



Bible Doctrine IV

International Alpha Bible Course
by Ralph Vincent Reynolds

International Alpha Bible Course

BIBLE DOCTRINE

Part IV

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INTERNATIONAL ALPHA BIBLE COURSE

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International Alpha Bible Course

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Lesson One

THE CHURCH

A. DEFINITION

The New Testament Greek word for *church* is *ecclesia*, meaning “an assembly of called-out ones.” The term is applied to:

1. The whole body of Christians in one city (Acts 11:22; Acts 13:1).
2. A congregation (I Corinthians 14:19, 35; Romans 16:5).
3. The whole body on earth (Ephesians 5:32).

Our English word *church* is derived from the Greek *kuriake*, meaning “that which belongs to the Lord.”

The meaning of the following terms should be understood:

1. Church—the actual body, composed of true, born again saints.
2. Christendom—professing Christians of all denominations.
3. Church militant—the church while on earth.
4. Church triumphant—the church in Heaven.

B. WORDS RELATING TO THE MEMBERS

1. Brethren—a spiritual brotherhood or fellowship in which all divisions which separate mankind are abolished
2. Believers—characteristic doctrine is faith in Jesus
3. Saints (holy ones)—separated from the world and dedicated to God
4. The Elect (chosen)—chosen by God
5. Disciples (learners or followers)—taught by Jesus
6. Christians (Christ-like)—religion centers on Jesus Christ
7. Those of the Way (Acts 9:2)—a special way of living

C. THERE IS ONLY ONE CHURCH

Scriptural References:

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-5).

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether . . . bond or free” (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

There are hundreds of church organizations and denominations, but there is only one church.

The church is one as far as place, area, or distance is concerned. The church is one whether she be found in England, America, Japan, India, or the West Indies. She is the same church, the same body, no matter where the members dwell here on earth.

The church is one as far as race and nationality are concerned. In the world there are many races and nationalities, but this has no effect upon the church. When one is baptized into the body, he becomes a member of the one church, whether he be a Jew or a Gentile.

The church is one as far as time is concerned. Members of the church living today are members of the same church as the apostles. It is the same and one church whether the members are living today on earth or have died in the Lord – whether they lived in the days of the apostles, during the Dark Ages, in the days of the reformers, or in these closing days of time.

D. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Scriptural Reference:

“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church is a living organism, not an organization. There is a vital relation between Christ and the church, just as there is between the physical head and the body. We cannot join the church as we could join a lodge or any mere human organization. We must be partakers of Christ’s life before we can become members of

His church. The human body is one, yet it is made up of millions of living cells; in like manner, the body of Christ is one, though composed of millions of born again souls. Pulsating through the veins and arteries of the church is the very life and presence of Jesus.

E. THE CHURCH IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Scriptural References:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”
(I Corinthians 3:16-17).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”
(I Corinthians 6:19).

A temple is a place where God, who dwells everywhere, localizes Himself—a place where His people may always find Him “at home.” In the Old Testament God dwelt in the Tabernacle and the Temple; in the New Testament God dwells not in buildings made with hands (Acts 17:24). The church is His dwelling place upon earth.

F. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Scriptural References:

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32).

“For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Corinthians 11:2).

Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom. The church is the bride-elect. The church is now preparing herself to become the wife of the Lamb. Soon the church will have herself ready and the marriage of the Lamb will have come (Revelation 19:7). It is for this glorious event that the church is preparing and joyfully anticipating.

G. THE CHURCH WAS PROMISED BY JESUS CHRIST

Scriptural Reference:

“And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

When Jesus spoke these words, He used the future tense: “I will build.” This definitely lets us know that His church had not yet been built. Although He had around Him disciples and followers, His church had not yet come into existence. The church was still future when Jesus was upon earth in flesh. The church was born on the Day of Pentecost in the upper room. Up to this moment there was no New Testament church. The church was prophesied in the Old Testament; Jesus promised the church. However, she was a mystery until she was revealed by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

When Jesus promised the church, He also stated that her future would be sure and certain. No power would be able to overthrow her. No amount of persecution would be able to destroy her. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

What was to be her foundation? Paul stated that she is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). In Matthew 16:18, Jesus was referring to Peter’s confession of the deity of Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter had received this great truth as a revelation from God. This was the rock upon which Christ’s future church would be built. The foundation rock was not Peter, but it was Peter’s confessions, the truth of “the deity of Jesus.”

We should note the following about the disciples while Jesus was here upon earth:

1. They were disciples (followers, learners).
2. Their names were already written in Heaven. “Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).
3. They were not yet converted. “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).
4. They were not yet members of the church, for the church was still future.

H. THE CHURCH WAS BORN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Scriptural References:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in

one place . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

"For his body's sake, which is the church . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:24-27).

The church is the body of Christ, indwelt by the presence and Spirit of Christ Himself. The mystery that had been hid from ages and generations is now revealed. Jesus Christ would dwell in the church. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." At the same time, each member would be "in Christ." "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13).

As long as Jesus was here upon earth in human form, the church was not possible. Jesus had to ascend into Heaven and come back as the Comforter before the church could be born into being. The church was not brought into existence by man-made means, by human organization; the church was born into being. Even as a baby, a living being, is born into this world, so the church, a living organism, was born into being.

When did this take place? There can be but one answer. The Day of Pentecost is the birthday of the church. The 120 believers (Acts 1:15) were the charter members of the church. When the Holy Ghost came as a rushing, mighty wind and filled each of them, they were baptized into one body, and that body is the church.

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Scriptural Reference:

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13).

Members are baptized into the body and are born again. All who are born again and living a holy life are members. A study of John 3:3-6 and Acts 2:38 will reveal the necessary conditions to be met in order to become a member of the church.

The physical body of Christ experienced death, burial and resurrection to provide salvation; likewise, the mystical body of Christ (the church) must experience death (repentance), burial (water baptism in Jesus' name), and resurrection (Holy Ghost) to receive salvation. Members are baptized into the body by one baptism of two elements of water and spirit.

Lesson Two

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. DEFINITION

The “kingdom of God” means primarily the rule of God, the divine kingly authority. There is no difference between the “kingdom of God” and the “kingdom of Heaven.” These terms are linguistic variations of the same idea. There is a hostile kingdom, the “kingdom of this world,” which is under satanic control. The purpose of Christ’s reign is to destroy all hostile forces and to subject all to the rule of the Divine Sovereign. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death. When all has been brought under the rule and dominion of the Father, the office of sonship will cease, for it will have accomplished its purpose.

B. THE IMPORTANCE

The kingdom of God is mentioned four times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, thirty-two times in Luke, two times in John, six times in Acts, and eight times by Paul in his epistles. It is mentioned many more times under other names such as “kingdom of Heaven,” etc. The hope of Israel was for the Messiah to come and overthrow her enemies. We see the importance of this in the way the disciples anxiously questioned concerning the kingdom (Acts 1:6).

C. THERE ARE TWO REQUIREMENTS FOR A KINGDOM

Scriptural References:

“For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19:6).

“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (I Corinthians 15:25).

The two requirements for a kingdom are:

1. There must be a king, a reigning monarch.
2. There must be a realm with subjects over which He reigns.

If we are members of the kingdom of God, Jesus is our king. If we are members of the kingdom of God, Jesus reigns within our hearts. We cannot say that we are in the kingdom of God if we have not crowned Him king of our lives.

