

KINGDOM SPIRIT



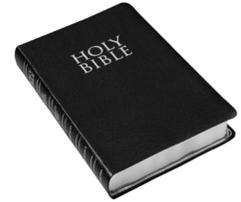
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 710

II SAMUEL — I KINGS I CHRONICLES

Picking up our story again in II Samuel, a very special relationship developed between David and the God of Israel. However, this did not mean David was to lead a trouble free, or sinless life, far from it in fact. The job God had for David was to develop and expand the kingdom to the limits God had promised to Abraham, as we read in Genesis. David spent his whole life in this job, thus most of his life was in war. But he never lost his trust in God.

II Samuel, the first two chapters of I Kings and the book of I Chronicles all cover the same time period of the life of David, with the exception of the genealogies we mentioned in the first eight chapters of I Chronicles. When David ruled over Judah only, he reigned from Hebron, but when he was anointed king over all Israel, he went up and took the city of Jerusalem from the Canaanites and established his rule there. David and his descendants then ruled from Jerusalem from this time until the Babylonian captivity. One of his first non-military projects was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Though ultimately successful, it proved a more difficult task than anticipated, as can be seen by reading I Chron. 13.

A little later, the King of Tyre, a friend of David's, brought cedar trees and craftsmen to Jerusalem and built David a house of cedar. This

made David aware that the Ark of the Covenant was still in a tent and it made him want to build a house or temple of cedar for it. However, God told him “no” through the prophet Nathan. He gave as His reason, that David was a man of war and had shed blood. Though disqualified from actually building the temple, David contributed much in the collection of materials including nails, gold, cedar and marble.

In telling David “no,” God made some promises to David that would have great bearing on the history of Israel and the world. First, in I Chron. 17 and II Sam. 7, God promised David that a temple would be built by David's son who would succeed him to the throne. Second, He told David He would build David a house, referring to David's family and descendants. Then He promised that David's throne would be established forevermore and that David's descendants, through his son Solomon, would always occupy that throne. Again, as with the promises to Abraham, we have unconditional promises. There are no “ifs,” so we know that his throne and kingdom were to be established forever. As we study future events that will seem to contradict this at the time, remember the unconditional nature of these promises.

Thirdly, God promised an expansion to the boundaries of the kingdom, apparently to another location, or locations even. II Sam. 7:10 and I Chron. 17:9 tell us **“Moreover I will appoint (or ordain) a place for my people Israel and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more.”**

Since they were in the land of Canaan at the time, this appears to indicate another location. Also, later we'll see that the vast majority of Israel left this land never to return, so Canaan doesn't seem to be the place these verses are speaking of. Keep these three promises in mind as they all are unconditional in that they require no further performance by David or his descendants as a condition for these promises to be in effect. These promises humbled David greatly and he very eloquently gave thanks to God for them.

David expanded his boundaries to those promised Abraham, including taking in the land of Moab, Syria, Edom, Ammon, and Zobak. Only during the reigns of David and his son, Solomon, did Israel control the full territory God promised Abraham. Though Israelites apparently lived in all the land, obviously not everyone under David's and Solomon's rule were Israelites.

David committed a couple of very serious sins. Once, while his army was out in battle and David had remained in Jerusalem, he was walking on his roof one evening and he happened to see a very beautiful woman bathing herself. David sent and had her brought to him and he slept with her. This tells us how human he was. However, this woman, Bathsheba, was married and her husband was in David's army. Complications to his sin then set in. The woman conceived, so she sent word to David that she was with child. David sent to Joab and asked him to send the woman's husband home, which he did. However, the man was so loyal to David that he would not go home to his wife, despite considerable urging from David. Finally, David sent him back with a note to Joab to put this man in the very forefront of the hottest battle. Joab complied with David's request and the man was killed. David then took Bathsheba for his wife. All seemed to be working out until Nathan, the prophet, was sent by God to accuse David of his serious sins. He had committed both adultery and murder.

David admitted his guilt and asked God for forgiveness. (II Sam. 12:13) However, David had to learn something we all need to learn. While God can and did grant forgiveness, the

very act of the sin itself can and usually does precipitate a correcting action, or judgement, that often cannot be stopped. The full penalty would have been death to David. From this David was spared because of God's forgiveness, but because he had given "**great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme,**" David was told the child of their sinful union would die and what he had done to another man's wife secretly would be done to him and his wives publicly. He would always have to live by the sword as God would bring evil against him out of his own house.

