

**King James Bible Study Correspondence Course**

*An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries*  
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

**Filling in the Gaps – Lesson 8A  
The Church and the Tribulation**

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This brief overview will serve as an introduction to our studies on the tribulation in relation to the Church. In order to have a clear grasp of the important subjects which are the theme of this study, it is essential that we comprehend the undeniable differences between Israel and the Church of God. If one fails to recognize the distinction between God's earthly, physical people (Israel) and His heavenly, spiritual people (the Church), a myriad of doctrinal errors will result.

The sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob became the nation of Israel. This nation was chosen by God to be His people. The nation was set apart from all other nations to be God's witnesses upon the earth.

Israel became a nation about 1,500 years before the birth of Christ. The Church, however, was not formed until after the death of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:18 *and upon this rock I will build my church* It was obviously not yet in existence when He spoke those words. The Church did not replace Israel as God's earthly people but is the company of those who have trusted the crucified and risen Saviour for the forgiveness of their sins. This body with Christ as its head is composed of countless men and women in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as a result of their regeneration.

Those who comprise the nation of Israel do so on the basis of their first or physical birth. Regardless of what a denominations or commentaries may say.

1. The Church, as defined in scripture, did not exist prior to the resurrection of Jesus.
2. The Church is not Israel.
3. The Church is not comprised of those who were born in a Christian nation, or baptized into a Christian church, or confirmed by Christian minister.
4. The Church has no land, territory, temple, army, etc. These are reserved strictly to the province of God's earthly people, Israel.

Israel was one nation separated from all of the other nations. They are known in the word of God as Hebrews, Jews, the circumcision, and my people. There are a few rare cases where a Gentile adopts the religion and manner of life of the Hebrews to become a proselyte to Judaism. This, however, does not make the Gentile an Israelite.

By contrast, the Church is composed of individuals gathered out of all nations including Jews and Gentiles. Christ reconciled all believers into one

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body through His death upon the cross. *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby* (Ephesians 2:16).

Israel included every member of the nation, whether or not they had any redeeming faith in God. Believers and unbelievers alike united in the prescribed sacrifices, feast days, and rituals. But the Church is made up only of true believers in Christ Jesus. The local assembly takes in only such as are sanctified in Christ Jesus, allowing participation only to those who testify and have evidence of faith in the Lord. *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours* (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Another distinction is the fact that Israel had a God-given religious system. It is the only religion that God ever gave to any people. It was predominately an outward, formal, and ritualistic setup where a priesthood and ceremony ruled. By contrast, the true Church is altogether spiritual. It has no official place of worship. It has no headquarters on earth. It has no priest class, no clergy. It has no special days being entirely separate from civil and secular authority. Where ceremonial worship is introduced into a congregation or denomination, they are done so by foolish men who cannot discern between Israel and the Church.

Israel was God's earthly people during the Old Testament history, but they continue to be so even though they are now scattered, they shall yet be so when He returns to earth and they dwell with Him as His redeemed people. Their earthly character and destiny is mentioned hundreds of times in scriptures too numerous to mention here. The Church is ever set forth as a heavenly body. She is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, according to Ephesians 1:3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* Her home is in heaven where she has an inheritance laid up for her, according to 1 Peter 1:4. *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*

In the Bible Israel is called the bride of Jehovah. In Isaiah 62:5, the Lord says that *as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.* Israel is not a virgin bride. On the contrary, the Lord speaks of that nation in harsh terms, such as her having been divorced (Isaiah 50:1) or as a widow (Isaiah 54:4). God speaks of that nation as if He had forsaken her (Isaiah 54:6). As a wife, God had married her when she was in her youth, but she strayed from Him and played the harlot (read Hosea). In that glorious day that awaits the nation, God will re-marry her. Isaiah 54:5 says, *For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.*

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In the sharpest contrast, the Church is the virgin bride of Christ. Israel was once God's people but turned from Him crucifying her Lord having been cast off these many centuries. The Church is pure before her bridegroom, as the Holy Spirit says in 2 Corinthians 11:2. *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The Lord is busy each day improving His Church (Ephesians 5:26-27), He will never leave or forsake her (Hebrews 13:5-6).

The distinctions between Israel and the Church are so obvious that no serious reader of scripture can fail to see them. Israel occupied the center of the stage in the Old Testament where the Church is unknown, save in types, shadows, and prophecies. The Church fills the picture in the New Testament, with Israelites seen in need of salvation through Jesus Christ the nation is coming back into view only in Revelation after the departure of the Church.

The Church is not a glorified or improved Israel but a contrast to the nation whose sin and failure, culminating in their rejection and crucifixion of her Messiah and King, has resulted in their being set aside until the church age runs its course (Romans 9-11; Acts 15). In this day God is gathering out of this world a people redeemed by Christ's precious blood. These saved men and women from all nations are called His body the Church, Christ being the head over all.

When the Church is taken home to heaven, God will once more take up His dealings with His earthly people Israel, a remnant of which will be saved and brought alive through the terrible time of tribulation that awaits them. They shall be the Father's bride here upon the earth. That is Israel's future. She will enjoy this happy conclusion when Christ returns to establish His rule upon the throne of David at Jerusalem. Read Romans 11:25-29 *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things* (Acts 15:14-17).