The kingdom of God during the church dispensation is not a material kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom. It is Jesus reigning within the hearts of His saints. Actually, when Jesus sits upon the throne of a man's heart, He reigns far more effectively than if He were reigning in a material kingdom. As He reigns within a man's heart, He has control over a man's desires, aspirations, ambitions, and emotions. Thus He is able to reign fully and His will is obeyed completely.

D. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

Scriptural References:

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21).

"My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Corinthians 4:20).

The kingdom of God is not a material kingdom. It is a spiritual kingdom within us. It is not seen through any physical evidence such as meat and drink, but through the fruit of the Holy Ghost—righteousness, peace, and joy—according to the promise of our Lord that we should receive power when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost. It is a kingdom of power (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49).

The kingdom of God is Jesus reigning in the hearts and lives of His Spirit-filled saints. The members of the kingdom of God are also members of His body, His church, and His bride-elect. He will bring with Him all who are members of the kingdom to reign (Revelation 20:6).

Being a spiritual kingdom, the reign of Christ is far more complete and effective in the lives of the members of the kingdom than if it were a material kingdom.

E. THE HOLY GHOST BRINGS THE KING INTO THE HEART

Scriptural References:

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17).

“Now the Lord is that Spirit” (II Corinthians 3:17).

Jesus is the king. If the kingdom of God is within you, and if the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, then it is necessary for Jesus to enter the heart of His saint in order to reign. How can this be? There is only one answer; it is because the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ. When we are filled with the Holy Ghost, Jesus comes into our hearts. When we sing, “Into my heart, into my heart, Come into my heart, Lord Jesus,” we are actually praying for the Holy Ghost to fill us; that is the only way that Jesus can come into our hearts.

When we repeat the words of the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), we are praying for the Holy Ghost to fill us, for that is the only way His kingdom may come into our lives. Only when Jesus is reigning can it be said that His will is being done in earth as in Heaven.

F. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN POWER

Scriptural References:

“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (I Corinthians 4:20).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

There is power in the name of Jesus. There is power in His Word. There is power in His blood. This power becomes available because Jesus, the source of power, comes to dwell in the heart of His child. There is power to cast out demons, power to overcome evil, power to live victoriously, power to witness, power to win souls. The kingdom of God is not just so many words, but there is power to save the sinner from his sins and give him victory.

G. THE ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM IS THROUGH THE NEW BIRTH

Scriptural References:

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

“Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Luke 16:16).

“Hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

It is evident that entrance to the kingdom of God is through the new birth, the work of regeneration, the act of being completely changed, transferred from one kingdom to another. We may understand the requirements of entrance when we study the gospel message preached by the apostle Peter, to whom was given the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:19).

In Acts 2:38, Peter preached:

1. Repentance
2. Water baptism in the name of Jesus
3. Baptism of the Holy Ghost

Lesson Three

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

A. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

Scriptural Reference:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices” (I Peter 2:5).

The apostle Peter wrote of the church as being a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices. In this lesson we shall study a few of the spiritual sacrifices the church offers up to the Lord.

B. PRAYER

1. Importance of prayer.

The importance of prayer cannot be over-emphasized. In Revelation we see the prayers of saints as incense upon the golden altar before the throne (Revelation 5:8; 8:3). The greatest sin of the church is that of prayerlessness. Prayerlessness leads to coldness, indifference, and unbelief. Prayer is the church’s greatest weapon. It moves God towards man, and man towards God. God does not bless machinery and methods, but God does bless a church that prays.

2. The church is commanded to pray.

Scriptural References:

“Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 15:17).

“That men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

“I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men” (I Timothy 2:1).

The church is commanded to pray. It is not left to the mood or whim of the Christian. There is no choice but to obey.

3. What is prayer?

Prayer is communion with God. It is speaking to the Lord and hearing the Lord speak. It consists of communion, intercession, supplication, and travail of soul—allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through the saint, with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

4. How should one pray?

There is no definite manner or time for prayer. The Bible gives examples of all bodily postures while praying—standing, kneeling, and lying prostrate. There is no special time or place for prayer. We should be in a prayerful attitude at all times and be ready to pray at any time. It makes little difference whether we pray audibly or silently, as long as we pray from the heart with faith.

5. Power in united prayer.

If we pray in unison and agree as touching anything on earth, Jesus has promised that our prayers would be answered (Matthew 18:19). It is on these grounds that there is power in united prayer.

C. FASTING

1. What is fasting?

Fasting is abstaining from food for a definite period of time in order to pray and seek God.

2. Is the church commanded to fast?

No. The church is commanded to pray, but nowhere is the church commanded to fast. However, Jesus said that we would fast (Matthew 9:15), and the early church fasted (Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23). Throughout the New Testament there is the inference that the church would fast.

3. What are the benefits of fasting?

The benefits of fasting are that we might pray more effectually. Prayer and fasting are more effectual and powerful than prayer without fasting. Christ said that certain demons could only be cast out through prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).

D. Worship

1. What is worship?

Worship is a definite act of the soul as it bows before God in deep adoration and absorbed contemplation of the majesty and glory of God. In prayer we are occupied with our needs, in thanks-giving we are occupied with our blessings, in worship we are lost to self and are absorbed in Jesus Christ. Just as thanksgiving is one step higher in our spiritual sacrifice than prayer, even so worship is the highest step. It is with this that the Lord is most pleased.

2. How are we to worship?

Scriptural Reference:

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Here are two elements in true worship: spirit and truth. To worship Him in truth we must have a revelation of the true identity of God; to worship Him in spirit we must be filled with the Holy Ghost. Only Spirit-filled saints can truly worship Him in spirit, and only Oneness believers worship Him in truth.

E. GIVING OF THANKS

Scriptural References:

“In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

“In everything give thanks” (I Thessalonians 5:18).

Ingratitude is a condition of the last days (II Timothy 3:2; Romans 1:21). Only one of the lepers returned to thank the Lord for cleansing; nine went their way without the giving of thanks.

Thanksgiving is closely connected with prayer and worship. It is the link in the chain that binds prayer and worship together. Everything that we are or have and everything that we have enjoyed in life comes from His munificent hand. There should flow from the heart of the church a constant stream of thanksgiving.

F. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Scriptural Reference:

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is” (Hebrews 10:25).

It is the Lord’s plan for the church to assemble together and to worship as a unit. Each member needs the help, encouragement, and blessing that can be had from the entire body. Just as each member of our physical body has to be united to the body in order to enjoy health and life, each member of the church needs to be spiritually united with the body.

Regular church attendance becomes a vital part of the saint’s experience. He attends faithfully as many services as possible each week.

Before being transferred to another city, the Christian should always inquire about a church to attend. If there is no church in that locality, he should either refuse to move or arrange to begin a new assembly as soon as he arrives. By no means should he be away from public worship services and the fellowship of the brethren.

G. WITNESSING

Scriptural Reference:

“Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The word *witness* comes from the Greek word *martys* from which we get the English word *martyr*. The meaning of being a witness is to bear testimony of our faith to the point of suffering and dying, if need be, for our faith. The act of witnessing was not restricted to the apostles, but all believers were witnesses. Every member of the church, regardless of age or position in life, is to be a witness. We are to witness to the ministry of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:39-41) and to His saving power (Acts 10:43). We are to be prepared to witness to the truth of the Scriptures and to a personal experience with God (I Peter 3:15).

