



KINGDOM SPIRIT

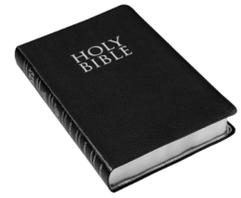
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1201

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

We looked at the first three chapters of Isaiah in our last issue. In chapter 3 Isaiah is prophesying of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, which we will see come to pass with the Babylonian captivity that we will study later. We also expressed the thought that the conditions that were extant in Judah at the time leading up to her destruction were very similar to what we see happening, not only in our nation, but worldwide. Isaiah points out that the women will drastically lower their moral standards in the way they dress, the way they make themselves up, the way they walk and other ways that they draw attention to themselves. This was to be a sign of overall decay within the nation which would be followed by war in which the men of the nation would be drastically reduced in number. As we look at the first verse of chapter 4, we see part of the result. (Read Isa. 4:1) Isaiah says that the ratio of men to women will be reduced to where there are about 7 women to one man and that they will be willing to share the one man among themselves. We don't have Biblical historical record of just how bad things got during the Babylonian captivity of Judah, but I think we would be safe in saying that the principle of what Isaiah is saying probably took place. The principle still applies to day to us. When we see the same things happening as Isaiah was predicting would happen to the kingdom of Judah, I think we can expect the same principle of

judgment that he predicted as well.

(Read Isa. 4:2-6) As we have mentioned before, it is sometimes difficult to know whether the prophet is talking about the literal Jerusalem, or the New Jerusalem since he doesn't make that distinction plain. Let me say at this point that Isaiah and other prophets tell us that the literal city of Jerusalem will be completely destroyed, probably in conjunction with the latter days that the prophet is speaking of here. The New Jerusalem that we find designated as such in the New Testament is not a literal city, but rather is the governmental structure of the Kingdom of God that will be manifested on the earth at that time. As we continue our studies we will see this to be the case, so when we read that a prophet is talking about Jerusalem or Zion in the latter days, it is the New Jerusalem that he is referring to. In Isa. 4, the "branch" is often a title referring to Jesus Christ. Isaiah says there is to be a cleansing of the land by washing, by judgment and by burning. Fire is referred to often as a cleansing agent. Moses, in Deut. 33:2, refers to God's law as a "fiery law." The cleansing then will be by judgment by God's law, keeping in mind that God's judgments are restorative in nature.

(Read Isa. 5:1-7) Isaiah tells us in verse 7 who or what this vineyard represents, it is the house of Israel. Keep in mind that at the beginning of Isaiah's ministry, Israel had not yet gone into captivity, so this basically is a prophecy concerning Israel and a large portion of the kingdom of Judah. God asks the question. What more could he have done to His vineyard to make it productive? He fenced it, gathered the stones out

of it and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a tower in the midst of it and made a winepress therein. All of this refers to all that He had done to build Israel into a kingdom. Yet, when He harvested it, He only got wild grapes. The people, instead of worshipping Him had gone after idols giving no credit to the God of creation who had given them the land in which they lived.

The result was that He will take away the hedge, or fence that it might be eaten up or spoiled. He will break down the wall that it might be trodden down. My understanding is that the vineyard was surrounded by a combination of hedge, usually of some prickly shrub or thorns, and a wall of earth or piles of stones in the gaps of the hedge. What this meant to Israel was that their protection from invasion was to be taken away by God so their enemies could invade the land. God says that He would lay it waste and briers and thorns would come up in the midst of the vineyard. The briers and thorns refers to the pagans from other lands that would come in and inhabit the land, a fact that happened when the Assyrians brought in people from several different nations to inhabit the land after they had taken the Israelites captive out of the land. Remember that not only was Israel taken out of the land, but a large portion of the kingdom of Judah was taken as well. God asked the men of Judah to judge between God and His vineyard. At this point, Judah still had had at least some righteous kings, but Israel never did. The fruit that God looked for in His vineyard was justice and righteousness, but what He got was oppression and a cry from the oppressed.

(Read Isa. 5:8-25) God then, through Isaiah, lists six woes against the people who were causing the problem and what they were doing. The first was against those whose sole purpose was to accumulate wealth, accumulating fields and houses. He says that many houses shall be vacant and the fields and vineyards will only produce about 10% of what they should. It is interesting that the tithe was to be 10% of what was produced, but because of their wickedness they were only going to harvest the tithe.

