

KINGDOM SPIRIT

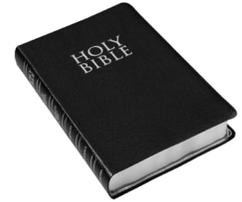
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 708

DEUTERONOMY—JOSHUA

We concluded our article last month with Israel ready to leave Mt. Sinai. The trip from the land of Goshen, their home in Egypt, to Canaan, the shortest route would have been approximately 300 miles, approximately a 2 month trip. We don't really know the true route that they traveled, but even going across the Sinai Peninsula and into Saudi Arabia and then traveling north on the east side of the Dead Sea and entering Canaan from the east should have been no more than a 6 month trip. Yet, after all the manifestation of God's power these people had seen and experienced, when spies who had been sent by Moses into Canaan came back and reported there were giants in the land, the people's hearts melted and they rebelled, refusing to go into the land when God told them to. God honored their refusal by telling them that their children would inherit the land, but not one of them would cross over into this promised land. The only exception was to be two men, Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies Moses had sent into the land but, who, when they returned, urged the people on, telling them God would give the land to them. A whole generation had to die off now before the people could go into the land, thus they spent 40 years making what could have been a 6 month trip. Even Moses and Aaron, whom God had named as their high priest, did not go in.

Those forty years were far from trouble free. God met all their needs, but He also punished them severely for their lust. This even included Miriam, sister to Moses and Aaron, and Aaron, though he was their high priest. Their failure to yield themselves to God's care was just one of the sins they committed. Another was that the people wanted authority without responsibility and they resented following those whom God had given authority and responsibility. Some wanted to make God to be what they wanted Him to be. Any of this sound familiar? Even Moses, as strong, physically and spiritually as he was, succumbed to temptation and took matters into his own hand in Numbers 20. This cost him the right to go into Canaanland.

Finally after the 40 years, Moses led the people north on the east side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River to a point approximately midway north and south of the land and then they turned and went into the land going west toward the Mediterranean Sea. This route took them through the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon before reaching the Jordan River, the eastern boundary of Canaan at that time. Moses instructed the people not to meddle or interfere with these countries they were to pass through because they were related to them, but when they crossed into Canaan, the Canaanites were to be totally destroyed because of the sins of the Canaanites. As they approached the Jordan River, they drove the Amorites out of the land on the east side of the Jordan. God had given explicit instructions not to mingle with the Moabites and Midianites, but this

stiff-necked people directly violated this command and began to take wives for themselves from this people. A Midianite prophet named Balaam played a major part in this by teaching the Moabite and Midianite women to seduce the Israelite men. Because this led to Israelites bowing down to the Moabite god, Baalpeor, this not only cost Balaam his life later on, it cost some 24,000 lives in Israel before the plague was stopped by Phinehas, son of the then high priest Eleazar, killing an Israelite man who was making a public display of sexual relations with a Midianite woman. The woman was also killed.

As part of the preparations for going into the land of Canaan, God had Moses rehearse all of the law again before the people. This he did beginning with the Ten Commandments and following with all of the written law. The law, as it was written, covered every aspect of life by principle, if not by specific commandment, statute or judgment. The elders of Israel have every law needed to promote and maintain peace, harmony, and prosperity among the people. It was something the people had to know and be willing to abide by, as well as the elders. It still is. We cannot stress enough the necessity of knowing the law as presented here in these four books.

Finally God decreed war on the Midianites and Moses sent 1000 men from each tribe to battle. Though greatly outnumbered, Israel lost not one man while all the males, including the kings of Midian, were killed. However, the women and children were not killed and this displeased Moses and God. Because of what Balaam had taught, Moses had all the women and children killed except the young virgins who could be kept for servants. This pretty well cleaned out the land on the east side of Jordan. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh found this land to be good land for their cattle and requested that their inheritance be this land rather than the land on the west side of the Jordan. Moses agreed to this after extracting a promise from them that they would send their share of men on with the rest of Israel into Canaan until all the land was taken.

