

KINGDOM SPIRIT

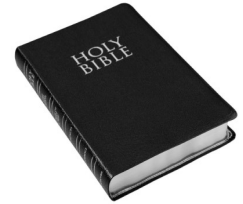
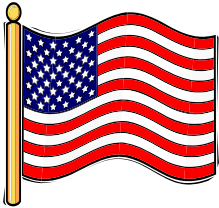
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1412

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

We were discussing in our last issue the fall of the Babylonian system as God brings it about. Revelation 18 continues with further discussion of this monumental fall.

(Read Rev. 18:1-3) This is not a problem just within our own nation, but every nation on earth has participated in the system so that all are guilty. All merchants have participated in the system whether they wanted to or not. Most have tried to use the system to enhance their own wealth, a wealth that they will lose with the fall of the system. We have seen in the past few years just how corrupted the system has become. A good example happened recently with the head of the International Monetary Fund being indicted for immoral sexual sins. As verse 2 says, Babylon is **“become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”** The corrupting influence of this economic system reaches into every aspect of life and affects everyone of us in one form or another.

(Read Rev. 18:4-8) While we all have to use the system, we don't all have to become a part of it. We have reached the point that it is virtually impossible for a person to purchase a home, a car, or even smaller necessities of life without incurring debt to do so. Certainly, we all need to avoid debt if at all possible, but it is sometimes necessary for us to incur it. When we do, we need to make it our top priority to pay it off. This is not what I mean when I refer to becoming a part of

the system. When we incur debt needlessly in our efforts to make more money, or when we intentionally use our money itself to increase our wealth, we are then becoming a part of the system. God is telling us here to come out of the system. If this is our goal rather than the goal of using the system to multiply our wealth, I think God honors this. It is truly unfortunate that we have to have a part in it to live, but to do so with the desire only to increase our wealth is wrong. God is going to judge the system by His own law. That which she (the Babylonian system) has “stolen” will have to be repaid double. Exodus 22:9 tells us, **For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.** This is the law. The case has been brought before God, the ultimate judge of all, and he is giving his judgment here in these verses in Revelation. The judgment will be carried out and all those that have profited by the system will have a part in the judgment.

In one sense, we are fortunate today in this time of mass communication and being near the end of the system in that we can see the things discussed in this Scripture being parroted by those in charge almost word for word. Even though we are seeing dire economic times, people in high places are saying almost daily what John is saying the system will say, **“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow”** for example. They are telling us the system is too big to fail, that there is no way that our overall economic system can fail, that debt is not a problem that won't resolve itself. Yet God says that because of this

arrogance, **“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”** I believe we are living in the time when we will see this happen. However, before this sounds too negative, we need to always remember that God does not take something away that would leave us hanging without replacing it with something that will sustain us. God already has an economic system that will work and He announced it to Moses at Mt. Sinai. When God destroys the Babylonian system, His system is waiting in the wings.

(Read Rev. 18:9-14) It is interesting that God uses fornication as an allegory of the relationship that the kings, or rulers, of the earth with this Babylonian system. Fornication is a term used to refer to unnatural sexual sins. I have found five examples of fornication given in Scripture: incest, homosexuality, sodomy, interracial marriage, and harlotry. If we consider these in the sense of the relationship of the rulers of the various nations with this Babylonian economic system, I think we can begin to visualize the real corruptness of this system and the rulers who have been a part of it. We can see the reason that these “kings” **“shall bewail her, and lament for her.”** However, note that verse 10 says that they are going to stand “afar off” as they see this system meet its end, though they are going to bewail its passing.

The merchants are also going to mourn the death of this ungodly system because people are no longer going to buy their merchandise. But notice how that merchandise is listed. Gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, etc. are at the top of the list, i.e. what they consider to be their most valuable items. Men, chariots, horses, sheep, cattle, wheat, etc. are at the bottom of the list. The merchandise that should be the most valuable for man’s sustenance is the least valuable in the Babylonian system. Could this be the reason that so large a percentage of the world’s population is starving or on the verge of it? God’s economic system values this merchandise in exact opposite values. When men like Abraham and Isaac are mentioned as being rich, their wealth is in their crops, their flocks and their herds, i.e. those things that man needs to live on. When God blesses man with wealth, it is not in gold or silver, but rather in crops and animals. Consider the dif-

ference. Man thinks he is doing well when his money brings him interest in double digit figures. Genesis 26:12 tells us, **“Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold,”** a return on his investment of 100 percent.