H. LIVING HOLY

Scriptural Reference:

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:2).

The true church is a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27). The church is a beautiful church, but this beauty is not an outward show of physical beauty. It is an inward beauty of true holiness.

The apostate church is robed in an expensive show of outward trimmings which are cheap and gaudy in the sight of God (Revelation 17). The world has a false conception of beauty and through paint and outward adornments endeavors to camouflage the true appearance.

Salvation beautifies the meek (Psalm 149:4). The bride who awaits the coming of her Lord is a church of holiness, which is beautiful in the sight of Jesus Christ (Song of Solomon 6:4).

Lesson Four

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

A. THE CHURCH COMMISSIONED

Scriptural Reference:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

The importance of the commission can hardly be over emphasized. Jesus stated that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. The commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), is a command and an authorization. The church has no choice but to obey.

The Lord has commissioned the church to do a definite work. With this commission goes a heavy responsibility, and with the responsibility goes the necessary authority. We must remember that responsibility and authority go together. They cannot be separated.

The responsibility of the church may be listed as follows:

1. To Preach Salvation

Christ has made salvation possible by providing it; the church must make it actual by proclaiming it.

2. To Provide a Means of Worship

The church must be a house of prayer where Jesus is honored in worship, prayer, and testimony.

3. To Provide Fellowship

Man is a social creature. He craves fellowship and an exchange of friendship. The church provides a fellowship where all earthly distinctions are obliterated.

4. To Preach Holiness

The church must teach men how to live as well as how to die. Against the downward trends of society, it must lift a warning voice; at all danger points it must plant a beacon light.

5. To Administer the Ordinances of the Church

An ordinance is a statute prescribing a definite ritual in the church which was instituted for a definite spiritual meaning. An ordinance uses earthly emblems which bring heavenly blessings. The ordinances are:

- a. Baptism
- b. The Lord's Supper
- c. Foot Washing

6. To Administer Church Government

Church government has to do with the administration of the affairs of the church, including discipline and finance. It also has the authority of deciding many questions such as marriage and divorce and the keeping of the Sabbath Day.

B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Himself on the night that He was betrayed after He had eaten the Passover supper with His disciples (Luke 22:19-20).

1. Names Given This Ordinance

- a. The Lord's Supper—It was instituted by the Lord and is a memorial of Him. It is "supper" in the sense that it is the last meal in this dispensation—next time with Him in His kingdom.
- b. Eucharist—this means "to give thanks."
- c. Communion—this means a sharing, a "partaking together."
- d. Sacrament—this word comes from the Latin *sacramentum* and means "an oath of allegiance."

From the names used, we have the meaning of this ordinance brought out: commemoration, thanksgiving, communion, and commitment.

2. Elements Used

- a. Unleavened Bread—symbolic of His broken body.
- b. Fruit of the Vine—symbolic of His shed blood.

3. Spiritual Meaning

The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Calvary and a looking forward to the coming of the Lord. By faith, the Lord's body is discerned. This only can happen if there is no condemnation in the heart of the believer.

4. Preparation for Partaking

Self examination and confession of sin (if any) must take place in preparation for partaking of the communion (I Corinthians 11:28). If sin is in the heart, there cannot be faith and the Lord's body cannot be discerned. Many are sick and even die because they partake unworthily.

5. Blessings of the Lord's Supper

- a. Forgiveness of sins and healing of the body as we look back to Calvary.
- b. Strength for the journey and encouragement for the soul as we look forward to the Second Coming.

C. WATER BAPTISM

1. One Baptism

Scriptural Reference:

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

There is one baptism which has two elements, water and spirit. The church baptizes the convert in water; Jesus Christ baptizes the believer with the Holy Ghost. Both phases or elements are necessary to be baptized into the body.

2. Meaning of Baptism

It comes from the Greek *baptizo* which means to "dip, plunge, immerse." Baptism can only have significance when it is by immersion. In baptism, we are identified with Christ in death and burial (Romans 6:3-4).

3. Preparation for Baptism

Repentance is the only necessary requirement for baptism. Water baptism should never be administered until the candidate has fully repented (Acts 2:38).

4. When May Baptism Be Administered?

Water baptism may be administered the moment one repents, and it should not be delayed (Acts 10:48; Acts 16:33; Acts 9:18).

5. Formula for Baptism

Water baptism is administered in the name of Jesus. The apostles always baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. To be baptized in water one must be immersed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN

1. What Is a Tithe?

Scripture References:

“And all the tithe of the land . . . is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30).

“And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance” (Numbers 18:21).

“But the tithes of the children of Israel . . . I have given to the Levites to inherit” (Numbers 18:24).

It is not necessary to state that the church has to have finances in order to carry on the great work of evangelizing the world. It is quite apparent that there has to be a financial plan. A study of God’s Word reveals that the Lord has provided for this need by instituting a definite financial plan to finance His work upon earth. God’s plan is tithing.

A tithe is one-tenth of your increase (Numbers 18:21). If a man’s check is \$100, he should take out \$10 (a tithe) for the Lord.

Tithing will work anywhere in the world. The church would be amply provided for if all would tithe.

2. Law or Grace?

Tithing belongs to the Abrahamic covenant and was instituted long before the law. Both Abraham and Jacob paid tithes (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:4; Genesis 28:22). The fact that Abraham tithed proves that it was the result of faith and not of law.

3. To Whom Does the Tithe Belong?

The tithes are to be brought into God's storehouse (Malachi 3:10). This is clearly your home church where you get your spiritual food. The Bible says "bring" not "send" the tithes into the storehouse. The only time tithes should be sent is when one is away on vacation or visiting.

The tithes belong to God (Leviticus 27:30). They belong to the Levites (Numbers 18:24). They are for the support of the ministry.

E. THE SABBATH DAY

1. The New Testament is silent regarding keeping the seventh day.

The church is enjoined in the New Testament as follows:

Worship of God	50 times
Idolatry forbidden	12 times
Profanity forbidden	4 times
Honor of father and mother	6 times
Adultery forbidden	12 times
Theft forbidden	6 times
False witness forbidden	4 times
Covetousness forbidden	9 times

However, keeping the Sabbath enjoined not even once.

2. The Lord's Day was not selected in place of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was abolished and therefore needed no substitution. The first day of the week was the day to celebrate the Lord's resurrection. On the Lord's Day:

- a. Jesus arose the head of a new creation.
- b. Jesus appeared to His disciples.

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- c. The Holy Ghost was given.
- d. The church was born.
- e. The door of the kingdom was unlocked.

Acts 20:7 – disciples met to break bread in remembrance of Him.

I Corinthians 16:2 – disciples brought their tithes and offerings.

Revelation 1:10 – the Lord’s Day

3. The Sabbath was a type; Jesus is the antitype.

The Sabbath was a shadow; Jesus is the body (Colossians 2:16-17). “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). Jesus is the Sabbath to the New Testament church. The rest is now in the Holy Ghost (Isaiah 28:11-12).

Lesson Five

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

A. THE RETURN OF JESUS IS THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

Scriptural References:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3).

The hope of the church is the return of Jesus Christ to receive unto Himself His bride, which is His church (Ephesians 5:27). The doctrine of the Second Coming is one of the most important doctrines in the New Testament. It is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament.

The saint does not look forward to death but rather to the coming of the Lord (II Corinthians 5:4). We do not long to be unclothed, but rather clothed upon. Death is an enemy, and at Christ’s coming we are raised from the dead and shout victory over death (I Corinthians 15:55).

