

KINGDOM SPIRIT

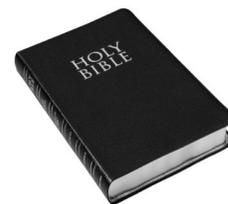
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1503

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In our last issue we were discussing Rev. 20:4-6 where it is discussing the first resurrection. We want to continue that discussion. Different people or groups have declared the first resurrection to have taken place at different times. However, since no one can point to a person and say that he or she has been resurrected immortal, and obviously we still have that old dragon operating, when confronted, the answer seems to be that it was spiritual and those who have been resurrected were resurrected in secret and are now in heaven. We are asked to accept this by faith. To believe this is to join Hymenaeus and Philetus. I don't think it will be any secret when the first resurrection occurs.

Rev. 20:6 says, **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”** This leaves no room for the non-Christian. Yet in some other Scriptures we are told that the resurrection will include both the Christian and the non-Christian. (Read John 5:28, 29) The fact that Jesus says **“the hour is coming”** indicates that this is not two resurrections, but rather that those that have done good and those that have done evil are resurrected at the same time. Obviously this is not the first resurrection where only the righteous are resurrected. (Read Acts 24:15) Paul is speaking in the singular when he says “a resurrection” in which both the just and the unjust will be resurrected. These are both speaking of a general resurrection and indicating that there will be Christians in that resurrection as well. In Rev. 20:12, John is discussing the final judgment and he tells

us that not only were the books of the law opened from which to judge, but the book of life was opened as well. If there were to be no Christians at this judgment, there would be no need of the book of life.

The point that I believe needs to be made is that not all Christians qualify for the first resurrection. It will be for overcomers only. Paul tells us in Heb. 11:35 that there were Christians who were tortured, **“not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”** Paul says of himself in Philippians 3:8-12 that he was striving for the better resurrection. (Read) Verse 11 should read “resurrection from the dead” instead of “of the dead.” The word “resurrection” should actually read “out resurrection.” Paul was not saying that he was concerned about being resurrected, but rather that he was striving for the resurrection from among the dead, i.e. the first resurrection in which the **“rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”** This should be the goal of all Christians. It is not automatic when one accepts Christ as their Saviour. It is something that is to be strived for.

Rev. 20:6 goes on to say, **“On such the second death hath no power.”** The second death is defined in Rev. 20:14, so we will wait until we get that far to discuss it further. We just need to acknowledge that it will not be a factor to those who have part in this first resurrection.

Verse 6 then tells us that those resurrected in this first resurrection **“shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”** This is the reward of the overcomer. If you recall when we studied Rev. 2 and 3, we listed the rewards of the overcomer. They were: 1. To eat of the tree of life (have age last-

ing life); 2. Escape the second death; 3. Have the hidden manna (spiritual food so needed), and a white stone (symbol of Covenant relationship), and a new name (signifying a change in character and position); 4. Power over nations and the morning star; 5. Be clothed in white raiment (priestly garments) and assurance of name in book of life; 6. Be made a pillar in the temple of God, have new name, will be a part of the New Jerusalem and will have God's new name; 7. To sit with Christ on His throne, i.e. to rule with Him.

As we concluded our last lesson with Rev. 20:6, we read, **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."** With Christ ruling and the overcomers ruling with Him, this thousand year age will be the most glorious the earth has experienced since the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah foresaw this in Isa. 2:2, 3. **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain (kingdom) of the LORD'S shall be established in the top of the mountains (over all the kingdoms), and shall be exalted above the hills (smaller kingdoms); and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion (the new Zion—Heb. 12:22) shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from (new) Jerusalem."**