The second woe is against those that drink

alcoholic drinks from morning till night until they are consumed by their drinking. They party and feast, but totally disregard God and His ways. He says, **“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge.”** He is talking about not having knowledge of God and His ways.

As we go through these woes, note how they apply as well today. In this case, our society is considered to be well educated, but because God and His ways have been totally removed from our educational system and pretty much from our churches, our people are basically ignorant as to how to solve the problems that face us today.

He says that **“hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.”** The word “hell” here is from the Hebrew *“sheol”* which usually refers to the grave. In the captivity of Israel, many people died in the process, certainly fulfilling this prophecy. In verse 16 we’re told **“But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.”** I don’t know if the people then exalted God, but certainly we today, as we see the bigger picture, exalt Him for His righteousness and mercy.

The third woe is directed to those who scoff at God’s Word. We see it today in those that say, “if He is coming back, then he should hurry up and do so, otherwise, I can’t believe in Him.” It was the same then. It is difficult for man to wait on God to work things out in His own timing.

The fourth woe is directed toward those who have things upside down. They call evil good and good evil. Again, we certainly see this today in our own society. They put darkness, i.e. a lack of knowledge of God and His ways, before light, the knowledge of God and His ways.

The fifth woe is to **“them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight?”** Today we call them the “elite” in both political and religious circles, those that know more than the rest of us and consider themselves

to be our keepers.

The sixth woe is again to those that rely strongly on alcohol and who take bribes to pervert true justice. Because they have cast away the laws of God and despised His Word, God says, **“Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.”**

Because of all of this, God says He is not going to withdraw His hand until His judgment is complete. We know from history that this what happened as Israel and a large portion of Judah did indeed end up in captivity to the Assyrians and were never allowed to return to the land.

(Read Isa. 5:26-30) Because God is true to His Word, even though He is foretelling the captivity of Israel, He then adds that the day will come when He will re-gather Israel from the nations from the ends of the earth and bring them to Him in a spectacular way.

(Read Isa. 6) This is the official commissioning of Isaiah to the job God has for him. He is given this commission in a vision that he says he saw in the year that King Uzziah died. We have record of several men seeing Jehovah on His throne such as Ezekiel, Daniel and John. What they each saw I’m sure they had difficulty putting it into words. Howard B. Rand, in his book Study In Isaiah (Destiny Publishers, Merrimac, MA) explains how he understands Isaiah’s vision here which I think will help us understand the visions of the other men better, so I would like quote what he wrote.

“Jehovah, the God of Israel, is thus represented by Isaiah as seated on His throne above the ark in the most Holy Place with the light of His Glory over and above all. Witnessing all this the Prophet undertakes to describe the glory he sees using the term seraphim in designating the brilliancy of the display around and above the Throne. He is at loss to actually describe the form of these august beings but the name seraphim in Hebrew means ‘burning ones.’ Thus the seraphim are associated with the fire or lightning surrounding the Throne of God, for the Prophet describes that glory in terms of whirling wings of

*light as he endeavors to depict the appearance of the seraphim. Above it [the Throne] stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (Isa. 6:2) The Prophet’s description as he beheld the majesty and glory of the vision he witnessed is confirmed by John as the revelation of the Glory of our Lord for, after quoting Isa. 6:9-10, he said: **These things said Esaias [Isaiah], when he saw his glory, and spake of him. (John 12:41)***

*“This but confirms our deduction that Isaiah’s description of the seraphim was an endeavor on the part of the Prophet to impress upon those who read this account the appearance of the Glory. We are reminded of the reference Daniel made to the glory surrounding the throne when the Ancient of Days did sit. Instead of naming that glory in terms of seraphim he describes it as a fiery flame and wheels as burning fire. Those wheels Isaiah depicts as whirling wings of light. Daniel states: **His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. (Dan. 7:9)***

“In the description of the fiery flame and wheels as burning fire, we have in the meaning of the Hebrew words thus translated the depicting of shining, splendor, exceedingly dazzling, with bright flames dividing into tongues of fire, whirling as flashing swords of light, comparable to lightning darting hither and thither. John in Revelation refers to the flashing splendor proceeding out of the throne as lightnings and thunders and voices (Rev. 4:5). Actually it is beyond the human mind to give a complete word picture of the awe-inspiring scenes beheld by those who are thus given a vision of the throne of the Lord. All such description falls far short of actually depicting the majesty they beheld and the glories surrounding His throne.”