The return of Jesus is the hope which thrills the heart of the church with joyful anticipation.

1. It is a blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

Not only is the hope a blessed one, but it brings great blessing to the saint of God who sincerely has the hope of seeing Jesus at His return.

2. It is a comforting hope (I Thessalonians 4:18).

The thought of being with Jesus brings great comfort to the heart of His children. Also with this, there is the hope of reunion with loved ones who have departed this life. There is no thought that can comfort the sorrowing one as looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

3. It is a lively hope (I Peter 1:3).

At that time, the church will be quickened and raptured. However, even while the church is waiting her translation, the expectation of that moment imparts new life and energy to her. It is not a dead hope gathering dust on the pages of history, but the hope is still alive today – a living hope.

4. It is a purifying hope (I John 3:3).

Possibly there is no doctrine that will sanctify a believer as much as this hope of seeing Jesus. The very thought of seeing Jesus cleanses and purifies.

B. THERE WILL BE A LITERAL RETURN OF JESUS

Scriptural References:

“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout” (I Thessalonians 4:16).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7).

It will be the Lord Himself, this same Jesus who was taken up into Heaven, who will come back for His church. The Bible could not be any plainer in stating this truth. Anyone who cannot see that it will be a literal return of Jesus is indeed blind to all spiritual truth.

C. THERE WILL BE A VISIBLE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

Scriptural References:

“And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7).

There are false teachers who claim that Jesus has already returned in spirit. There are other false teachers who claim that death is the return of Jesus. Both of these thoughts are false.

The return of Jesus is a personal return. The angels declared that He shall return in like manner as He went into Heaven. How did He go? His going was personal, literal, and visible. His return will be likewise: personal, literal, and visible.

Part of the hope of the church is that of seeing Jesus (I John 3:2). The apostle John wrote that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

“Every eye shall see him.” What could be plainer than this? A spirit cannot be seen. We shall see the glorified body of Jesus who died on the cross for our sins.

D. JESUS WILL RETURN BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM

Scriptural References:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (II Thessalonians 2:8).

“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

The Antichrist, who is pre-millennial, is to be destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming. Therefore, the coming of the Lord must be pre-millennial.

The tribulation is pre-millennial, and Jesus will come to set up His kingdom “immediately after” (Matthew 24:29-31). If Jesus is to set up His kingdom immediately after the tribulation, the coming of the Lord must be pre-millennial.

The church will reign with Christ for a thousand years. This, of course, applies to the Millennium, Christ’s thousand years or reign of peace upon the earth. If the coming of the Lord were post-millennial, then how could the saints reign with Him? In order to reign with Him, the coming of the Lord must be before the Millennium.

This truth is very important, for many professing churches of the church world have accepted an error that crept into the church about the year 1700. This error teaches that the church will prosper and grow until the world will be converted, that this triumph of the church will constitute the Millennium, and that Jesus will come after the Millennium.

Anyone who believes this error does not preach the return of our Lord. He is not looking for nor expecting the Lord’s return; therefore, he makes no preparation for the Lord’s return. Possibly, this is as much reason as any why much of the

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world is unconverted and living in sin.

To the saint of God, the coming of the Lord is imminent. To him the Lord may come at any moment. Therefore he prays much, lives victoriously, and maintains a strong faith and hope.

E. JESUS WILL SET UP HIS KINGDOM UPON EARTH WHEN HE RETURNS

Scriptural References:

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east” (Zechariah 14:4).

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32).

Every time the Lord’s Prayer is said, the words “Thy kingdom come” are repeated. This is a prayer for Christ to return to earth to reign in righteousness. Only Jesus can bring peace to this troubled, war-torn world, full of hatred and bitterness. Only Jesus can bring order out of chaos.

The church began on the Day of Pentecost and ends at the Rapture, as far as her existence in this world is concerned. At the close of the Tribulation, Jesus returns with His church to reign. This will be the beginning of His millennial reign upon earth.

It is the personal reign of Christ on earth. He was prophesied to be king of the Jews (Isaiah 9:6). He was born king of the Jews (Matthew 2:2). He was crucified as king of the Jews (Matthew 27:37). He shall return to earth to be the king of the Jews. Jesus shall sit upon the throne of David and establish a kingdom of which there will be no end to peace (Isaiah 9:7).

F. THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH IS IMMINENT

Scriptural References:

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:42).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

No man knows the day and the hour of His return. However, we may know the seasons and the times, for the Bible has much to say on this regard.

Jesus may come at any time. There is no prophetic Scripture relative to His return for the church that awaits fulfillment. That which is most startling and impressive is the fact that there has been more prophecy fulfilled in our generation than in all the nineteen centuries since Christ's first advent.

Here is a partial list of Scriptures, telling us of the imminent return of Jesus:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. The Latter Rain Outpouring | James 5:7 |
| 2. Apostasy | II Thessalonians 2:3 |
| | I Timothy 4:1 |
| | II Timothy 4:3-4 |
| | Matthew 24:24 |
| | II Timothy 3:1-5 |
| | Jude 4 |
| 3. Increase of crimes and violence | Luke 17:26-30 |
| 4. Increase of restlessness and travel | Daniel 12:4 |
| 5. Increase of knowledge | Daniel 12:4 |
| 6. Political and social troubles | Luke 21:25-26 |
| 7. Israel | Romans 11:25 |

Lesson Six

THE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

A. THE CHURCH WILL STILL BE HERE WHEN JESUS COMES

Scriptural References:

“And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51).

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thessalonians 4:17).

There are two main truths that prove that when Jesus returns, the church will be still here waiting for the return of her Lord.

The first is that there is no power that can overthrow the church. Thousands have been martyred, but the church has still grown. No amount of persecution or opposition can destroy the church. Hell itself cannot prevail against the church. The church is indestructible. Fire cannot burn her; floods cannot drown her; tempests and storms cannot move her. Jesus built her upon the rock, and she will overcome all the powers of Hell thrown against her.

Secondly, the Scriptures make it very clear that the rapture of the church will take place at the time of the first resurrection, both of which will take place when Jesus comes. The dead in Christ shall rise first then we which “are alive and remain.” When Jesus returns there will be a church on earth that will be caught away without experiencing death.

B. THE CHURCH WILL ESCAPE THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Scriptural References:

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass” (Luke 21:36).

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

When the signs of the times are being fulfilled which tell of the Lord’s coming, we are exhorted to lift up our heads and look up (not down or around) for our redemption draws nigh. The coming of the Lord is our redemption not the tribulation. The church is never exhorted to look for the tribulation but rather for the coming of Jesus.

In both of the Scriptures, Luke 21:36 and Revelation 3:10, there is a definite promise of the church escaping the tribulation. These promises would be meaningless if the church had to pass through the tribulation.

The tribulation is primarily a time of God’s dealing with the Jewish nation, and before this can take place, the church age must come to an end. This of course takes place when Jesus returns and takes the church out of this world.

The church has a glorious hope of being caught away. In no way can the coming of the tribulation be looked upon as a hope, while on the other hand, we look forward to the return of our Lord with joyful anticipation.

There are two main objections to this doctrine which we shall deal with briefly here:

1. Matthew 24:29-31

The word *elect* means “chosen” and may refer either to the church or to the nation of Israel. In this Scripture it refers to Israel. The angels have nothing to do with the rapture of the church; it is the Holy Spirit which quickens the saints. These Scriptures refer to the gathering of Israel (Isaiah 27:13).

