

KINGDOM SPIRIT

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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1203

ISAIAH 11-14

The book of Isaiah, to a large extent, is a series of topics rather than a chronological history and prophecy of his time. Beginning with chapter 7 when God sent Isaiah to assure King Ahaz that the house of David would stand in spite of the sins of Ahaz that had brought the kingdoms of Syria and Israel against the kingdom of Judah, we have been looking primarily at prophecies concerning the house of David. Isaiah appears, at least by the quantity of his writings on the subject, to understand more about the ultimate outcome for the house of David in both the first and second coming of Christ than any of the other prophets. In chapter 11 he looks forward to the day of Christ's second coming and His rule of the nations in that day.

We might point out that though Jesus was proclaimed King by the people before his crucifixion (John 12:13), He was rejected as such by the priests and never ascended to a throne. This was in keeping with a curse that God had put on Jehoachin, or Coniah in Jer. 22:30, **“Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man (Coniah) childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.”** Jesus being a descendant of Coniah, (Matt. 1:11-12) this curse applied to Him. It did not mean that Coniah would not have children, but rather that none of Coniah's descendants would sit on the throne of David. He did have

children, Salathiel being the son through who Christ would eventually come. Until Christ had died and was resurrected, He was under this curse. Once He died He was free of the curse. (The principle of this release is found in Rom. 7:1-3)

The point being, Christ will not rule from the throne of David until his Second coming. In keeping with the unconditional promise to David (II Sam. 7:10-17) He had to be descended from David through Solomon to take the throne. Thus we're told in Luke 1:32-33, **“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”**

By all of this then, we know that Isaiah is speaking of Christ's second coming as he tells us of Christ and how He will rule and the result of that rule in Isaiah 11. (Read) Jesse, of course was David's father. Unlike any ruler today, Christ will not judge by what He sees or hears, but rather by the intent of the heart. Though man thinks more of himself than he ought and makes laws such as those that supposedly have to do with hate crimes, man does not know what another man thinks, and therefore cannot truly judge on what he thinks another man thinks. Only Christ will be able to rule in true righteousness.

The result will be total peace on the earth, not just peace between nations and between men, but between the animals of the earth as well. The nations (Gentiles) will seek the rulership of the King of Kings.

Many people today have written off the

kingdom of Israel that was taken into the Assyrian captivity, apparently believing that they were completely destroyed either literally or by assimilation. The prophets, especially Isaiah, tell us a different story. Isaiah never loses sight of God's promise to restore Israel. If we study both the Bible and secular history, identifying these people in history is not that difficult. When we do this we will understand much better what Isaiah has to say about them in this chapter. The highway he speaks of in verse 16 has already been opened up as these people migrated from the place of their captivity into western Europe and to the isles of the sea and on to the continents of North America and Australia, in keeping with God's purpose for scattering Israel to be His witnesses to the nations and in preparation for the return of our King.

Read Isa. 12. This continues how Israel and the world will react when Christ takes the throne of David to rule the world.

Isaiah now leaves the house of David to deal with the nations that surrounded Israel and Judah. The most important of these nations both for the time of the prophets and the latter days is Babylon. Though there was a kingdom of Babylon and a city within that kingdom by the name of Babylon, Babylon became a name that represents all that is opposed to God, thus to His kingdom of Israel. In chapter 13, Isaiah begins what he calls the "burden of Babylon."

Babylon had its beginning in Assyria which became the strongest nation of its time. As God destroyed Assyria, for their taking credit for their conquests that God had given into their hand, out of the ruins of Assyria arose Babylon, a yet even stronger kingdom than Assyria.

What is usually a judgment on a nation or person is often referred to in scripture as a "burden." This burden, or judgment upon Babylon that Isaiah is prophesying here did not take place on the literal kingdom and city of Babylon for nearly 200 years after Isaiah prophesied it. We need also to look at this judgment on Babylon as a shadow of the final destruction of what "Babylon" came to represent. That judgment is now in process of coming to pass, I believe. So as we look at what Isaiah has to say on the subject,

try to think of it in modern day terms as well.

