Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes* written by Lewis Sperry Chafer and revised by John f. Walvoord

The Church: Her Purpose and Commission

Introduction

- O By means of the Church in the present age, God is now making known His wisdom and manifesting His grace to the angelic host (Eph 3:10).
- O However, the divine commission of the Church is given to the individual believer rather than to the corporate body.
- O Christ as the Head of the Church (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18) is able to direct each believer in the paths of the Lord's will in keeping with the plan of God for the individual life.
- O All of this is in harmony with God's general purpose for the Church in the present age.

• The Present Divine Purpose in the World

- O In Acts 15:15-18, James explains to an audience of Jews how God is calling out a people from among the Gentiles.
 - ▲ After the Tribulation, the Lord will return and restore the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16).
 - During the Millennial Kingdom there will be many Gentiles who are saved (Acts 15:17).
 - But first, during this present age, God is concerned about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14).
- O In this present age the world will be filled with lawlessness, albeit restrained, until the one who restrains (the Holy Spirit) is taken out of the way (2 Thess 2:7).
- O The present divine purpose of this age is not the conversion of the world into a better place (world-improvement program), but rather the calling out from the world those who will believe in Christ to form the body of Christ which is the Church.
- O The conversion of the world is possible only by the personal presence of Christ and His immediate power which will happen when He returns at the Second Advent.
 - It is *after* the Stone (Christ) crushes the other kingdoms that the God of heaven sets up His kingdom on earth (Dan 2:44-45).
 - It is *after* He is seen descending from heaven that Christ reigns on the Davidic throne for 1,000 years (Rev 19:11 20:9).

- The Formation and Growth of the Church
 - O Christ said the He would *build* His Church (Matt 16:18).
 - O The Apostle Paul described the Church as a building growing into a holy temple in the Lord with believers being built together into a dwelling of God (Eph 2:21-22).
 - O It is our work of service to build up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith (Eph 4:12-13).
 - O As individual believers we are to grow up in all aspects into Christ while it is the whole body, when each part of the body is working properly, which causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love (Eph 4:15-16).

• The Believer's Commission

- O Although the preaching of the gospel relates to death as well as life (2 Cor 2:16), the child of God is instructed to go out into the world and preach the gospel to all creation (Mk 16:15), knowing that faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom 10:17).
- O God has committed to us the word of reconciliation and is making an appeal through us as ambassadors for Christ to those who need to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:19-20).
- O We are thus commissioned to make disciples of all the nations wherever we may go (Matt 28:19).
- O This ministry rests upon every believer and may be exercised in many ways...
 - ➤ Praying for the unsaved. This is without a doubt the most important tool in evangelism.
 - ➤ Giving the gospel directly in person. This assumes that there is...
 - a willingness to go where the Spirit leads.
 - a clear understanding of the gospel of grace salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.
 - an understanding of the importance of being filled with the Spirit when presenting the gospel.
 - ➤ Presenting the gospel through literature, radio, television, the internet, music performances, etc.
 - ➤ Training others to give the gospel.
 - ➤ Providing support (financial, logistical, organizational, etc.) for missionary organizations.
- O Although every Christian may not be equally effectual in giving the gospel directly, every Christian bears a portion of the responsibility of making sure that the gospel is preached to all of creation.

Questions

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- O Who directs each believer in the path of the Lord's will?
- O Contrast the purpose of God in the present age with His purpose in the Millennial Kingdom.

0	What is necessary before the world can be converted into a better place?
0	What will become of Israel when God has gathered His Church at the Rapture?
0	According to Acts 15, what is the order of God's program for blessing on Gentiles and blessing on the Jews?
0	Describe God's present purpose in building His Church.
0	What is the believer's present commission?
0	Name some various ways by which a believer can exercise his privilege of extending the gospel to the world.
0	What are some of the basic conditions for being an effective messenger of the gospel?
0	In what sense is every Christian responsible for preaching the gospel to all of creation?