2. I Corinthians 15:52 and Revelation 11:15

The last trump in I Corinthians 15 is not the trumpet of Revelation 10:7 and Revelation 11:15. Undoubtedly, Paul was making reference to Jewish tradition to emphasize the resurrection. The trumpet here is one of glorious victory; the trumpet in Revelation is one of judgment. We should know that there is another trumpet at the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:31).

C. THE CHURCH WILL BE READY AND WAITING FOR HER BRIDE-GROOM

Scriptural References:

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Ephesians 5:27).

“Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3).

Jesus exhorted His disciples to be ready (Matthew 24:44). Readiness is the watchword of the church.

Jesus will return for those who are ready, not those who are getting ready. The hope of Christ’s return sanctifies and purifies the saint and helps him to be ready. The scripturally correct attitude of the heart of the New Testament saint is that: Jesus may come *now*; I am ready to go *now*. Thus, the hope purifies him.

To be ready, one must be a member of the church by being baptized in Jesus’ name and filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:14; Romans 8:11; Matthew 25:1-13). He must also be living a holy life and looking for the return of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:14; Hebrews 9:28).

D. THE CHURCH WILL BE RAPTURED WHEN JESUS COMES

Scriptural References:

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51).

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds” (I Thessalonians 4:17).

There were two characters in the Old Testament who were taken from this world without dying. Enoch and Elijah were raptured. “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24). “And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:11).

What happened to Enoch and Elijah will also happen to the living saints when

Jesus comes. When a person is raptured or translated, his physical body is changed in a twinkling of an eye (I Corinthians 15:52). This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. As this is done, he is caught away into the clouds of glory to meet the Lord in the air. There will be no intermediary state of death and decay but an immediate glorification and catching away.

It is to be understood that the greater part of the church has already passed on into eternity through death and will be sleeping in Jesus. The living saints will not precede the saints who are asleep in Him.

“That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep” (I Thessalonians 4:15).

The apostle Paul stated that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then the living saints will be caught away and all (those who are already dead and those who are still living) will be gathered together by our Lord in the air.

We must not overlook one of the key phrases in this Scripture: “in Christ.” Only those who are “in Christ” will be resurrected and raptured at this glorious event. The Holy Ghost places us “in Christ” (I Corinthians 12:13).

E. THE CHURCH WILL ATTEND THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

Scriptural References:

“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9).

“And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut” (Matthew 25:10).

Many Scriptures clearly teach that the church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:32). When will Jesus present unto Himself a glorious church? There can be only one answer: at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be the most glorious event of all eternity. The bride will have made herself ready (Revelation 19:7), and she will be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. It will be a time of great rejoicing. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come” (Revelation 19:7).

Jesus said, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” It is for this glorious event that the church is preparing and joyously anticipating.

F. THE CHURCH'S ETERNAL HOME IS NEW JERUSALEM

Scriptural References:

“And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

Jesus is preparing an eternal home for the church. Knowing how much He loves the church, and knowing that He is the mighty Creator who created the beauties of this universe, one can begin to understand in a small way the beautiful home Jesus is preparing for His beloved.

A description of this eternal home is given in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. It is called the New Jerusalem, a city four square. The glory and beauty of this city exceed anything that has been seen in this world.

G. THE CHURCH WILL REIGN WITH JESUS IN HIS KINGDOM

Scriptural References:

“But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

“And they shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

The Bible speaks of the saints ruling, judging, and reigning. Certainly the church will take a very active part in Christ's kingdom. In the scriptural references given here, the church is spoken of as reigning with Christ. Undoubtedly, as the bride of Christ, she shall reign at His side in His kingdom. However, her place of power and glory will not end with the close of the Millennium, but throughout all eternity she shall reign. Hallelujah!

What a glorious future is in store for the church!

Let us make certain that we are a member of this apostolic church by being born of the water and the Spirit and ready for the coming of our Lord.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

Lesson Seven

DEATH

A. DEFINITION OF DEATH

Physical death is the separation of soul and spirit from the body. It introduces man to eternity and the unseen world.

B. DESCRIPTIONS OF DEATH

The Bible speaks of death in the following terms:

1. Sleep – Deuteronomy 31:16; John 11:11; I Corinthians 15:6; I Corinthians 15:51; I Thessalonians 4:13-14
2. Earthly house being dissolved – II Corinthians 5:1
3. Putting off this tabernacle – II Peter 1:14
4. God requiring the soul – Luke 12:20
5. Going the way whence there is no return – Job 16:22
6. Being gathered to one's people – Genesis 49:33
7. Yielding up the ghost – Genesis 49:33, Acts 5:10
8. Going down into silence – Psalm 115:17
9. Returning to the dust – Genesis 3:19
10. Being cut down – Job 14:2
11. Departing – Philippians 1:23

C. PHYSICAL DEATH IS CERTAIN TO EVERY MAN

Scriptural Reference:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

The only persons who will escape physical death are those living saints at the time of the coming of Jesus. These will be translated, but all others will die. Although the redemption of the saints has been provided for and purchased on Calvary, yet only at the first resurrection shall we be able to enter into this full physical redemption.

D. DEATH HAS BEEN CONQUERED

Scriptural References:

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Corinthians 15:26)

“Death reigned by one . . . shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:12-21).

“Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:10).

Death was the first outward and visible effect of sin, and it will be the last effect of sin from which we shall be saved. Jesus has abolished death, and in Him we may have eternal life and immortality.

E. AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

1. The Intermediate State

The righteous do not enter into their final reward, neither do the wicked into their final punishment, until after their respective resurrections. The righteous are in conscious rest in Paradise, but the unrighteous are in conscious unrest and torment in Hades.

2. The Resurrection

At the resurrection the soul and spirit of the dead are united with the resurrected body.

3. The Judgments

Just as there is no escaping death, there is no escaping the judgment which follows (Hebrews 9:27). The righteous receive their rewards and the unrighteous receive their punishment.

4. Eternity

There are only two final destinies for man: a Heaven to gain, and a Hell to shun. Which will it be?

F. THE LOCATION OF PARADISE AND HADES

Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, these two places were separate compartments of Sheol. They were located adjacent to one another, with a gulf fixed between them (Luke 16:26). Because of this, when Jesus died He visited both places (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:21). This also explains I Peter 3:19-20. When Jesus arose, He emptied one compartment and changed the location of Paradise to the third Heaven (II Corinthians 12:2). Since the resurrection of Jesus, what the witch of Endor was able to do with the spirit of Samuel (I Samuel 28:14) can never be done with the departed spirits of the redeemed, for Paradise and Hades no longer have adjacent locations in Sheol. Jesus led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8).

G. FALSE TEACHINGS

1. Purgatory

This teaches that even the faithful need a process of purification before becoming fit to enter God's presence.

Scripture teaches the immediate happiness of the dead in Christ. There are only the saved and the unsaved, and the destiny of each is determined in this life. Death closes the period of probation and then follows judgment.

References: Luke 16:22; Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27

2. Spiritism

This teaches that we may communicate with a departed spirit through a "medium."

The Bible expressly forbids consulting such spiritists, and the very prohibition indicates that there is evil and danger in the practice. In Luke 16 the account of the rich man and Lazarus proves that the departed are not permitted to communicate with the living.