(Read Rev. 18:15-19) John reiterates the plight of the merchants and the ship masters when they see this system by which they obtained what they are calling wealth be destroyed in a very short time. It is important that we understand that wealth that consists of gold, silver, precious stones, fine linen, etc. is not what God bases real wealth on. These are things that only the wealthy, by today’s standards, have, yet, without food, clothing, and a means of procuring such things such as growing them, of what real value are they? But because gold, silver, precious stones, etc. are the measurement of wealth in most people’s minds, I think we can see why merchants and shipmasters are in great despair when the system by which they gained them is destroyed.

We’re told that the system falls in one hour. I would rather think that the one hour is used in the sense of long term prophecy which would mean that one hour would be about 15 years. I don’t think the Bible indicates that this destruction happens instantly, but rather over a short period of time as God replaces it with His own system. But I think we can see the dilemma of those who are used to their money working for them, having to instead themselves having to produce something of intrinsic value in order to eat.

(Read Rev. 18:20-24) I think we can also see that this destruction will not happen without violence. The comparison of the destruction of the Babylonian system to the casting into the sea of a great millstone shows us how complete this destruction will be. It is very difficult for us, having lived with this system all of our lives, to imagine so complete a destruction as John is detailing. Virtually all of us want to see the destruction of at least some part of this evil economic system, but at the same time all of us will want to preserve some part of it as well. Without having the mind of Christ, as will be evident in the overcomers, it is difficult to imagine any kind of system that can and will replace the Babylonian system. We have the pattern of the replacement system given to us in the Law, but it is still hard to comprehend the loss of this Babylonian system since that is all that

we have all lived with all of our lives.

Verse 24 gives us a strange twist in our study. We're told that **"in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth."** This has particular bearing on our time now with the events that are transpiring in the Palestine area and Jerusalem in particular. In Luke 13:33, 34, as part of His answer to some who were warning Him not to go to Jerusalem because Herod wanted to kill Him, Jesus said, **"for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee."** It is Jerusalem that Christ says is responsible for killing the prophets.

(Read Matt. 23:29-39) Jerusalem is the only city in Scripture that is charged with killing the prophets and being held responsible for doing so as in verse 35. In Rev. 18 we were talking about the city of Babylon that appears to be charged with the blood of the prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth. Jesus considered Jerusalem to be guilty of all the blood shed on earth from Abel to His own day—John extends this to the end of the age when great "Babylon" falls from power and is cast into the sea like a great millstone.

Obviously, somehow Mystery Babylon and old Jerusalem become synonymous with each other insofar as the law is concerned. In Rev. 11:8, in discussing the two witnesses, John told us, **"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."** So Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified, is spiritual Sodom and Egypt. Sodom is a symbol of immorality. Egypt is a symbol of bondage. Babylon is a symbol of commerce built upon usury, rather than upon the divine law. Sodom is remembered for being destroyed by fire and brimstone. Egypt is remembered for being destroyed by the ten plagues. The old city of Babylon is remembered for its sudden fall at the hand of Cyrus, who was a type of Christ.

The old Jerusalem is Sodom in that its lawlessness caused it to kill the prophets. Jerusalem is Egypt in that it is in bondage with her children, the followers of Judaism who rejected Jesus. Jerusalem is also Babylon, in that its "children" have gained control over the world system through their financial and banking empires.

Old Babylon was not liable for the blood of prophets. This liability was incurred when Babylon and Jerusalem merged corporately just as liability for immoral lawlessness and bondage was incurred when they merged with Sodom and Egypt. Of course there was not a physical merger, but rather a merger that occurred mystically or spiritually.

Jerusalem, then, is spiritual Babylon, spiritual Sodom, and spiritual Egypt. Those who today are working to establish Jerusalem (old) as the Kingdom of God are working against God, not for Him. Christian Zionists have been tricked into supporting the opposition without really knowing who they are working for, or their real agenda.