(Read Isa. 13:1-5) Isaiah records the gathering of the nations to fight against Babylon. The Medes and the Persians were the nations that destroyed Babylon, but their army was made of soldiers from many nations.

The city of Babylon was, by the standards of the day, an impregnable city. Her walls were at least eighty feet thick and three hundred feet high. There were five hundred gates of burnished brass. Enclosed were lakes, parks and six hundred and twenty five city squares. A temple eight stories high and resting on a foundation a quarter of a mile square was at the center of the city. It was famous for its hanging gardens and an artificial mountain raised on arches and planted with trees. It was truly one of the wonders of the world at the time. Those in the city, including the king, felt quite secure.

Cyrus took the city by diverting the water of the Euphrates River which ran through the city and then entering the city through the riverbed that ran under the walls. The river was never restored, but overflowed the surrounding countryside making it a giant marsh to this day.

(Read Isa. 13:6-22) Understanding the city and kingdom of Babylon then, and the what I like to refer to today as the Babylonian System makes the destruction the prophet describes more real. Verse 20 tells us that neither the Arabian nor the shepherds will spend the night at the sight of the city of Babylon. This is the case to this day. In their mind it is haunted with evil spirits and they refuse to spend the nights there. The destruction of the city was horrendous.

Babylon is no longer a city or a kingdom per se. However, the system called by its name has all the elements of a kingdom. It has a religion, humanism; it has an economic system, our modern usurious worldwide banking system; it has people in every nation (with the exception of true Christians); it has land in every nation; and while it doesn't have a one man king, certainly there are rulers from virtually every nation that are united, at least by ideology, in imposing man's rule over the nations (as opposed to God's rule.) If we apply this prophesy, which is also prophe-

sied by many other prophets and the writers of the New Testament as well, to this system, I believe we can see at least the beginning of its fall as God moves to completely destroy it. When its religion and economic systems fail, the whole system will fail, and it is these two systems that we now see beginning to fall. When the fall is complete, I doubt that we can at this time imagine the destruction that will result.

(Read Isa. 14:1-2) This is a long term prophecy that again tells us that Israel would be set in a new land. II Sam. 7:10 and I Chron. 17:9 tell us the same thing. Israel was not allowed to return to the land of Canaan from their captivity. Instead, when they escaped their captivity, they moved west into western Europe and beyond. The nations formed by these ex-Assyrian captives have the strangers doing their best to emigrate to them, plus I believe that verse 2 will be fulfilled as the Babylonian system falls.

(Read Isa. 14:3-4) God promises rest to the house of Israel from their hard bondage. This has certainly happened to the escaped ex-Israelites in the nations that they have formed. However, there yet remains an even greater rest. **“9There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.** (Heb. 4:9-11)

Isa. 14:5-23 is a proverb against the king of Babylon. However, because the word “Lucifer” is used, many people are misled as to what it is really talking about. As we read these verses, keep verse 4 in mind so that we don’t get misled.

Verse 5: God takes credit for breaking the power of the Babylonian king. Vs. 6: This king that has **“smote the people with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger”**, God says is persecuted and no one is stopping it. Because the king is destroyed, verse 7 tells us the earth is at rest and is quiet.

Vs. 8: The trees, referring to the people, are rejoicing because since the king has been killed, no one else has come against them. Vs. 9

says that **“‘Hell’ from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming.**” The word “hell” is translated from the Hebrew word *sheol*. The same word is translated in verse 11 as grave. It means the same thing here in verse 9. God then mocks the king in the rest of verse 9 and verses 10-12. Most kings consider themselves to be strong and invincible, but all have the same weakness, they die. God is saying that this extremely arrogant king has this same weakness and mocks saying that the various kings that have died before him are mocking him. All the pomp, or importance that the king had ascribed to himself goes to the grave with him and the result of the grave will be the same for him as with all men.