As Israel's origin, character, destiny, worship, etc. are so clearly different from that of the Church, so also is its hope for the future. There is a marked difference in the word of God between the coming of Christ for His Church and His coming to Israel.

The future of the Church rests in the return of Christ to take her away from a world of sin. This coming of Christ for the Church is spoken of in scripture as that blessed hope (Titus 2:13). (reference Lessons 9A & 9B) It is often spoken of as the rapture by believers.

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The return of Christ to Israel, at which time He will also judge the world for its wickedness, is known as His appearing or His revelation.

Let us note twelve undeniable differences between the two.

1. At the blessed hope, the Lord Jesus comes for His Saints (John 14:3). At His appearing, He comes with His Saints. (Colossians 4:4). They could not possibly be the same event.

2. The blessed hope is a secret coming as far as scripture indicates. No mention of anyone seeing it is given. But His appearing is public - every eye shall see Him. (Revelation 1:7).

3. At the blessed hope, the believers will meet their Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16). At His appearing, Christ will come down to the earth (Zachariah 14:4).

4. At the blessed hope, the Lord gathers saints to Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:16), but at His appearing, He gathers Israel by means of angels (Matthew 24:31).

5. No mention is made of any signs to prepare people for the coming of Christ for His Church, but many signs accompany His public coming at His appearing. (See Luke 21; Matthew 25-27.)

6. At the blessed hope, there will be a resurrection of all the dead in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:23). At His appearing, there is no mention of a resurrection.

7. The blessed hope holds out a marvelous transformation of the bodies of believers; who will be changed into His likeness receiving a glorious body like His (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3). This is something altogether new and would not be anticipated by anyone reading the Old Testament. But at His appearing, there is no suggestion of any physical changes because there will be none. The physical changes taking place at His appearing will be to the creation as a whole, with a large portion of the Genesis 3 curse being lifted.

8. The blessed hope pictures Christ's coming under the figure of the rising of the morning star (Revelation 22:16). His appearing is recorded as the rising of the sun (Malachi 4:6).

9. The blessed hope is set before the believer as a real source of comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18). But what comfort could there possibly be if one would have to experience that fearful deluge of woe called the great tribulation? On the contrary, Christ's appearing is often presented as a time of the outpouring wrath of God.

10. At the blessed hope, Christ delivers us from wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10). At His appearing, He delivers the wrath (Revelation 19:15).

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11. At the blessed hope, our Lord descends from heaven with a shout, and we are caught up to meet Him in air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). At His appearing, He is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. No angels are mentioned at the rapture, but at His appearing, (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8) *...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, & In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

12. At the blessed hope, Christ takes His saints out and leaves the sinners behind (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:5). Revelation 20 declares that the rest of the dead do not live again until the thousand years are fulfilled (v. 5). But at His appearing, the reverse takes place, for then our Lord will take sinners out of the earth and leave saints here (Matthew 13:41-43). It will be seen from the above contrasts that Christ's coming for His Church and His subsequent appearing in judgment are unmistakably different. There are men who will inform you that there is no such thing as a pre-tribulation catching away of the body of Christ, which only displays their biblical ignorance. The blessed hope is the bright prospect awaiting the Church. The appearing of Jesus Christ threatens this wicked world and at the same time brings deliverance to God's earthly people Israel.

The coming of Jesus Christ for His purchased bride will be the completion of His redemptive work for them.

At His appearing, He shall be glorified in His saints and be admired in all that believe (2 Thessalonians 1:9-10). That day will be the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19; John 1:12-13). In that day Christ will finally be seen in all His majesty and glory by every believer. In that day all knees will bow to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. His blood-washed saints will share the honors of that day. The Church will appear by His side; the bride with her bridegroom. That day shall reveal in full what the matchless grace of God has done for us and to us. Hence, it is a day of joy and triumph for Christ and for His bride.

## Notes

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Note: must include scripture with all your answers, including the T/F.

1. The Bible speaks of 3 distinct groups of peoples, what are they?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. What Land belongs to the Church?
3. Explain Isaiah 54:5
4. What is the future of the Church?
5. Why is it so important to have the right Bible when trying to define the person in Revelation 22:16?
6. Explain what happens when you read and study from the wrong bible (such as the NIV) when looking at Revelation 22:16 & Isaiah 14:12?



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7. What is a good indication that a believer has not rightly divided the word of God when studying?
8. When did Israel become a nation and how?
9. In the Earths timeline, what will happen after the Church is taken to heaven?
10. From this study, how do we know the born again believers are eternally secure?
11. There are 12 differences between the Church and Israel, name 4 and elaborate on each of them. (use back of page if necessary)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.

**True/false**

- Matthew 24 pertains to the Church.
- The Church and Israel are the same.
- Signs, wonders and miracles are evident before the Church is taken off the earth.

**Scripture memorization**

Ephesians 2:16; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:26-27

Write out these verses on the back on this page: (must be in KJV)  
any questions?