

KINGDOM SPIRIT



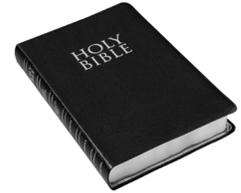
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 904

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The book of Acts is a partial history of what happened in the days and years immediately following the ascension of our Lord. While it doesn't cover near all of the activity of the disciples and apostles by any means, it does give us a representative history of how the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached first at Jerusalem, then to the gentiles (nations), and then to the world as commanded by Jesus Christ. It is the only history, as such, of that period that appears in our Bible, though the epistles, or letters, of the various disciples and apostles in the rest of the New Testament confirm the authenticity of this history. As we'll see later, the book of Revelation is the only other history given, and it does so as prophecy (history pre-written) for the most part. Revelation basically starts where the book of Acts leaves off.

Luke, the physician, wrote the book of Acts as a follow up to his book of Luke, both of which were written to his friend, Theophilus. He first reviews Christ's resurrection and His forty days of appearances with His apostles and disciples and then he tells of Jesus' commandment to the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

He then records Jesus' answer to the apostle's question, **“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put**

in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:7-8) Luke then records the ascension of our Lord into heaven and the promise of the angel who told the apostles He would return in like manner as they had seen Him ascend into heaven.

The day of Pentecost (the 50th day after the Passover) was the time chosen by God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the apostles. The sound of a mighty wind and the appearance unto them of cloven tongues like as of fire, which sat upon each one of them, left these apostles able to speak in several languages, or at least to be heard in several languages. Remember that the majority of the Jews stayed where they were scattered throughout Persia, when the remnant returned to rebuild Jerusalem. Though they were scattered, many made annual trips to Jerusalem for the feast days, but because they had long lived in these other countries, they spoke the language of the country they came from. When these apostles were able to speak, or be heard in these different languages, they were able to teach all these men in Jerusalem in their own language, regardless of their native country. However, many mocked them saying they were drunk.

But Peter stood up and began to preach, beginning with the prophecies of David concerning Jesus (Psa. 16:8-11); how He would not see corruption, but rather would sit on the right hand of the Father. He pointed out that since David was in the grave and had not ascended to heaven,

this prophesy had to apply to the man they had just crucified. **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”** (Acts 2:36) This was the Gospel of the Kingdom. Many believed and were baptized and three thousand were added to the church and the Lord continued to add to the church daily such as should be saved.

Greater than the ability to speak different languages as the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, was the apostle’s understanding and wisdom in the law and the prophets and their power to heal. Peter and John healed a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ in the temple. A crowd gathered as a result, giving Peter a chance to preach. He told the crowd that they had denied and killed the Prince of life whom Peter and John were witnesses of His resurrection and that it was through Jesus that the man was healed—not any power of Peter and John. Then he used prophecies to show who Jesus is, telling them all the prophets foretold of Jesus and these days they were living in. The priests and rulers of the temple and some of the Sadducees (who did not believe in a resurrection) came upon them as they taught and, disturbed that they taught the people resurrection through the risen Christ, took Peter and John and put them in hold. They kept them there until the following morning when they were brought before the council. Realizing that they were unlearned men (in the sense that they had not been formally educated as priests), yet they spoke with authority and had been with Jesus, and because these priests and rulers could not deny the miracle that had been performed, they only threatened them if they continued to teach. Peter’s answer was for them to judge whether they should follow Jehovah or the council. Following their release, they rejoiced and prayed God would continue to grant them the boldness to heal and speak.

As the multitude grew, the high priests of the sect of the Sadducees had the apostles arrested and put in the common prison. An angel released them and told them to continue teaching in the temple, which they did. When they were not in the prison the next morning, but were teaching in

the temple, it gave the high priest and chief priests concern as to how far this movement would grow. When the apostles were brought before them again and reminded of their threat, Peter answered, **“We ought to obey God rather than man.”** (Acts 5:29); and continued to preach Jesus’ crucifixion at their hands, His resurrection, and His exaltation.