David grieved and prayed earnestly for God to spare the baby boy that was born of Bathsheba, but the baby lived seven days and died. Later, Bathsheba bore David another son, Solomon, who would ultimately rule in David's place and become a very great king.

David was to continue to have troubles that were precipitated by these sins. He was even forced out of Jerusalem for a time in fear of his life at the hand of another of his sons, Absalom.

Later, David committed another great sin by having Joab number the people. This probably amounted to a conscription to military service of all the young men. Joab objected very strongly, realizing it to be a serious sin, but David persisted. II Sam. 24:1 tells us God caused David to do this while I Chron. 21:1 says Satan caused David to do it. The word "Satan" is a transliterated Babylonian word which, according to Young's Analytical Concordance means "adversary." So, whether we regard Satan as a separate being of some type or whether we consider God to be the adversary, God took the responsibility of causing David to number the people. Though the result of this numbering had what we would consider tragic results, when we look at the whole picture, we can see it as part of God's purpose (boulema). David recognized he had sinned when accused and asked God for forgiveness. Again, personal forgiveness was granted, but judgement still had to occur. Given three choices of punishment, David chose three days of pestilence as he felt better in the hands of God than in the hands of men. Still, 70,000 men died.

This numbering does give us an idea of

the population at this time. We're told there were approximately 1 1/2 million men under arms. Multiplying this number by four would be very conservative, but this would give us double the number that left Egypt.

Another attempt was made by another of David's sons, Adonijah, to assume the throne of David. This attempt forced David to abdicate the throne in favor of Solomon as God had directed. This had the effect of strengthening Solomon and his reign.

As promised to David, Solomon played a very important part in the history of God's kingdom, Israel, and the rest of the world. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him what He could give him. According to I Kings 3:9, Solomon's answer was, **"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"**

Because Solomon asked for this instead of long life, riches, or the life of his enemies, God promised him what he asked plus these things as well. As a result, there was never a king before or after Solomon so wise or rich. His wisdom was not just philosophical, he also had a great scientific mind as well. The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon clearly indicate his wisdom in both areas. Solomon loved God and his wisdom seemed to put him into an even closer relationship with God. He became famous over the then known world and rulers and people traveled great distances just to see this man and his kingdom.

His most significant contribution was the construction of the temple of God in Jerusalem. He made an agreement with Hiram, King of Tyre and friend of David, for the timber and the skilled labor for the construction. Thirty thousand Israelites were conscripted by Solomon to help with the construction plus an unspecified number of bond-servants who worked as burden bearers and stone hewers.

The construction began in Solomon's fourth year and took seven years to complete.

God provided exceptionally talented craftsmen to work with the gold plating, engraving, brass casting, etc. that would rival or exceed the abilities of the world's finest craftsmen since that time.

In I Kings 6:12-13, God appeared unto Solomon and re-affirmed His promises to David, but also warned if Solomon or the people should turn from God and worship other gods, then God would cast them out of the land, and the temple which Solomon had built would be cast out of God's sight.

For all of Solomon's wisdom, he had one very serious weakness—women. Unfortunately, in violation of God's law, he married many non-Israelite women which ultimately drew him away from his God to their gods. Because he started worshipping these other gods, God became very angry with him and told him that He would rend the kingdom from him, but for David's sake, He would not do it in Solomon's lifetime and also for David's and Jerusalem's sake, God would not rend it all, but would leave him one tribe. Speaking through the prophet Ahijah in I Kings 11:36, God told a man named Jeroboam, who was ultimately to receive the portion of the kingdom God would rend from Solomon, **"And unto his (Solomon's) son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there."**

Understand that this one tribe is in addition to Solomon's own tribe of Judah. As we continue, we'll see that this "light" tribe was the tribe of Benjamin. It is interesting that, with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot, all of the apostles chosen by Christ, including Paul, probably came from this "light" tribe.

Solomon died and the kingdom passed to Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Rehoboam took some bad advice from his younger princes and alienated the people of Israel from him. So bad was their alienation that they stoned Rehoboam's tax collector to death and selected Jeroboam to be their king. When Rehoboam raised an army to bring the ten tribes, who had revolted, back into subjection to him, God stopped him by telling him the split

was of God. So, we find ten tribes making up one kingdom, called the Kingdom of Israel and later also called in Scripture the Northern Kingdom, Ephraim, or just Israel. Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, made up the other kingdom called the Kingdom of Judah, or the Southern Kingdom. The tribe of Levi was split between the two kingdoms and is not included in the number ten or the number two.

