshua 1:1,2).
 - 1053 BC » Saul is anointed King over Israel (I Samuel 9:27; 10:1).
 - 1013 BC » It has been approximately 3,000 years since Creation. Now, David, a man after God’s own heart, is appointed as King of Israel (II Samuel 2:4).

3. Nearly 3,000 years after God created mankind, King Solomon builds a Temple to God in Jerusalem.

- 960 BC » Solomon builds God’s Temple in Jerusalem (I Kings 6:1).
- 933 BC » Because of Solomon’s disobedience, the nation of Israel is divided into two: Israel (10 Tribes) and Judah (2 Tribes). Read I Kings 11:11-13; 31,32.
- 721 BC » The 10 Tribes of Israel are carried away into captivity by Assyria. This is where the phrase “the lost tribes of Israel” came from. Read II Kings 17:22,23.
- 606 BC » The remaining 2 Tribes of Judah (henceforth referred to as “Israel”) are conquered and carried away to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 24:13-16).

4. After approximately 3,600 years, God’s chosen people are now carried away captive into foreign lands. And, His Temple, which was built by King Solomon, has now been destroyed.

- » However, all is not lost. In 536 BC, the tribes of Judah are permitted to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:1). Eventually, God’s Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:14).

“UNDERSTANDING GOD’S MASTER PLAN – Part 2”

LESSON 2 ■ For week ending January 13, 2024

We covered a lot of ground last week—nearly 4,000 years! When we finished last week’s lesson we found the remaining Israelites back in their Promised Land of Israel and they had just completed rebuilding God’s Temple in Jerusalem. So, what happens next? Let’s see what the Scriptures have to say.

KEY TEXT: *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,”* (Galatians 4:4).

1. As of 520 BC, the Children of Israel have returned to Israel and they have rebuilt God’s Temple in Jerusalem (referred to as the “Second Temple”).

- » In 444 BC, Nehemiah rebuilds the walls surrounding Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:17) which provides them with protection from their enemies.
- » In 430 BC, the book of Malachi was written (the last book of the Old Testament). The book concludes by saying, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse”* (Malachi 4:5,6).
- » The time between the last writings of the Old Testament and the appearance of Christ is known as the “intertestamental” (or “between the testaments”) period. It lasted from the prophet Malachi’s time (about 400 BC) to the preaching of John the Baptist (about AD 25). Because there was no prophetic word from God during the period from Malachi to John, some refer to it as the “400 silent years.” The political, religious, and social atmosphere of Israel changed significantly during this period.

2. In Genesis 3:15, God promises to punish Satan for his role in the deception of mankind.

- » God says of the promised Messiah, *“He [Jesus] shall bruise your [Satan’s] head, and you [Satan] shall bruise His [Jesus] heel.”*
- » This 4,000 year old prophecy came to pass in 5 BC (approximately) when Jesus Christ was born of a virgin in Bethlehem as prophesied by God’s prophets in Isaiah 9:6,7 and Micah 5:2.
- » The birth of Jesus Christ was not a random or sporadic event. It was event that was foretold by the prophets of God with precision and accuracy.
- » Paul put it this way, *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law”* (Galatians 4:4).
- » The word “fullness” means that there was a very specific point in time and history for Jesus to be born. We do not serve a random nor unorganized God.

3. Yahweh God the Father knows everything!

- » The Bible tells us emphatically that His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8,9).
- » Solomon put it this way: *“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven”* (Ecclesiastes 3:1).
- » While we may not always understand what is happening, remember that God has full understanding of what *has happened, is happening, and what will happen.*
- » When Israel found itself captive in Egypt as slaves, God knew it would last for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). When Judah was carried away captive into Babylon, God knew it would last for 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10).
- » Even in these Last Days, God promised we would not be in the dark (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

“THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR – Part 1”

LESSON 3 ■ For week ending January 20, 2024

One important principle to understanding God’s Master Plan for humankind, it to remember that we have a dedicated enemy of our souls. He is called Lucifer, Satan, the Devil (El Diablo), Serpent and more. Today’s lesson will discuss the fact that Satan is AN IMITATOR of Yahweh God. What does that mean? For every concept, blessing, promise that Yahweh makes, Satan has an imitation to offer us. His persuasive powers are so adept and developed that he was able to talk one-third of the angels right out of paradise in heaven. Let’s learn about Satan the Imitator in today’s lesson.

KEY TEXT: *“Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die...you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4,5 partial quote).*

1. Satan wants you to worship him instead of worshipping Yahweh God.

- » Let’s begin this discussion with examining how Satan came into being. We know that he was created by God. So, how did Satan become evil?
- » The answer is found in a very unusual verse in Isaiah 45:6,7 (KJV). Verse 6 ends by saying, “...I am the LORD, and there is no other.” Verse 7 then continues, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”
- » This scripture seems to come in direct violation of I John 1:5 which says, “...God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”
- » So, what is Isaiah 45:7 saying? We believe the scripture is clarifying that while there is no darkness (sin) in God, God in His sovereignty, has *permitted* darkness/evil to come into existence.
- » It’s obvious that at one point in time (before Creation in the Garden of Eden) the angels had the right to choose between good and evil in heaven (Jude 1:6).