The priests were stopped from killing the apostles by Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the law of great reputation. He told them that if this movement was not of God, it would not stand, but if it was of God, they would be found fighting against God. They reluctantly agreed with him and released the apostles after they had them beaten.

As the apostles continued teaching daily in the temple and in every house, the job of ministering to the growing multitude of believers became so great that the apostles asked that seven men be selected to help with this job. Among those selected was a man named Stephen. When he did great wonders and miracles among the people, and several of the synagogue, who disputed with Stephen, were unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they brought false accusers against him and had him brought before the council. In answer to his accusations before the council, Stephen began with Abraham and related the story of Israel from Abraham to Jesus. He then accused them of murdering Jesus and of not keeping the law of God. This made his accusers furious with him. But, being filled with the Holy Spirit, he looked up into heaven and saw the Glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. He told those about him what he saw and his accusers ran upon him with one accord. They cast him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Looking on and assenting to the stoning was another young man named Saul (whom we will later call Paul). Following this incident, there was a great persecution of the church causing the scattering of the disciples, except for the apostles, throughout Judea and Samaria. Saul was at the forefront of this persecution making great havoc of the church and committing many men and

women to prison.

Another of the seven chosen to assist the apostles was a man named Philip. He went to a city of Samaria preaching Christ unto them and many gave heed, including a famous sorcerer, and they were all baptized.

Philip was told to go south toward Gaza and as he did so, he came upon a eunuch of great authority under the queen of Ethiopia sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah. When Philip asked if he understood what he read, he answered, he could not except some man guide him. He was reading Isaiah 53:7-8 which foretold of Christ's crucifixion. Philip began with this and preached Jesus Christ to him and the man believed and asked to be baptized.

Saul received permission from the high priest to go to Damascus to take any disciples of Jesus he found and bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he traveled toward Damascus, there was suddenly a very bright light from heaven shining down on him and a voice said, "**Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me?**" (Acts 9:4) Saul fell to the earth and in answer asked who it was. Jesus answered that it was He and told Saul to go to Damascus and it would be told him what he should do. When Saul arose, he was blind and had to be led to Damascus where he remained blind for three days and he neither ate nor drank for that same period.

Jesus appeared to a disciple named Ananias, who lived in Damascus, in a vision and told him to go to Saul that he might see again. Because of Saul's reputation, Ananias was afraid to go, but he finally went and when he put his hands on Saul, Saul's vision returned and he arose and was baptized. After spending several days with the disciples, he began to preach Jesus Christ in the synagogues. At first the people were afraid of him but then the Jews began to fear him and took council to kill him. He escaped by being let down over the wall at night in a basket and he returned to Jerusalem. The disciples were afraid to let him join with them there until finally Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them all that had happened and how he had preached.

The Jews in Jerusalem then attempted to kill him and the apostles sent him to Tarsus to escape them. There followed a period of time that the churches were at rest for a while and the church grew greatly during this time.

Peter went down to Lydia and on to Joppa where he healed and even raised a woman from the dead. While he was there, a centurion of the Italian band in Caesarea named Cornelius saw a vision in which an angel of God told him to send to Joppa for Peter and he would tell him what he ought to do. Cornelius immediately sent two servants and a soldier for Peter. Meanwhile Peter was shown a vision of his own three different times, in which there appeared to be a great sheet let down from heaven that was filled with all manner of four footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things and fowl of the air. A voice said, "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.**" (Acts 10:13-14) Then the voice said, "**What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.**" (vs. 14) After the third repetition of this, Peter was greatly bothered and could not figure out what the vision meant. As he was pondering this, the servant of Cornelius came to his door and when they told Peter what they wanted, Peter then knew what the vision meant. After lodging the servants and the soldier for the night, Peter went with them and coming to Cornelius' home, he said unto them, "**Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**" (Acts 10:28) This is what the vision had meant that Peter had seen.

