

KINGDOM SPIRIT

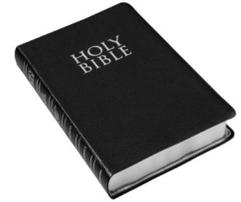
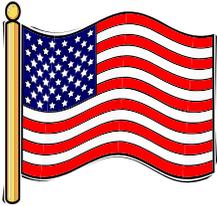
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1309

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In our last issue, we were quoting from a paper on the history of the time of the Protestant Reformation that was written by Dr. Stephen Jones. We had just begun in our study with Revelation 10 where in verse 2 it spoke of a “little book that was open.” I want to continue with the history of the time in this issue.

[Rev. 10:2 says that this little book was OPEN. This is a reference to the Bible being opened to the common people through the printed page and through the efforts of men who began to translate the Bible into the common language of the people. These two factors changed history.

Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, began building the first wooden press in 1436 using metal movable type. It was completed in 1440. In 1450 he printed the Constance Mass Book. He then began working on the Bible itself. The Gutenberg Bible was being printed from 1452 to 1455 even as Constantinople was being besieged by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

The fall of Constantinople brought thousands of refugees into Europe. Many of them were Greek-speaking theologians, carrying with them Greek copies of the Scriptures. Suddenly, the Latin Vulgate had competition. Men could now translate the Bible into English directly from the Greek text instead of relying upon the Latin version.

In 1462 the attack on Mainz by soldiers of the Archbishop of Nassau, forced printers to flee that city. In this manner their printing skills became spread over Europe. By the year 1500 there

were over 1000 printing presses in 250 cities of Europe, including 60 in Germany. By the year 1500 over 9 million copies of 30,000 different books had been printed.

In 1466 William Tyndale translated the New Testament directly from the Greek text now available to him. He also translated the Old Testament directly from the original Hebrew into English, and his complete translation was published as The Coverdale Bible in 1536, just after Tyndale and his assistant, Rogers, finished the translation of the Old Testament.

Tyndale had said, “I will cause a boy that driveth a plow to know more of the Scriptures than the pope.” Again he asked, “By what right doth the pope forbid God to speak in the English tongue? Why should not the Sermons of the Apostles, preached no doubt in the mother-tongue of those who heard them, be now written in the mother-tongue of those who read them?”

Tyndale was finally burned at the stake. We read in the book, History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin, by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne,

In August 1536 Tyndale appeared before the ecclesiastical court. “You are charged,” said his judges, “with having infringed the imperial decree which forbids any one to teach that faith alone justifies.” The accusation was not without truth. Tyndale's Unjust Mammon had just appeared in London under the title: “Treatise of Justification by Faith Only.” Every man could read in it the crime with which he was charged.”

On October 6, 1536 Tyndale died joyfully as a martyr for the Word of God. J. H. Merle d'Aubigne continues,

“The joy of hope filled his heart; yet one painful idea took possession of him. Dying far from his country, abandoned by his king, he felt

saddened at the thought of that prince, who had already persecuted so many of God's servants, and who remained obstinately rebellious against that divine light which everywhere shone around him. Tyndale would not have that soul perish through carelessness. His charity buried all the faults of the monarch; he prayed that those sins might be blotted out from before the face of God; he would have saved Henry VIII at any cost. While the executioner was fastening him to the post, the reformer exclaimed in a loud and suppliant voice, 'Lord, open the king of England's eyes!' They were his last words. Instantly afterwards he was strangled, and flames consumed the martyr's body."

The Bible rapidly became an open book. It was no longer merely a priestly book that was closed to the laity. All of this was a direct result of the "strong angel" sent by God to change the course of history.