2. Who was Lucifer in heaven?

- » The account of the demise of Satan is recorded in Isaiah 14. Read verse 12. Here Satan is referred to as “*Lucifer, son of the morning!*”
- » What was Lucifer’s role in heaven before he was cast down? Read Ezekiel 28:12. This scripture makes it clear that Lucifer was created by God. He was perfect, intelligent, and beautiful. Discuss for a moment the beauty that Satan uses today to distract and tempt us to sin.
- » Now, before you say that this scripture is talking about “*the king of Tyre,*” read Ezekiel 28:13. God emphatically says, “*You were in Eden, the garden of God...*” This passage in Ezekiel 28 is talking about Lucifer. The last part of verse 13 says, “*was prepared for you on the day you were created.*” Again, Lucifer was created by God as a beautiful, talented, and intelligent angel.
- » Now read Ezekiel 28:14. This scripture states that Lucifer was “*the anointed cherub who covers...you were on the holy mountain of God.*” In other words, Lucifer was one of the 2 angels that covered the throne of God. Consider the example given us in Exodus 25:18-22 concerning the mercy seat in the Tabernacle Holy of Holies.



3. The downfall of Lucifer.

- » Ezekiel 28:15 says that Lucifer was perfect in his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him.
- » What was that iniquity? Read Isaiah 14:13,14. Lucifer allowed PRIDE to arise in his heart. This PRIDE corrupted Lucifer and he began to think that he was equal to Yahweh God.

“THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR – Part 2”

LESSON 4 ■ For week ending January 27, 2024

Last week we ended our lesson talking about the PRIDE that arose in Lucifer’s heart which corrupted him and caused him to think that he was equal with Yahweh God. We will continue that discussion this week. Isn’t it interesting that so much of the confusion and unrest in our modern-day society is focused on taking PRIDE in things that are ungodly?

KEY TEXT: “*These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look...*” (Proverbs 6:16,17 *partial quote*).

1. Pride arose in Lucifer’s heart.

- » The word PRIDE means *a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements*. The Hebrew word for *proud* is *rûm (room)* which literally means *be high, to rise, haughty, to exalt*.
- » The demise of Satan began when he began to exalt himself above God. Read Isaiah 14:13,14.
- » What happened to Satan after pride arose in his heart (Isaiah 14:15; Ezekiel 28:16-19)?
- » Not only was Satan cast to the earth, he deceived 1/3 of the angels in heaven and they were cast down with him (Revelation 12:4,7-9).

2. Satan wants to deceive you and I.

- » When God created the Garden of Eden, He placed Adam and Eve in the garden with one rule: Don’t eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 1:26;27; 2:18; 2:16,17).
- » We learn a lot about the deceptive skills of Satan in his conversation with Eve. Notice his first attack was to make Eve question what God had said (Genesis 3:1).
- » While some have jokingly said that Adam must have forgot to tell Eve about God’s one command, notice that Eve told Satan *exactly* what God had said (Genesis 3:2,3).
- » In Genesis 3:4, Satan tells Eve an outright lie. He defies what God has said. Then he proceeds to tell Eve his interpretation of what God said (Genesis 3:5).
- » What is the moral of this story? First, never, ever get into a conversation with Satan. He will out-talk you! Jesus reaffirmed this truth when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness in Matthew 4. After fasting for 40 days and nights, Satan tried to tempt Jesus. Jesus, the very Word of God, did not get into prolonged discussions with Satan. He simply quoted the Word of God to Satan. This is what you and I need to do as well! Quote God’s Word to Satan then command him to leave you alone.

3. Satan, the great imitator, has a plan to deceive you in these Last Days.

- » God’s Word tells us that Satan is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).
- » Satan tried to convince the angels in heaven to worship him. He successfully deceived one-third of them causing them to be forced out of heaven and subjected them to face eternal punishment and separation from God (Jude 1:6).
- » He wants to do the same thing to you. He has an elaborate Last Days program intended to force you to worship him (Revelation 13:14). It’s a plan based on deception, wealth, false peace, and your dependency on a totalitarian government (Daniel 8:25; 9:27; Revelation 13:16,17).
- » We can see the beginning of his plan right now. Our government is now demanding compliance to its ungodly programs with the threat of loss of monetary benefits if we are noncompliant.
- » Next week we will talk about Satan’s greatest imitation to date: The Antichrist (Man of Sin).