Isaiah thought because he had seen God in this vision that he would die. He says he was undone. Yet when he heard a voice asking **“Whom shall I send?”** Isaiah responded that he would go. The King James translation is a little confusing at this point. I would like to quote from the Ferrar Fenton as I believe he makes the commission to Isaiah more understandable.

“And I replied, ‘I am here; I will go!’ He said, —’Go! And say to this People, Hearing, you hear, but never perceive; Seeing, you see, but never will learn!—For this People’s heart has grown fat,—Deaf-eared, they have blinded their eyes, Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, Understand with their heart, And turn and be healed!’” (Isa. 5:9-10)

Isaiah then asks God “how long?” or “when?” The answer is when the cities are wasted without inhabitant and the land becomes desolate and the Lord has removed the people far away and has forsaken the land.

It is important to note in verse 13, as God always does, this captivity that He is prophesying is not the end. He says it will be like the teil tree and the oak tree when they have cast their leaves, there is still strength in the stump, or the apparent dead tree to revive again. Though Israel is going to be taken into captivity and their land desolated, there will still be life in them as a people or kingdom that will revive again.

(Read Isa. 7:1-9) Note that it was the intent of the king of Syria and the king of Israel to destroy the Davidic king line. We’re not told their reason, but their purpose is plainly stated in verse 6: **“Let us go up against Judah and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.”** This has to be understood to understand the rest of the chapter. God tells Isaiah to take his son with him and go meet Ahaz and tell him that the purpose of these two kings will not stand. It is interesting to me that Isaiah’s son’s name, Shearjashub, means “A Remnant Shall Return” and the fact that God told Isaiah to take him with him is significant. We need also to remember that God made an unconditional promise to David in II Samuel 7:16 that is important in this situation. **“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”** The significance is, beginning with Solomon, David’s throne would last for ever, or for the age and only David’s descendents would sit on it. So this attempt by these two kings is a direct affront to

God.

(Read Isa. 7:10-16) The sign that Isaiah gave appears strange at first look. What the sign meant was that a virgin of the line of David would conceive and bear a son whose name would be Immanuel which means “God with us.” Until that son is actually with us, the line of David and David’s throne would continue to exist. Ahaz did not need to worry about losing his throne because this was something that had yet to happen, so the attempt by these two kings would fail. For the present, Isaiah says before a baby could grow up to know to refuse evil and choose the good, both of these kingdoms would be destroyed and disappear.

(Read Isa. 7:17-26) God tells Ahaz through Isaiah that He is going to use the kingdom of Assyria to accomplish the destruction of these kingdoms, but He is also saying that He will bring Assyria against Judah as well. Concerning Israel and Syria, using shaving to tell the story, he says God will shave the head (the elite), the feet (the common people) and the beard (the kings).
JRL

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the “Faith Chapter of the Bible.” At the end of chapter 10, the author warns those whose faith is not genuine against falling back into perdition, or destruction, and urges those to whom he is writing to have patience to endure. Chapter 11 picks up on the subject of faith with more encouragement. Faith could probably be considered both qualitative and quantitative. We’re told in Rom. 10:17, **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** Though two people both hear the same word, it doesn’t necessarily mean that their faith is affected in the same way or in the same amount. Faith probably starts by our being persuaded, or convinced, of a particular fact or viewpoint. But if the persuasion does not endure, it is not faith. We can think of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt as an allegory. They

were all persuaded to leave Egypt. They had the faith to leave Egypt. But as soon as they faced trials, many wanted to return. When they arrived at Mt. Sinai, they did not have the faith to hear God speak to them. With the exception of Caleb and Joshua, their faith did not endure long enough for them to enter into the Promised Land. Caleb's and Joshua's faith endured through their patience for them to enter the Promised Land. Heb. 11 gives us a number of examples of enduring faith.