As we said earlier, The Coverdale Bible in 1536 was Tyndale's translation. It was presented to King Henry VIII to get permission to distribute it in England. Continuing, "Henry ran over the book: Tyndale's name was not in it, and the dedication to his Majesty was very well written. The king regarding (and not without reason) Holy Scripture as the most powerful engine to destroy the papal system, and believing that this translation would help him to emancipate England from the Romish domination, came to an unexpected resolution: he authorized the sale and the reading of the Bible throughout the kingdom. Inconsistent and whimsical prince! At one and the same time he published and imposed all over his realm the doctrines of Romanism, and circulated without obstacle the Divine Word that overthrew them! We may well say that the blood of a martyr, precious in the eyes of the Supreme King, opened the gates of England to the Holy Scriptures....

"For centuries the English people had been waiting for such permission, even from before the time of Wycliff; and accordingly, the Bible circulated rapidly.... This great event, more important than divorces, treaties, and wars, was the conquest of England by the Reformation... Whoever possessed the means bought the book and read it or had it read to him by others. Aged persons learnt their letters in order to study the Holy Scriptures of God. In many places there were meetings for reading; poor people dubbed

their savings together and purchased a Bible, and then in some remote corner of the church, they modestly formed a circle and read the Holy Book between them. A crowd of men, women, and young folks, disgusted with the barren pomp of the altars, and with the worship of dumb images, would gather round them to taste the precious promises of the Gospel. God Himself spoke under the arched roofs of those old chapels or time-worn cathedrals, where for generations nothing had been heard but masses and litanies. The people wished, instead of the noisy chants of the priests, to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, of Paul and of John, of Peter and of James. The Christianity of the Apostles reappeared in the Church."

Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation

While there were important background events that brought about the Protestant Reformation, including the degeneracy of the Roman Popes themselves, the Reformation really began in 1517. Asimov's Chronology of the World, pp. 209-210 says,

"Wyclif and Hus had inveighed against the corruption, venality, and luxury of the Church, and they had been silenced; however, as long as abuses continued, other reformers were sure to arise.

"To raise money, the Church was now selling 'indulgences;' that is, documents assuring that dead souls in purgatory would be released if living relatives would only pay the prices set for such indulgences....

"An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546), was offended by this rank conversion of spirituality into a money-making device and by various other flaws that he saw in Church administration and behavior. On October 31, 1517, he nailed 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg in Saxony—the usual way of challenging others to debate with him over the various points of view he was expressing.

"Luther had going for him what previous reformers had had—nationalism. Wyclif had appealed to English nationalists who objected to money forever flowing into the Italian coffers of the Pope. Similarly, Hus appealed to Bohemian nationalism, and now Luther appealed to German nationalism.

"However, Luther had, in addition, something Wyclif and Hus had not had. Luther had the

printing press. Wyclif's and Hus's views were only broadcast with difficulty, so that a great many people knew little detail about their arguments. Luther, however, had the gift of vigorous and powerful prose that appeared as printed pamphlets. These spread the length and breadth of Germany much faster than they could be suppressed. In no time, everyone was aware of, and debating, the new views."

Thus, we see how important the printing press was to the success of the Protestant Reformation. On page 213 of the same book, we read about Pope Leo X, who was the Roman Pope during this period of history:

"Leo apparently had no comprehension of the seriousness of the situation and was satisfied with excommunicating Luther. He dismissed the whole thing as just another argument among monks, not understanding the vast change that the printing press had brought to such arguments."

Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther in 1520. Luther in turn burned the papal "bull," as it was called. The next year King Henry VIII of England wrote a book refuting Martin Luther's views. For this, Leo X awarded him the title, "Defender of the Faith."

But events in England soon led to a break from Roman Catholicism and the establishment of Protestantism in that nation. Henry VIII wanted a male heir to the throne, but his wife, Catherine of Aragon had given him only one daughter named Mary. He claimed that his lack of a male heir was God's judgment upon him for marrying his brother's widow. Thus, in 1527 he applied to the Pope for a divorce.