“THE ROLE OF SATAN THE IMITATOR – Part 3”

LESSON 5 ■ For week ending February 3, 2024

In last week’s lesson we established that Satan is an imitator of God. He wants you to bow down and worship him instead of worshiping Yahweh God the Father. In today’s lesson, we will expose Satan’s nefarious Last Days plan to exalt himself to a place of world leadership while demanding that everyone bow down and worship his image. Let’s investigate what God’s Word has to say about Satan’s plans.

KEY TEXT: *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8).

1. Let’s set the world stage.

- » In the Last Days, God’s Word specifies that a great war will take place in the northern mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:15,16). We call it the Battle of Gog and Magog which is defined in Ezekiel 38,39.
- » This battle occurs when a limited number of nations (Ezekiel 38:1-5) attack Israel for her wealth (Ezekiel 38:10-12). These intruders make it into the northern mountains of Israel—the Golan Heights region (Ezekiel 38:8).
- » Now, consider what is happening in the world. First, the majority of Christians today believe that all Christians are going to be raptured out of the world (to heaven) before any trouble starts on earth. So, they will be confused when they see a major battle taking place in Israel.
- » Most will undoubtedly think they are watching the Battle of Armageddon which takes place before the return of Jesus Christ.

2. The world will demand peace.

- » Today’s lesson is being written on December 12, 2023. At this time, Israel is still fully engaged in a full-scale war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The world is DEMANDING a cease-fire in Israel because of the civilians being killed. In other words, the WORLD IS DEMANDING PEACE (especially the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres).
- » The same will happen when they see war taking place in Israel (Ezekiel 38:21,22). The Bible tells us that all but 1/6 of the attacking armies will be destroyed in the mountains of Israel by God in 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.”*
- » So, this great war is now over—which many will think is Armageddon—and a man will stand up on the world stage to declare a time of peace and prosperity (Daniel 8:25).
- » This is the when the ANTICHRIST or MAN OF SIN stands up to establish a (false) world wide peace treaty for 7 years (Daniel 9:27). The Antichrist is Satan’s imitation of the true Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.
- » Revelation 13:11 tells us that the Antichrist will look like a LAMB but speak like a DRAGON.

3. Satan wants you to worship him.

- » This Antichrist will rule the world (Revelation 13:7,8) and demand that the world take the Mark of the Beast to survive (Revelation 13:16-18). He will also demand that the world worship him or be killed (Revelation 13:15).
- » What happens to the Antichrist and his empire? We find the answer in Revelation 19:19-21. Satan is bound in the bottomless pit according to Revelation 20:1-3
- » Is this the end of Satan? Not yet! He arises one final time at the 2nd Battle of Gog and Magog where he is defeated—again—and then spends eternity being tormented (Revelation 20:7-10).

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 1”

LESSON 6 ■ For week ending February 10, 2024

You and I are living in very interesting times. Since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, we have watched Israel attacking Gaza trying to eliminate Hamas—the terrorist regime that rules Gaza. The world has also been watching. Have you noticed the rising anti-Semitism around the world? There have been demonstrations in Washington DC and prominent elite Universities around the country as well as large demonstrations in London, France, Germany, and Arab Countries as well. You and I are witnessing the rise of the 8th Empire that is prophesied to rule this world. Let’s see what Scripture tells us about this Last Days Empire.

KEY TEXT: “*The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition*” (Revelation 17:11).

1. There are SEVEN WORLD EMPIRES that have ruled/dominated the Holy Land of Israel.

- » In Revelation 17:10 John writes, “*There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.*”
- » The “*seven kings*” that John refers to are the SEVEN WORLD EMPIRES that have ruled over Jerusalem and Israel.
- » They are as follows:

1600 – 1200 BC	1. EGYPTIAN EMPIRE
1447 BC	Moses and the Israelites depart from Egyptian captivity
960 BC	King Solomon built the First Temple of God in Jerusalem
933 BC	Division of the Kingdom into Israel (10 Tribes) and Judah (2 Tribes)
900 – 607 BC	2. ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
721 BC	Israel (10 Tribes) are captured by King of Assyria and carried away (II Kings 17:6)
606 – 536 BC	3. BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
606 BC	King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah (2 Tribes) and carried away them away to Babylon for 70 years (II Kings 24:14)
586 BC	The First Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed (II Kings 25:9)
536 – 330 BC	4. PERSIAN EMPIRE
536 BC	King Cyrus permits the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2)
520 BC	The Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem (Ezra 6:15)
330 – 146 BC	5. GREEK EMPIRE
146 BC – 476 AD	6. ROMAN EMPIRE
5 AD	Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem, Israel
638 AD	Muslims first enter Jerusalem, Israel
692 AD	Muslims build Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem on Temple Mount
1299 – 1922 AD	7. OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE
1922 AD	After fighting on the side of Germany in World War I and suffering defeat, the Ottoman Empire was dismantled by treaty and came to an end in 1922.