Division of the land was worked out. It

was to be surveyed out and then a draw by lot of the parcels was to be made first by the tribe and then parcels within these larger parcels would be divided again by lot to the individual men of the tribe inheriting that particular parcel. The Levites however, did not inherit any of the land, but rather were to be given cities within each tribe's inheritance, because of their priestly and/or administrative duties among all of the tribes. Six of their cities, three on each side of the Jordan, were to become cities of refuge, the closest thing to a prison in God's law. Anyone who killed anyone, whether accidental or intentional, if they could flee to one of these cities, would be protected unless they were found guilty of first degree murder.

Moses, knowing he would not go into Canaan, chose Joshua, one of the two spies who was allowed to go into Canaan, to be his replacement and did all God told him to do to prepare the people. All of this done, Moses speaks to the people the last time. His admonishment was to obey, obey, obey...He points out to them that they have seen no similitude of God, as God made sure they would not be tempted to try to make any image or likeness of anything to worship. Deut. 4:24 says, **"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."** He tells them they will perish from off the land if they worship other gods. However, he reminds them that if they do this and are cast off the land and they turn back and seek God with all their heart and soul, He will not forsake them nor forget the covenant He made with their fathers. He tells them in Deut. 4:39, **"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."** It is extremely important that we get the full significance of this statement.

He admonished the parents to diligently teach the commandments to their children, but even more than that, they were to be the topic of conversation in every aspect of their lives and to always be visible around the home.

The people of the land of Canaan were worshipping their gods on every hilltop, in groves of trees and setting up images all over the land. To

discourage the Israelites from doing the same, God was to choose only one place to worship once they were in the land and all of their feasts, sacrifices and offerings were to be taken there. In Deut. 10:16, Moses admonishes the people to **“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.”** In other words, even though they were to carry on the rituals of the sacrifice laws, they were to do so from the heart and obey out of love of their God. They were not to rely on the ritual itself as a fulfillment of their obedience to God. Over and over in all the Bible, we find God’s people were to love their God and keep His law. Anyone trying to divert them to other gods was to be stoned to death.

Moses also reiterated the Sabbath law which also included the seventh year land rest and the jubilee every 49th year. For any nation to be healthy economically, it had to be debt free. Provision for the release of debt was included.

Moses knew the republican form of government they had would ultimately give way to a monarchy as the Israelite people seemed prone to want to be like everybody else. Among the guidelines Moses gave them for when this time came to pass, the importance of having their king to be of their own race, or family, and that the king was not to use his office to multiply wealth or wives to himself, was stressed. As we’ll see later, even wise Solomon broke this law and Israel paid dearly for it.

The laws of war they were to observe once the seven Canaanite nations had been destroyed, laws concerning their relationship to each other, conservation laws, laws pertaining to public safety, rules concerning diversity of planting, working animals, fibers in clothing, etc., were all gone over again by Moses. Remember the principles used in the examples are the importance of the law. Moses continued by bringing to their attention the laws of marriage and divorce, of cleanliness and sanitation, and of economics, including the probation of usury. Finally, in Deut. 30:15, he said, **“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.”**

Moses is now 120 years old and about to say goodbye to his people. He encouraged them

and charged Joshua with his responsibilities and then sang a song that everyone should study in detail (Deut. 32). One point we will take from it is in Deut. 32:9, **“For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”** All the world is God’s by virtue of Him being its creator. As the tribe of Levi was set apart from all Israel, God in effect is setting Israel apart from all the world. I believe it is safe to say that the rest of the world’s population would always be proportional to the population of Israel.

God then took Moses up on Mt. Nebo and showed Moses all the land of Canaan from there. This last meeting between God and Moses, whose mutual love for each other far exceeded that normally known by man, would have been beyond description. Thus it was kept a private affair between the two of them as Moses died there and was buried by God. No one knows where.

These five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, are often called the Pentateuch and all but the last chapter were probably written by Moses.

Joshua took over Moses’ office as they crossed the Jordan to begin taking the land of Canaan. Jericho was the first city to be targeted. Crossing the Jordan took place in the spring at flood time but God, as He did at the Red Sea, performed a miracle to let them cross on dry ground. As soon as the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the water, the water backed up until all the people were across. This served not only to get them across the Jordan, but to magnify Joshua as their leader in the sight of all the people.

The ritual of circumcision had been neglected in the wilderness and God required this to be corrected before they moved on. When this was done and the Passover observed, the people were ready for the task of claiming the land. The method employed to destroy the city of Jericho put great fear in the hearts of the people of the land.