The word “Lucifer” in vs. 12 means “Day Star”. This is the only place this word is used in scripture. Again, it is God’s way of mocking this king who thought so highly of himself.

Verses 13-14 tell us why God is mocking him. He was considering himself to be above God and then he says in verse 14 **“I will be like the most High.”**

Yet vs. 15 says that he will be brought down to the grave just like everyone else. When people see his body, the question will be **“Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?”** (vs, 16-17)

Then verses 18-23 tells us that while other kings of the earth that have died lie in glory, this king will be cast out of the grave like an abominable branch, that his body will be trodden under foot and will not have an honorable burial. Isaiah goes on to say that none of his descendants will be allowed to live either including son or nephew and his name will be cut off likewise.

We have in scripture the literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Turn to Daniel 5. The name of this king is Belshazzar who was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. His arrogance is portrayed in verses 2-4, **2“Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jeru-**

salem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. **3Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. 4They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.**" He put himself on the level with God, or above, by using these vessels that were only to be used in worshipping God.

(Read Daniel 5) The last two verses tell us part of what happened. **30**"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. **31**And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." We know from secular history that the king was not buried, but that his body was trodden down and left to scavengers. To me this fulfills the prophecy that Isaiah pronounced against this king as part of his burden of Babylon. I would not be surprised if this was not a shadow of what will happen to the rulers of the Babylonian system that we are currently living under .

(Read Isa. 14:24-32) God says that He will break the Assyrian and tread him under foot, but then God makes the point that this is His doing and purpose and nobody can change it. This burden came to Isaiah the year Ahaz died.

God warns all of Palestina that though Assyria will be destroyed, worse is yet to come. JRL

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

We are continuing our study of Heb. 12 with this lesson. (Read Heb. 12:12-14) In our previous lesson we discussed our need for chastening both from our parents when we were children, and the need from our Father in heaven now that we may be Sons of God. To be Sons of God, we need to recognize God as our Father. If we recognize Him as our Father, we, as we did with our parents when we were children, understand that He has a responsibility to train us to be His Sons. His training can be quite difficult at times,

but it will be worth it in the end. The author is telling us in verse 12 to recognize these facts and as the modern day term says it, "man up!"

The author is still thinking of running a race. If we think of it as a cross country race, for example, the temptation might be to try to take a short cut off the beaten path. The danger is that on the rough ground, there is the possibility of turning one's ankle, or tripping and falling, or stumbling and possibly breaking a leg. It would be much better to stay on the beaten path where the ground is smooth and the running can be done at full speed. The NASB translations uses the word "sanctification" in the place of the word "holiness" in verse 14. They both mean "setting apart" but I think we understand sanctification a little better. The author tells us to pursue peace with all men but to also pursue sanctification, without which no man shall see God. Pursuing peace means to live in harmony with all men. It does not mean to conform to the world's standard of morality. The addition of pursuing sanctification counterbalances the pursuing peace. We are to pursue peace, but we are to also set ourselves apart from the world's flawed life style. Marriage, as God intended it, gives us an idea of what the author is saying here. The couple becomes one, not by one swallowing up the other, but rather they are united in love. Without sanctification one cannot see God, but if one sets themselves completely apart from man, he will lead at best a very un-enjoyable life and will be of no benefit to man or God. If one pursues peace at any cost, they would be swallowed up by the world's very flawed life style.

(Read Heb. 12:15-17) The NASB translation makes this verse a little more understandable. **"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;** and the verse 16 continues, **"that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."** Esau is given as an example of one coming short of the grace of God. Because he had no vision of God's grace, being a here and now type person, he sold his birthright, which included the **Abrahamic** prom-

ises, for one meal. Because he did this it wasn't long before he became very bitter because he could not go back and do things over again as he should have the first time. Vs. 17 says, "**For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found not place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**" Even though Esau sought the blessing from Isaac with tears, he could not change his father's mind. Once Isaac had given the blessing, he could not change his mind even though he had intended originally to give the blessing to Esau. Because of the bitterness that arose in Esau's heart, Esau and Jacob and their respective families have been opposed to each other ever since, often in battle.

