

# KINGDOM SPIRIT

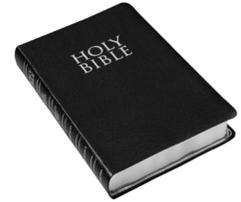
P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail [ksm@fone.net](mailto:ksm@fone.net)

**“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1108

## EXODUS 20

In our last issue, we began to look at the Ten Commandments. I had planned to just give a brief review of each of the commandments. But after thinking about it more, I feel we need to go into considerable more detail since these commandments are the foundation of the rest of the law that we have recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. So I would like to back up a little and start over in our study of the law. I recommend that you read all four of these books. I will be using different Scriptures as we proceed, but in the interest of space, I will not be quoting most of these Scriptures, but rather paraphrasing in a sense and giving the location of these Scriptures. I urge you to read them so that they are familiar in your mind. As I have urged in the past, do not take my word for anything, but rather take God's Word.

The Ten Commandments are listed in their entirety twice in the Bible, first in Exodus 20:1-18 and second in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. As we mentioned in our last issue, God spoke these commandments to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai as they were traveling from Egypt to the land of Canaan. It is the only time that God spoke directly to all the people of Israel. However, upon hearing God, the people became so fearful that they said to Moses, **“Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us lest we die.”** (Ex. 20:19) God also wrote these commandments on two tablets of stone and gave them

to Moses. (Ex. 31:18) Before Moses could return from the mountain where he received the stone tablets, the people had talked Aaron into making them a molten calf and they worshipped the calf as their god. When Moses saw what they had done, in his anger, he threw the tablets of stone down, breaking them.

Later God instructed Moses to hew two tablets of stone like the first and bring them up into the mountain again. Moses did this and God again wrote the laws on these stones. (Ex. 34:28) God also instructed Moses how to make the Ark of the Covenant and commanded that the children of Israel build it. Then the stones containing the law were to be placed in it, within the Holy of Holies. These stones remained in the ark until it disappeared from history when the kingdom of Judah went into the Babylonian captivity.

The Ten Commandments can be grouped into two groups, commandments relating to our relationship to our God and commandments relating to our relationship with each other. The first four commandments fall into the first category and the last six into the second category. Each commandment states the primary principle of the law involved, then there are other laws (commandments, statutes, and judgments) that relate to that principle by further defining it, presenting the blessings of obedience to it or the curses of disobedience.

The first commandment, as we mentioned in our last issue is, **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”** (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7) The word “gods” is from the Hebrew ‘elohiym,’ the plural of ‘eloahh’ meaning, “a deity or The Dei-

ty” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance). The Ferrar Fenton translation renders this verse, **“There shall be no other God to you, except MYSELF.”** In laws related to this commandment, we find things we are to do to keep God foremost, as well as things we are not to do that would dishonor God.. We’ll find gods, people, and things to which people attribute divine powers and God’s prohibition against these. And we’ll also see blessings for obedience and judgments for disobedience to this commandment.

Let us first look at laws that deal with what we should do to promote God foremost in our heart and mind or what we should not do to keep from removing God from being our only God.

Ex. 23:13 advises us to be continually watchful that we never even mention the names of any other gods in our speech. Certainly we are never to bow down to any other god or serve them, nor go after their ways (Ex. 23:24-25). The same passage also promises blessings and good health if we serve our one God only.

God gave Moses specific instruction on making an altar for burning incense, with a command to never burn strange incense on it, or use it for any other purpose except to make an atonement upon the horns of the altar with the blood of the sin offering. (Ex. 30:1, 7-10) Very often the point is missed that it is not the altar that is to be worshipped, but rather the God who commanded the altar to be built, by being obedient to Him. Israel has always had trouble keeping from worshipping the altar itself.

At the same time, God commanded that the altar, images and the groves of other gods are to be completely destroyed as the Israelites come into the land of Canaan. Failure to do so could end up with Israel making covenants with those worshipping these other gods themselves (Ex. 34:13-17). We must remember this principle still applies to us.

Christ quoted Deut. 6:4-5 in Matt. 22:37, **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”** In Matt. 22:38, He called

this the first and great commandment. He used the Greek word *“agapao”* for the word “love.” A study of the meaning of this word will show that this isn’t the love two friends or sweethearts might have for each other, but rather it is a love that is consciously and intentionally developed and maintained. We are expected to make a conscious effort to love or have affection for God. This type of love will be reflected in what we do. We might characterize it as ‘head love’ as compared to “heart love.” We have to put effort into it. God expects us to put effort into our love for Him.