Yet, we're told that there will still be those who reject the Kingdom of God. (Read Rev. 20:7-10) We speak frequently of God's sovereignty and point out that everything that happens does so in complete accordance with God's plan. Sometimes it may sound as if God is unfair, or unjust. Yet if we look at history, it really seems as if God bends over backward, as the saying goes, to be fair and to give man every chance. I think this is what He is planning at the end of the thousand years. Even though the earth will have just completed a glorious one thousand years in which the benefits of righteousness will be on true display, it appears that there will still be those who are still opposed to the rule of Jesus Christ. So God gives them one last chance to attempt to prove that man's system is better than God's system. Keep

in mind that the "beloved city" is no longer a physical city, but rather the New Jerusalem that is in the hearts of Christian people. Fire is symbolic of God's law. (Read Deut. 33:2, 3) Moses, in blessing the children of Israel before his death, said in part, speaking of God, **"from His right hand went a fiery law for them."** and then in verse 3, speaking to God, says, **"all His saints are in thy hand."** The "fiery law in his hand" is identified with the saints in His hand. When God's law is written on the hearts of the overcomers, they become His fiery law, they become the administrators of divine justice and rulership in the earth. Saying that **"fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them"** is a symbolic way of saying that the rule of Christ, and the overcomers, through God's law destroys (or converts) those who are still resisting God's kingdom. The devil, i.e. that **"dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan"** that we determined to be what is left of the Roman Empire, or the Babylonian system, is cast into the "lake of fire." In other words, this system that had ruled men since Nebuchadnezzar until the rule of Christ, like the leadership of that system as well as the false prophet (Islam), has to go through the judgment requiring restoration of all the damage it has done. This is no small thing. This will be a very major undertaking.

(Read Rev. 20:11-15) We need Daniel's vision of this same event also to make the picture we are seeing here complete. (Read Daniel 7:9, 10) As we study these passages, we will see that Daniel and John are seeing the same event transpire. This is the second, or general resurrection. As we have studied in our last lesson, there will be both Christians and non-Christians in this resurrection and subject to the judgment of the one on the Great White Throne. This is probably one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible and the source of several false teachings. To understand what transpires here, we need to review God's system of justice.

In Daniel's vision, God portrays Himself as the "Ancient of Days" and His hair as being like pure wool. Since God is ageless and can portray Himself in any manner that He so desires, why the "Ancient of Days" and the white hair? Part of the answer is in Lev. 19:32. (Read) In our courtrooms today, when the judge enters the courtroom, the command comes from the bailiff

for all to stand until the judge is seated. This custom is probably from this law. In the case of the Great White Throne, God is probably manifesting Himself in this manner to portray this reverence to justice.

He further pictures the throne to be **“like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire.”** Thrones symbolize the administration of the law by one in authority. In countries that have a monarchical government, sitting on the throne signifies that the king is issuing decrees or judgments in an official capacity according to the laws of the nation. In America where we have no kings, but rather a separate judicial system, the judges sit “at the bench.” The “bench” and the “throne” would signify similar duties. God is often manifested as fire such as the burning bush and the fire on Mt. Sinai. The river of fire is God’s judgment coming from the throne.

In both cases, we are told that the books were opened and the people were judged by these books. There are those that believe that God has a book that lists each individual sin that each individual has committed. I believe that the books are the books of the law, the divine standard of right and wrong. The divine law defines sin and is the divine standard by which all of men’s deeds are judged. John says in I John 3:4, **“sin is the transgression of the law.”**

There seems to be a variety of thought as to what the fire mentioned in these two passages really is. One common view is that this “fire” is literal and that it will last forever on the grounds that the people will be immortal and fireproof, but will be able to experience pain. Another is that it is literal and will simply “burn up” (annihilate) the sinners. This is to misunderstand God’s judgment. One needs to understand the difference between punishment and judgment. God judges, man punishes.

Malachi 3:6 says, **“For I am the LORD, I change not.”** As author of the Divine Law, I think we can say that since God does not change, neither does His law, unless He makes the change. I find nowhere in Scripture where He says that He changes the laws of judgment, and nowhere in Scripture where burning someone alive is part of His judgment. The only use of fire as part of judgment is where a dead body might be burned (cremated) for the purpose of preventing an honorable burial. Lev. 21:9 says, **“And the daughter**

of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.” Lev. 20:14 prescribes the same judgment when a man, and his wives, who marries both a wife and her mother. They were to be executed first and then their body burned. An example of this is found in Joshua 7:25 when Achan, whose greed caused 36 Israelites to be killed in the battle of Ai. **“And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.”** This tells how the law was actually administered to help us understand how the law is to be interpreted.

