

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE
(Special English Edition)

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For Rogma International, Inc.

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HOW GOD GATHERS UP THE CHURCH OUT OF THIS WORLD

INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches that something will happen before Jesus Christ comes back to this earth. Bible teachers have talked about the day that God takes the Church out of this world. The reason for this lesson is to help you to understand what the Bible says about the Church. This lesson will also teach you what will happen when God takes the Church out of the world. In this lesson you will learn why God is putting the Church together and why He will take it out of this world. This will happen before the Anti-Christ shows himself and before the great time of suffering starts. This will happen before Christ comes back in power and shining greatness to rule over this world.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

It is difficult to say how very, very important this lesson is. 2 Timothy 2:15 says that we must teach the Word of Truth in the right way. To understand God's program for the future we must understand what the Bible teaches about the Church.

- ❑ The prophets in the Old Testament did not know about the church (Ephesians 3:5; 1Peter 1:10-12).
- ❑ God's plan for the church was completely different from His plan for Israel (Romans 11:25-27).
- ❑ The Church is special just for this age of grace (Ephesians 3:2-6).
- ❑ God is putting the Church together today through the preaching of the Gospel. He is making it up of believers who have been born again. These believers come from both Jews and people who are not Jews. When that "body" of believers is complete, God will take it out of this world so that it can be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). The Church is waiting for this. This can happen at any time. Any person who teaches that this cannot happen at any time is giving false teaching.

THE LESSON

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH

- A. The word church in the Greek language is "ekklesia." This means "to call out." This word was used for calling people together, like a town council. When this word is used for the Church it means, "the called out ones." It talks about all believers of this time, both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-16; 3:6). It talks about every person God has called out from among the unbelievers. These believers make up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4; Romans 8:28).
- B. The Church is called "the body of Christ" (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6).
- C. The Church is also called "the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23, 30-32).

II. WHAT IS GOD DOING IN THE WORLD TODAY? Read Acts 15:14-17. These are important verses for the future.

- A. Note that God visits the non-Jewish nations and He takes a "people for His name" out from among these nations. This is the Church. It is the same as the "body of Christ" and "the bride of Christ."
- B. What will happen when this work is finished and the last soul is added to the body of Christ? It says that Christ will return after this is done.
- C. At that time He will build the building of David that fell down.
- D. Christ will come back to this earth to put Israel back in their land and to put His throne in Jerusalem. Jesus is the righteous branch that comes from David's family (Jeremiah 23:3-6).

- E. This will happen after God makes the Church complete.
- F. Read Romans 11:25-27 very carefully. Here it talks about God finishing His work among the nations that are not Jews. After God finishes that work, Christ will return to save Israel.

II. THE COMING OF CHRIST MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

- A. The coming of Christ to the Jews means:
 - 1. That Christ (their Messiah) will put them back in the land of Palestine.
 - 2. That they will live there in peace (Deuteronomy 30:2-9).
- B. The coming of Christ to the non-Jewish nations means:
 - 1. A powerful person comes to put everything in order.
 - 2. He will bring fairness and peace to the world (Zechariah 14:9).
- C. The coming of Christ to the Church means:
 - 1. For the believers the coming of Christ means that they will be with Him forever (Colossians 1:27).
 - 2. Christ will not give the land of Palestine to the Church.
 - 3. The Church will not rule the world with Christ on this earth at this time. The Church will meet Christ in the air. Christ will take the Church out of the world at this time (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

III. SOME VERSES WHICH CLEARLY SHOW US THAT THE CHURCH IS GATHERED UP OUT OF THE WORLD

- A. John 14:1-3
 - 1. In these verses the armies of heaven do not come with Him. Christ comes alone to receive His Bride, the Church.
 - 2. There is no battle of Armageddon here. Christ just comes “to receive you unto Himself.”
 - 3. Note the difference between these verses and what happens in Revelation 19:11-15.
- B. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
 - 1. Christ does not step on the earth, but He stays in the clouds.
 - 2. Christ comes “to take us up.” We do not come down from heaven with Him.
 - 3. The believers go up to heaven. They do not come down to this earth.
- C. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8
 - 1. These verses talk about how Christ gathers us together to Him (verse 1).
 - 2. In these verses we see two things:
 - a) The gathering up of the believers comes first.
 - b) After that the “man of sin” the “evil one” the “Anti-Christ” comes.

IV. WHEN WILL THE GATHERING UP OF THE CHURCH HAPPEN?

- A. It happens before the judgment seat of Christ. It is also called the “Bema” (2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - 1. The Bema Judgment happens in heaven before Christ comes the second time in great power and with shining greatness.
 - 2. This judgment is not mentioned in the Second Coming of Christ or after it.
 - 3. This judgment is for Christians only. In the same way the Great White Throne judgment is for sinners only (Revelation 20:11-15).
- ◆ *The judgment of the believers happens after God takes the Church out of the world. It happens before Christ comes back to this earth in power and shining greatness.*
- B. It happens before the Day of the Lord.
 - 1. Paul wrote the book of 2 Thessalonians to tell the believers that they had not missed the gathering up of the Church. He wanted them to know that they were not going through the suffering that will come in The Day of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8).
 - 2. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 the words “Day of Christ” in the English King James Version should read the “Day of the Lord.”

