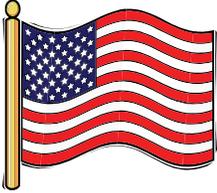


KINGDOM SPIRIT



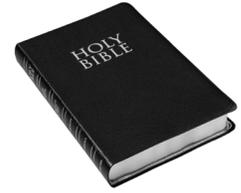
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 711

I & II KINGS I & II CHRONICLES

We concluded our article last month with the division of the Kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. We need to emphasize, before we continue, that from this point on in the Old and New Testaments, Israel is not referred to as Judah and Judah is not referred to as Israel. We might find the term Israel used in reference to the whole house, or kingdom of Israel, but to call Israel Judah or Judah Israel will most certainly lead the student of the Bible into certain error. These two kingdoms have separate destinies, separate jobs as God’s witnesses, so thus have to be dealt with as separate and distinct nations or kingdoms.

Jeroboam, the man God chose as the first king of the Kingdom of Israel, wasn’t long in causing the people of the ten tribed Israel to sin. Feeling that if he allowed the people to go back to Jerusalem to sacrifice in accordance with God’s law, they might turn back to King Rehoboam, he devised a scheme to keep it from happening. He made two golden calves and set one in Bethel and the other in Dan and told the people these were their gods and they were to worship them there. He cast many of the Levites out of their jobs and replaced them with non-Levites. Many of these Levites, plus other Israelites, refused to worship these images and went back to Jerusalem and Ju-

dah.

I and II Kings lists the history then of both kingdoms and kept up with the kings of both kingdoms; but II Chronicles, dealing with the same time period, deals primarily with the kings of Judah, or the line of David. The timing or dating of all events is based on the reigns of the kings of Judah since they were of the line of David. The throne passed from father to son, father to son, etc.

The kings of Israel from here on varied from family to family and tribe to tribe as the succession to the throne became a sort of survival of the fittest. The sin of Jeroboam was a sin they never did shake off and because they continued it, they never really knew true peace and prosperity.

The chronological history from this point and taking us up to approximately 400 years before Christ, is given in I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. All of the rest of the books of the Old Testament, with the possible exception of Malachi, were written at some point during this period covered by these six books.

We will briefly deal with the kings and events of both kingdoms, though we will focus more distinctly on the kings and events of Judah because of the promise God made to David. To maintain the continuity of the story the Bible tells from here through the New Testament, it is important for us to know what happens to both kingdoms, however. When we reach the time of each prophet, we’ll deal with that time in a little

more detail.

To help keep track of kings and events, you will find an insert in this issue of the “Spirit” that you can pull out and have as a ready reference as we continue our study of kings, events, and prophets. We refer to this insert as our “king chart” and it has an explanation as to how to use it on the back of the chart. If you have questions concerning its use, please let us know.

Jeroboam, king of Israel, and Rehoboam, king of Judah, fought each other continually. This seemed to set the pattern of behavior of the two kingdoms towards each other for many years to come. Also, because both kingdoms sinned often by worshipping other gods, the stories of other nations and kingdoms plundering these two kingdoms are quite numerous. At first, the kings of Israel were probably the most wicked. King Omri even substituted a different law system for God’s law system. Micah 6:16 refers to this system. Just a note for future reference, the Assyrians began calling Israel “Bit Khumri,” or the house of Omri, after this king of Israel.

The most wicked of these Israel kings was the son of Omri, Ahab. Ahab’s wife was the wicked Jezebel, a daughter of the king of the Zidonians. It is during Ahab’s reign that we meet the very interesting prophet, Elijah. God sent him to King Ahab to inform him there would be no rain or dew until Elijah said there would be. This didn’t make Elijah a very popular man. He had to flee to the wilderness for a time, but God took care of him there by having the ravens feed him. From there he went into Zidon where he met a widow and her son who were on the verge of starving due to the drought. She had enough meal and oil for one final meal when Elijah arrived. She fed him and God blessed her meal and oil so that she continued to have enough to feed Elijah, her son and herself. However, her son became ill and died, and we’re told that Elijah raised him up again.