This is borne out in other instructions He gave. Deut. 6:6-9 and 11:18-21 point out that we are to learn God’s ways, His laws, and we are to teach them to our children and to make them a regular topic of conversation. To do so will continue to make loving God and keeping His ways, an internal action. He warned against external actions designed to show one’s loyalty to something or someone else, such as cutting ones hair a certain way (as required for some religious reason) or even cutting the flesh for the dead (Deut. 14:1-2)

Ex. 23:14-19 commanded the men of Israel to appear before the LORD three times a year at special feasts which coincided with the three major harvests each year. Keeping always mindful of God and being under the obligation of presenting an offering as these feasts helped the people put and keep God first.

There are always those whose intent is to distract from God. This included actually trying to get people to follow false gods, attempts to assume supernatural powers themselves and those who would attempt to put down God’s laws even if it was a little at a time. All of these God says to put away from us because of the danger of distracting us from Him.

Deut. 13:1-4 tells us that even if a prophet gives us a sign that comes to pass to prove his credibility, but he tries to get us to follow false gods, we are not to hearken to him at all. Deut. 13:6-8 says that even if a close family member or a close friend tries to mislead us, we are not to consent, nor are we to try to hide that person from

judgment. Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26b and 31; and Deut. 18:10-13 all warn of witches, enchanters, or anyone either taking credit for supernatural powers or ascribing supernatural powers to any act or substance. They are to be stoned to death. We are not to have anything to do with them. We are not to tempt God as the people did in Ex. 17. It is important that we learn obedience for the sake of knowing and doing what is right. God does not owe us a reward for being good boys and girls. Many of us seem to have this attitude and seem to expect God to reward us if we do something we should. We then get upset with God when there is no reward. This is the type of tempting I believe Moses is speaking of in Ex. 17. We need to learn to abide by God's law simply because God said to. One expression of our love of God is willing obedience to His law.

Two laws that might at first not appear to be relevant to this commandment are in Lev. 17:12 and Deut. 23:17. The context of Lev. 17:12 is that God is explaining the reason that blood is prohibited from being eaten. Life is in the blood. Therefore, He has given Israel the blood as an atonement (covering) for sin upon the altar, i.e. He has allowed the substitution of life, the life of animals in this case, for life, the life of the people that they owe as a debt for their sins. Of course, ultimately, God manifested as man in Jesus Christ, gave His life, His blood, as that perfect substitution for our lives. But, back to the blood. If we drink the blood, the life, of something, I don't think we would have to look far around us to see that we might soon be attributing mystical or supernatural powers to that blood. Thus we would be honoring another god in some form.

Concerning Deut. 23:17, the most common "other" god we deal with is man himself. It may be ourselves, or it may be someone else, but our desire to satisfy the appetites of the flesh becomes our motivation. The sexual appetite seems to be one of, if not the most powerful, appetite we have. When we yield to any of these appetites, outside of their intended use by our Creator, they then become our god, something to which we submit ourselves. If we were to allow neither the whore, nor the sodomite within our land, we both

remove the temptation and we keep ourselves ever mindful of the one true God by denying ourselves.

If we made ourselves consciously abide by Deut. 6:13-15, i.e. fear God, serve Him, and not go after other gods, we will not have other gods before our God. We will have the blessing and not the curse of Deut. 11:26-28.

God tells us many times He is a jealous God. This is not to be taken lightly. This first commandment, "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**" is not a recommendation. It is a law! As with any other law, there are judgments, or penalties, for violation of it or the other laws supporting it. These judgments are severe. Ex. 22:20 sets the tone, "**He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.**" Lev. 20:2-5 tells us any one sacrificing their children to the god Molech is to be stoned to death by the people. Likewise for a person having a familiar spirit or that of a wizard (Lev. 20:27). A prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, who leads people after other gods (Deut. 13:5), a family member or close friend who attempts to thrust us away from the one true God (Deut. 13:6-11), and even someone who had gone forth and worshipped other gods including the sun, the moon or the host of heaven (Deut. 17:2-5) are to all suffer the same fate of being stoned to death.