Israel was to destroy everything except the silver, gold, brass and iron and were to pick up nothing for themselves as individuals. This proved to be too much of a temptation for a man

named Achan of the tribe of Judah. He kept a garment and some silver and gold, but no one knew it. That is until they attacked the next city, Ai. When they were beaten back, God told Joshua it was because of disobedience. Joshua had to find out who was disobedient. When he did, Achan, his family, and all his substance were taken to the valley of Achor, stoned to death, burned and covered with a large pile of rocks. The second attack on Ai was then completely successful.

The kings of the land began to fear greatly and tried to confederate themselves to fight Israel. One city, however, tried a different approach. They tricked the elders of Israel into believing they were from a far land and convinced them to sign a covenant with them that would guarantee their protection. These Hivites were soon found out. Israel could not destroy them because of the covenant, but they did make them bond-servants. In fact, Israel was soon in battle with several kings, headed up by the king of Jerusalem, as these kings came against the city of these Hivites, Gibeon, to destroy it. Because of the covenant, the Israelites had to fight these kings to protect the deceivers with whom they had made the covenant. The Israelites routed these kings very decisively, but they were still chasing them at the end of the day. God had killed more with hail than the Israelites had with the sword. However, they still needed more time, so Joshua prayed for the sun and the moon to stand still. God granted his prayer and daylight lasted nearly another full day. This is often referred to as “Joshua’s long day.”

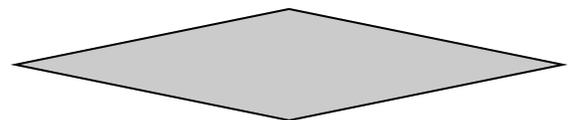
When the battle was over, the Israelites had destroyed most of the inhabitants of the land in a strip from the Jordan river on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west and about 50 miles wide. They then went south, then back north destroying the cities as they went. Though not all the land was totally subdued (there were not enough Israelites to fully inhabit it yet), Joshua was instructed to divide all the land, subdued and un-subdued, among the 9 1/2 tribes on the west side of the Jordan.

Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, of the tribe of Joseph (probably of Ephraim), the two

spies who were allowed to live to come into Canaan, each claimed the land promised them, thus establishing which parcels of land their respective tribes would take. The remaining seven parcels were then divided by lot and the 2 1/2 tribes claiming their land on the east side were allowed to return home.

Joshua, at 110 years old, called all the elders together and reviewed with them all that had taken place from Abraham’s time to the present and then admonished the people to be courageous and keep the law of God. He cautioned them not to intermarry with the people left in the land and not to serve their gods. He warned them that if they did so, they would soon perish off the land. This was not a prophecy—it was the law. Finally, as he admonishes them to serve God, Joshua says in Joshua 24:15, “**but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**” The people promised to do the same and apparently did throughout the lives of the elders who outlived Joshua. Joshua died soon after as did Eleazar, the high priest. With the passing of Joshua, no one replaced him in his “presidential” office. Each tribe governed itself with even the individual cities being pretty much autonomous. Their courage decreased proportionately with their diminishing trust in God until they were unable to drive out the remaining inhabitants of Canaan as they needed more land and, as God had predicted, they soon fell to worshipping the gods of the land. As a result they were given into the hands of their enemies, but when they would turn back to God, He provided them “judges” to deliver them from their enemies. This up and down pattern for Israel continued on for approximately 300 years.

Please read Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles as we continue our study. **JRL**



RESURRECTION

Rev. 20:4-6 says, **“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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.”**

Then in verses 11-15 the apostle John speaks of another or second resurrection. **“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”**

We will use these verses as our information base on resurrections and see how other Scriptures support and expand the information we see here. Let's first examine the information provided here, looking as we begin at the first resurrection.

Clearly, this is a believers only resurrection. However, the description of those having part in this resurrection doesn't appear to me to

include nominal Christians. These people include martyrs and people who have not worshiped the beast we find discussed in Rev. 13. Understanding what worshipping the beast means is a study to itself, but perhaps saying that these were people who put God above riches, pleasures, and status will briefly summarize the meaning. I realize that there is considerable opposition to the thought that some Christians will receive a greater reward than others, but I believe that there are a number of Scriptures that support what Rev. 20:4-6 is telling us here. Of course, this leaves us with the question, “If not all Christians are resurrected here, where do the rest fit into the resurrection picture?” If I may, let us delay our answer to this while we look at Scriptures supporting Rev. 20:4-6.