2. These SEVEN WORLD EMPIRES are talked about in the book of Revelation.

- » REVELATION 17:10,11, “*There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.*”
- » Let’s break down verse 10 phrase by phrase. First, let’s explain the “*Five have fallen...*”
 - 1) The following empires had already fallen at the time the Apostle John wrote this scripture: EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, PERSIA, AND GREEK.
- » Next, the Apostle John says, “*...one is...*” One what? John is saying that *one empire* still is. The ROMAN EMPIRE was ruling Israel when John wrote this passage. The Apostle John wrote that text approximately 96 AD.
- » So, John states that 5 empires have fallen, one still is (the Roman Empire), and “*...and the other has not yet come.*” John is saying, “There’s one more empire to come after the Roman Empire.” According to history, the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE was the next world power to dominate Israel. At the time the Book of Revelation was written, the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE had not yet come.

3. Please read the KEY TEXT.

- » We can all admit that the Book of Revelation can be confusing at times? The key text is one of those times. It seems like a riddle—right?
- » Next week we will examine Revelation 17:11 and break it down phrase by phrase. Don’t miss it!

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 2”

LESSON 7 ■ For week ending February 17, 2024

Last week we left off in the middle of a riddle. So, let’s get right to it this week!

1. REVELATION 17:11, “*The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.*”

- » Let’s break down verse 11 phrase by phrase. Let’s discuss “*The beast that was...*”
 - 1) This is a reference to the 7th Empire or the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE. John acknowledges that the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE existed and “was”.
- » Next, John says that the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE “*...is not...*”
 - * What is John saying? He is acknowledging that the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE existed once, but that it was not in power—or existence—any more.
 - * John was acknowledging that the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE would cease to exist at some point which happened in 1922.
- » John goes on to say that this “new” beast “*...is himself also the eighth,*” and “*is of the seven...*”
 - * John is telling us that a new 8TH Empire will arise in the Last Days but it will be “*of the seven.*”
 - * What was the 7th Empire? It was the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE .
- » Finally, John tells us that this new 8th Empire—the REVIVED ISLAMIC 8TH EMPIRE—“*is going to perdition.*”
 - * What does the word *perdition* mean? It simply means *destruction*.
 - * John is telling us that this new REVIVED ISLAMIC 8TH EMPIRE that will arise will ultimately be destroyed for good.

2. The Apostle John is telling us that in the Last Days a new 8th Empire will arise on the scene.

- » This time it will be a world-wide Empire (as opposed to just ruling over the Nation of Israel).
- » According to Revelation 13:7,8,15, all the world will worship the beast and his empire: “*It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. [8] All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world...[15] He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the beast to be killed.*”
- » You and I are witnessing the groundwork being laid for this 8th Beast system to arise in these Last Days.
- » Consider the following: Israel is attacked by Hamas on October 7 in a vicious terrorist attack which kills approximately 1,200 people in Israel. It should be noted that the 1,200 people included people from many nations—not just Israelis.
- » As a result of this terrorist attack, Israel has declared war on Hamas—OPERATION SWORDS OF IRON—and has attacked the Gaza Strip (home to approximately 2.3 million Palestinians) and as a result, the world has begun to condemn Israel for the number of “civilians” who have been killed in the war.

3. We are watching the rise of Anti-Semitism on the world stage.

- » In Zechariah 14:2, we are told that “*all the nations*” will battle against Jerusalem in the Battle of Armageddon which occurs when Jesus Christ returns at the 7th Trump to fight against the AntiChrist and his followers (Revelations 19:11-16,19-21).
- » The point we see in this prophecy is that one day ALL NATIONS will turn against Israel. Right now, the United States of America is Israel’s number one supporter. We are currently sending financial aid as well as military aid—in the form of ships in the Mediterranean Sea to halt a possible escalation in the war.
- » However, we are also starting to see people within the USA turn against Israel and campaign in favor of Hamas and the Palestinian people.
- » We have also watched large pro-Palestinians rallies in London, France, Germany, Russia and in Muslim/Islamic countries as well. Some of these protestors are shouting a phrase, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.” Many view this phrase as a call for the annihilation of the Nation of Israel.

"THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 3"

LESSON 8 ■ For week ending February 24, 2024

There's a lot of confusion in the Christian Kingdom about the Roman Catholic Church. Some say they will be the 8th Empire to arise and that the Pope will be the Antichrist. Let's read Revelations 17 and see what it has to say about the subject.