References: Leviticus 19:31, 20:6; Isaiah 8:19

3. Soul Sleeping

This teaches that the soul is unconscious until the resurrection.

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Scripture teaches that there is an immediate conscious rest in Paradise for the saved and a conscious torment in Hades for the lost. Lazarus and the rich man were both conscious. Why did Jesus visit Paradise and Hades if the souls were unconscious? This should answer the error once and for all time.

References: Isaiah 14:9-11; Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; Psalm 16:10; II Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9-10

4. Universalism

This teaches that everybody will finally be saved, that God is too loving to exclude anyone from Heaven.

This error is refuted by the Scriptures. It is in reality a mercy that God excludes the sinful from Heaven. It would be a Hell to them, and their presence would soon make it a Hell to the redeemed.

References: Proverbs 29:1; Romans 6:23; John 3:36; Luke 16:19-31

5. Restorationism

This teaches that Hell is not eternal but a temporary experience for the purpose of purifying the sinner to ready him for Heaven. If this were the case, then the fires of Hell would have more power than the blood of Jesus. Experience teaches that punishment in itself is not regenerative; it can restrain, but not transform. Those who believe this error contend that *eternal* means "age-long" in the Greek and not endless duration.

According to Matthew 25:41-46, if the punishment of the wicked man has an end, so does the bliss of the righteous. God will no more force a man to be saved in the future than He does in the present.

6. Annihilationism

This teaches that the wicked will be annihilated. Those who believe this error point to II Thessalonians 1:9 and other passages which state that the wicked will be destroyed. However, this does not mean annihilation, but ruin. In this Scripture, if it meant annihilation, then the word *eternal* would be useless. They also point to death as the penalty for sin. This means separation from God and not the ceasing to exist. God's promise of life does not mean the promise of existence, for all men have that. Therefore, the opposite is true, death as a penalty does not mean the mere loss of existence.

Lesson Eight

THE RESURRECTION

A. THE RESURRECTION TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE

1. In the Old Testament

- a. In the Word – Job 19:25-27; Daniel 12:1-3; Psalm 16:9; 17:15
- b. In Figure – Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19
- c. In Prophecy – Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14
- d. In Reality – II Kings 4:32-35; 13:21

2. In the New Testament

- a. In Word
 - By Jesus – John 5:28-29; John 6:39-54; Luke 14:13-14
 - By Paul – Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:14-15; Philippians 3:11
 - By John – Revelation 20:4-6, 13
- b. In Reality
 - Resurrection of Lazarus – John 11
 - Resurrection of Old Testament Saints – Matthew 27:52-53
 - Resurrection of Jesus – Matthew 28

B. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION

1. Redemption of the Body

The redemption of the body is included in our complete redemption.

References:

Romans 8:11-23; I Corinthians 6:13-20; John 6:39; Job 19:25-27

2. The Redeemed and the Resurrected Body

- a. We shall be like Christ

Scripture References:

“Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty” (Philippians 3:21 Amplified New Testament).

“When he shall appear, we shall be like him” (I John 3:2).

“And we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Corinthians 15:49).

- b. What was the nature and likeness of Christ’s resurrection body, which our resurrection body will resemble?

A real body – Luke 24:39

A recognizable body – Luke 24:31

- c. Characteristics of the believer’s resurrection body is set forth in I Corinthians 15:

Incorruptible – (No decay, sickness, pain) Verse 42

Glorious – Verse 43, Matthew 17 and Revelation 1:13-17

Powerful – (Not tired or weak) Verse 43

Spiritual – Verse 44

Heavenly – Verses 47-49

Real Body – Verses 50-51 (See Hebrews 2:14; II Corinthians 5:1-6)

Relationship to the Old – (Like the grain of wheat) Verses 36-37

The resurrection body will have great agility. It will be able to travel with lightning speed and penetrate solid substances.

C. THE ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION

Scriptural Reference:

“But each in his own rank and turn: Christ, the Messiah, the first fruits, then those who are Christ’s at His coming. After that comes the end (the completion)” (I Corinthians 15:23-24 Amplified New Testament).

The Scriptures teach that everyone will not be resurrected at the same moment. There is a definite order that takes place as far as time is concerned in the resurrection.

1. The First Resurrection

This is the resurrection of those who are in the kingdom of God and who shall reign with Christ during the Millennium (Revelation 20:5-6). They shall not appear before the White Throne Judgment.

There are three distinct phases or steps to this resurrection:

- a. Firstfruits – Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:23)

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection” (Matthew 27:52-53).

One should clearly understand that this resurrection of the first fruits took place after His resurrection. Jesus arose first and then these Old Testament saints.

- b. Harvest – This takes place at the Rapture of the church when Jesus returns.

“And the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

- c. Gleanings – The Tribulation Saints

“And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

Although the first resurrection takes place at three different times, yet these three phases all constitute one resurrection.

2. The Second Resurrection

This is the general resurrection of all those who are not in the kingdom of God. They shall appear before the White Throne Judgment and be judged according to whether or not their names are in the Book of Life.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God” (Revelation 20:12).

Lesson Nine

JUDGMENTS AND REWARDS

A. THE JUDGMENTS

Scripture teaches us that the judgments differ as to time, place, subjects, and purpose, etc.

1. At the Cross

Scriptural References:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (II Corinthians 5:21).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (I Peter 2:24).

All sin has to be judged. The sins of the redeemed have been judged at Calvary. Christ took the penalty for our sins.

2. A Daily Judgment in the Life of the Saint

Scriptural References:

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (I Corinthians 11:31).

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6).

There is a continual self-examination on the part of a child of God and a chastisement as God deals with him in perfecting him.

3. A Future Judgment of the Saints for Rewards

Scriptural References:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:10).

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12)

The judgment seat of Christ is not for the purpose of judging sin, for no sin will enter there. It is a judgment of works when rewards will be given according to faithfulness, motives, etc.

This will be pay day for the child of God.

4. Judgment of the Living Nations

Scriptural Reference:

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:32-33).

This judgment will take place at the coming of Christ with His saints. It is a judgment of living nations in the setting up of Christ’s millennial reign on earth.

One should note well that it is not individuals that are separated as sheep from the goats, but rather it is nations who are judged.

5. Great White Throne

Scriptural Reference:

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:11-12).

This is the final judgment at the close of the Millennium. All those who were not in the church (kingdom of God) are resurrected and judged on the basis of whether or not their names are in the Book of Life.

There are at least three different books opened here (verse 12—“books . . . and another book was opened”). It is the opinion of the writer that these books are:

- a. The Word of God
- b. Book of remembrance where a record of a man’s life is kept

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c. Book of Life

It is the traditional teaching of the church that there is no saved person who appears before the White Throne Judgment. However, this is false, for if a person reads carefully this text of Scripture it will be seen at once that there are those whose names do appear in the Book of Life.

6. Judgment of the Fallen Angels

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

The angels which fell with Satan will be judged. Hell was created for them. It would seem that this is the last judgment, and it should be noted that the saints have part in this judgment.

References:

II Peter 2:4; I Corinthians 6:3

B. THE REWARDS FOR THE FAITHFUL

Rewards will be handed to the saints chiefly on the basis of faithfulness. The parables of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the pounds (Luke 19:11-28), and the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) make this fact plain.

In the parable of the laborers, every man received one penny. The time spent in the field did not affect his wages. It was faithfulness to that to which he had been called that counted.