(Read Heb. 11:1) The word "substance" is from the Greek *hupostasis*. We have seen this word before. In Heb. 1:3, it is translated "person." It is defined as "substratum, what lies under" and as we said when we studied it then, it is the word used of title deeds, legal documents proving ownership. Here we can think of faith being what gives us title to the inheritance of the Kingdom, which is the thing we hope for. Again, a title deed is proof of ownership. It is our proof of ownership of the promised inheritance. (Read Romans 8:19-25) This defines our hope. We're told here in Heb. 11:1 that our faith is our title deed, or legal proof of this hope, that which supports our hope. Our hope is not just wishful thinking, but rather an expectation of inheriting a glorified, resurrected body at the time of the manifestation of the Sons of God.

If our "faith" is just wishful thinking, or persuasion of our carnal minds, (even though I believe it starts out that way for most of us) instilled in our minds by positive thinking, it will not endure. Faith has to go beyond just positive thinking. Our first level of faith is the faith that allows us to accept justification. This is the faith that allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. But in this allegory, we can see that it was not sufficient to take them into the Promised Land. They did not have the patience or endurance to make it to the end. Unfortunately many Christians have no vision beyond "getting someone saved (Passover)", others have no vision beyond getting people filled with the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). They do not have the vision of "Sonship (Tabernacles)." True faith quantitatively and qualitatively is manifested in those who hear and see the message of Sonship and catch that vision.

But the reality of this vision is not seen as of yet.

Heb. 11:2 tells us, "**For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good report.**" This good report is certainly not necessarily that given by ordinary men, as many of the prophets and others exhibiting this faith were afflicted and persecuted for their faith. God's approval is displayed in the fact that Scripture gives them a good report.

(Read Heb. 11:3) The word "worlds" is from the Greek *aionas* meaning "ages." An interesting note on this verse from the Companion Bible is as follows: "The reference is not to creation, but to the ordering by God of the dispensations, each of which succeeded but did not spring from its predecessor as a plant does from its seed. By rendering *aionas* as "worlds" here; *kartertishai* as "framed", instead of "prepared"; and *gegonenai* as "made", instead of "came into being", or "came to pass", the meaning of this important statement is lost." While in a sense the author is talking about creation, he is specifically talking about the ages rather than the material creation. Each age was not a development, or end result of the preceding age, but rather each age was prepared for its time by God before it came into being. We have been conditioned to think in evolutionary terms which I believe is contrary to what this verse is telling us.

(Read Heb. 11:4) We are not told very much about why Abel's sacrifice was acceptable and Cain's was not. (Read Gen. 4:3-7) The book of Jasher adds a little more to the story. Quoting from chapter 1:15-16, "*And it was at the expiration of a few years, that they brought an approximating offering to the Lord and Cain brought from the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought from the firstlings of his flock from the fat thereof, and God turned and inclined to Abel and his offering, and a fire came down from the Lord from heaven and consumed it. And unto Cain and his offering the Lord did not turn, and he did not incline to it, for he had brought from the inferior fruit of the ground before the Lord, and Cain was jealous against his brother Abel on account of this, and he sought a pretext to slay him.*"

It would appear then that Abel brought of

the best of the firstlings of his flock while Cain, though he brought fruit of the ground, apparently kept the best for himself. By bringing of the best of his flock, Abel worshipped God, thus his faith was expressed in worship.

(Read Heb. 11:5, 6) Enoch pleased God in his walk, i.e. all that he did day by day. Verse 6 explains that one cannot please God without faith because to please Him, one has to believe first that God is, that He exists and then that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. This is faith and we are told that Enoch pleased God, thus he had faith.

This verse is a little misleading. It is taught by many that Enoch was taken to heaven and that he did not die. There are many verses that contradict this teaching, possibly including verse 13 here in chapter 11, **“These all died in faith, not having received the promises...”** The “all” in this verse could apply only to Abraham and Sarah, or it could apply to all the people that have been listed in this chapter, depending on how we each read the context. However, verses 39 and 40, I believe, would include all the people that have been listed in this chapter, **“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”** John, in John 3:13, tells us **“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man.”** He also tells us in John 1:18, **“No man hath seen God at any time.”** So we need to understand two things, first what does the word “translated” mean and what else could “that he should not see death” mean. The word “translated” is from the Greek *metatithemi* meaning “to transfer, i.e. (lit.) transport, (by impl.) exchange, (reflex.) change sides, or (fig.) pervert.” It is translated “carry over, change, remove and turn” in other scriptures. Gen. 5:24 simply says that **“God took him.”** It does not infer that Enoch was taken to heaven, just that he was taken. First note that we’re told **“that he might not see death”**, not that he might not die. I think we have to conclude that God mercifully took Enoch out of this life that he

might be spared the infirmities of old age, and/or from the hands of the wicked. Either way, I believe that Enoch died, but possibly like Moses who died on Mt. Nebo in the presence of God.