1. REVELATION 17:1-10,

- 1) *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,*
 - » The Church believes that the "great harlot" is the Roman Catholic Church (Revelations 18:1-8).
- 2) *with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*
 - » It was the Roman Emperor Constantine, and later the Roman Catholic Church, that polluted the doctrine of the Early Church (See Manual, V, B, 3, A. The Emperor Hadrian (AD 117 - 138) outlawed "the practice of the Jewish religion in general and of Sabbath keeping in particular throughout the empire.")
 - » They did away with the Sabbath, mixed God's Holy Feasts with pagan rituals, and introduced heresy into God's Church causing it to go into the Dark Ages (II Corinthians 6:16,17).
 - » This was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 1:21, "How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers."
- 3) *So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman [Roman Catholic Church] sitting on a scarlet beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*
 - » Here we see that the Roman Catholic Church is now associated with ("sitting on") a scarlet beast (Satan's program—the Revived Islamic 8th Empire).
- 4) *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.*
 - » They say that the fortune/wealth of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be accurately ascertained because of the priceless treasures (gold, jewels, paintings, properties, etc.) that they possess.
- 5) *And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*
- 6) *I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.*
 - » It was the Roman Catholic Church who carried out the Inquisition during the Dark Ages.
 - » They killed anyone whom they deemed "heretics".
 - » According to HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK (page 726): "Historians estimate that, in the Middle Ages and Early Reformation Era, more than 50,000,000 Martyrs perished."
- 7) *But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman [Roman Catholic Church] and of the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.*
 - » Why would Satan "carry" a church? Because that "church" has caused endless destruction and confusion concerning God and His Church.
 - » The Roman Catholic Church is a "business" that affects nations and countries around the globe.
 - » It's based on a faith of "works" and endless greed.
 - » Paul warned about the Roman Catholic Church in Acts 20:29,30 when he told the Early Church that "savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock...to draw away the disciples after themselves."
- 8) *The beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition [destruction]. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*
- 9) *"Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman [Roman Catholic Church] sits.*
 - » Rome, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, sits on 7 mountains.
 - » It's also interesting to note that Constantinople (Istanbul), the headquarters of the Islamic Faith, sits on 7 mountains/hills as well.
 - » Istanbul (name officially changed in 1920) is today the largest city and financial center of Turkey and the largest city in Europe, straddling the Bosphorus strait, lying in both Europe and Asia.
- 10) *There are also seven kings. Five have fallen [Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek], one is [Roman Empire], and the other has not yet come [Ottoman /Islamic Empire]. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.*
 - » These 7 Kings represent Seven Empires that have ruled over Israel.

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 4”

LESSON 9 ■ For week ending March 2, 2024

We are continuing our study of Revelation 17 and the connection between the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of the Revived Islamic 8th Empire. We will start reading in Revelation 17 verse 10.

1. REVELATION 17:10-18

- 10) *There are also seven kings. Five have fallen [Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek], one is [Roman Empire], and the other has not yet come [Ottoman /Islamic Empire]. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.*
- » These 7 Kings represent Seven Empires that have ruled over Israel (refer to Lesson 4 for a detailed chart identifying the Seven World Empires).
- 11) *The beast that was [Old Ottoman Empire], and is not [ceased to exist in 1922], is himself also the eighth [Revived Islamic 8th Empire], and is of the seven [Old Ottoman Empire], and is going to perdition [destruction].*
- » The Apostle John is saying that a beast (Satan’s Government or Empire) will arise and become the 8th Empire which will rule the world.
 - » Please note that this “new” 8th Beast will come from the 7th Beast (Old Ottoman Empire which ended 1922).
- 12) *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire].*
- » People often ask about these 10 Kings. We will not know their identity until the Last Days when they receive their kingdom during the last 7 years (one hour).
- 13) *These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire].*
- 14) *These will make war with the Lamb [Jesus], and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”*
- » These 10 Kings will align with Satan’s Revived Ottoman 8th Empire and will be destroyed by Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:14-16; Zechariah 14:3,4).
- 15) *Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*
- 16) *And the ten horns which you saw on the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire], these will hate the harlot [Roman Catholic Church], make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.*
- » Here we see that the beast (Satan’s 8th Empire) will turn on the harlot (Roman Catholic Church) and destroy her.
- 17) *For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire], until the words of God are fulfilled.*
- » God is well able to control the wicked of this earth including placing thoughts in their mind to fulfill His will.
 - » Remember the example of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar? God used him to bring about punishment upon Israel and even referred to him as “my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (Jeremiah 29:5).
- 18) *And the woman [Roman Catholic Church] whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”*
- » At this point, God is using Satan/Beast to wreck havoc/punishment upon the Roman Catholic Church for all that it has done to destroy/dismantle the Early Church which Jesus established some 2,000 years ago.
 - » While there are believers in the Roman Catholic Church (read Revelation 18:4), the institution as a whole has been used by Satan to confuse and pollute God’s Church.