It was a case of very bad timing. There had been a dispute between the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of Spain. The pope unwisely made an alliance with the French king during a time when Charles V was in control of Italy. The commander of the French forces (Charles, duke of Bourbon) fell out of favor with his own king and so turned traitor and joined forces with the Emperor Charles V. He then led his French army (mostly Catholics) into Italy and sacked the city of Rome, taking the pope prisoner. Charles of Bourbon himself was killed in the first battle, but his troops sacked Rome without him. Asimov's Chronology of the World says on page 213,

"Rome received far worse treatment at the hand of Christian soldiers (some were Lutherans,

but most were Catholics) than ever it had received at the hands of Goths and Vandals 11 centuries before.

"The sack of Rome is considered to mark the end of the Italian Renaissance..."

Thus, Henry VIII appealed for a divorce from Catherine at the time when Pope Clement VII was the prisoner of the Emperor Charles V. Thus, the Pope was in no position to grant Henry's request to divorce Catherine.

Furthermore, Catherine was the aunt of Charles V, so he was in no mood to allow the pope to grant the divorce.

These events meant that the pope was preoccupied with his very survival at the very time that trouble was brewing in England. Because Henry was not granted the divorce, he divorced her without papal permission and married Anne Boleyn in 1533. She gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, later in 1533.

In 1534 the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, appointing the king and his successors Protector and only Supreme Head of the Church and the Clergy of England. This was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in England. It was more of an act of state, rather than a true reformation of spiritual ideals.

Nonetheless, for all of its faults, it provided a relatively safe haven for Protestants to develop their ideas and to spread them into the rest of Europe....

There were two main historical events that protected the Gospel and allowed the Scriptures to continue to spread among the common people. In Rev. 10:2 we read,

²and he [the angel] had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

Martin Luther's 95 Theses (1517) and England's Act of Supremacy (1534) were the evidence of the angelic foot being planted upon the land—first on the European mainland and then in England. These events established the Protestant Reformation by which the little book was opened to the common people.

Yet these events did not go uncontested by the Roman Church. For all his trouble, going through six wives, Henry VIII of England ended up with just one son, Edward VI, who ruled almost seven years (1547-1553). He died at the age

of 16 and was then succeeded by Mary, his older sister whose mother was Catherine of Aragon.

Mary was a Roman Catholic, and in 1554 she married Philip of Spain, who was also Catholic. Mary attempted to bring England back under the Roman yoke. The Encyclopedia of World History, page 285 says,

“About 300 are said to have been burned during this persecution.”

Queen Elizabeth I then came to the throne of England in 1558, and she secured England as a Protestant country by repealing all the Catholic laws that Mary had enacted. Yet there would be one more attempt to bring England back under the Roman yoke.

In 1587 Philip II of Spain began to build a huge armada of ships in order to invade England and force it back under the yoke of Rome. This Spanish Armada of 130 ships set sail for England on July 12, 1588. More than half of these ships were destroyed by the English and by storms in the North Sea. The strong angel had put his foot down on the sea. This changed the course of history and kept the Bible an open book that has blessed the lives of millions among the hungry people during the famine of hearing the Word.]

We'll continue our study beginning with Revelation 10:3 in our next issue. JRL

By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour and life. Prov. 22:4

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 6 begins with a warning to the children of Benjamin to flee out of Jerusalem. (“Read Jeremiah 6:1-5) Remember that when God caused the ten tribed Israel to revolt from Judah, He said that He would give one tribe to Judah for a light. That tribe was Benjamin. Judah was by far the larger of the two tribes. As I have said before, I believe that Benjamin being the light tribe doesn't manifest itself until the New Testament. We'll discuss this more later.

Tekoa was a town about five miles south of Bethlehem and ten miles from Jerusalem. Bethhacrem means “house of the vineyards” which could have referred to another town, but we don't know which one. At any rate the trumpet and a fire sign was to warn of the coming of the Babylonians from the north.

The daughter of Zion usually refers to Jerusalem. I think “shepherds” in verse 4 is a reference to the Chaldean armies. They are to pitch their tents “against” Jerusalem. The general theme is that war is to be prepared against Jerusalem as evidenced by verses 4-5.

(Read Jeremiah 6:6-8) God continues warning of war and then again gives the people of Jerusalem a chance to repent before He brings war upon them.