Not only did this judgment requirement apply against individuals, but should a city turn against God, the entire city was to be destroyed according to Deut. 13:12-18. Careful inquiry is to be made first to determine for sure the guilt, but once guilt is determined, no mercy is to be granted.

Should man fail to carry out this judgment responsibility, God says He will still carry it out (Lev. 20:2-6). Man seems to be very short sighted in that he will not look ahead at the tremendous damage a person like this will do in the long run so far as our relationship to God is concerned. Because of this short sightedness he will refuse to carry out God's judgment on such people. So for man's good it is necessary for God to step in.

In fact, it seems to be difficult for man, in general, to keep God's law at all. Just as the fail-

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ure of a child to obey his parents is usually because he is yielding to his own desire, i.e. himself, or his peers; when we fail to obey God we are usually yielding to another god, whether it be ourselves or something we (or man) has created. But, we can be assured that our disobedience does not go unnoticed as Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 8:19-20; Deut. 11:16,17; and Deut. 28:15-68 all point out. Whether we look at disobedience from the individual's standpoint, or the national standpoint, we can be assured that we will not prosper.

At the same time, we need to say there are blessings promised when we adhere to the only true God and to Him only.

If we pondered what we might consider to be truly the most ideal living conditions in which we want to live, we could not exceed the blessings promised in Lev. 26:3-13 and Deut. 28:1-14. None of us truly want to live where everything is handed to us on a silver platter, so to speak, but we desire to be able to enjoy the fruits of our labors. This is what we can expect when we seek God only as our God, and exhibit this through true heartfelt obedience.

Even if we are chastised, individually or nationally, for disobedience and yet truly repent and turn back to God, He is merciful to receive us again and extend His blessing upon us. Lev. 26:40:45 explains this to us. For the children of Israel to even be successful in their attempt to take the land of Canaan as their own, obedience was required according to Deut 11:22-25. The law of God was given to the nation of Israel and while portions of it certainly applied to the individual, we must not lose sight of the fact that a national response was required by God. Of course, a national response is dependent on individual response, but God holds the nation responsible to hold its citizenry responsible. For this reason, over 70% of the Bible is addressed to or about the nation Israel rather than the individual. JRL

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*If you must make mistakes, it will be more to your credit to make a new one each time.*

We established in our last lesson that Jesus Christ is greater than an angel, whether this be a prophet or an angelic being; that Christ is our kinsman redeemer; and the concept of sonship is greater than servanthood. As we proceed into chapter three, we'll see that the author of Hebrews advances further into this concept of sonship and servanthood.

(Read Heb. 3:1-2) **“Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,”** identifies those to whom Paul is addressing, whether we consider it to be the Jews of Paul's day, or us today. The focus is not on our calling, but rather on Jesus Christ, whom Paul identifies as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, or confession. In verse 2, he makes a comparison between Christ and Moses. We have already established that Christ is the greater of the two.

(Read Heb. 3:3-4) While Moses was faithful in all his house (which I believe here represents the House of Israel), Christ is worthy of more glory in as much as Christ is the actual builder of Moses' house.

(Read Heb. 3:5-6) Here, Moses represents the faithful servant in contrast to Christ, the faithful Son. This servant and son relationship extends to us today. Moses, representing the Old Covenant, is a faithful servant. Though Moses had a great calling, the calling of Jesus Christ, representing the New Covenant is a greater calling. Moses' faithfulness as a servant was for a testimony of those things that were about to happen, i.e. the coming of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection. Note in verse 6 that we are Christ's house, **“if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”** This is not talking about personal salvation as we will see as we continue. Paul is using the Exodus as an allegory of one's Christian experience. **“Unto the end”** is referring to enduring to the end of the journey, the entering into the Promised Land. Again, if we can use the 3 feast days as an example, the people had the faith to get out and leave

Egypt, their Passover experience, or the justification, or salvation experience. While this is taught by some that if one doesn't endure unto the end, he or she is not a Christian, or they lose their salvation, this is actually speaking of attaining to "sonship," the entering into the Promised Land; being a part of Christ's house. Israel under Moses was a servant nation. The people were supposed to be like Moses, a faithful servant. Under the New Covenant, we are not under Moses, but under a new head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not merely a servant.