Burning people alive as a judgment for sin was practiced by the pagans in and around Canaan who worshipped Molech and Baal. It was their practice to burn their children to atone for their own sins. Unfortunately Israel and Judah often adopted these same doctrines. God told the prophet Jeremiah about this in Jer. 19:5, **“They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.”**

We do find fire used as a symbol of judgment. We have already mentioned Deut. 33:2, 3 where the law is referred to as a fiery law. We also mentioned the fact that God manifested Himself as fire at Mt. Sinai. In Deut. 4:36, Moses is addressing all of Israel. He says, **“Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.”** The law was spoken and went forth from the midst of the fire on the mount. This compares to Daniel saying that **“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him (from His throne),”** David used similar terminology in describing what happened the day that God spoke the law to the people at Mt. Sinai, **“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled.”** (Psa. 18:7, 8) Does this not mean that the fire that comes from His mouth is His word? God says in Jer. 23:29, **“Is not my word like as a fire? saith**

the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

Stephen Jones makes the comment in a study he made on the Lake of Fire, “There are two kinds of fire: earthly and divine. The earthly type of fire burns the flesh-body. The divine fire burns ‘the flesh’ in our souls, as it purifies us by means of discipline.” “The flesh” means that which is within us that draws us to man as opposed to that which is in us that draws us to God.

In describing God’s appearance as fire on Mt. Sinai, Moses says in Deut. 4:24, **“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.”** The Israelites, at the time they were at Mt. Sinai, thought that the fire they were seeing would devour them physically. Moses, 40 years later, reminds them of what they were saying and thinking in Deut. 5:25, **“Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.”** They did not understand the difference between earthly fire and divine fire. What the all-consuming fire of God destroys is the “flesh” that we should submit to Him for destruction anyway. The purpose of God’s judgment is to teach the world righteousness, not to burn them to ashes. Earthly fire burns literal flesh to ashes—divine fire burns “the flesh” to ashes. We understand spiritual things by their earthly counterparts. But we should not confound the two.

Our Roman law system is not concerned with justice, but rather deterrence. In God’s law system, the priorities are reversed, justice is primary and deterrence is secondary. In our Roman law system, there is no consistency in punishment as one person may be fined one amount for a certain crime, and another person fined a greatly different amount for committing the same crime, or jail sentences many vary. This results in one person being punished too much and the next not being punished enough. The victim is rarely compensated for their loss. With God’s system, the judgment fits the crime. For example, if a person steals \$1,000.00, he must restore to the victim double, no more without the consent of the sinner, no less without the consent of the victim.

Burning people in hell is not justice—it is a punishment. In true justice, justice is not served until all the victims of the injustice have been compensated as per the divine law for the loss.

This does not happen in man’s prison system, nor does it happen by torturing the perpetrator, nor could it ever happen by annihilating all sinners by fire. Only the justice of the Divine law found in the Bible is true justice. Not only was the purpose of Divine justice to compensate the victim, but it is designed to work toward the sinner’s forgiveness and restoration to the congregation.

However, the law is weak in some ways. If a man commits murder, the law cannot restore the victim back to life, so restoration is not possible because of fleshly weakness. When there is no possible way for restoration to be made, the sinner was to be put to death. But putting the sinner to death is only partial justice, since the victim cannot be compensated. The death penalty is the law’s way of deferring judgment to the Great White Throne, where justice can be completed as there is no longer any fleshly limitation in the law’s power to restore the losses incurred by the victim. Sin is reckoned as debt, thus the sinner is a debtor to the victim. Only God can make this situation right, though it is not within my wisdom to know just how He will do it. I just believe that He can make all things right. I need to say that should a murderer, for example, place his faith in Jesus Christ, then Christ’s crucifixion will satisfy the law at the Great White Throne of Judgment.