Finally, after three years of drought, God sent Elijah back to Ahab. Elijah told him to gather Israel to Mt. Carmel and to be sure to have the prophets of Baal, the false god the Israelites were

worshipping, to be there also. Ahab agreed to this and when they were all gathered at Mt. Carmel, Elijah made a deal with the Baal priests. They and he would each build an altar and sacrifice a bullock. Whichever god responded to the sacrifice would be the God they would all worship. Elijah had them go first. Try as they would, they could get no response from Baal at all. Elijah then took 12 stones for his altar, killed the bullock and laid him on the altar. He then had servants fill four barrels with water and pour them on his sacrifice four different times, even filling a trench around the altar with water. Then he prayed and a fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones of the altar and the water. The people fell on their faces and said, “**The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.**” (I Kings 18:39)

Elijah then slew all the priests of Baal, and then it began to rain. Elijah, still fearful for his life, fled to Mt. Horeb and God spoke to him there and told him to go anoint Hazael, king over Syria; Jehu, king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his (Elijah’s) place.

Meanwhile in Judah, Abijam, son of Rehoboam had taken over the throne after the death of his father and then his son, Asa had become king of Judah after him. Jehoshaphat, son of Asa then became king in Asa’s place and was contemporary with Ahab. Jehoshaphat did what was right in the eyes of God. He became very great and we’re told his army numbered 1,160,000 men besides all those he had placed in the fenced cities.

Ahab desired a vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth, but when he tried to buy it from Naboth, Naboth wouldn’t sell. When Jezebel heard about it, she took matters into her own hands and had Naboth killed and then she took his vineyard and gave it to Ahab. However, when Ahab went to take possession of it, he met Elijah, who didn’t have any good news for Ahab at all. He told him the dogs would lick his blood where they licked the blood of Naboth; all his male posterity would be cut off; and Jezebel would be eaten by the dogs by the wall of Jezreel. Upon hearing this, Ahab humbled himself before God and

God had mercy on him and told him he wouldn't take the kingdom from him, but from his son.

Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab and Ahab talked him into going into battle with him at Ramothgilead. Though warned by a prophet named Micaiah that Israel would be scattered like sheep without a shepherd, they both went out to the battle. Jehoshaphat was wounded and Ahab was killed. His chariot was washed out at the place where Naboth was killed and the dogs licked up his blood as Elijah had predicted. Ahab's son, Ahaziah, took the throne of Ahab, but was soon wounded in battle and he died. His brother, Jehoram, then became king of Israel.

We're told that Elijah was taken up by God and that his spirit fell on Elisha. II Kings 4, 6 and 7 tell us of some of the miracles God did through Elisha.

King Jehoshaphat died and his son, Jehoram, took over the throne of David in Jehoshaphat's place. We now have a King Jehoram ruling Israel and a King Jehoram ruling Judah and they are related. King Jehoram of Judah married a daughter of Ahab, a sister to King Jehoram of Israel. Unfortunately, King Jehoram of Judah followed the way of the kings of Israel, but because of His promises to David, God refrained from destroying his house. (II Chron. 21:7) However, Jehoram of Judah did die of a serious disease and Ahaziah, his son, reigned in his stead.

Jehu, Whom Elijah anointed to be king over Israel, killed King Jehoram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah and all the male posterity of Ahab. He also killed Jezebel, or had her killed, in the streets by the wall of Jezreel and he left her body to the dogs. He then killed all the worshippers of Baal and took over the throne of Israel himself.

Judah went for a six year period without a king then as Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother and the daughter of Ahab, had all of Ahaziah's sons killed, or so she thought, and attempted to take the throne herself. An infant son of Ahaziah, Joash, was saved from Athaliah, however. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada, the high priest, crowned Joash king and had Athaliah

killed.

The kings of both Judah and Israel prospered when they did what was right under God and suffered when they did wrong. In general, the kings of Judah did follow God's ways, but few of the kings of Israel did so and none of them removed the sin of Jeroboam, the golden calves he had set up for Israel to worship.

There are 16 "prophets" who have at least some of their writings included in the Old Testament in books by their names. The first of these we contact in Scripture is the prophet Jonah during the time of Amaziah (son of Joash), king of Judah and Jeroboam (the 2nd), king of Israel. Jeroboam (the 2nd), though an evil king, was used nevertheless by God to restore some of Israel's borders and her internal strength. We're told in II Kings 14:25 that this was done according to the word of God which he spake by the hand of Jonah, the prophet. The book of Jonah, by this same Jonah, covers a different story and teaches us more about the sovereignty of God. It does not add much to the chronological story we're pursuing except that Jesus used the story of Jonah and the great fish, as a sign to predict what would happen to Him from His death to His resurrection.