(Read Jeremiah 6:9-17) God continues to tell what is going to happen when the Babylonians come against Jerusalem. Jeremiah asks God, “**To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear?**” He says that the people's ear is uncircumcised, i.e. there is a covering over their ear that they don't hear. They no longer delight in the Word of the LORD but consider it a reproach to them. Jeremiah is frustrated. He is weary of holding in the fury of the LORD. God answers him telling him that He will pour out His fury on

the people in the streets and on the assembly of the young men. He says that even the husband and wife will be taken as well as the elderly. No one is going to be spared. From the least of them to the greatest of them, they are all covetous and the priests and prophets are all dealing falsely. They are trying to make the people feel better by telling them there will be peace, but God says there is no peace. God asked if they were ashamed when they committed abomination?, then He answers His own question, **“nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could** (know how to) **they blush.”** So God says that when He punishes Jerusalem, these priests and prophets will fall as well. God goes on to say that the people refuse to walk in the good way that would give them rest and they won't hearken to the watchmen who are warning them of what is coming.

(Read Jeremiah 6:18-26) Apparently the people were going through the motions with their sacrifices and burning incense, but God says these are unacceptable because they have rejected His law and His word. He reiterates that He is bringing a great nation against them that is cruel and has no mercy. Jeremiah comments, in verse 24, that they have heard the fame of the nation that God is bringing against them. Fear grips the people and they are afraid to go outside the city. Jeremiah urges the people to repent in sackcloth and ashes in mourning as if for an only son.

(Read Jeremiah 6:27-30) God tells Jeremiah that He has set him for a tower and a fortress among the people that he would know and try their way. He says they are grievous revolvers, slanders and corrupters. All efforts to turn the people back have been fruitless. He uses the refiner's fire as an example. Though the fire has burned hot, i.e. the word has been given to the people, the product of the refining is still rejected.

I need to point out that while some of Jeremiah's writings are in chronological order, much is not. It is sometimes difficult to tell when it is and when it is not. While other chapters will make it obvious that they are not in chronological order with the previous chapter or chapters.

(Read Jeremiah 7:1-7) God tells Jeremiah to go to the gate of the temple and proclaim that if the people would amend their ways and doings and thoroughly execute judgment between them, God would cause them to dwell where they were,

i.e. they would not be taken into captivity.

(Read Jeremiah 7:8-16) Verse 4 introduces us to a major problem that they had. Because the temple was located in Jerusalem, the people seemed to believe that because it was there God would not cause any destruction to come upon them. Verses 9-10 make this problem very plain. The people seemed to think that they could commit any sin they wanted from murder to idol worship and then come to the temple and say, **“We are delivered to do all these abominations.”** God asks, **“Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.”** In actuality, it was like they were considering the temple to be a safe house for outlaws. Because they had the temple, they did not need to keep the law of God. They kept the sacrifice laws, but the law, as embodied in the Ten Commandments, they believed they could violate and still be “saved.”

But God had news for them. He told them to go look at Shiloh where the tabernacle was first set up when the people came into the promised land. He tells them to go see what happened to it because of the wickedness of the people. It had been completely destroyed. Then God told them that because of all of their sins, He was going to do with the temple and Jerusalem what He had done to Shiloh. This happened when Eli was the high priest at Shiloh. Eli had two sons that were priests as well, but we're told in I Sam. 2:12 that they were sons of Belial and that they knew not the LORD. They taught the people that they did not need to keep the law because they were “saved” by who they were and because the ark of the covenant was with them. It came to pass that Israel went to battle against the Philistines, but when the battle went against them, they brought the ark to the battle and it fell into the hands of the Philistines, both of Eli's sons were killed and when Eli heard the news, he fell off his seat and broke his neck and died. The ark stayed in the hands of the Philistines for seven months before they returned it. When it was returned, it was never returned to Shiloh, but was taken to the town of Kirjathjearim where it was kept until David brought it to Jerusalem. It is observable that when God's glory (in this case the ark of the covenant) leaves a place such as it did when it left Shiloh, It never returns. Jeremiah is prophesying