Only victims can forgive. The purpose of the law is not to forgive, nor is it within the authority of the judge to forgive. For example, if a person steals \$1,000.00, the penalty is to restore \$2,000.00 to the victim. If a judge reduces the amount, he violates the right of the victim. If he increases it, he violates the right of the sinner. Only the victim has the right to reduce the amount of the debt as only he has the power of grace to forgive what is owed him.

Once the debt has been paid, the law mandates forgiveness of the sinner. (Read Lev. 19:17, 18) No one has the authority to exact any more from the sinner than the law allows. Loving your neighbor means that one cannot treat anyone as an ex-convict. He is a forgiven sinner under grace.

We are leading up to the “lake of fire”, but for us to thoroughly understand what the “lake of fire” represents, we have to thoroughly understand God’s laws of judgment. We will continue to do this in our next issue. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

In our last issue, we were discussing Ezekiel 18 and had proceeded through vs. 9. (Read Eze. 18:10-13) If a just man begets a son who behaves the opposite of his father, God says he shall surely die, but he will be responsible for his own death, not his father. (Read Eze. 18:14-18) The opposite of this, i.e. a sinful father begets a son who lives a just life, the son shall live, but the father will die in his own iniquity. Apparently there was some question about this, so God asks the question, Why? (Read Eze. 18:19-23) He clarifies this in verse 20, **“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the**

iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Then He says that if a wicked man turn from his transgressions and does that which is lawful and right, he shall live and his past transgressions will not be counted against him. (Read vs. 24) The opposite is that if a righteousness man turn from his righteousness and commit lawlessness, then he will die in his iniquity and his former righteousness will not be remembered.

(Read Eze. 18:25-32) God says that the argument yet comes from His people saying that He isn't fair, that His ways are not equal, yet God says that His ways are equal. It is Israel's ways that are not equal. I suspect that whether we would consider God's way to be fair might depend on where we were individually or nationally (as I believe that this discussion was not only intended for the individual, but for the nation as well). If we were practicing lawlessness, we would consider God's way to be unfair. It would mean we would have to make some changes. This was the condition of Israel as a nation, as well as most individuals at the time.

This discussion, in most people's mind would set in contrast “eternal life” by faith and “eternal life” by works. But let's consider the question, Why would one either want to live a righteous life to start with, or to change from a lawless life to a righteous life? I once had a discussion with a man, whom I had considerable respect for, who seriously questioned this subject. To my knowledge, he led a pretty righteous life, I did not know of any particular sin he was guilty of. Yet, he questioned his need to “go to church” as he put it. He reasoned that he needed to do what he thought was right because he felt that it benefited him in this life, he wasn't particularly thinking beyond this life, or if he was, he did not so indicate. He was more righteous than many who considered themselves to be Christians, which may have been part of the problem of his not feeling a need to go to church. He really would not commit himself on what he thought of God. To me he was the exception, not the rule.

I believe that most people who try to lead a righteous life do so because they either love or fear God. Either way, they have, in effect, acknowledged that God has the power over our lives. This could have been the case with the man

I was talking to, I don't know. While most churches have prescribed ways that they expect one to accept Christ, or have what we have referred to as the Passover Experience, i.e. accepting His death as a substitute for ours, I'm not sure that it has to be that formal. At the time of Ezekiel, Christ had not yet died and made things plainer for us. Most people were expected to sacrifice, which it appears to me that most did, whether they were wicked or righteous. I can't say what their thoughts were concerning those sacrifices, but I look at the examples that God has given here of living righteously as the process of sanctification. Justification is God's to give, not ours to earn. I believe that He granted justification to those who lived righteously and those who turned from their wickedness to righteousness, not as something they earned through their righteous living, but rather the reason for righteous living. He said in verse 4, "**Behold, all souls are mine.**" The point that I think has to be made is that the process of justification-sanctification-glorification was the same then as now, though we might encounter it slightly differently then and now.