From this point on, the Bible makes a distinction between the two kingdoms and this distinction is maintained throughout the rest of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, with the exception of occasionally speaking of the whole house of Israel, which would include all 13 tribes. It never refers to the Kingdom of Judah alone as the Kingdom of Israel or as Israel and vice versa. From this point on, these two kingdoms have separate destinies, so to refer to one by the name of the other will lead to confusion. Note that Israel had the birthright and Judah had the scepter. JRL

BAPTISM

We are continuing to discuss uses of the Greek words from which we get our word “baptize” and different versions of it. In Mark 7:1-4, the Pharisees are getting ready to ask Jesus why His disciples do not walk according to the traditions of the elders. In verse 2, they observed some of Jesus’ disciples eating with “unwashen” hands. The word “unwashen” is translated from the Greek “**aniptos.**” In the 3rd verse they say of themselves, “**except they wash their hands oft, eat not.**” Here the word wash is translated from the Greek, “**nipto.**” Going on into verse 4, “**And when they come from the market, except they wash (Greek=baptiso), they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (Greek=baptismos) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels and of tables.**” Tables here means beds or couches. So if we

translated the Greek words to English as they are translated elsewhere in Scripture, they would be saying that except they baptize, they eat not and that as part of their traditions of the elders, they held to baptizing their cups, pots, brazen vessels and their beds or couches. That this was a ceremonial washing, or baptizing, I believe can be inferred from the fact that these couches or beds were quite large and very heavy, not something they would have picked up and dipped or emersed in water. At any rate, the word baptize was used to indicate washing some way or another in the Greek.

I believe we can then see how the word “baptize” in the New Testament times came to be used in reference to some of the ceremonial washings, or uses of water in the Old Testament times. The words baptize, baptism, and Baptist are strictly New Testament terms being derived from strictly Greek words but we can see that some of the New Testament writers were referring to Old Testament “washings” part of the time that they used these words.

According to “Strong’s Concordance.”, there are five Greek words used that are translated into some form of the English word “baptize.” He numbers them consecutively 907 through 911. 907 is “**baptiso**” and is from a derivative of 911, “**bapto,**” and means “*to makewhelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, espec. (techn.) of the ordinance of Christian baptism.*” It is translated Baptist, baptize, and wash. 908 is “**baptisma.**” It is from 907 and simply means *baptism.* 909 is “**batismos**” and is also from 907. It is defined as “*ablution (ceremonial or Christian)*” and is translated baptism and washing. 910 is “**Baptistes,**” also from 907 and means “*a baptizer, as an epithet of Christ’s forerunner*” and is translated Baptist. 911 is the word “**bapto**” from which we already seen the word “**baptiso**” derived. It is a primary verb meaning “*towhelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; in the New Testament only in a qualified or special sense, i.e. (literally) tomoisten (a part of one’s person), or (by implication) tostain (as with dye.)*” It is translated “dip.”

According to my College Dictionary, the word ablution is: “(1) a wash or cleansing, specifically as a religious right, 2) the liquid used in the cleansing.” The word overwhelm is “to overwhelm, engulf, hence overpower or crush.”

With this much groundwork, let’s begin with John the Baptist. Remembering that John the Baptist’s father was a priest in the temple, we should consider John a priest as well. Though I might be hardpressed to prove this with Scripture, I believe that the rituals in the temple had become so humanized, or Phariseeized, at this point in time that God was not recognizing their validity. Yet, if Jesus was to be perfect under the law, there were certain rituals, or ordinances, that He had to keep. We see this in Luke 2:21 where He was circumcised and named and verses 22-24 where He was presented to God in accordance with the law of Exodus 13:2,12 & 15. However, the mission that Christ had to perform in sacrificing Himself for the justification or atonement of all men (Rom. 5:18) and in becoming our High Priest (Heb. 7), to be in keeping with the fullness of the law that Paul called our “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” the same three steps, or anointing agents, that we discussed in our last lesson, must be brought into play, at least in principle.

I submit that John the Baptist performed one of these steps or anointed Jesus with one of the anointing agents—water. Since John was a priest by birth, he had the right to perform this ceremony. In fact, it appears to me that John was the last true high priest of the Aaronic priesthood to be recognized by God. Jesus, though descended through the tribe of Judah, was a cousin to John, so to me, the promise to the Levites that they would always have a man to offer sacrifice before God (Jer. 33:18) is met in Christ when He became our true High Priest. In baptizing Jesus, John fulfilled the washing requirement for the consecration of the high priest, preparation to go to the altar and preparation to go to the Holy of Holies.