(Read Heb. 11:7) In II Peter 2:5, we’re told, speaking of Noah, that he was a preacher of righteousness. In Gen. 6:3 we’re told, **“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”** This verse has been used to teach that man’s life span would be reduced to a maximum of 120 years, or that man had 120 years to repent before the flood. The book of Jasher indicates the latter. In chapter 5:7, 8, Jasher says that God said to Noah, “Speak ye, and proclaim to the sons of men, saying, thus saith the Lord, return from your evil ways and forsake your works, and the Lord will repent of the evil that he declared to do to you, so that it shall not come to pass. For thus saith the Lord, behold I give you a period of one hundred and twenty years; if you will turn to me and forsake your evil ways, then will I also turn away from the evil which I told you, and it shall not exist, saith the Lord.” With this information, I think we can see just how much faith that Noah had. How discouraging would it be to preach for 120 years and not have anyone believe you. Also how discouraging would it be to take all of the guff that he would have received as he built this large ark on dry ground. Noah would have had to have great faith to continue both his preaching and his building in the face of total apathy and unbelief.

(Read Heb. 11:8-10) We’re told that Abraham did three things by faith. First he left his homeland to go to a new land, not knowing where he was going, when called by God to do so. Second, he dwelt in tents, in the land God had called him to, as an alien. Third he looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. These same elements or steps are expected of us as Christians and compare to what the Israelites went through in the Exodus. They were called to leave Egypt by faith, i.e. as we are justified by faith. The Israelites were given the law and then lived in tents in the wilderness to teach them obedience. We strive through faith for sanctification by hav-

ing the law written on our hearts and in our minds. The Israelites looked for the Promised Land, we look for the redemption of our bodies, the manifestation of the Sons of God, the inheritance of the promises. Faith needs to increase with each step or each element. If one is satisfied with justification only, they only have 1/3 of the faith needed to inherit the promises. To them, they never know the goal beyond what they think of as "heaven." As one advances into the process of sanctification, if they don't have a concept of the third element, they wander aimlessly in the wilderness not having a direction to go. Unfortunately, many seek to live in houses, i.e. denominations rather than tents that can be moved when the pillar of cloud moves or advances. However, when one, by faith, goes through all three of the steps or elements, they will find the city that Abraham sought, the New Jerusalem.

(Read Heb. 11:11, 12) I have heard testimonies of different people in which they were trying to show how their faith worked for them. In most cases, it had to do with something material that they felt they needed and when they asked for it in prayer, they received it in fairly short order. I am not questioning their faith, but consider how much greater one's faith is who waits years for the answer to their prayer. This was the case with Sarah. She would have been 65 years old when she and Abraham left Haran and God made the first promises to Abraham. These promises demanded that Abraham and Sarah have children, yet it wasn't until 25 years later that Isaac was born. Yet we're told that through faith Sarah received strength to conceive and deliver a baby son when she was past the age of child bearing. The promise was that she and Abraham would have seed like the stars in the heaven or the sand upon the sea shore in number and they neither one stumbled at this but accepted it through faith because she judged, or considered, Him faithful Who had promised. This example of attitude is one that we all need to develop in our relationship to God.

(Read Heb. 11:13) As I said before, this could apply only to Abraham and Sarah, or it could apply to all the people who have been listed

to this point. At any rate, their faith did not extend only to the here and now, but they were able to look beyond the immediate fulfillment to the greater fulfillment long after they had died. The confession that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth correlates with the 40 years that the children of Israel were in the wilderness and the time of our sanctification. All are looking toward that city, the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is not a literal city in the classic sense that we usually think of a city, but rather it speaks of the organization of God's Kingdom, which though the Israelites were looking for the Promised Land, if they had gone in when God commanded them to do so, they would have attained to this city, or the kingdom.