1. Crowns

- a. Of life—James 1:12; Revelation 2:10
- b. Of glory—I Peter 5:4; Hebrews 2:9
- c. Of righteousness—II Timothy 4:8
- d. Of rejoicing—I Thessalonians 2:19
- e. Of gold—Revelation 4:4
- f. Incorruptible—I Corinthians 9:25
- g. Thy crown—Revelation 3:11

2. Rewards to the Overcomers

Revelation 2 and 3:

- a. Eat of the tree of life
- b. Stone with a new name written
- c. Authority over nations
- d. Shall not be hurt of the second death
- e. Eat of the hidden manna
- f. Arrayed in white garments
- g. Pillar in the temple of God
- h. Write on him a new name
- i. Sit down with Him in His throne

Lesson Ten

HEAVEN

A. THE NATURE OF HEAVEN

The righteous are destined to eternal life in the presence of Jesus. He created man to know, love and serve Him in this present world, and to enjoy Him forever in the world to come. The name "Heaven" means all that Jesus has prepared and provided for the redeemed throughout eternity.

An understanding of the nature of Heaven may be obtained by studying the names describing Heaven.

1. Names Describing Heaven

- a. *Paradise*—The meaning of this word is "garden," reminding us of our first parents as they walked with God. Actually, this is the place where the spirits and souls of the just await the resurrection (Revelation 2:7; II Corinthians 12:4).
- b. *Father's House*—This name, with its many mansions, conveys the thought of home, rest, and fellowship (John 14:2).
- c. *Heavenly Country*—This speaks of a promised land—like Canaan to which Israel traveled (Hebrews 11:13-16).
- d. *City*—This suggests the idea of an organized society (Hebrews 11:10).
- e. *New Jerusalem*—This is the eternal dwelling place of the church.

2. Three Phases

- a. Intermediate state of conscious rest in Paradise awaiting the resurrection.
- b. Judgment for faithfulness and works (II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12).
- c. New Jerusalem—the eternal home of the church (Revelation 21).

B. THE NECESSITY OF HEAVEN

The history of man discloses the fact that the human soul instinctively be-

believes that there is a Heaven. This instinct has been implanted within the soul of man by God Himself, the Creator of human instincts.

C. THE BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN

1. Light and Beauty

Human language at its best is inadequate to portray the realities of the life to come. In the last two chapters of Revelation language is used which helps us to gain a slight conception of the beauties of the world to come.

One writer used the illustration of a mole burrowing in the ground, not being able to understand the life of an eagle. Another illustration is to think of a caterpillar which is wholly unable to comprehend the beauty and glory of the butterfly into which it will develop.

References: Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5

2. Fullness of Knowledge

Man is surrounded by mystery and hungers for knowledge. In Heaven this thirst for knowledge will be perfectly satisfied. The mysteries of the universe will be made plain; perplexing theological problems will shine as clear as day.

Reference: I Corinthians 13:12

3. Rest

Weariness, pain, strife and grief cannot enter there.

References: Revelation 14:13; Revelation 21:4

4. Service

God gave Adam instructions to keep and dress the first paradise, and He will not leave him inactive in the second Paradise.

References: Revelation 7:15; Revelation 22:3

5. Joy

The greatest earthly happiness increased a millionfold, but feebly expresses the

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enjoyment awaiting God's children.

6. Permanence

Heaven's happiness will be forever. Permanence is necessary to complete happiness.

7. Social Joys

Man by nature is a social being. A solitary man is abnormal and exceptional. In Heaven there will be no misunderstandings, no strife, and everyone will be good and beautiful.

References: Hebrews 12:22-23; I Thessalonians 4:13-18

8. Fellowship with Jesus

We shall see Jesus face to face. He who shepherded His people through this vale of tears will in Heaven lead them from joy to joy, from glory to glory, from revelation to revelation.

Lesson Eleven

THE DESTINY OF THE WICKED

A. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Scriptural Reference:

“And death and hell [Hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:14).

When the wicked die their souls go to Hades, which is a prison house, where they remain in conscious torment until the final resurrection and the White Throne Judgment. A vivid picture of Hades is given in the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:10-31).

B. THE SECOND DEATH

Scriptural References:

“This is the second death” (Revelation 20:14).

“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

The destiny of the wicked is eternal separation from God, and the eternal sufferings of His wrath, known as the second death. Because of its terrible nature, it is a subject from which one naturally shrinks; yet it is one which must be faced because it is positive truth of divine revelation. The Christ of gentleness and love warned men against the sufferings of Hell.

The “death” spoken of in Romans 6:23 does not mean cessation of existence anymore than eternal life means the beginning of existence. Eternal life does not mean only to live forever, but to live in a state of blessedness forever. Eternal life does not deal with quantity as much as with quality of existence. Just so with eternal death.

Eternal death is a quality of existence, not cessation of being. Even in this life, death can co-exist with life (Ephesians 2:1; I Timothy 5:6). What men call life, God calls death.

There are two things the child of God gets:

1. At the new birth—eternal life
2. At his resurrection—immortality

but he already had existence.

So it is in the case of the wicked; the second death does not mean cessation of existence, for he is dead now in this life. It means the eternal separation from God.

References: Revelation 20:14-15; Revelation 21:8.

C. THE NATURE OF THE LAKE OF FIRE

The nature of Hell is described by the Scriptures that describe both Hades (the prison house) and gehenna (lake of fire). We shall not attempt to separate the descriptions, for they both are similar in nature.

1. Extreme suffering—(tormented) Revelation 20:10
2. Memory—("Son, remember") Luke 16:25
3. Unsatisfied desire—Luke 16:24
4. Remorse—Luke 16:27-28
5. Shame and contempt—Daniel 12:2
6. Worm dies not—Mark 9:46
7. Fire is not quenched—Mark 9:46
8. Bottomless—Revelation 20:3
9. Darkness—Matthew 25:30
10. No rest—Revelation 14:11

There will be no light, no sight, no music, no honor, and no hope in Hell. What a dreadful, fearful place!

D. HELL WAS PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS

Scriptural Reference:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Hell was never prepared for man. God made it for the devil and his followers.

God has done everything He can do to stop man from going to this dreadful place. The cross of Calvary is a roadblock stopping man from his slide down into a lost eternity. Christ died to stop men and women from going there. In the justice of God, Hell was made for the devil. If man willfully chooses to be a follower of Satan, he definitely will spend eternity with Satan.

E. FIRE

In the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:36-43), Jesus explained every figurative word of the parable. He did not explain *fire*. Why was this word left without explanation? There can be only one answer. The word *fire* was not figurative.

Lesson Twelve

ETERNITY

A. TIME AND ETERNITY

Scriptural Reference:

“That there should be time no longer” (Revelation 10:6).

Just as man is limited in occupying one place or position at any one time, he is limited to living this life one moment at a time. He cannot be in two places at a time, and he cannot live yesterday and tomorrow at one time. He is limited to the here and now. He always lives in the present.

Time was created for man and his understanding is wholly limited to time which he measures with minutes, hours, and days. God dwells in the eternity. He is the Great I Am. He is the omnipresent One who fills the universe with His presence and with Him the past, present, and future is one eternal present.

B. THE IDEA OF ETERNITY

To get some idea of eternity, we shall compare it with space. Time and distance have a definite connection, just as mass and energy. Likewise, eternity and space have a connection.