that the same thing is going to happen here. Jeremiah doesn't report seeing it happen, however, Ezekiel reports seeing the glory of God leave the temple and Jerusalem and go to the Mount of Olives. (Read Eze. 10:4, 19, 11:22,23) Then God told Judah through Jeremiah that because of their failure to keep His law, He was going to do with the temple and Jerusalem what He had done to Shiloh. We will see that as God has warned the people, the temple and the city itself will be destroyed. Even though the temple was rebuilt, there is no indication in any of the prophet's writings that indicate that the glory of God ever entered into it as it had in the temple that Solomon built. In the New Testament, we find a down payment of the glory of God, an earnest of the Spirit, descend on the disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This was the beginning of the new temple, the hearts of men is where God abides instead of a physical building such as Solomon's temple.

God tells Jeremiah that He is going to cast the people of Judah out of His sight as He has done with the people of Ephraim, or Israel. He tells Jeremiah to not pray to Him for this people or make intercession for them, for He will not hear him. They have gone beyond the point of no return. From this point on, the captivity by the Babylonians is a sure thing that cannot be stopped.

(Read Jeremiah 7:17-20) God asks Jeremiah if he is not seeing what all is happening. The whole family gets into the act of worshipping their idols. Therefore, God is going to punish not only the people, but the beasts, the trees, and the fruit of the ground.

(Read Jeremiah 7:21-28) The people did not understand the purpose of the sacrifices, though they thought they did. God says it is not the sacrifices that He wants, but rather obedience to Him and His law is what He wants. The people seemed to think that all they had to do was to offer sacrifices and observe certain rituals, that this would please God and they could go and do whatever they wanted. Even though He has sent His prophets to turn them, they would not hearken to Him. Even though God is telling Jeremiah to proclaim these words to the people, He also tells him that the people would not respond, but he is still to proclaim what God has told him to say.

(Read Jeremiah 7:29-31) Cutting off of

the hair was a symbol of mourning which is what God is telling Jerusalem to do. He told her to take up a lamentation because God had rejected and forsaken this generation. He goes on to explain why. They have taken their idols into the temple and they have built up the high places in Tophet in the valley of the son of Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire. Not only did God not command them to do this, but He says it didn't even come into His heart.

(Read Jeremiah 7:32-34) Because of their building up the high places in Tophet, God says it will no longer be called Tophet, but rather the valley of slaughter because of the number of graves that will be dug there to bury those killed as a result of what is coming upon Jerusalem.

(Read Jeremiah 8:1-3) To my knowledge, we do not have a historical record of there actually being a removal of bones from the graves, however, it certainly could have happened. When we think of graves, we usually think of being buried six feet deep, but this was not always the case. Even when Christ was crucified, He was buried in a hollowed out place in a rock. So this may very well have literally happened. It would have been part of the destruction brought on Judah by the Babylonians.

(Read Jeremiah 8:4-13) The Companion Bible has a note on verse 4 that is important I believe. If I understand the note, Dr. Bullinger is indicating that there is either a transcription error in some of the original texts or a translation error. If the error is corrected, the latter part of the verse would read, "**Shall they fall, and not arise? Shall they return [to Him], and He not return [to them]?**" This would make verse 5 make more sense. God questions, "**Why then is this People of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold deceit, they refuse to return.**" If God would return to them if they returned to God, why would they continue to insist on not returning to Him? This is a good question, considering all of the problems that they were having at this point. A good question we might ask ourselves today. Again God asks, what has He done? Everyone seems set on their own course no matter what.

The animals know their times and seasons, but God says His people know not the judgment of the LORD. Somehow, the people seemed to think that they had the law of God on their side.

God says He gave the law in vain so far as these people are concerned. They have rejected God's word. God says He is going to strip them of their possessions, including their wives, and give them to others. Then we have a repeat of Jeremiah 6:14 with the priests and prophets telling the people that there is peace when there is no peace. Again He says they were not ashamed to commit an abomination. These priests and prophets are going to fall among those that fall.