(Read Heb. 12:18, 19) The author tells his readers they are not come to a mountain that could be touched, i.e. an earthly mountain. He refers back to Mt. Sinai in Arabia when the Israelites stopped there to receive the Law. The description he gives is when God came down on the mountain to give them the Law, but when He spoke, they asked Moses to not let God speak to them in person again. We're told that they could not even endure hearing the word "**And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.**" Even Moses, who had seen the burning bush, says that he feared and quaked. (Read Heb. 12:20, 21) Moses was able to overcome his fear and went up into the mountain to receive the Law of God. (Read Ex. 19:12) Those boundary markers are still there around the base of Jabal al Lawz, which is probably the real Mt. Sinai.

(Read Heb. 12:22-24) This is the finish line of the race—the New Jerusalem. In Gal. 4:24-28 (Read) Paul likens Mt. Sinai to the old Jerusalem. The author of Hebrews is basically doing the same thing. Mt. Sion is the New Jerusalem. The general assembly and church of the firstborn are the saints who have attained to the first resurrection whose names have been enrolled in heaven. There are many still today who teach that Christians are saved by the New Covenant while the Jews are saved by the Old Covenant, i.e. by the Law. The author of Hebrews is pointing out

that this is not so. If a Jew became a Christian, the author is telling him that the New Jerusalem is the goal, that that goal can only be reached through Christ, through the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant.

(Read Heb. 12:25) If the people did not escape who refused to hear Moses, who spoke on the earth, the chances of escaping are far less if we refuse to hear Jesus who speaks from heaven. This is referring back to Heb. 3 and 4 where the author showed how the Israelites had refused to hear God's voice in Exodus 20:18-21 (Read) Only the Ten Commandments were spoken that day. Israel refused to hear the rest of the law. This refusal to hear the rest of the law brought blindness and deafness to the nation of Israel that has continued to this day. A few have been able to escape the effects of it. The church today has, for the most part continued to refuse to hear the rest of the law, the consequences of which will result in most Christians not inheriting the first resurrection.

(Read Heb. 12:26) The earth shook the day that the God came down unto the people. But the author quotes from Haggai 2. (Read Haggai 2:6-9) Most people thought this applied to the temple that was being rebuilt by Ezra and Nehemiah, but the glory of the Lord was never greater on it than that built by Solomon. This is speaking of the temple referred to in I Cor. 3:16, "**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**" In Haggai 2:8, God lays claim to the silver and gold. Silver and gold are needed to build this spiritual temple, so I think it is plain that these metals are symbolic. Silver is sometimes referred to as the metal of redemption and gold signifies the divine nature. These are the materials that are used to build this spiritual temple. The shaking is to cause men to bring their "silver" and "gold" to finish the work of the temple.

(Read Heb. 12:27) The purpose of the shaking is to remove the counterfeits of this new temple that man has erected. This would include the temple that the Zionists are planning in Jerusalem. But it would also include the counterfeit spiritual temples such as denominations, orders,

and churches that are building carnal temples in the spirit, the reason for shaking the heavens. If a temple is not built on the Chief Corner Stone, Jesus Christ, it is a carnal temple, whether it is physical or spiritual (mystical).

(Read Heb. 12:28, 29) Again the NASB makes these verses a little clearer. **“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”** Those who receive **“a kingdom which cannot be shaken”** are those who believe the Word of God presented here in Hebrews. The Jews of that day believed that true religion centered around the physical temple in Jerusalem. The purpose of the book of Hebrews is to refute this common belief. The prophet Daniel said in chapter 9:27, **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease....”** If we studied out the timing referenced here, we would see that the ceasing of the sacrifice and the oblation would correspond with Christ’s offering of Himself for baptism at the beginning of His ministry. Though the Jews continued to offer sacrifices for another 40-plus years in the temple, those sacrifices were not acceptable to God, nor has any such sacrifices been acceptable since. In the true temple, our bodies are the only acceptable sacrifices that we may present to God now that the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself has been offered. **“Our God is a consuming fire”** and has accepted our sacrifice by fire consuming our sinful flesh.