Let's first look at Heb. 11:35, **“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”** I believe we can assume we are talking about Christians, whether they accepted deliverance or not. Being Christians was the reason for their being in this position. Whether these people understood that there would be two resurrections we don't know, but they apparently understood there would be a difference in the outcome of those resurrected even among Christians. They definitely believed that what they did in this life affected their outcome in their resurrection.

In Philippians 3:11, Paul expresses a desire that at first seems a little strange with us, knowing how strong a Christian he was. But as we analyze it a little, I believe we will find it more understandable. He says, **“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”** The word resurrection is translated from the Greek word *anastasis*. This word appears in the New Testament 42 times and is always translated resurrection. However, here in Phil. 3:11, the Greek word *exanastasis*, which literally means “a standing up out of” or an “out resurrection.” According to an explanation note in the Companion Bible for the term “of the dead.” all the texts read, “the one from (*Gr.ek*) the dead”

making the expression emphatic. "Resurrection of the dead" appears frequently and is translated from the Greek, *anastasis nekron*, but here the Greek is *exanastasis ek nekron*. The *ek nekron* means "from the dead" implying the resurrection of some with the others being left behind. In putting it all together we have a further selection (out-resurrection) from among (some) the dead. There is no question that Paul expected to be resurrected, but this indicates that there was going to be a separate resurrection of the just (or Christians) that would include only a portion of them. This resurrection was the one that Paul was hoping to attain to.

If we look at the letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2-3, at the end of each letter we find the term **"To him that overcometh."** This is then followed by a reward Christ says He will give to the overcomer. In the order given, these are the rewards. **"will give to eat of the tree of life."** (vs 7) **"shall not be hurt of the second death"** (vs 11); **"Will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written"** (vs 17); **"To him will I give power over the nations"** (vs 26); **"the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels"** (Rev. 3:5); **will I make a pillar in the temple of my God...I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem...and I will write upon him my new name"** (vs 12); **"will I grant to sit with me in my throne."** vs 21).

Compare these rewards or promises to Rev. 20:6. **"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 (administrators) of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."**

Phil. 3:11, quoted above, indicates that Paul was striving to be a part of this resurrection in Rev. 20:6. Though he never uses the word "overcomer" to describe those who will participate in this resurrection, he goes to great length to teach us to be overcomers and to strive to attain

to this first resurrection. Though Paul, at the time he wrote the Philippian epistle, was not sure he had attained to it, he is in agreement with John that such a resurrection would take place. But this begs the question we have already asked, "What about the rest of the Christians?"

Lets look at Rev. 20:12-15. In verse 12 we are told that **"the books were opened: and another book was opened; which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."** This indicates there would be 2 books, or sets of books, that would be used at this judgement. "The books", I believe, are the books of the law. Some believe that these books represent individual records of each individual appearing for judgement. But we're told that the judgement would be of the works of each person. The works would need to be judged against the law to determine what was right and what was wrong. So I believe these "books" are the books of the law against which each person's works will be judged.

If everybody appearing for judgement were unbelievers or non-Christians, then what would be the necessity of the "book of life"? None of them would have their name written in it. Verse 15 tells us that **"whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."** This tells me there will be some whose names are written in the book of life at this judgement, thus a part of this general resurrection.

If we review some of the Scriptures discussing resurrection, with this information in mind we can tell which resurrection is being discussed. For example, in a lesson that Jesus gave to the Pharisees in parables, He finished in Luke 14:14, **"for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."** Since only the believer, or the just, will be in the first resurrection, this is the resurrection referred to.

In John 5 Jesus is discussing resurrection and says in verse 28, 29 **"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, on which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come**

forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” The word “damnation” could be rendered “judgement.” Since **all** that are in the grave will come forth, this cannot be the first resurrection where only some come forth. This refers to the second or general resurrection and confirms that both Christians and non-Christians will be a participant in it.