2. Revelation 18 talks about the punishment promised to come upon the Roman Catholic Church.

- » Read verses 7,8. Discuss the phrase, “I set as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrows.” The arrogance of the Roman Catholic Church has been part of its offence before God.
- » The Roman Catholic Church readily admits its part in removing any form of Judaism from what we now call “Christianity” today. In their arrogance, they have relegated to themselves the authority to *change God’s Word*.
- » Are we permitted to change God’s Word in any situation or circumstance? Read Revelation 22:18,19.

3. Should we as a church remain silent about the Roman Catholic Church?

- » In Revelation 18:20, we as believers are told how to react to the punishment of the Roman Catholic Church. The preceding scripture (verse 19) ends by saying, “For in one hour she [Roman Catholic Church] is made desolate.” Verse 20 says, “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”
- » Why would we be told to rejoice over her demise? Verse 23 tell us why, “...For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.”
- » Discuss the use of the word *sorcery*. It is because of the Roman Catholic Church’s fables that Easter, Halloween, and Christmas have become the retail industries’ busiest seasons (I Timothy 1:4; II Peter 1:16).

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 5”

LESSON 10 ■ For week ending March 9, 2024

Today we will continue our study of the Revived Islamic 8th Empire that is prophesied to arise on the World Stage in these Last Days.

1. The Church refers to the Ottoman Empire as the “Islamic Empire” because of the overspread of Muslim tradition, culture, religion, and influence wherever the Empire dominated.

- » *“The Ottomans are one of the greatest and most powerful civilizations of the modern period. Their moment of glory in the sixteenth century represents one of the heights of human creativity, optimism, and artistry.*
- » *The empire they built was the largest and most influential of the Muslim empires of the modern period, and their culture and military expansion crossed over into Europe. Not since the expansion of Islam into Spain in the eighth century had Islam seemed poised to establish a European presence as it did in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*
- » *Like that earlier expansion, the Ottomans established an empire over European territory and established Islamic traditions and culture that last to the current day (the Muslims in Bosnia are the last descendants of the Ottoman presence in Europe).*
- » *The Ottoman empire lasted until the Twentieth Century. While historians like to talk about empires in terms of growth and decline, the Ottomans were a force to be reckoned with, militarily and culturally, right up until the break-up of the empire in the first decades of the 20th century (1922).*
- » *The real end to the Ottoman culture came with the secularization of Turkey after World War II along European models of government. The transition to a secular state was not an easy one and its repercussions are still being felt in Turkish society today; nevertheless, secularization represents the real break with the Ottoman tradition and heritage.” (“The Ottomans” by Richard Hooker, 1996)*

2. We have talked about this Revived Islamic 8th Empire that will arise in the Last Days. The question arises: Who will lead this worldwide empire of evil? The answer is: The Antichrist—the Man of Sin—will lead this evil empire.

- » The leader of this 8th Beast/Empire will be the Antichrist (the Man of Sin). He came from the 7th kingdom (the OTTOMAN/ISLAMIC EMPIRE). In other words, the Man of Sin will be Muslim. He will be the 8th king to rule the world (albeit briefly). All those who are not saved will worship the Antichrist. REVELATION 13:8, *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

3. Let’s read and breakdown REVELATION 13:1-5.

- 1 *“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.*
 - » The “beast” rising up out of the sea is the 8th World Empire (the Revived Islamic 8th Empire).
 - » This empire will be led by the Antichrist (the “blasphemous name.”).
- 2 *“Now the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon [Satan] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.*
 - » This leader of the “beast” is the Antichrist. Notice that he gets his “power, this throne, and great authority” from Satan the dragon.
- 3 *“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire].*
 - » What is John talking about a “deadly wound that was healed”?
 - » Consider the fact the OTTOMAN EMPIRE (the 7th Empire) was *mortally wounded* at the end of World War I.
 - » In fact, the OTTOMAN EMPIRE ceased to exist in the terms of having control of large masses of land and people.
 - » While the OTTOMAN EMPIRE may not exist today in terms of a ruling empire, it should be noted that there are approximately 2 billion Muslims in the world.
 - » When the Revived Islamic 8th Empire stands up again in the Last Days, people are going to be amazed and will subsequently follow the “new” (revived) empire.
- 4 *“So they worshiped the dragon [Satan] who gave authority to the beast [Antichrist and Revived Islamic 8th Empire]; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”*
- 5 *And he [Antichrist] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.*
 - » DANIEL 8:25, *“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [Jesus Christ in Armageddon]; but he shall be broken without human means.”*

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 6”

LESSON 11 ■ For week ending March 16, 2024

Today we will continue our study of the Revived Islamic 8th Empire that is prophesied to arise on the World Stage in these Last Days. Let's continue our study of Revelations 13.