The last few issues have been discouraging at best as they have described the fall of the Babylonian system. I say this from the standpoint that unfortunately we are all affected by the system and as it falls, it is going to make us wonder just where we are in relation to it. However, chapter 19 is a good news chapter, though at first read it might appear to be a bit somber. As we learn to understand it, I believe this will change and we will all appreciate the good news.

(Read Rev. 19:1-6) That God has rendered judgment on all three aspects of this system is truly something to rejoice about. Remember that John is in the spirit in the Kingdom of God that we discussed in Rev. 4. So what he is seeing is the rejoicing of the whole kingdom.

(Read Rev. 19:7-9) This is the voice of the great multitude of verse 6 that is speaking verses 7 and 8. This passage is usually not understood because of a failure to understand who the bride is. We studied in chapter 17 of the false bride, i.e. the Church, that has tried to insert herself into the position of the bride. But Scripture is quite specific as to who the true bride really is. Hosea 1 is basically the divorce decree that God gave to Israel, His first bride. This first marriage took place at Mt. Sinai as God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. However, Israel, the bride, did not keep her word and went after other gods, or lovers as Hosea 2 describes them. (Read Deut. 24:1-4) This is the law of divorce. God found great uncleanness in Israel as she turned from Him to gods made by man. Thus God gave her a bill of divorce in Hosea 1. This severed all ties between God and Israel. The ex-Israelites could no longer call themselves by the name of Israel,

which means God rules, or ruling with God, because of this divorce. This still holds today. The people today that call themselves Israel do so in violation of God's law is two or three different ways and will be judged for it.

Yet God had made some unconditional promises to Abraham that left Him obligated to these people even though the people had sinned greatly. For this reason, we see God seeking to re-marry Israel in Hosea 2:14-23 (Read). But the question comes to mind, is not re-marrying Israel a violation of law. Based on Deut 24:4, this would certainly seem to be the case. However, there is more to the law. (Read Romans 7:1-3) Christ, as God the husband, died thus releasing Israel from the divorce law that would have prevented her from re-marrying God, or Christ. Now that He is risen from the dead, we see him alluring Israel to be His bride again. But this time, it will not be a marriage based on conditions, or the Old Covenant. This new marriage will be based on the New Covenant in which Israel will be in complete agreement with God in all His ways. Rev. 21:2 equates the bride with the New Jerusalem. This will be the New Jerusalem, the Sarah, not Hagar, the Old Jerusalem. (Read Gal. 4:22-31) Bride = Israel = New Jerusalem.

Israel is the corporate Bride of Christ. This has individual as well as corporate aspects. The corporate Bride is the sum total of all the individuals who have been married to Him throughout history. On the individual level, we have discussed the three steps that one must take toward coming into this marriage bond with Jesus Christ. The first is to by faith accept justification by the blood of the Lamb, that is to experience the Feast of Passover. This is free and cannot be bought or earned. The second is to be filled with the Spirit, or to be sanctified,--that is to experience the Feast of Pentecost. This requires effort on the part of the individual to grow and mature in Christ. The third is glorification, -- that is to experience the Feast of Tabernacles. The first two steps cannot be bypassed to achieve the last.

Quoting from the book Who Is An Israelite by Dr. Stephen Jones,

"Passover and Pentecost were both fulfilled in 33 A.D. Jesus became the Passover Lamb when He died on the cross while everyone was killing the lambs for Passover that year. After His resurrection, He ascended and then re-

turned at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1) to fulfill that feast. This concluded the work of His first coming—the work that He had to do as the Messiah-King of Judah.

"The autumn feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles) are fulfilled in the events surrounding the second coming of Christ, when He comes as the heir of Joseph's birthright. This is the time of the 'marriage' that the book of Revelation describes."

This fulfillment of the first two feasts allowed us as individuals to come into a marital relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of our spiritual immaturity and imperfections, this marital relationship is not instantly perfect the moment we accept Christ's justification by faith—nor is it perfect when we are sanctified or experience Pentecost. We still have much growing and maturing to do. So while we have the beginning of a marital relationship, the marriage bond is not what it will be.