King Amaziah was assassinated and his son, Azariah, or Uzziah as he is more commonly called, ruled in his stead in Judah. It is during the time of Uzziah that we begin to see prophets coming to both kingdoms, but especially to Israel because of the sin of the golden calves that the Israel kings failed to remove. The purpose of these prophets seems to be two fold. First, they were to warn the people of the consequences of their sin and call for repentance. The second purpose is to witness and testify against them of their sin, before God as the judge, pronounces and carries out sentence upon them. This exemplifies the righteousness of God as He works in accordance with His law. Remember that according to God's law, nobody could be convicted and sentenced without the testimony of at least two witnesses. These prophets served as these witnesses.

We will continue to look at the prophets next month, so please read Jonah, Amos, Joel,

Isaiah and Hosea in preparation. JRL

(Editor's Note)

I think it might be well to point out that the Old Testament consisting primarily of the law and the prophets was all the Bible that the apostles and disciples had in New Testament times. Most of the gospels and epistles were not written, much less assembled into any kind of book as we have them now, until many years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel or good news was not so much something new that had just happened, but rather it was fulfillment of what the law specified and the prophets had prophesied. To the apostles and disciples, this was good news indeed, something that had been looked forward to for centuries.

There seems to be a tendency today to relegate the Old Testament to something of no use because it has been replaced by the New Testament. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To truly understand the "New" Testament, one must understand the "Old."

BAPTISM

Last month, we left off in our lesson discussing the baptism of John the Baptist. Before we change the subject, please read Matt. 21:23-32 as this is one more example of the publicans and harlots, though they went wrong first, repenting (changing their mind) and being baptized. Again, baptism really signified outwardly something that had happened internally already. It was a ceremonial washing to indicate an internal cleansing.

Now, the question, "was the baptism of John for the same purpose and did it accomplish the same thing as the baptism of the disciples and apostles that we read of following Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and ascension?" Let's begin

our search for the answer to this question in Acts 19. The apostle Paul is talking to some disciples at Ephesus. Beginning with verse 2, he asks, **"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."** This tells me that though there were similarities, the two rituals were not the same baptism.

One of the most popular verses referred to in baptism teaching is Acts 2:37-38. We find the same terminology here that we read in Mark 1:4 concerning John's baptism. Peter says in vs. 38, **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."** "Repentance" and "for the remission of sins" appear to still be a part of the reason for baptism. But we also have added the promise of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit. Repentance and remission mean the same here as we discussed before and the word "for" is also from the Greek word "eis" meaning "with a view to" that we looked at last month. However, a major change has taken place since John's baptizing. Before we discuss this change, let me say that we will discuss the gift of the Holy Spirit a little later.

The change that has taken place is that instead of looking forward to Jesus Christ's sacrifice for the remission of sins, now that sacrifice and remission is an accomplished fact. It has already happened, so the view changes from something yet to happen to something that has already happened.

Paul gives us a little more detailed look at baptism in Rom. 6. However to better understand Paul's thinking, we need to back up to chapt. 5. Here Paul is discussing what Christ accomplished by His ministry and His sacrifice. In verse 12, he

tells us, **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that** (marginal rendering—in whom or in which) **all have sinned.”** Adam, the man who brought sin (disobedience to God) into the world died or became mortal as a result of that sin. Paul next tells us that death then, or mortality, not sin, passed upon all men. It is then death, or mortality, in whom or in which or is the reason we all sin. If we drop down to verse 18 we read, **“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”** The key word in both vs. 12 and 18 is “all.” If mortality came upon “all men” then it is the same “all men” upon which the free gift of justification of life came as a result of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This takes forgiveness, or remission (freedom or pardon) from our sins from something anticipated, or looked forward to, to something that has already happened for everybody according to this verse. In vs. 19 the number of men is “many” instead of “all” but note that again the same number, “many,” that were made sinners is the same number, “many,” that will be made righteous (forgiven of sin). Most of us want to believe that only a few will be “saved” (presumably meaning forgiven and resurrected) and that we have to do something for that salvation. Though we say it is a free gift, in our mind most of us attach something to it that we have to do, such as church membership, baptism, taking communion, public acceptance of Jesus as our Savior, or any number of requirements put on us by the various denominations. But Paul is telling us that all who are victims of mortality will receive justification of life. I think all of us, when we ponder this, will almost universally have the same question in our mind. Paul anticipated that question in verse 1 of chapt. 6 when he asked the question himself. **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”** His answer in verse 2 is very forthright, **“God forbid.”** But then he explains our relationship to God as Christians by explaining

the significance of baptism more thoroughly. Continuing in verse 2, **“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