In chapter 19, God tells Ezekiel to take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel. This refers to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim. (Read Eze. 19:1-4) I believe this refers to Jehoahaz as he was taken by the Pharaoh to Egypt where he died. (Read Eze. 19:5-9) I believe this refers to Jehoiakim. (Read Eze. 19:10-14) Israel started out with strong men as her kings such as David and Solomon. Then the division of the kingdom and some of the kings were good strong kings, some were not. But following Jehoiakim, he was the last actual legitimate king of Judah, though his brother Zedekiah reigned another 11 years. But the die was cast, Judah, or Israel, no longer had a king of the Davidic royal line on a throne in Jerusalem. The first part of vs. 14 says "**and fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit**" This is probably referring to Zedekiah whose breaking of the oath he swore to Nebuchadnezzar brought about the destruction of Jerusalem by fire. The last of vs. 14 says, "**she hath no strong rod to be a scepter to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.**" It was a sad end for what could have been a glorious kingdom if they had but kept God's law and followed it..

Before we read chapter 20, I would like

to reverse the normal way that I have been presenting lessons in that I would like to give some explanations first so that when we read the chapter, it will hopefully be more understandable. Ezekiel had been with the Israelites for two years. Several times in this chapter God says He will pour out His fury on them for their sin, but then He says "**But I wrought for my name's sake.**" Because He made the promises to Abraham unconditional, even though the people of Israel have totally failed to keep His laws and have worshipped idols, God does not pour out his fury on them and destroy them to protect His name. More than once the Israelites have done things to provoke God to great anger, but to destroy them in the sight of the other nations would be to break His promises to Abraham, something He couldn't do for His name's sake.

Again, like in verse 11 and others, referring to his laws and judgments, He says "**if a man do, he shall live in them.**" This is saying he shall "live again."

The Sabbaths not only refer to the weekly Sabbath, but to Sabbath years and Sabbath of Sabbath years as well. When God says "**I withdrew mine hand,**" this is a Hebrew idiom meaning He relaxed His anger.

(Read Eze. 20:1-24) I wanted to stop with verse 24, because the next few verses are a little confusing. (Read Eze. 20:25-26) Dr. Bullinger has a note on the phrase, "**I gave them also statutes that were not good**" in which he says, "*In Hebrew idiom—I suffered others to give them statutes, &c.: i.e. in their captivity. Active verbs in Hebrew were used to express not only the doing of the thing, but the permission of the thing which the agent is said to do. The verb 'nathan,' to give, is therefore often rendered to suffer in this sense. Where not so actually rendered, it means permission.* So I think we can assume that it wasn't God that gave them statutes that were not good, but rather He gave permission to others to give them laws that were not good. This polluted the laws of God to them. By God's law, the firstborn were to be passed over to God, but they were instead passing their firstborn to Moloch through fire. (Ex. 13:12-13 says, "**That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. And every firstling of an ass thou**

shalt redeem with a lamb; and it thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.”)

(Read Eze. 20:27-49) God continues to give reasons why he won't be inquired of by the elders of Israel. They cannot continue in their idolatrous ways such as causing their children to pass through the fire to Molech and expect to still be able to inquire of God. This may be something that we need, as a nation, to consider in our day. When some tragedy or disaster occurs, everyone turns to God, but continue in their heart idolatry that we have all been guilty of in the past. It may be that God will not listen until there is true repentance.

The word “Bamah” in vs. 29 means “high place.”

But there is going to be a change. In vs. 32, God says that when the people say that they are going to be like other nations and go and serve wood and stone, He says think again. The time will come when this won't happen at all. Instead, God says that He is going to rule over them. In vs. 37 He says He is going to cause them to pass under the rod, meaning that all Israel will be accounted for, and then He is going to bring them into the bond of the covenant. He is going to purge out the rebels and transgressors and says He will bring them, speaking of the rebels and transgressors, out of the land where they live, but will not allow them to enter the land of Israel. In so doing, He says the rest of the people will know that He is the LORD. So He tells the people to go ahead and serve their idols, but the time is coming in which they will serve Him and no longer pollute His name with their gifts and idols. I believe the prophet is looking forward to a time that is yet to come when Christ will rule here on the earth and His people will serve Him. When this happens, they will loathe their former ways because of the unrighteousness of them.