Chapter 13 continues with things that need to be done in running the race. (Read Heb. 13:1-3) “Brotherly love” is from the Greek *philadelphos*. *Phileo* we have discussed before as meaning heart love as opposed to *agape* meaning head love. *Adelphos* means brother.

“Entertain strangers” is from the Greek *philoxenia* meaning friendship for strangers or love of strangers. *Xenos* is the Greek word for “stranger.”

In God’s law, there are no prisons. If someone committed a crime, he had to pay resti-

tution, or work out the restitution. If restitution was not possible, in cases such as murder, or if the person refused to pay restitution, he was put to death. So anyone who has been put in prison is technically, by God’s law, being treated unjustly either way. The author tells us to deal with prisoners and those who suffer adversity as we would like to be treated if we were in the same circumstance as they.

(Read Heb. 13:4) Roman law prohibited polygamy and adultery, however, it allowed the men freedom to commit fornication with as many women as they wanted. God’s law prohibits fornication of any kind. This law was certainly not abolished at the cross, so **“God will judge.”**

(Read Heb. 13:5, 6) The Greek word translated “covetousness” here is *philarguros* and means “lover of silver.” It appears one other time in the New Testament, **“Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre (*philarguros*); but patient, not a brawler, not covetous:”** (I Tim. 3:3). “Coversation” could be translated “conduct or character.” Most people’s love of money is a result of a lack of faith in God. No matter how much they have, it never seems to be enough. Thus we have the admonition, **“be content with such things as ye have.”** Then he follows by saying that God has said, **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”** This quote is not from any specific verse as it has been said in both the Old and the New Testaments several times in one form or another. God often hides Himself from us to test our faith, so that we might think that He can’t possibly be with us if such and such is happening to us. The problem is that we often think we have faith that we do not have. Often faith only reveals itself in affliction and troubles. I know by my own experience that when things are going well, I trust myself, I don’t need faith. This has been a difficult lesson for me to learn and I have put myself into some very difficult situations as a result thinking I had the power, experience, or intelligence to do things that I found I clearly did not have. Sometimes, like myself, it takes us several such situations before we can really say, **“The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”** We know

this every time when He gets us out of the mess that we have created, but we seem to have a tendency to forget from one time to the next until it becomes thoroughly engrained into our minds.

(Read Heb. 13:7) In the early days of Christianity, church leadership was primarily a matter of setting an example for others to follow. Remember the advice that Paul gave to Timothy and Titus in choosing the people who they were to leave in charge of the congregations they formed. Unfortunately, church leadership has become a very corrupted thing in a lot of cases with many ministers striving to be rich and prosperous. So the last part of this verse has particular implication. Ferrar Fenton translates it, **“imitate their faith, after reflecting upon the result of their way of life.”**

(Read Heb. 13:8) I remember a lady saying to me one day, “I am sure glad that the God of the New Testament is different from the God of the Old Testament.” Her reasoning was that the God of the Old Testament was a mean God that was very severe in His judgment and the God of the New Testament was a much kinder, gentler God. I think we can say that we know much more about God today than, say, an Israelite that was among those coming into the land of Canaan under Joshua. This is because God has revealed more and more of His character progressively through the centuries, and yet we still have more to learn. John says in I John 3:2, **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”** The important thing for us to know now, is that He is the same God from the beginning and has not and will not change. We should take comfort in this fact.

(Read Heb. 13:9) God’s Holy Word is the one true source of truth and sound doctrine. It is by His Word that we are to compare various doctrines for authenticity, not “standard” church teaching or “mainstream” Christian thought. Because of God’s progressive revelation of His character, we need to know the whole Bible, not just the New Testament or some part of it, or just the Old Testament or some part of it.