1. Let's read REVELATION 13:6-18.

- 6 *“Then he [Antichrist] opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.*
- » This is the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION that Jesus warned us about in MATTHEW 24:15,16, *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”...[16] “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”*
 - » The ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION happens when the AntiChrist stands on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—*“the holy place”*—and blasphemes God by saying that he (Antichrist) is greater than Yahweh God.
 - » This is when the Wrath Dispensation begins (a period of 42 months or 3 ½ years).
- 7 *“It was granted to him [Antichrist] to make war with the saints [foolish virgins of Matthew 25] and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*
- » This is the formation of the one-world government led by the Antichrist.
- 8 *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.*
- 10 *He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*
- » This Revived Islamic 8th Empire is a continuation of that nation that Esau fathered and they are still being identified by the “sword” just as Esau's father, Isaac, said would happen in Genesis 27:40.
- 11 *“Then I saw another beast [Antichrist] coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.*
- » The Antichrist will appear on the world stage following the Battle of Gog and Magog (when a group of Muslim nations attack Israel for their wealth in the Golan Heights region—Ezekiel 38:9).
 - » He will look *“like a lamb”* and orchestrate a worldwide peace treaty (Daniel 9:27) and many people will think he is Jesus the Messiah (Luke 17:22,23).
- 12 *“And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*
- 13 *He [Antichrist] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.*
- 14 *And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [Revived Islamic 8th Empire] who was wounded by the sword and lived.*
- » It's interesting to note that “swords” were still part of the Allied Forces weapons used in World War I. This should speak to us about the accuracy of God's Word!
 - » The Old OTTOMAN 7TH EMPIRE was defeated (wounded) at the end of World War I yet still “lived” in the form of billions of Muslims who live around the world (Muslims make up 2 billion of the world's population).
- 15 *“He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*
- » This is the same story found in the Old Testament when Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar commanded that everyone—including the 3 Hebrew Men—bow down and worship his image or be killed.
- 16 *“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads [Mark of the Beast],*
- 17 *and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*
- 18 *Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”*

2. The Islamic Empire.

- » The Ottoman/Islamic Empire has stopped existing as of 1922. What was left of the Empire after World War I became the country of Turkey.
- » Although the Ottoman/Islamic Empire does not technically exist anymore, they still exist in the form of 2 billion Muslim followers worldwide. How difficult will it be for them to reorganize themselves when prophecy demands it?
- » We are watching the rise of this 8th Empire around the world. Consider all of the uprisings that we are seeing around the globe as pro-Palestinian supporters protest the war between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

“THE RISE OF THE 8TH EMPIRE – Part 7”

LESSON 12 ■ For week ending March 23, 2024

Today we will debunk the theory that the Roman Catholic Church is the 8th Empire to arise in the Last Days. A careful examination of relevant scriptures will conclusively exclude the Roman Catholic Church as the 8th Empire.

1. Is the 7TH WORLD EMPIRE the Roman Catholic Church?

- » There is a lot of teaching in the Christian community that the 7TH WORLD EMPIRE is the Roman Catholic Church. They argue that the Roman Catholic Church followed the Roman Empire which most historians recognize ended in 476 AD.
- » If this were the case, why didn't John just say, “the seventh king will be of the sixth”?
- » That's exactly what he said about the Revived Islamic 8th Empire.
- » REVELATION 17:11, “The beast that was, and is not, **is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.**”

2. The church does not believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the 7TH WORLD EMPIRE for a number of reasons.

- » Do we have the right to change the definition of “world empires”—remember Revelation 17:10 calls them kings—to include a religious organization?
- » In other words, the 6 kings that John referred to were actual armies that conquered the Holy Land and controlled it by force.
- » Can we expand the definition of “world empires” to accommodate a non-military church presence/organization?
- » The church acknowledges that the Roman Catholic church has a unique history filled with violence and forced compliance; however, we do not believe that this qualifies it as a “world empire.”
- » The church recognizes that the Roman Catholic Church has a special identity in Scripture—Babylon, the Great Whore—however, we do not believe that she has to be listed as a “world empire” to fulfill her prophetic role in the Last Days.

3. Many have said the 7TH WORLD EMPIRE is the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope will be the Antichrist.

- » While nothing is impossible with God, it would be a far stretch for the Pope—who is recognized worldwide—to implement the Mark of the Beast system and behead Christians for not worshiping the beast.
- » **REVELATION 17:12-18,**
 - [12] “The ten horns which you saw are the ten kings who have received no kingdoms as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.
 - [13] “These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.
 - [14] “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”
 - [15] Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.
 - [16] “**And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.**
 - [17] “For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.
 - [18] “**And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”**
- » In this scenario, the ten kings—who give their power to the Antichrist—hate the harlot.
- » We know that the harlot is the Roman Catholic Church. If the Antichrist is the Pope, why would the Pope allow the ten kings to make the Roman Catholic Church desolate and naked?
- » Would he allow them to “eat her flesh and burn her with fire”?
- » The Church of God believes that the Revived Islamic Empire will be the 8th Empire to rule the world.
- » We believe the Muslim Antichrist will be Satan's imitator of Jesus Christ—the true Prince of Peace.