Then in vs. 44, He says, **“And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, not according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the LORD God.”** When the people loathe their former ways, they will know that God has acted with them in accordance with His promises to Abraham, not according to their wicked ways.

In verses 45-48 Ezekiel is told to turn his attention back toward Judah and Jerusalem. Being with the Israelite captives, he is north of Palestine and is told to turn toward the Negev, which we know today as the Negev desert which is southeast of Palestine, and tell the forest of the south field (the people of Judah and Jerusalem) that God is going to kindle a fire that will cover the whole land, i.e. the scourge of Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel does this, but it told by the people that he is just speaking in parables.

(Read Eze. 21:1-7) God clarifies what He just said at end of chapter 20 about what was going to happen to Judah and Jerusalem. He tells Ezekiel to sigh, as he would with a broken heart, and when the people ask him why he is sighing, he is to tell them **“For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD,”** referring to the coming destruction of Judah and Jerusalem.

(Read Eze. 21:8-17) God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy saying **“A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished.”** The repetition here is for emphasis. I believe the “sword” He is talking about here is the power He is giving Nebuchadnezzar. He is emphasizing the destructiveness of what is coming as Nebuchadnezzar comes against Jerusalem and Judah. He says that it (the sword) holds in disdain the scepter (rod) of my son (Judah). This power is being given into the hand of the slayer (Nebuchadnezzar). He tells Ezekiel to cry and howl as this “sword” is coming upon His people, particularly the princes, or those in authority in the government of Zedekiah. By saying in vs. 13, **“Because it is a trial”** I believe He is saying that this “sword” has been tried and proven. What if it holds in disdain the scepter, i.e. the king, he says that it will be no more. The kingship in Jerusalem will be no more once this “sword” has done its job. It will do double damage and many of the great men will be slain and put into their graves. It won't make any difference which way the “sword” goes, whether to the right or to the left, it will accomplish its purpose.

(Read Eze. 21:18-24) God is telling Ezekiel to draw out a plan with two routes coming from the same place. One route was to go to Rabbath in Ammon and the other to Jerusalem. King

Nebuchadnezzar was to come to this division in the route and decide by divination which route to take. He had three ways to do this. One was to shake his arrows and they were apparently painted in such a way that they would indicate the way he was to take. The second was to consult his idols or images. I'm not sure how he was able to tell what they were supposed to tell him. The third was to consult the liver. I assume this meant that he was to kill an animal and if it had a healthy liver, this would give him a positive answer to his question. If it was not healthy, the answer was negative. In this case, God says Nebuchadnezzar was to choose the route to Jerusalem and to set up mounts, etc. to prepare to take the city. God says that those who had sworn an oath, i.e. Zedekiah and his princes who had sworn an oath to Nebuchadnezzar, would consider the divination a false one and would not believe that Nebuchadnezzar would come against them. But because of their iniquity, i.e. their breaking of their oath, had been made public, God says that they would be taken.

(Read Eze. 21:25-27) God then directs His attention specifically to Zedekiah, the profane wicked prince of Israel, and says his day had come when his iniquity would have an end. Then we see the command to remove the crown from Zedekiah. We discussed this in our last lesson as we discussed what happened to the unconditional promises that God made to King David that his family, his kingship and his throne would continue forever in his family through Solomon, his son. After commanding the removal of the crown, God says that nothing would remain the same, that He would exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. We took this to mean that the line of Zarah would be exalted while the line of Pharez would be abased. Then God says, **"I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."** We pointed out in our last lesson that God kept His promise to David through one of the

daughters of Zedekiah, with Jeremiah taking her eventually to Ireland where she married a prince from the line of Zarah who was already there. This would have been the first overturn. The crown was moving out of Jerusalem where it had been since David was crowned as king, and moving to another land, in this case Ireland. Incidentally, in the traditions of the people of Ireland, Jeremiah had with him a harp, claimed to be David's harp; a chest, claimed to be the Ark of the Covenant; and a stone, claimed to be Jacob's pillar that he anointed with oil twice at Bethel. I believe I said the harp was in the British museum, but I believe now that I am wrong. We'll continue with Eze. 21:27 next issue. JRL