Israel, as the Bride, is not composed exclusively of natural, or genetic, Israelites. While the marriage is exclusively with Israel, it does not exclude those who are not natural Israelites, nor does it necessarily include all natural Israelites. (Read Isa. 56:6-8) Isaiah is referring to Solomon's dedicatory prayer when he dedicated the temple. (Read I Kings 8:41-43) Galatians 3:29 makes it clear that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, one must be Christ's to be an heir of the promises. This will exclude many natural Israelites and include many non-natural Israelites. In studying the Law, one would see that there are many reasons that a person would be cast out of the congregation, i.e. lose citizenship rights. This may be permanent or temporary depending on the reason for the casting out and/or the repentance of the one cast out. The point is that through sin or uncleanness, a natural Israelite could lose his or her citizenship rights, so Paul is saying that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, to be a true Israelite, thus an inheritor of the Abrahamic Promises, one must have Christ.

Getting back to Rev. 19:7, the angel tells John, "**his wife hath made herself ready.**" This making herself ready is the three step process that we have been discussing.

Verse 8 tells us that the Bride is to be granted to be arrayed in fine linen and then ex-

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Verse 8 tells us that the Bride is to be granted to be arrayed in fine linen and then explains that the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Saints are Christians. The supposed conferring of sainthood on individuals by the Church misrepresents the true use of the term in Scripture. This is something that is conferred by God upon all Christians.

In verse 9, the angel instructs John to write **"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."** In our western culture, we have the wedding, or marriage, before the marriage supper, or the reception. In Scripture, this order is reversed. The marriage supper preceded the wedding and would last for seven days. The story of Jacob in Gen. 29 helps us understand this custom. (Read Gen. 29:21-28) Jacob had served Laban for seven years in lieu of a dowry (which Jacob apparently had stolen from him as he journeyed to Padanaram in search of a wife). Laban deceived him and at the end of the feast gave him Leah, his oldest daughter, instead of Rachel whom Jacob loved. When Jacob confronts Laban about this deception, Laban basically

said that if he would fulfill her week, i.e. finish the week of festivities for the bride and groom, then he would give Jacob Rachel, if he would agree to another seven years service. So they had another week of feasting and Laban gave Jacob his younger daughter Rachel.

Another example is in the story of Samson. Samson saw a young Philistine woman that he decided that he wanted to marry, so he asked his parents to set up the wedding. They objected because of the fact that she was a Philistine, but Samson insisted. So finally his father went to the woman and apparently made arrangements for the wedding. (Read Judges 14:10-13) We won't go into the whole story, the point is that the feast was a week long affair. We aren't told just when the bride was introduced into the affair, but the feast started before the wedding.

We will continue our discussion of the marriage supper in our next issue. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 10 continues with Ezekiel in the temple in Jerusalem, at least in his vision. (Read Ezekiel 10:1-7) I have tried to find a description of a cherub, but apparently different people had different ideas as to what one looked like. The word "cherub" is from the Hebrew "*kerub*" which literally means "one grasped, held fast." I think it is fairly obvious that they were a celestial being of some type with varying descriptions. The ones that Ezekiel saw had hands and feet as a man and four faces and 4 wings

In the vision that Ezekiel is seeing here, cherubims are supporting a throne, presumably the throne of God. The one on the throne spoke to the man we encountered in chapter 9 clothed with linen and carrying the writer's inkhorn, to take of the coals of fire from between the cherubims and scatter them over the city of Jerusalem. Again, the glory of the LORD moved from the cherubims to the threshold in preparation to leave the temple.

Meanwhile, the man clothed in linen went in between the cherubims and one of the cherubims stretched forth his hand into the burning coals and took some and put them into the hand of the man clothed in linen. Then he went out.

(Read Ezekiel 10:8-22) Ezekiel again describes the living creature that he is seeing and says that it is the same creature he first saw by the river Chebar. There is one difference however, though later it changes back to the same as he first saw. This time, one of the faces was that of a cherub rather than the face of an ox. This creature leaves the temple and the glory of God that was above it leaves with it.

(Read Ezekiel 11:1-3) God took Ezekiel up in the spirit and brought him to the east gate of the temple where he saw twenty-five men. These are not the same twenty-five that we saw worshipping the sun a couple of chapters ago, nor is this the same Jaazaniah that we previously encountered that was the son of the high priest. God told Ezekiel that these were the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in the city. While the prophets like Jeremiah were prophesying that the end of the city was soon to come, these men were telling the people just the opposite.