"OUR JOB IN THE LAST DAYS"

LESSON 13 ■ For week ending March 30, 2024

We've spent the last 12 weeks talking about God's Master Plan for mankind as well as the role that Satan the imitator will play in the Last Days events. Today we will discuss the role that you and I are told to take as we see the Last Days approaching. We are not instructed to be bystanders as events unfold around us. We are told to be watchmen who are wide awake while praying for God's perfect will to be done on this earth.

KEY TEXT: *"Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober"* (I Thessalonians 5:6).

1. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

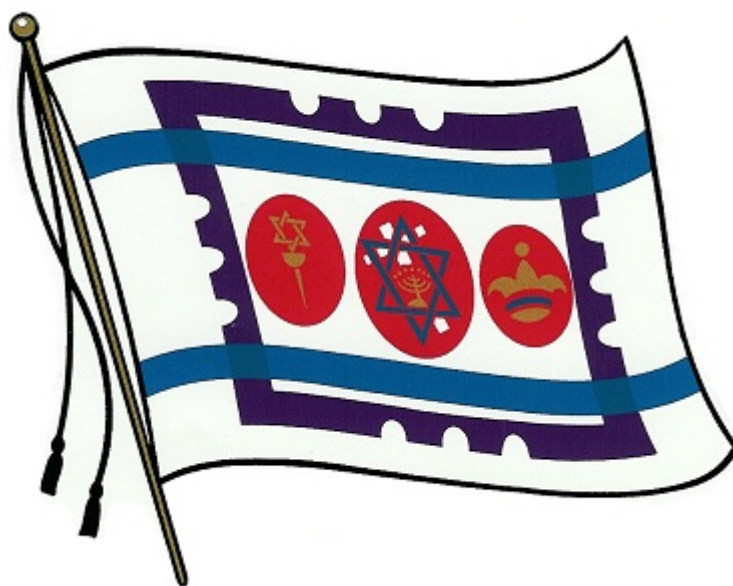
- » Please read Matthew 25:1-13. It should be noted that according to verse 1, Jesus is talking about *"the kingdom of heaven..."* In other words, Jesus is talking about believers in the Last Days.
- » How do we know He's talking about the Last Days? Because Jesus specifies in verse 1 that they were all waiting for the Bridegroom (Jesus) to come.
- » What happened when the Bridegroom didn't come when they expected Him (Matthew 25:5)?
- » This is our first job! We are told to be WIDE AWAKE (reread Key Text).

2. Another important point we can learn from this parable is of the necessity of truth in our lives.

- » The Church of God believes that the "oil" in this parable represents "truth" (Proverbs 23:23).
- » Truth (understanding the Word and will of God) is the light that will light our path to find Jesus (Ephesians 5:14-17) in troublesome times (Matthew 25:10).
- » It's interesting to note in this parable that while the entire Kingdom of God falls asleep, there is a group of people (God's Bride) who make the Midnight Call, *"Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!"* (Matthew 25:6).
- » It's obvious that God's Bride will be wide awake and fully aware of what is happening while the rest of God's Kingdom is slumbering.
- » Discuss some of the Kingdom doctrines that lull believers into a false state of slumber (Imminent Return of Jesus, the Rapture, No-Tribulation, etc.).

3. We are called to be watchmen.

- » Jesus reiterates this truth at the end of the Wise and Foolish Virgins parable. Read Matthew 25:13. Jesus tells us to *watch!*
- » Paul gives some additional instructions found in I Thessalonians 5. Please read verses 6 and 7. This passage correlates with the words of Jesus found in Matthew 25.
- » How does Paul describe believers in I Thessalonians 5:4? Paul tells us emphatically what *"we are not in darkness."* You and I can know the times and seasons when we search God's Word and embrace truth (irregardless to what the Christian Kingdom says about a subject).
- » There is a penalty for not embracing truth. Read II Thessalonians 2:9-12.
- » The fact is that Jesus Christ *is the truth*. That's the message of John 14:1-6. Jesus is saying that if we believe and follow Him, *"...where I go you know, and the way you know."*
- » That's why Paul can promise us that, *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness...you are all sons of the light...therefore let us now sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober...therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing"* (I Thessalonians 5:4,5,6,11).
- » Our job is to be awake, alert, and to pray. If we follow Jesus, we will know the way!



A quarterly publication of

THE CHURCH OF GOD

**– Jerusalem Acres –
Post Office Box 1207
1826 Dalton Pike, SE
Cleveland, Tennessee 37364-1207, USA
Phone: 423/813-0299**

**Website: thechurchofgodntj.org
Email: thechurchofgodntj.com**