Since no mention is made of the non-Christians in I Thess. 4:13-17, I believe this would refer to the first resurrection. But this Scripture does bring up another point. Verse 17 says, **“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them** (the dead in Christ—vs 16) **in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”** Many teach that this means that both those resurrected and those who remain alive at the time of the resurrection will meet Christ in the air and will go to heaven with Him to always be with Him. The key words here are “to meet.: The Greek words are, *eis apantesin* which according to Young’s Analytical Concordance means “for a meeting.” It is found 4 times in the N.T., Matt 25:1, 25:6, Acts 28:15 and here in I Thess. 4:17. In all of the first three verses the indication is that those going out to meet someone went to escort the one they were meeting back to their location. For example, in Acts 28:15 Paul is being taken to Rome and when some in Rome, who knew Paul, heard he was coming, we’re told, **“They came to meet us as far as Appii forum and the three taverns.”** to escort him back to Rome. This is what is meant here in I Thess. 4:17. Those caught up to meet Christ in the air will ultimately escort Him back to earth where He will begin His 1000 year reign.

There is probably much more that could be written about the resurrections, but the most important point we need to emphasize is that we as Christians, regardless of who or where we are, need to strive to be an overcomer, a participant in the first resurrection. If there are still questions concerning the resurrections, please feel free to let us know and we will do our best to provide answers. **JRL**

PERSIA-IRAN

Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 2 what a dream the king had, (but couldn’t remember), was and then interprets the dream. The king had dreamed of a great image, that was very bright and excellent, that stood before him that was very awesome or terrible. Describing this image in vs. 32-33, Daniel tells us, **“This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”**

Daniel had been taken captive from Jerusalem as a young boy. He had become known, as he grew up and matured, as a wise man. It was because of this that he was now before the king telling and interpreting the king’s dream. Daniel then interpreted the dream telling him concerning this image, beginning at the last of verse 38, **“Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”**

Daniel is foretelling through this dream the order of the great world ruling empires that had begun with Babylon and would continue until the very recent past. As he told the king, Babylon was the first and we now know Persia to be the second (the breast and arms of silver), the Greeks the third and finally the Romans (represented by iron).

This is our basic introduction to Persia though she is not named. Earlier in Isaiah 44:28, we are introduced to the king of Persia that would bring down and take over the Babylonian Empire, though Isaiah made this introduction many years before Babylon even became a world empire. This king’s name was Cyrus and God named him long before Cyrus was even born. Daniel records

the events in the palace of the King of Babylon the night the Medes and Persians took the city of Babylon in Dan. 5. The Euphrates River ran through the city under the walls. The Persians went up river and diverted the river away from Babylon and then went into the city in the dried up riverbed under the walls while the drunken orgy was taking place at the king's palace.

It is generally agreed that Darius the Mede, who took the kingdom of Babylon, was either an underling of King Cyrus or was Cyrus himself. Cyrus was more sympathetic than had been the kings of Babylon and he allowed the people who had been captured by the Babylonians to take their idols and return to their homes. Since the Judahites had no idol, they were allowed by Cyrus to take instruments used in the temple and return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and the city. II Chron. 36:22-23 records the proclamation he made to this effect.

The Medes occupied the land north of Persia and actually played a part in the start of the migration of the Israelites, who had been taken by the Assyrians, out of the land of their captivity, which was partially in the land of the Medes, as they moved west across Asia Minor, Europe and the British Isles. Part of the time the Medes were

friends of the Persians, but ultimately came under the rule of the Persians.

Ezra records the return of the Judahites to Jerusalem and the beginning of the rebuilding. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of the King Artaxerxes, the king following Cyrus. He obtained favor of the king and he too went up to Jerusalem and was appointed governor of Jerusalem by the king of Persia.

In the book of Esther, we see that Esther, of the tribe of Judah, married King Ahasuerus of Persia (possibly Artaxerxes II) and became Queen of Persia. We're told in Esther 1:1 that there were over 127 provinces in the kingdom of Persia that extended from India to Ethiopia. This was probably at the height of Persian dominance. Persia took over the Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C. and lasted as a major empire for just over 200 years. Alexander the Great of

Greece conquered the Persian Empire in 334 B.C. It was never to rise to great prominence again.

Though Persians represent the majority of population in Iran today, the mix of nationalities and languages today is the result of a number of conquests of Persia by several different entities such as the Huns, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russia. JRL