(Read Heb. 13:10) The following quote from Hebrews: Immigrating from the Old Covenant to the New by Dr. Stephen Jones hits the nail on the head about this verse: In other words, those Levites serving in the temple in Jerusalem, who daily ate of the sacrifices (Lev. 6:16-29, 7:6, etc.) *“have no right to eat”* of the Sacrifice of Christ in the true Temple of God. This is perhaps one of the strongest statements against Judaism in the book of Hebrews. After showing the *“better”* things of the New Covenant, the new temple, the new priesthood, and the new sacrifice, the conclusion of the matter is that those who continue in the old religious manner have no right to partake of Christ.

Jesus Himself explained this principle in John 6:53-58 (NASB translation), Jesus therefore said to them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.”**

Jesus Christ is the true Sacrifice that is to be eaten. He is not the manna that came down out of heaven, by which the church in the wilderness was fed for forty years. Only those who eat of His flesh—rather than the flesh of animals in the temple—have any life in them.

(Read Heb. 13:11) This is a reference to the sin offering that was to be made. Ex. 29:10-14 (Read) is an example. “Without the camp” is defined as 2000 cubits outside the city walls, that is “a Sabbath day’s journey.” Jesus being the antitype of all animal sacrifices in the law, He had to be crucified “outside the camp.”

(Read Heb. 13:12, 13) Keep in mind that this is written primarily to Hebrew Christians who seemed unable or unwilling to leave the old order of temple worship. They were fearful of the re-

proach that would come upon them if they were to leave as they would be considered sinners and godless. But this is the point of the book of Hebrews. Christ was considered a sinner and godless and was crucified as a blasphemer. The body of Christ (Christians) is to identify with Him, "bearing His reproach."

(Read Heb. 13:14) In Heb. 11:10 we read that Abraham was looking for **"a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."** The city of Jerusalem was, in the Jewish eyes, a lasting city, an eternal city. The author is saying not so. And of course history has borne this out and even though it has been rebuilt several times, it is still not a lasting city. It is still under the curse of Jer. 19. However, the New Jerusalem is a "continuing city." We don't have it yet, it is yet to come. It will differ from the old cities such as Jerusalem, Rome, Salt Lake City, etc.

(Read Heb. 13:15, 16) Praise to God, giving thanks to His name, doing good to each other, and fellowshiping with each other are the kind of sacrifices that God wants. Psa. 51:17 tells us, **"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise."** God says in Hosea 6:6, **"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."**

(Read Hebrews 13:17) There are several admonitions in Scripture to obey those in positions of rulership, both civil and spiritual. The example of Daniel's three friends is probably the best example for us to follow. They obeyed King Nebuchadnezzar until they were commanded to worship the golden idol. They were willing to obey man until man demanded they disobey God. But even in their disobedience, they did not make a national case about it. They simply did not worship the idol.

It appears to me in this passage that the author is talking about obeying spiritual leaders. We have hundreds of denominations today because people refused to obey a particular spiritual leader. If one believes that what their spiritual leader is requiring is not in accordance with God's law, to me the proper thing to do is simply to leave their particular church or denomination and search out a leader or denomination they can submit to or better yet to simply study on their own. This requires discipline that usually one has to be trained to observe.

(Read Heb. 13:18, 19) This probably gives us evidence that Paul is the author of Hebrews as he appears to be in prison and has the hope that he can come to them soon. We know that Paul was imprisoned in Rome twice, the first time he was released and he went on to Spain, Britain, Gall, Asia Minor and was re-arrested and taken to Rome and was ultimately be-headed. It was probably during this second imprisonment that he wrote the book of Hebrews if he is the author.

(Read Heb. 13:20-25) Timothy was probably arrested with Paul and had since been released. The author gives his benediction and then gives his final instructions. JRL

Don't worry about opposition. Remember, a kite rises against the wind, not with the wind.

To reduce spiritually, simply close your Bible.

The one thing worse than a quitter is the person who is afraid to begin.

You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you do not try.