(Read Jeremiah 8:14-17) Jeremiah admonishes the people to flee to the defenced cities and to be silent, as he says God has put them to silence. Then he says God has given them water of gall to drink. We find gall and wormwood quite often in Scripture with no explanation as to what it is. I found an explanation that was written by Dr. Stephen Jones that I feel is worthy to pass on to you. [The Hebrew word for "wormwood" is *lahanaw*. According to Strong's Concordance, the word means "to poison." Its root word means "to curse." Other passages use phrases like "bitter as wormwood" (Prov. 5:14) and "drunken with wormwood" (Lam. 3:15). This shows us that whatever this substance is, it is something bitter that people may consume orally, and it makes people "drunk." However, it is not wine or fermented drink of any kind.

Pinpointing the precise meaning would be quite difficult, if it were not for the fact that is usually associated with "gall." The Hebrew word translated "gall" is *rosh*. (See Strong's Conc. #7218 to 7220.) *Rosh* is the **poppy plant**. It literally means "head," a reference to the "head" of the plant -- its conspicuous red flower.

Poppies were cultivated in Sodom and Gomorrah, and apparently this was one of their main sources of income. We find in Deut. 32:31-33 that poppies are called "the grapes of Sodom."

³¹ **For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.** ³² **For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall [poppies], their clusters are BITTER:** ³³ **Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.**

In Revelation 22:15 we find that those who deal in this drug trade will not be allowed into the Holy City. They are called "sorcerers." The Greek word is *pharmakos*, from which we get our English word "Pharmacist," or druggist. These will not be classed as Overcomers.

The Bible often speaks of "the water of gall" (Jer. 9:15). This is the sap or juice from a certain part of the poppy that contains **opium, which is wormwood**. It is very bitter in taste, and it makes people drunk, or "high." Opium was used to deaden pain, both mental and physical. They tried to give Jesus some of this to drink (Matt. 27:34) while He was on the cross. It would have deadened the pain, but Jesus refused it.

In the Old Testament, wormwood became one of the themes of the prophets to decry the people's false sense of security. Judgment was coming, but the false prophets were saying, "Peace, Peace" when there was no peace (Jer. 8:11). Spiritually speaking, the prophets and priests were using this drug to heal the hurt of Israel slightly, but this only treated the symptoms, not the cause. The nation had a brain tumor, and the false prophets were masking the real problem by just giving them opium, or wormwood, to dull the pain. Jeremiah was astonished at this, and asked in 8:22,

²² **Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?**

God's verdict was that He would give them MORE OF THE SAME. If they wanted a drug, rather than the true Balm of Gilead, He would give them a "belly full." Jeremiah 9:15 says,

¹⁵ **Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.**

Again, in Jeremiah 8:14 we read,

¹⁴ **Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath**

put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.]

“Wormwood” and “the water of gall” (Jer. 8:14) would be their judgment for disobedience to His law. Their life would turn bitter as foreign armies would invade and occupy their land.”]

Jeremiah says they looked for peace, but no good came and for health, but only trouble came. Again he warns of the coming Babylonians. But God is not just sending the Babylonians, He says He will send serpents, vipers that cannot be charmed that will bite the people He says.

(Read Jeremiah 8:18-22) Jeremiah says that when he would comfort himself against sorrow, his heart is faint in him. Then God asks, **“Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?”** Then Jeremiah laments that nothing has changed. Time is passing that could have been used to repent, but it hasn’t happened. Speaking of Jerusalem, he says, **“For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.”** The Hebrew word translated “black” literally means “to be covered.” It is primarily translated black, darkened, and mourning in the O.T. I believe that “mourning would be the proper translation here.

Those that are familiar with essential oils know that there is healing qualities in the ~~balm, or oil, from the balsam tree.~~ In effect,

Jeremiah is asking why hasn’t Judah been healed comparing the wormwood and gall that treats symptoms to the balm of Gilead that has actual healing qualities. Instead of saying peace, peace when there is no peace, the people need the truth of God’s word. JRL