After Cornelius told Peter of his vision, Peter preached of Jesus, His crucifixion, resurrection and His showing Himself to many witnesses and how He commanded them to preach to the people and "**to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead.**" (Acts 10:42) The Holy Spirit then fell on all that heard Peter's word and they were baptized in the name of the Lord.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, many of the circumcision, or of the Jews, contended with him for going to the uncircumcised, or non-Jews, so Peter related the whole story to them of his vision and the events that ensued and upon hearing this, they glorified God.

Up to this time, though scattered, the disciples preached to Jews only. But now Barnabas was sent to Antioch from Jerusalem to exhort them all to cleave unto the Lord and much people were added to the Lord. He also went to Tarsus and brought Saul (Paul) back to Antioch with him where they stayed for a year. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

The balance of the book of Acts is devoted to three missionary journeys made by Paul and various traveling companions. We'll begin next issue looking at what happened in these before unheard of missionary journeys. JRL

ECONOMIC CRISES CAUSE AND CURE

The book of Revelation is quite controversial within Christian circles with two primary lines of thinking dominating how these scriptures are considered. "Historistic" is by far the oldest line of thinking dating back to the early church fathers in the first century after Christ. "Futuristic" is a much younger line of thinking but probably the most popular in the church today. The historicist view considers Revelation to be an account of history pre-written prophetically but in symbolic language. The futuristic view is that most of the book is yet to come to pass and is more literal than symbolic.

I believe the historicist view is the proper view. In this sense the book of Daniel deals primarily with history from the time of the captivity of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar up through the first few centuries after Christ. Revelation picks up the ball following the resurrection of Christ

and gives us the history in prophetic symbolism for the last 2000 years and looks briefly into the next age to come. With this in mind I want us to pick up this Babylonian succession of empires in Revelation history and follow it through the centuries through our present time.

Since we are concentrating on the economic system of this succession of empires, I am not going to try to explain the whole book, but rather those portions that I believe deal directly with the economic systems. We left the prophet Daniel telling of his dream of the 4 beasts that came up from the sea, the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the unnamed very dreadful beast with iron teeth and 10 horns. In Revelation 12, we again encounter this afore unnamed beast, but John has a name for it. He calls it a great red dragon and tells us it had seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns upon his head.

It is difficult, for me anyway, to deal only with portions of the book of Revelation because as you study through the book, I believe you can interpret the various symbolisms, but I believe you then need to maintain that same interpretation through the rest of the book. In Rev. 4, I believe it can be determined that the word "heaven" can be interpreted as meaning the Kingdom of God, i.e. His earthly kingdom that had its beginning with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then the establishment of Israel as a nation at Mt. Sinai, and then the establishment of the throne of David. So then, His kingdom would be His people Israel. Incidentally, this does not mean the counterfeit nation of Israel today.

The "earth" then, would be interpreted to mean the Roman Empire at that time. Basically all history revolves around the conflict between the Kingdom of God, or God's system, and the Babylonian succession of empires, or man's system.

With this in mind, we're told in Rev. 12:1-2, **"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to**

be delivered.” In Gen. 37, Joseph, son of Jacob, told his father and his brothers of some dreams he was having. One of these dreams was that **“the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.”** His father recognized that the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars referred to him, Joseph’s mother and his eleven brothers. This, I believe, can be used to interpret who the woman of Rev. 12:1-2 is—she is Israel. The man child she is to bring forth is Jesus Christ.

Continuing in verse 3, **And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”**

We all know the story of how King Herod, an agent of the Roman government, had all of the children two years old and younger in and around Bethlehem killed in an attempt to kill the baby Jesus. Upon advice of an angel, Joseph and Mary escaped with the baby. He grew up, was crucified, was resurrected and ascended to His Father in heaven.

So this dragon failed in its first attempt to destroy the Son of God. But we’re told that the dragon, called the old serpent, the Devil, and Satan, continued to pursue the woman who fled into the wilderness, but was overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

When Daniel saw this beast, he saw a little horn push out three other horns and began to speak great things. We now know that this little horn represented the Papacy which ultimately revived the Imperial Roman Empire to be the Holy Roman Empire.