Yet, being justified by faith does not automatically make one a son. Sonship is that second step that we have discussed before that we referred to as sanctification. It takes us beyond servanthood.

Perhaps this would be more understandable if we paused a moment and considered the whole trip of the Exodus as it relates to our Christian experience. The fact that the people had the faith to leave Egypt compares to ones faith to accept the gift of justification, our leaving the world so to speak. As we have discussed before, this is the Passover experience. Crossing the Red Sea compares to the ritual of water baptism. (I Cor. 10:2) At Mt. Sinai God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people. This correlates with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Had they been willing to hear, God would have spoken the law into their hearts and minds. Since they were not willing, God wrote the law on the external tablets of stone. This would have been their Pentecost experience. The offering that was to be made at Pentecost was 2 loaves of wheat bread baked with leaven. The leaven represents sin which is killed by the baking of the loaves. The fire for the baking represents God's law. Baking means that we learn obedience. Had the people been willing to go into the land of Canaan when God first told them to, He says that they would have entered into His Rest. This would have been their Tabernacles experience, their glorification. Since they refused to obey God, that Rest is still yet to be entered into, but, as we have studied previously, will be associated with the first resurrection. Servanthood begins with the Passover experience. Sonship actu-

ally begins with the Tabernacles experience, but develops under Pentecost. Not all who have become servants will become Sons; not all will endure until the end, but this doesn't mean that they went back to Egypt, (though they thought about it) i.e. lose their salvation, they are still servants.

(Read Heb. 3:7-11) This is taken from the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm. The provocation started immediately after God had spoken the 10 commandments to the people and the people refused to hear God Himself anymore. (Read Ex. 20:18-21) Because they did not have the faith to experience Pentecost, i.e. God speaking the law into their hearts, it was not until after Christ's resurrection that the fulfillment of Pentecost was achieved. The entering into God's rest is the equivalent of entering the Promised Land. By not learning the lessons of Pentecost, most of the Israelites did not have the faith they needed to enter the Promised Land after the 12 spies gave their report.

There are three "rests" in Scripture portrayed by the Sabbaths, the Sabbath day, the Sabbath year, and the Jubilee. The first is man's rest, the second is the land's rest, and the third is God's Rest. Had the Israelites entered the Promised Land when God told them to, they would have entered in the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, i.e. in God's Rest. Instead, because of their disobedience, God made them wait another 38 ½ years in the wilderness, so when they finally entered, it was not in a Jubilee year. As a result, their calendar had Sabbath years and Jubilees that were not in alignment with God's Creation Jubilee calendar.

(Read Heb. 3:12-13) Considering all that we have looked at thus far, the author of Hebrews gives us this admonition. "Today" with the Israelites could have been a single day, such as the day they refused to hear God's voice at Mt. Sinai, or the day the spies gave their report, or 40 years. "Today" is an indefinite period of time for us. Usually, to us as individuals, I believe, it is a person's lifetime. A person has that length of time to be justified by faith, then having been justified by faith, to learn to obey God's Word, unless the resurrection occurs during one's lifetime. In the big picture, it is until the first resurrection.

(Read Heb. 3:14-18) In verse 14 we're told, **"For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."** Note the condition, the "if." But referring to the allegory that the author has used of the Exodus to explain our relation to Christ, we know that this is not talking about justification, or salvation, as most people express it. As we have already stated, the fact that the people had faith to believe the blood of the lamb would protect them from the death angel is equivalent to one having the faith to accept the blood of the Lamb, Christ Jesus, to protect one from the second death, i.e. one is justified by faith. What this verse is talking about is Sonship. Not only did the people have to have the faith to leave Egypt, but they had to go to Mt. Sinai and then on to the Promised Land. Endurance to the end is required to attain to Sonship, or the first resurrection.

The word "beginning" in verse 14 is from the Greek word *arche* which means first or primary or beginning. It also means "chief." The word "confidence" is the Greek *hupostasis*, the same word we looked at in Hebrews 1:3 last lesson which means "substratum, what lies under," or foundation. It is also used to refer to title deeds, the proof of ownership, so to speak. We could look at verse 14 then as saying that we are made partakers of Christ, IF "we hold the chief ruler of our foundation, or our title deeds, steadfast unto the end. Heb. 11:1 says, **"Now faith is the substance (*hupostasis*) of things hoped for, the evidence (*elenchus*, "proof") of things not seen."** In Hebrews 1:3, we saw that Christ is the imprinted seal of heaven that certifies the validity of God's title deed to the kingdom. So we could say here that we will inherit Sonship if we hold fast to the Chief Ruler of our title deed.