How God Gathers The Church Out Of This World

3. Two things must happen before the Day of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
 - a) The believers must be gathered up to heaven. The Bible calls it “the falling away” or “the departure”. b) The Man of Sin must show himself.
 - ◆ *The Church will be taken to heaven before the Antichrist shows himself.*
4. “The Day of the Lord” is “as a destruction from the Almighty.” (Joel 1:15) It is a time when God begins to personally step in and begins to regulate the affairs of nations.
5. Careful Bible students make a difference between THE DAY OF CHRIST (1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6,10), and the RAPTURE or the BEMA or THE DAY OF THE LORD as referred to in Philippians 2:16.
- C. It will happen before God takes away the Holy Spirit from this earth. (Read 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)
 1. The Holy Spirit lives in the believer today (1 Corinthians 6:19). When the believer is gone or raptured, the Holy Spirit is also removed from the earth.
 2. There is some repetition between 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 7-8. In verse 3, “that man of sin (Antichrist) be revealed” when the Rapture happens. In verses 7-8, “that wicked one (Antichrist) is revealed” when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way.
- D. It will happen before the Time of Great Suffering.
 1. The Bible talks about a great time of suffering that will come all over the world (Matthew 24:21:22; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1).
 2. This happens at the same time as the Day of God’s Anger (Revelation 6:17; 15:1; 16:1).
 3. The time of suffering is a time when God pours His anger out on Israel and the unbelievers.
 - a) It is a time of punishment.
 - b) This time is not for the believer because the believer will be in heaven (I Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10). (Know these verses for the test.)
- E. Some people will believe during this time of great suffering (Revelation 7:9-15).
 1. These people are not part of the church.
 2. They come from the millions of people in this world who have never heard the Gospel.
 3. They will accept Christ as Savior because of the 144,000 preachers who will preach all over the world (Revelation 7:1-4).
 4. Those people who reject Christ before God gathers up the Church will not have a chance to be saved. God will blind their eyes and they will be lost forever (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

V. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GATHERING UP OF THE BELIEVERS AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IN POWER AND SHINING GREATNES

- A. When Christ gathers up the Church:
 1. He will come in the air.
 2. He will come to gather the believers to take them to heaven.
 3. He will come to bless us.
 4. He will come as far as the clouds.
 5. He will not punish the world.
 6. He will take the believers to heaven.
 7. He may come at any time. Nobody knows when He will come.
 8. He will come in a secret way.
 9. He will not tie Satan up.
 10. He will come for the Church only.
 11. He will come without an army.
 12. He will come to make our salvation complete.
- B. When Christ comes the second time:
 1. He will come to this earth.
 2. He will bring the believers with Him to the earth.
 3. He will come to punish unbelievers and to make war.
 4. He will come to the Mount of Olives.
 5. He will punish the unbelievers.
 6. There will be many signs that will let people know when it will happen.
 7. Every person will see Him coming.
 8. He will bind Satan and put him in the hole that has no bottom.
 9. He will come to bless the whole world.
 10. The armies of heaven will come with Him.

How God Gathers The Church Out Of This World

11. He will come to fulfill God's promise to David.

- ◆ *I could put the Bible references with each statement, but I decided not to do that. I would like you to look them up in the Bible yourself.*

VI. WE KNOW THIS WILL HAPPEN. HOW SHOULD THE BELIEVER LIVE NOW?

- A. The Bible tells us we must look for Christ to come (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:28; Titus 2:13). Believers are happy to look for Christ because they know He will take them to heaven.
 - B. Believers must wait for Him (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The idea is to wait and be ready for Him. We know He can come at any time.
 - C. We must look out for Him and be serious (1 Thessalonians 5:6). While Christians are looking for Christ to come back they should live seriously.
 - D. We must love to think about the day when He will come back (2 Timothy 4:8). Everyone who loves to think about the day Christ will appear, will receive a crown of righteousness.
- ◆ *It should not surprise us that John said, "Let it be so. Come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).*

VII. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME CHRIST GATHERS UP THE CHURCH TO TAKE THEM TO HEAVEN WITH HIM?

- A. What Christ did by His almighty power.
 1. He won over the grave (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).
 2. He won over the law that causes dead bodies to rot (1 Corinthians 15:53-54).
 3. He won over the law that causes things to fall down (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
- B. Our bodies will be changed in a moment. He will take our weak bodies that we have received from our parents. These are the bodies that are sinful and they will die. He will change these bodies to spiritual ones that are not sinful and will never die (1 Corinthians 15:42-54; Philippians 3:21).
- C. We will see Christ face to face and we will be like Him (1 John 3:2; Jude 24; Philippians 3:21).
- D. Christ will gather us up in the clouds and out of the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- E. All of the shining beauty of heaven will be for us. We will be with Christ forever and ever (Romans 8:17-18; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:4).