John was divinely called as can be seen in the story found in Luke 1:11-20. The angel,

speaking to John’s father, Zacharias, concerning the birth of John, tells us in verse 17, “**And he (John) shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**” Reading Luke 3:2, we read, “**the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.**” John 1:33 has John the Baptist saying, “**he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.**” Clearly, John was instructed by God to carry out these ordinances that should have normally been carried out in the temple. Because of the humanness of the law in the temple, God made these ordinances available in their purest form that Christ could partake of them. Instead of the laver, we find the Jordan river of “living” water used. The traditions of the elders had become the law of the temple instead of God’s law, so we see the principle of the law being carried out in pureness and innocence at the river Jordan. It is doubtful that the priests in the temple would have allowed Jesus to take this step in the temple because they did not understand, nor accept, at this point, what He was going to do and also because he was not descended from Aaron. However, even if they had agreed, their “traditions of the elders” mentality would have tainted the ceremony. But as we can see, God made the necessary provision ahead of time.

Jesus understood this necessity before the law. When He came to John to be baptized, John was more than a little hesitant to baptize Jesus because he did not feel worthy. However, Jesus told him “**Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.**” (Matt. 3:15) He had no need to repent, so if He were fulfilling all righteousness, or the law, it would have to be for some of these ordinances we find in the law. Remember that at this point in time, the people were still under the Old Covenant as Christ had not yet been crucified and resurrected.

There appears to be two reasons for John baptizing. The baptism of Christ was one and applied only to Christ. The other reason we find in Matt. 3:11, **“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.”** Mark 1:4 provides an addition to this, **“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”**

We need to define the words “repentance” and “remission” before we can proceed. Strong’s Concordance tells us “repentance” is translated from the Greek word **“metanoia.”** It comes from a word meaning “to think differently or afterwards.” It is defined as, “(subj.) *compunction* (for guilt, includ. *reformation*); by impl. *reversal* (of [another’s] decision). Young’s Concordance defines it simply as “a change of mind.”

“Remission” is from the Greek word **“aphesis”** defined by Dr. Strong as “*freedom*; (fig.) *pardon*” and is translated deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, and remission. Young’s Concordance defines it as “a sending away.”

At first look, these two verses seem to say that baptism gives repentance and repentance gives remission or forgiveness of sin. But, what does the rest of Scripture tell us gives us remission or forgiveness? Is it not the blood, more specifically the blood of Christ? If this be so, how can baptism of repentance be for the remission of sins. We need to look at the preposition “for.” It comes from the Greek word **“eis”** pronounced “ice.” According to Strong’s it is a primary preposition; meaning “*to* or *into* (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (fig.) purpose (result, etc.)” It is not saying here in Mark 1:4, for example, that remission of sins is the result or purpose of baptism, but rather indicates a point of purpose has been entered into by being baptized, or by repenting. Young’s Concordance defines the word “eis” as “with a view to.” This makes it easier for me. We could re-read Mark 1:4 as **“John did...preach the baptism of change of mind with a view to forgiveness.”** In saying this, I think it safe to say that John’s baptism

was an outward sign, a ceremonial washing, if you will, of an internal change of mind or direction (internal cleansing) with a view toward forgiveness. Neither baptism nor repentance, of themselves, are forgiveness. It is important that we understand this as one of the problems in various teachings of baptism is that baptism has become the object, or the method, or the means of forgiveness. We must realize this was not the case with John’s baptism, nor the baptism we receive as taught by the apostles.

To understand John’s baptism better, let us look at Luke 7:29-30. Jesus has just praised John the Baptist. Then we’re told, **“And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”** The word “justified” in vs. 29 is from the Greek word **“dikaioo”** meaning “to render (i.e. show or regard as just or innocent.” These people who had been baptized by John rendered, or regarded God as just. The Pharisees and lawyers did not regard God as just because it affected them. They rejected the counsel of God against themselves. They did not regard God’s indictment of them for their sins as just. They knew better. This makes it clear that there is more to it than just baptism, more that is necessary. Baptism was a sign of an attitude change that the people, including the hated publicans, regarded God as just or righteous. If we say God is just we at the same time say we are unjust or unrighteous, we have to. The Pharisees and lawyers were not willing to say that. They were saying that because they were following all the traditions of the elders that they had concocted over the years, they were righteous. As we see Christ dealing with the Pharisees elsewhere, He dealt with more what they were thinking than what they actually did. To them, so long as they carried out these traditions physically, in their mind they were righteous, so no need for baptism as they did not have the change of mind or heart that said God was just and they unjust. The publicans on the other hand recognized their sin, had

a change of mind and justified God and were baptized as an outward sign of an inward change of heart or mind. JRL