(Read Ezekiel 11:4-12) Ezekiel is commanded by God to prophesy to these men. Ezekiel tells them that God knows what they have thought. They have multiplied the slain in the city. Though they themselves have feared the sword, God says He is going to bring the sword upon them. Though they may escape the sword, God says He is going to deliver them into the hands of strangers and He will judge them in the borders of Israel. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar set up his military headquarters at Riblah which was on the northern border of the land of Israel.

(Read Ezekiel 11:13-21) Ezekiel says that when he prophesied, Pelathiah, one of the twenty-five, died. This made Ezekiel fearful that God was going to make a full end of those left in Judah and Jerusalem. But the word of the LORD came again to him reminding him that it was the men of Jerusalem who said to all the house of Israel, **“Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.”** Apparently when the Israelites were taken into captivity, the men of Jerusalem considered themselves better than the Israelites and mocked them telling them that God was removing them from the land and giving it to

their betters, the men of Jerusalem. But God says that though He has cast Israel far off among the nations and scattered them, He says, **“Yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.”** He then gives the promise that He will gather them from where they have been scattered and says He will give them the land of Israel. He says He will put a new spirit into them and take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh. He says He will do this that they might walk in his statutes and keep His ordinances. And finally the promise He made to Abraham and we found it again in Hosea, they will be His people and He will be their God. Any who refuse to walk after God’s ways, but continue in the ways of their own heart after their idols, God says He will recompense their way upon their own heads.

(Read Ezekiel 11:22-23) Ezekiel then sees the Glory of God leave the temple and the city and stand upon the mountain on the east side of the city, which I believe is the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel is seeing this in a vision that demonstrates that God has left the temple and the city. Jerusalem now has no defense against Nebuchadnezzar.

As I have mentioned, it is interesting to me that it is from this same location that Jesus ascended into the heavens which symbolized the Glory of God leaving the earth to return on the day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of the apostles and disciples, and of course into the heart and mind of every Christian since then. This is the new temple, the new abode of God on earth.

(Read Ezekiel 11:24-25) Ezekiel was then taken by the spirit to the captives of Judea in Babylon. Here he spoke to them of all that he had seen in his vision.

(Read Ezekiel 12:1-16) In chapter 12 Ezekiel is apparently back among the Israelite captives for God again tells him he is dwelling among a rebellious house, who, though they had eyes and ears, they can neither see or hear because of their rebellion. God instructs Ezekiel to prepare his stuff as if he were moving such as he would if he were going into captivity and then he is to carry his stuff out during the day where the people can see him doing it. He was to dig through the wall in the process. When asked by the Israelites what he is doing, God told him to answer that he was their sign as to what was going

to happen in Jerusalem. He says that this sign has to do with the prince, or king in Jerusalem. He says that the king will dig through the wall to carry his stuff out of the city. He will wear a disguise. But God says that He will spread His net upon him and he will be taken to Babylon, but will not see it, though he will die there. God then says that He will scatter the people with the king among the nations, but He will take a sword after them. He says He will leave a few to escape so that they can tell the people, in the nations to which He scatters them, of their abominations and that they will know that God is the LORD.

We have already studied the story of what King Zedekiah did, how he and a number of his princes and mighty men attempted to escape out of Jerusalem in the night by going between the walls and how the Chaldeans caught up with them and took Zedekiah to Riblah where King Nebuchadnezzar had the king's sons and the people that were with the king all killed and then had Zedekiah's eyes put out. He was then taken to Babylon, but never saw it.

(Read Ezekiel 12:17-20) God told Ezekiel to eat his food with quaking and to drink his water with anxiety as a demonstration of what the people of Jerusalem were going to go through because of the siege by Nebuchadnezzar. He then tells Ezekiel that all of the inhabited cities in Judah will be laid waste.

(Read Ezekiel 12:21-28) The Israelites had developed a proverb which said, "**The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth.**" This was their way of saying that the prophecies that the prophets like Jeremiah were saying were not true because a long time had gone by and none of the prophecies had come to pass. God reminds Ezekiel of this proverb and says He is going to make this proverb a false one. God says that He will now say the word, and it would very soon be fulfilled. No longer will the vision be prolonged.