(Read Heb. 3:16-19) Unfortunately, the example, or allegory that the author of Hebrews is using is a negative example. The people of Israel did not have the faith they needed to enter into God's Rest, i.e. the Promised Land at the appointed time. Verse 16 indicates that not all that came out of Egypt provoked God. We know that Joshua and Caleb, who had come out of Egypt with Moses, were able to go into the Promised Land.

But the vast majority died in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb would compare to the overcomers that will attain to the first resurrection, thus immortality, while the vast majority will remain mortal, i.e. they will be subject to death until the second resurrection.

(Read Hebrews 4:1) Because "salvation" has become the overriding theme of most Christian churches today, there is a failure to understand the symbolism that the author of Hebrews is allegorically using here from Psa. 95. This is not talking about salvation, it is something beyond justification that we have to strive for. The Promised Land is not heaven. Rather it is the promises of God that we have had from the beginning. As individuals, it is the promise of life in the Age, i.e. participation in the first resurrection and living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4) Not all Christians believe in 2 resurrections, though I believe the Scripture to be quite clear on the subject, but I realize that most Christians that do believe in the two resurrections, believe that all Christians will be in the first resurrection and the non-Christians will be in the second resurrection. To understand that this is not so, let's compare Rev. 20:4-6 with John 5:28,29. (Read Rev. 20:4-6) I think it is obvious that only Christians are included in this group that are in the first resurrection. (Read John 5:28,29) In this resurrection we're told that all that are in the grave will be resurrected. However, some will be resurrected to life and some will be resurrected to judgment. Obviously, we are not speaking of the same resurrection in both Scriptures. In Revelation, only Christians will be resurrected, a partial resurrection, whereas in John he is speaking of a resurrection in which all that are in the grave will be resurrected, some to life and some to judgment. So it was with Israel, the vast majority were judged in the wilderness with only a few of those who left Egypt with Moses, Joshua and Caleb and their families specifically, ultimately entering the Promised Land. As we said above, the Promised Land is not heaven, as opposed to hell. The Promised Land is the fulfillment of God's planned kingdom on earth. This is what Heb. 4:1 exhorts us to attain to.

(Read Heb. 4:2) While we have, for the most part, limited the term “gospel” to only the news of Jesus Christ, in reality, the “gospel” is God’s Word, whether spoken by God or man. This verse tells us that the “gospel” was not new as it was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness. This does not necessarily mean that it was as understandable as it is to us today after the fact. However, the gospel of the cross was preached to Israel by means of the Passover Lamb and the attendant ceremonies. While it would appear that the majority of the people did not understand the prophetic significance, still for them to obey killing the lamb, putting its blood on their doorpost and then packing up and leaving Egypt required more faith than some of us have or have had in the past. Verse 2 does not mean that they had no faith at all as they certainly had faith enough to leave Egypt. But they did not have enough faith to hear God at Mt. Sinai nor to go into the land at the appointed time. The focus was not on their leaving Egypt, but upon hearing God’s voice at Mt. Sinai. Rom. 10:17 tells us, “**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” The people refused to hear God, saying they would rather hear from Moses than from God. Because they preferred to hear a man rather than God, though Moses told them what God told him, it did not produce faith in them. This refusal to hear God carried over to them not really hearing Moses, though he told them what God told him.

It is unfortunate that many people are discouraged from hearing God’s voice, i.e. His Word, by their pastors and teachers as these pastors and teachers don’t want them to hear anything that might not agree with their opinion. When I was in the service, I was attending a church one Sunday evening and the preacher told the congregation that they did not need to read the Bible as he would tell them what they needed to know. Needless to say, I never went back.

Getting back to Heb. 4:2, since the people refused to hear God, and since faith cometh by hearing, they did not have the faith to enter the Promised Land at the appointed time.