CONCLUSION

What does this gathering up mean to the believer?

- It can encourage the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:18). One of the American church songs says, "When we see Christ we will forget all of the suffering of this life. The hard times we have seen in this life will look like nothing when we get to the end of the road."
- It helps the believer to stand strong for God (Hebrews 6:19; 1 Corinthians 15:57). You must not get tired in living the Christian life. You must not stop living for God. You must be sure that Jesus will come back. Let this doctrine be your anchor when you are suffering in the storms of this life.
- Watch out all the time (Matthew 25:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:6). Know what is happening around you. You must look for ways to serve God at this time. In Luke 19:13 the Bible tells us to keep on working until Jesus comes back.
- Live a life that is separated to God. Live a life that is holy and clean (Titus 2:11-13; 1 John 3:3). You must put away the unclean way of living. You must turn away from friends that do not believe and tempt you to do sin. Do not say anything you would be ashamed for Jesus to hear. Do not go anywhere you would be ashamed for Jesus to find you. Do not do anything you would be ashamed for Jesus to see you do.

What does this mean for people who have never believed on Christ?

- You must prepare yourself to meet God (Amos 4:12).
- You must repent from your sins (Luke 13:3). Ezekiel 33:11 asks you: "Why do you want to die?" It is better to turn away from your sin.
- Look for the Lord NOW (Isaiah 55:6).
- Do not make your heart to refuse the Word of God (Hebrews 3:13). There is not much time left. You must prepare for what is coming. You should remember the flood God sent in the time of Noah (Genesis 7). Remember the foolish virgins (Matthew 25: 1-13). Don't refuse to listen to God.

**GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE EXAM
LESSON 9**

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Register No : _____

Name _____

Address _____

Choose and Round the correct answer in the following: -

1. If we want to understand God's program for the future, it is important that we know: (Value 4 points)
 - a. the New Testament well.
 - b. what the Bible teaches about the Church.
 - c. about the one thousand year reign of Christ.
2. What is the meaning of the word "Church"? (Value 4 points)
 - a. a building for people to meet in.
 - b. a group of people having a meeting.
 - c. the called out ones.
3. What other New Testament title is used for the "Church"? (Value 4 points)
 - a. the body of Christ.
 - b. the group of apostles.
 - c. a cathedral.
4. What does the coming of Christ mean to the Jews? (Value 4 points)
 - a. That He will bring the CHURCH back with Him.
 - b. That the Jews will live in peace.
 - c. That they will express sorrow for the crucifixion.
5. To the CHURCH the coming of Christ means that: (Value 4 points)
 - a. Christ will take the CHURCH out of the world.
 - b. Christ will rule the world with the rod of iron.
 - c. Christ will preach everywhere in the world.
6. The "Bema judgment" is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. a judgment of all the unbelievers.
 - b. a judgment of all the believers.
 - c. the time God judges the whole world.
7. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians because: (Value 4 points)
 - a. he knew the believers in Thessalonica were having spiritual problems.
 - b. he knew that there was persecution in Thessalonica.
 - c. he wanted the believers in Thessalonica to know that they had not missed the Rapture of the church.

How God Gathers The Church Out Of This World

8. Mark the verse that teaches that believers will not go through the Tribulation (time of suffering):
(Value 4 points)
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10
 - Revelation 6:17
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
9. Mark the three things that will happen at the Rapture. (**Mark three**) (Value 15 points)
- Christ will come in the air.
 - Christ will come on this earth.
 - Christ will punish believers.
 - Christ will come only as far as the clouds.
 - Christ will come in a secret way.
10. Mark three things that will happen when Christ comes in power and great glory.
(Value 15 points)
- He will come only as far as the clouds.
 - He will bring the believers to earth with Him.
 - He will not tie up Satan.
 - Every person will see Him coming.
 - He will come for the CHURCH.
 - He will punish the unbelievers.
11. Knowing that Christ may return at any time, how should a believer live? (Value 4 points)
- Any way he wants to.
 - Looking for Him every day.
 - Going to church every day to wait for Him.
12. What will happen at the time Christ takes the CHURCH to heaven with Him? (The Rapture)
(Value 4 points)
- All the believers will be afraid to look at Him.
 - The bodies of the living believers will be changed and the dead believers will rise out of their grave.
 - The army of Christ will defeat all of His enemies.
13. What should the unbeliever do about the fact that Christ will return? (Value 4 points)
- Go to church as often as possible.
 - Be kind to everyone and do many good deeds.
 - Prepare himself by receiving Christ as Savior.
14. What other word does the Bible use for the Church, which is the "body of Christ"?
(Ephesians 5:23-32) (Value 6 points)
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15. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, what will happen to the CHURCH when Christ comes back?
(Value 6 points)
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16. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:3 what two events must take place before the Day of the Lord?
(Value 14 points)
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