(Read Ezekiel 13:1-16) Ezekiel is told by God to prophesy against the false prophets in Israel who are prophesying of peace for Jerusalem because God says there is no peace. Because these prophets have gone about saying "thus saith the LORD" when God says He has not sent them nor given them a word to say, God says these prophets will not be in the assembly of His people, and neither will they be written in the writing of the house of Israel nor will they enter the land of Isra-

el. He likens them to one who builds a wall and others daub it with untempered mortar. Because He will bring a great storm upon the wall, it will fall as will those who have daubed it.

(Read Ezekiel 13:17-23) God tells Ezekiel to also set his face against the prophetesses that were prophesying falsely. Speaking of pillows and kerchiefs makes this a little bit confusing. The Companion Bible's notes on these verses conveys the idea that these prophetesses were concealing the true judgment of God through their false prophecies. The margin of my King James Bible indicates that they were sewing magic charms on their clothing to both entice and conceal. Through their lies, they have produced the opposite result of that intended by God. They have made the people sad whom God has not made sad. They have strengthened the hand of the wicked instead of causing the wicked to repent.

God tells them through Ezekiel that they will see no more divinations because God is going to deliver His people out of their hands.

(Read Ezekiel 14:1-5) Ezekiel has a group of elders of Israel come to him, presumably to ask him for an answer from God. But God tells Ezekiel that these men have "**set up their idols in their heart and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face.**" Very often, since we don't go bow down to some idol or statue, we tell ourselves that we do not worship idols. I would be reasonably sure that these men were thinking along this same line. But let's look at the opposite. Deut. 11:18 says, "**Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.**" "Idols in their heart" could be any of a number of things that would be the opposite of the God's law. It doesn't have to be a literal thing, it can be a way of thinking. God is saying that whatever it might be, it is iniquity, or lawlessness. Instead of having the law of God before their faces, they have this stumblingblock, this false law, thought, or whatever we might want to call it that is opposite of or opposed to the law of God in front of their faces or in the forefront of their mind. Knowing this, God asks, "**should I be enquired of at all by them?**" This reminds me of an example I experienced in the equipment

business. Mesa Verde National Park put out a bid request for a tractor-loader-backhoe. I looked at the specifications and felt we could meet them more than adequately so I bid on the machine. When it came time to open the bids, the only bid that they paid any attention to was a bid from the John Deere dealer. Prices or specifications from everyone else were totally ignored. My question to the man opening the bids was, if the only machine you were going to buy was a John Deere, why did you ask anyone else for bids? This is somewhat the position God was in with these elders. If their heart idol was dominating their thinking and actions, why did they come to Him?

So God told Ezekiel to tell them that every man who had set up idols in their heart and putteth the stumblingblock of their iniquity before his face and then came to the prophet, God would answer him according to the multitude of his idols. He gives as His reason, so that He could take hold of the heart of the house of Israel because they were estranged from Him through their idols.

(Read Ezekiel 14:6-11) God tells Ezekiel to speak to the whole house of Israel telling them the same thing that He told Ezekiel to tell these elders. God will answer them by setting His face against that man and making him a sign and a proverb and will cut him off from the midst of His people.

If the prophet is deceived, God has permitted him to be deceived that he might be punished for his own deception of the people. Both the prophet and the man coming to him will receive the same punishment. God says that this is so that the house of Israel go no more astray from Him or continue to pollute themselves any more with their transgressions. It is God's intent for Israel to be His people and He be their God.

(Read Ezekiel 14:12-23) The word "land" is from the Hebrew "*erets*" which refers not only to the land, but all that is in it. "Trespassing" is

from the Hebrew "*maal*" meaning to transgress. So God is saying that if the nation transgresses grievously, then He will correct it with one or more of four different judgments, famine, wild beasts, the sword, and pestilence. He says that even if Noah, Daniel, or Job were there, they would only deliver their own lives by their righteousness, i.e. each person would be responsible for their own righteousness. There would be no riding on someone else's coat tails.

Then He asks, "**How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem...to cut off from it man and beast?** We have already seen the arrogance of the men of Judah, so this punishment will be much worse on Jerusalem because of it. Yet God says that there will be a remnant left that will come forth to Israel that they might know what all has taken place and that it has been God that brought it about. JRL