If, as we discussed early in our study, baptism corresponds with the laver experience in the pattern of the tabernacle, it can not correspond to the altar experience. Atonement for sin was accomplished by blood at the altar. In the case of the tabernacle, it was the blood of bulls and goats. Now, we know true atonement is by the blood of Christ. The laver did not provide this blood—it was the sacrifice on the altar. So if our correlation is correct, baptism is not the sacrifice. We are not making the sacrifice for our sins just as the Israelites did not make the sacrifice then. They relied on the blood of bulls and goats—we have to rely on the blood of Christ. So what does it mean then when we read the statement that those **“baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”** The next verse says we are **“buried”** with Him. This may be the key to understanding the answer to our question, but we need to back up to Paul’s time to understand how. We think of burying, for the most part, as digging a hole in the ground and burying the dead underground. In Paul’s time, this seldom, if ever, happened. The Romans cremated their dead. The Israelites, or Jews that were in Jerusalem, put their dead in a sepulcher or cave. They would make shelves in the sepulcher and would put their dead on a shelf. When the shelves were full, they had another box within the sepulcher that they would put the oldest bones into and then continue to put the new dead on the then empty shelf. Eventually the bones would be totally mixed so that they were unidentifiable so far as the individuals “buried” there. This helps us then to understand “Strong’s Concordance” definition of “sunthapto”, the Greek word translated “buried”— “to inter in company

with, i.e. (fig.) to assimilate spiritually.” Breaking the word down, “sun” means “with” and “thapto” means “to bury.” While “sun” denotes union (with or together), “Strong’s” indicates it is a closer or more intense union than other Greek prepositions that are also translated “with.”

Paul is using this example of baptism to express this intensity of union in a way that it would be difficult to express otherwise. He is not necessarily promoting the method or mechanics of baptism at this point. He is just trying to express how close we come to Jesus. He is not telling us that we are making the sacrifice as Jesus did, but rather is discussing the next step for us as Christians.

Holding your finger in Rom. 6, please look at II Peter 1:1-4. Read verses 1-3 and then give particular attention to verse 4, “**Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**” If you read the rest of this chapter, you’ll see Peter is exhorting his readers to work to achieve a position of responsibility in the Kingdom of God. Though it is a study in itself, let me briefly say that for each of us to be mature Christians, we need to know and understand two basic principles. The first, the principle of justification or being made righteous before God, is, as we have discussed, an accomplished fact. It is a free gift and is available to all men and I believe it will ultimately be accepted by all men, though unfortunately for many, it will be after the judgment. The second principle has to do with the promised inheritance by God to Israel of world ruler-ship. We need to be aware that this promise was made to a nation, but we as individual Christians are citizens of that nation and thus have a part in the inheritance. But we must work for it. Ruler-ship with Christ does not come automatically with justification. We must strive for it through obedience. Achieving this position of responsibility will make us Christ like. We become a part of Christ. We take on the divine nature. It is taking on this divine nature that Paul is talking about in

Roman. 6. Verse 5 says “**For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.**” The word “planted” is from the Greek “sumphutos.” According to “Strong’s” it means “grown along with (connate), i.e. (fig.) closely united to.” Baptism unites us with Christ, not the mechanics of it, but the internal change that we are demonstrating has occurred by this outward ritual. That this is really something we have to decide to do is born out by later verses in this same chapter, such as verses 11-12, “**Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.**” If you read all of this chapter, I believe you will see that baptism is an outward sign of an inward decision and Paul is telling us that once we have made that decision and been baptized, then live like it.

Paul repeats this theme in several of his epistles. In Col. 2:6 he says, “**As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:**”. He goes on to tell the Colossians that they have been rooted and built up in Christ and have been established in the faith through what they have been taught. He then warns them to beware that no man pervert their belief by leading them after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Jesus Christ. He tells them that in Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He then tells them they are complete in Christ having been circumcised of the heart. Verses 12-14 tell us, “**Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (commandments and doctrines of men-vs. 22) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled**

principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Chapt. 3:1 then tells us, **“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”**

If we make a commitment to Christ, which is a commitment to righteousness, then we are to forget the traditions of men (the commandments and doctrines of men) and look to the things of Christ.