(Read Heb. 4:3-5) The Ferrar Fenton

translation translates the first part of verse 3, “**But we, the believers, may enter that rest (although He said...**” i.e. though God had said of the Israelites that refused to go into the Promised Land, “**They shall not enter into my rest.**” Paul is saying that the believers now would go in. He and the other writers of the New Testament assumed that everyone would hear God’s word and that instead of being limited to just justification by faith, they would all advance through sanctification and would be in that first resurrection. This turned out not to necessarily be so, as it is today. However, entering God’s rest for the Israelites meant going into the Promised Land. The question then comes up, How was going into the Promised Land, God’s rest? The last part of verse 3 plus verses 4, 5 helps answer this question, though we may need some extra explanation. The idea of resting comes from the law of the Sabbaths. Referring back to what we have already said about the 3 Sabbaths, the Sabbaths are based on the pattern established by God on the seventh day of creation. Each Sabbath was a different level of rest. In the final Sabbath, the Jubilee, God’s rest, all debt was cancelled. Had the Israelites gone in at the appointed time, it would have been at the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, i.e. 2450 years from Adam. Since all sin incurs a debt, it is interesting to speculate on what God’s rest would have meant. Because they refused to go in at that time, they had to wait 38 ½ years to go in at which time their calendar started the jubilee count but it was not in alignment with God’s original Jubilee count. At any rate, the Israelites were not allowed to enter God’s rest at that time.

(Read Hebrews 4:6-9) The Sabbath rest that remains is the Jubilee. It is a time of cancellation of debt, i.e. the liability of sin. Historically Israel never kept the land Sabbaths until the time of Ezra. By the time of David, they had accumulated 62 land Sabbaths and 8 Jubilees that they had not kept, i.e. 70 rest years. These were owed to God. God foreclosed in a strange way. He caused David to number the people without collecting the half shekel atonement money that God commanded Moses to collect in the last census. (Ex. 30:11-13) This removed their protection and

God slew 70,000 men of David's army, 1000 men for each rest year. This story is in II Sam. 24. The people still didn't learn their lesson as their time debt again grew to 70 years again at the time of the Babylonian captivity. II Chronicles 36 tells us that the Judahites spent 70 years in captivity to the Babylonians and verse 21 then says, **"To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."** When the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, they began to keep the land Sabbaths, but refused to keep the Jubilee. Thus verse 9 tells us **"there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."**

(Read Heb. 4:10) This refers to Christ and helps explain what God's rest is. (Read Isa. 58:13-14) We consider the weekly Sabbath, the first level of rest, to be a time of physical rest and study of God's Word. The second level of rest, we begin to learn to cease from our own works even as Jesus Christ did nothing of Himself, but only what He saw His Father do. (Read John 8:28, 29) also (Read John 12:49, 50) also (Read John 14:10) Jesus had entered into the "rest" which Heb. 4:9 tells us still remains. This is the highest Sabbath that God has intended for man from the beginning. It is to cease from one's own works, and desist from speaking one's own words and do only what the Father does and to speak only the Father's words.

We begin to learn this in the second level

of rest, Pentecost, through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that the Pentecost offering was 2 loaves baked with leaven. The leaven has to be killed by baking, i.e. by fire, or the law, as it is written on our hearts. It is a time of training, of maturing.

(Read Heb. 4:11) The example of disobedience he is referring to was the refusal to enter the Promised Land at the appointed time. As a result, God would not allow them to enter His "rest" at that time.

(Read Heb. 4:12, 13) The word "quick" in the King James means "living." It is not just the Word of God, but as Heb. 1:2 says, it is spoken by the Son, One who has entered the "rest" of God. As Heb. 2:1 tells us, **"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."** When this two-edged sword is spoken, it truly is sharper than any man's sword. In I Cor. 14:24, 25, Paul says that if Christians were in agreement in preaching God's Word, **"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."** There is nothing hid from God and His Word lays bare who and what we are before Him.

The next 3 verses are actually a part of the next chapter. We will begin here next issue. JRL

In our local Bible study group, we have, for the last several years, attempted to look at the complete Bible story, or plan of God. In doing this, we have virtually gone through the Bible several times, learning more and more each time we have done this. We are again doing this same study, but with the knowledge that we have gained each time we did this previously. I write out my notes in preparation for each lesson. Several people have requested a copy of these notes through the years. These are available on our website ([kingdomseekersministry.org](http://kingdomseekersministry.org)) or by mail to anyone who writes or calls and asks for them. JRL