(Read Heb. 11:14-16) This explains what we have just discussed. All of the people of faith, but especially Abraham and Sarah here, plus those Israelites of faith, the prophets, apostles, disciples, and all who believe God are looking for this better country, this new city that God has prepared. The fact that it is already prepared might lead some to think He is talking about heaven, but we need to remember that so far as God is concerned, all of this was prepared before the foundation of the earth and will be manifested in God's own timing.

The people the author was writing to, i.e. the Jews, in that day had a very jealous attachment to the land of Judah, much like the Jews of today concerning the land of Palestine, only probably more so. So far as they were concerned, this land was their inheritance. So when the author speaks of another country, this would have been quite difficult for them to understand and accept. The author makes it quite clear he is not talking about the land of Palestine. He could have been aware prophetically that the Jews were going to soon lose their city, the Old Jerusalem and their land. But he is trying to get them to understand that what he is talking about is not a literal city or land, such as they were thinking, but rather a heavenly, i.e. from heaven, or a structure of government from heaven. There is a great deal said, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament about the New Jerusalem, though it is not always called by that name. A study of the subject will

show that it is not the literal structure, but rather the spiritual structure of government, that it refers to. We'll see more about it as we continue our study.

(Read Heb. 11:17-19) Abraham's faith was such that because God had promised that Abraham's seed would be called in Isaac, Abraham had no doubt that even though he was to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on the altar, Isaac would still have children, even if it meant that he would have to be resurrected to do so. As I have said before, remember that Isaac was a grown man at this time, so he too had to be willing to be sacrificed. The amount of faith that Abraham would have had to have at this point is faith that most of us have never come close to knowing.

(Read Heb. 11:20) (Read Gen. 27:28, 29 [Isaac's blessing to Jacob]; 39, 40 [Isaac's blessing to Esau]) Obviously these blessings are God inspired. But, in Isaac's thinking at the time, do you think he was blessing them by what he hoped would happen to them, by what he thought would happen to them, or do you think he knew exactly what was going to happen to them? (Read Gen. 25:21-23) This prophecy was given to Rebekah by God. But Isaac would like to have reversed it if he could, but Gen. 27:33 tells us that Isaac, though he thought he gave the first blessing to Esau, when he realized he had given it to Jacob, confirmed it by saying, **"yea, and he shall be blessed."**

(Read Heb. 11:21) (Read Gen. 48:15-20) Jacob blessed all of his sons, including Joseph, in Gen. 49. This blessing here in vs. 21 has special significance in that Jacob in effect gave Joseph a double portion in the inheritance they were to receive in the land of Canaan. He adopted Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own sons giving them his name, Israel. As we have dis-

cussed before, the birthright consisted of two parts, the Dominion mandate and the Fruitfulness mandate. Jacob split the birthright in Gen. 49 giving the Dominion mandate to Judah and the Fruitfulness mandate, or the rest of the birthright to Joseph. This is confirmed in I Chron. 5:1, 2 (Read). To say, as verse 21 of Heb. 11 does, that Jacob blessed both of the sons of Joseph by faith begs the question, faith in what? Just saying that these two sons would become very great, one to be a great nation and the other to become a multitude of nations would be easy said. But to bless them knowing that the blessing would actually come to pass is quite another thing. I think we have to conclude that Jacob was being directed by God and he had the faith to know that it would be carried out. Though I doubt that Jacob had any idea what this blessing would ultimately bring about, or how important it was in God's plan for mankind. I believe that God instructed him in some manner to give the blessing and Jacob had the faith to do so without questioning God. This is a difficult thing for most of us to truly comprehend. It is only as we gain understanding into God's overall plan that had Jesus coming the first time to claim the kingship, i.e. the sceptre, and the second time to claim the kingdom, i.e. the birthright, that would manifest the Sons of God, those who will rule with Christ, that we can truly begin to get the significance of the faith that Jacob had in making this blessing.

(Read Heb. 11:22) This is in reference to Gen. 50:22-26 (Read). Joseph knew and understood the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and had faith in those promises to know that the children of Israel would return to the land of Canaan and would possess it. This was fulfilled in Ex. 13:19 and Joshua 24:32.

(We will continue next issue with Heb. 11) JRL.