We’ll continue with at least one more example of how Paul viewed baptism next month as we continue our study. JRL

ASIA MINOR-TURKEY

Asia Minor in New Testament times consisted of several regions and/or Roman provinces. The ones that I find mentioned in the New Testament include Cappadocia, Cilicia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Phrygia, Pisidia and Pamphylia. They all share some common history but they do have separate identities, so we’ll try to deal with each one separately beginning with Cappadocia, the eastern most province and working our way west. By New Testament time, Cappadocia was a Roman province having been constituted as one in AD 17 by Tiberius, the then Roman Emperor. However its history extends back many centuries before this. Its boundaries varied greatly from time to time, but in New Testament times was bounded on the north by Pontus, on the east by the Euphrates River, on the south by a range of mountains that include Mt. Taurus and to the west vaguely by the great salt lake, Lake Tuz.

Cappadocia is mostly a highland area with most of it being 3000 ft elevation or more. The name Cappadocia is from the Persian *Katpatuka* which means “the land of beautiful horses.”

Though its history extends before the Hittite Empire, of which Cappadocia was a part, the Hittite culture is probably the most prominent early archeological evidence. The Hittites are descendants of Heth, a son of Canaan, son of Ham,

son of Noah. The Jewish historian, Josephus, associates at least one tribe, the Moschoi, with Meshech, son of Japheth, son of Noah. We know that the Assyrian Empire controlled all of this area to be followed by the Babylonian Empire. Keep in mind that it was the Assyrians that took Israel and a large part of Judah captive and placed them in the area of the Medes between and south of the Black and Caspian Seas. Early in the 7th century BC, the Cimmerians advanced into Cappadocia and Phrygia and settled in the plains of Cappadocia. We now have archeological evidence that the Cimmerians were a part of the Israelites that had been taken into the Assyrian captivity as the Israelites began to leave this captivity and migrate north and west. This will probably explain the apostle Peter’s salutation in I Peter 1:1, **“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”**

In the 6th century BC, the Persians took over the Babylonian Empire and extended their domination over most all of the then known world which certainly included Cappadocia. As we mentioned above, it was during the time of the Persians that Cappadocia got its name. We’re told in the book of Esther 1:1 that the Persian Empire consisted of 127 provinces that extended from India to Ethiopia. Because of the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem and what was left of Judah, we also find that there were Jews scattered throughout all of these provinces. This explains Acts 2:5, **“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”** which included among others, **“Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia...”**

So we see that there were a number of ethnic backgrounds represented in Cappadocia in New Testament times. However, this diverse ethnicity was to continue to change as we follow the continuing history of this area. As Alexander the Great began his conquest of the Persian Empire, Persian control of Cappadocia began to decrease as Greek control increased. Alexander died in



TURKEY TODAY

323 BC and administration of Cappadocia under the Greek Empire fell to the dynasty of Ariarathes, whose family ruled the kingdom of Cappadocia until 93 BC. These rulers were responsible for the establishment of positive relations with Rome.

The civil wars that ended the Roman Republic prior to the establishment of the Roman Empire found the Cappadocians supporting first one faction, then another, but finally it was established as a Roman province in 17AD. It stayed under Roman rule then, first under Rome and later when the Empire was divided, under Constantinople. In the 11th century a Turcoman tribe called the Seljuks set up a state in Iran with Isfahan as their capital and spread their influence westward. Later when overrun by the Mongols they moved farther west into Cappadocia, but were further defeated by the Mongol tide. But the Mongols with-

drew leaving behind several unimportant mini-states led by petty chieftains. These were ultimately united by one of these chieftains, Osman who founded a new empire called the Ottoman Empire that stretched from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east, and from Yemen to the Crimea.

The Cappadocia region is largely underlain by sedimentary rocks deposited by ancient volcanoes. The deposits are soft rocks that the people in the villages carved out to form houses, churches, monasteries, etc. Underground cities were carved out of these rocks and many early Christians fled there to hide from their persecutors. To this day the hundreds of churches, chapels and homes can still be seen. In fact many people still live in these underground caves, as well as some serve as hotels. The stone formations that exist there are major tourist attractions today. JRL