ASIA MINOR-TURKEY

We want to move into New Testament times in our study of the geography and demographics of Bible countries and nations. We have already looked at the Palestine area in our study, so I would like to go to the book of Acts where we have record of three of the apostle Paul's missionary journeys. His first journey was from Antioch in Syria to the regions of Lycia, Pisidia, Phrygia, Galatia and Cilicia in what was known as Asia Minor. Today that area is part of the country, or nation, of Turkey. Since this is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions of the world, though not always by the same races or ethnic groups, it is very rich in history prior to and during Christ's time, as well as during the time of the apostles and on through the time of the Roman Empire that is of interest to us as Christians. Even today, Turkey is very prominent in our daily news as it plays a major role in world events.

Because of its rich history, it will probably take us three or four issues to explore this region of the world to our satisfaction. So let's begin with a look at Turkey today. Turkey is unique in that it has territory on two continents, Europe and Asia; borders with eight different countries, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greece and Bulgaria; has shores on three seas, Mediterranean, Aegean and Black; plus it contains the Sea of Marmara which is used by geographers to mark the border between Europe and Asia.

It is considered an Eurasian country since it stretches across the Anatolian Peninsula (Asia Minor) of southwest Asia to the Balkan region of southeast Europe. Its largest city is Istanbul on the European continent but the capital city is Ankara on the Asian continent. The

country is divided into 81 provinces.

It ranks as the 37th largest nation in the world with an area of approximately 302,535 sq. miles which makes it slightly larger than the state of Texas. It is roughly rectangular in shape being approximately 1000 miles long east and west and 500 miles wide at its widest point north and south. Estimated 2007 population is 71,158,647 which gives it a density of about 240 people per square mile. 67% of the population live in urban centers. There are 12 cities that exceed 500,000 population.

The average precipitation is approx. 15" with less inland. Yet 3 major rivers have their beginning in Turkey, the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Aras. Hot, dry summers with mild wet winters is the normal climate with harsher conditions inland. Approx. 29.8% of the land is considered farmable with 52,250 sq. km. being irrigated. There are several mountain ranges with Mt. Ararat in the far northeast corner of the country being the highest mountain at 16,940 feet elevation. This is traditionally where Noah's ark is supposed to be though this is questioned by some.

Turkey, as we know it today as a nation, is relatively young. It was founded in 1923 from the Anatolian remnants of the Ottoman Empire that had fallen as a result of World War I. We'll discuss the history of the Ottoman Empire and the preceding empires and kingdoms next issue, but the Ottoman Empire had sided with the Germans in WWI and were defeated. A national hero, Mustafa Kemal, led the country in adopting wide-ranging social, legal and political reforms. Though there has been some instability in the government as it has gone through intermittent military coups, political power has ultimately returned to and rested with the people. Today's secular republican parliamentary democracy seems relatively stable. Ethnically, the population is 80% Turkish and 20% Kurdish. It is this ethnic difference that causes most of the problems today. Quoting from "The World Factbook," "a separatist insurgency begun in 1984 by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - now known as the People's Congress of Kurdistan or Kongra-Gel



TURKEY TODAY

(KGK) - has dominated the Turkish military's attention and claimed more than 30,000 lives. After the capture of the group's leader in 1999, the insurgents largely withdrew from Turkey mainly to northern Iraq. In 2004, KGK announced an end to its ceasefire and attacks attributed to the KGK increased." This is what is behind the news reports that we see today on our news that is affecting both Iraq and Turkey.

Though efforts have been made in the Turkish law system to keep the government secular, the population is 99.8% Muslim (mostly Sunni), with the remaining 0.2% being mostly Christian and Jews.

The official language is Turkish but there are also Kurdish, Dimli (or Zaza), Aqeri, and Kabardian languages spoken.

Though agriculture accounts for only 9.3% of the GDP, 35.9% of the population is employed in agriculture. Industry accounts for 31% of the GDP with services accounting for the rest. Agriculture products include tobacco, cotton, grain, olives, sugar beets, pulse, citrus, and livestock. Industrial products include textiles, food processing, autos, electronics, mining (coal, chromite, copper, boron), steel, petroleum, construction, lumber, and paper. Currently, imports exceed exports with machinery, chemicals, semi-finished goods, fuels, and transport being the main imports.

We'll begin a historical look at this region of the world, from pre-New Testament times until now, next issue. I think we might be surprised to see how this area plays into our own history now.