1. Space—Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. One light year is about 6,000,000,000,000 miles. Man is now peering out into space some 38,000,000,000,000 light years away. Now, try to measure this distance with a yard stick. We see at once it is foolish to try. It is necessary to have a larger unit of measurement which is a light year.
2. Eternity—Just as it is foolish to measure space with a yardstick, so it is foolish to measure eternity with years. We must have a larger unit of measurement which is known as an eon or age.

C. EON OR AGE

This Greek word *aion* or the English equivalent *eon* has been used in the New

Testament some 124 times. It has been translated *world* thirty-five times (Matthew 12:32; Matthew 13:39-40; Matthew 24:3; Mark 10:30). It is used to refer to the past (Colossians 1:26). It is used to refer to the future (Ephesians 2:7).

D. EON OF EONS (AGE OF AGES)

Scriptural Reference:

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Ephesians 3:21).

The period of time that the Bible deals with, in which is recorded God’s dealings with man over some 7,000 years, is an *eon* of eons.

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Eden | eon of Innocence | |
| 2. Antediluvian | eon of Conscience | 1,655 years |
| 3. Post-diluvian | eon of Human Government | 431 years |
| 4. Patriarchal | eon of Promise | 427 years |
| 5. Mosaic | eon of Law | 1,491 years |
| 6. Church | eon of the Holy Ghost | ? years |
| 7. Millennium | eon of Manifestation | 1,000 years |
| TOTAL | eon of eons | Approximately 7,000 years |

E. EONS OF EONS

The above “eon of eons” may in turn be pluralized and we get the expression “eons of eons.” We find this expression in such Scriptures as Revelation 19:3, Revelation 20:10, and Revelation 22:5.

The picture that is brought out by this term and translated “for ever and ever” reveals ages tumbling over ages without end. They cannot be counted for they are infinite in number. This term is used both for the final destiny of the wicked and the righteous.

F. ETERNITY

We are told very little about the eternity of the past nor of the eternity of the future. We are told that there will be a new Heaven

and a new earth, and there is the lake of fire where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:46; Revelation 21:1; II Peter 3:13).

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This life is very brief compared with eternity. We are here only long enough to prepare for eternity. There is a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun, and both are everlasting (eons of eons). *Where will you spend eternity?*

G. THIS AGE OF AGES CLOSES WITH ETERNITY

The Bible permits us to look forward to the close of this eon of eons. Then God pulls the curtain and all that we are permitted to know is that eternity begins.

We shall conclude this Bible study with a summary of events that will take place at the close of this age of ages:

1. Calvary
2. The burial of Christ
3. The resurrection of Christ (firstfruits – I Corinthians 15:23; Matthew 27:52)
4. The ascension of Christ
5. The upper room; Pentecost; the birth of the church.
6. The church – mystical body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23); bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:21-23); the kingdom of God, Christ reigning by His Spirit in the hearts of His saints
7. Resurrection of the dead in Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16)
8. Rapture – Translation of the living saints (I Thessalonians 4:17)
9. The meeting in the air; marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-8)
10. The Great Tribulation (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21; Luke 21:25-26)
11. The resurrection of the tribulation saints (Revelation 20:4-6)
12. The revelation of Christ and His saints (I Thessalonians 3:13), in flaming fire (II Thessalonians 1:7-10), to execute judgment (Jude 14, 15)
13. Armageddon; judgment of the nations or the quick
14. The Millennium; Christ's glorious reign on earth for 1,000 years
15. Satan loosed for a little season
16. The general resurrection (Revelation 20:12-15; Daniel 12:2)
17. The White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)
18. New Heaven-new earth
19. The lake of fire
20. Eternity, the ages to come

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson One

Write out one Scripture with its reference for the following truths:

1. The church is the body of Christ.
2. The church is the bride of Christ.
3. There is only one church.
4. The foundation rock upon which the church is built is the "deity of Jesus."
5. To have church membership one must be baptized into the body.
6. The disciples' names were written in Heaven before they were born of the Spirit.
7. During the earthly ministry of Jesus, the church was still future.
8. The charter members of the church were about 120 in number.
9. The church is the temple of God.
10. The church is a living organism.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Four

1. State whether the following statements are false or true.

- _____ a. The church is a blessing, but has no authority.
- _____ b. It is possible to keep the Sabbath Day.
- _____ c. The church is responsible to preach holiness.
- _____ d. The Bible instructs us how often the Lord's Supper is to be kept.
- _____ e. The word *Eucharist* means "to give thanks."
- _____ f. In baptism we are identified with Christ in death and burial.
- _____ g. To be saved one must worship God on Saturday.
- _____ h. We must pay our debts before we tithe.
- _____ i. The tithes belong to the Levites.
- _____ j. Tithing is not possible on the missionary field.

2. Write a paragraph explaining how the following truth applies to the church: "Responsibility and authority must go together."

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Five

1. State whether the following statements are false or true.

- _____ a. The coming of the Antichrist is post-millennial.
- _____ b. The hope of the saint is to be ready for death.
- _____ c. The hope of the coming of Jesus purifies the child of God.
- _____ d. There are several prophetic Scriptures to be fulfilled before Jesus returns.
- _____ e. Increase of violence is one of the signs of Christ's return.
- _____ f. There will be a personal reign of Christ during the Millennium.
- _____ g. The return of Jesus is a comforting hope.
- _____ h. Jesus will return in the form of a spirit.
- _____ i. Some men know the very hour that Jesus will return.
- _____ j. The world must be converted before Jesus returns.

2. Write one Scripture with its reference for each of the following:

- a. The return of Jesus is a blessed hope.

- b. Jesus will return in like manner as He went away.

- c. The brightness of Christ's coming will destroy Antichrist.

- d. Knowledge will increase just before Christ's return.

- e. The church will reign with Christ for a thousand years.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Six

1. Give scriptural arguments why the church may expect the return of Jesus before the great tribulation.

2. Who are the "elect" in Matthew 24:29-31?

3. Give a full explanation of I Thessalonians 4:15-17.

4. What is the final destiny of the church?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Seven

1. From the list below, place the correct word in the blanks.

death Hades separation spiritism universalism

- a. The last enemy to be destroyed is _____.
- b. _____ teaches that we may talk with a departed spirit.
- c. At one time, Paradise and _____ were adjacent compartments in Sheol.
- d. _____ teaches that everybody will be saved.
- e. Death is the _____ of soul and spirit from the body.

2. Write a clear explanation why Jesus was able to visit both Paradise and Hades after He died (Luke 23:43, Acts 2:31).

3. Where is the present location of Paradise? How do we know this?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Eight

1. Write one Scripture verse with its reference for the following:
 - a. Job believed in the resurrection.
 - b. The saints will be raised with bodies similar to that of Jesus.
 - c. Jesus Christ is the Firstfruits of the resurrection.
 - d. The tribulation saints will have part in the first resurrection.
 - e. Some of the Old Testament saints arose after Christ arose.
2. Explain the difference between the first and second resurrections.
3. What are the three phases of the first resurrection?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Bible Doctrine IV

Lesson Nine

1. Using the parables of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the pounds (Luke 19:11-28), and the laborers (Matthew 20:1-16), show that the rewards will be chiefly given for faithfulness.

2. List the six judgments and state the exact purpose of each:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.

3. How do we know that not everyone who appears before the White Throne Judgment will be lost in Hell?