One other proof that the great red dragon was the same beast as Daniel’s unnamed beast is

in the next chapter. John tells us in Rev. 13:1-2, **“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”** So this beast that came up out of the sea (from among the people) is all four of the beasts Daniel saw rolled into one with the dragon, the current rulers of the succession of empires providing the power, seat, and authority. So while the greatness of the empires declined with each succeeding empire from Babylon to Rome, the strength, power and authority of the rulership increased greatly from Babylon to Rome. Remember, it was not just a matter of one empire succeeding another, but rather each empire, each rulership is built on the one preceding it so that the metal image that Daniel saw remained intact until the stone destroyed it. Likewise, we now have a beast incorporating all of the four empirical powers of rulership.

We’re told in Rev. 13:8 that, **“All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”** This composite beast had one of its heads wounded to death we’re told in Rev. 13:3, but the deadly wound was healed. Again this refers to the little horn that Daniel saw. Imperial Rome was on the very verge of death when the Emperor and the Pope joined forces to make the church and state one resulting in the Holy Roman Empire carrying on with all the power and authority of Imperial Rome.

Rev. 13:11-12 tells us, **“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth (Roman Empire); and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast (the composite beast) before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”**

I believe this 2 horned beast now to be the economic and commercial arm, or system, of the Babylonian system. We're told in verse 14 that he had the power to cause the people to make an image to the beast (first beast). He then had power to give life to this image so that it could speak and cause any that would not worship the image to be killed. Vs. 16 says, **"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."**

Let's first look at the beast with 2 horns. If you study history, you know that by the time of John, the economic system of Rome was heavily dependent on borrowing money and charging interest. As a result bribery was far from uncommon. Julius Caesar actually became dictator for life of Rome, in large part, through his skills of bribery and of handling loans. To me the two horns could well be the two things that drove the economic system then and drives it now—debt and interest.

The image of something means it reflects or mirrors the original. What would the image of the beast here be? Remember back when Nebuchadnezzar, the lion of this beast, caused to be cast the image of gold that was to be worshipped by all in business and commerce. Multiply that thought by four, at least, and would not money, the coin of the realm reflect that thinking. You've all heard that "money talks." Does that not fit the description of the image here?

Concerning the "mark," I would like to quote from the book, "Study in Revelation" by Howard B. Rand. *"There are many kinds of marks. The branding and marking of cattle show ownership and in that sense the mark is here used. The right hand represents all manual labor while the forehead is emblematical of mental and intellectual work. Whether rich or poor, men must labor with brawn or brain in order to acquire money, the possession of which in some one of its many forms is necessary in order to buy and sell. When the entire desire and energy of a man,*

either in his mental or physical labors, it to acquire money and with that as the goal of his life such a one has received the mark of the beast. Such men have a price and are subject to bribery. If the inducement is sufficient they would sell their own souls to acquire the wealth that this beast can give, for they are his, having received his mark."

This gets us to where we are today. Throughout scripture we find warnings by God that this man made system, this Babylonian succession of empires will fail. It is directly opposed to God's system in all three systems necessary in any government.

Rev. 17 deals with the fall of the religious and political systems. Rev. 18 deals with the fall of the economic system. I believe we are witnessing Rev. 18 in detail. John witnesses an angel with great power come down from heaven and in vs. 2, **"He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."** Most of us are just now learning of the oppression and the lowering, or abandonment, of ethical standards in the financial world that we haven't even dreamed of, much less had a part in. I think we can see that the foulness, that is being reported daily now, is so well described in verse 2. We'll continue to discuss this fall of Babylon next issue and look at our own responsibility that we need to be aware of as this system is destroyed. JRL

"I have wondered at times about what the Ten Commandment's would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress."
Ronald Reagan

THE GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES

As we said at the conclusion of our article on this subject last issue, there were still to be some minor changes yet to be made to The Great Seal after the Secretary of Congress, Charles Thomson, submitted his design and written description in 1782. Congress accepted the design and the written report became law the same day it was submitted. The first die cut of the seal in 1782 itself was a violation of the description Thomson had submitted in that a crested eagle, instead of the American bird was inscribed on the die. This original die, cut in brass, is on display in the National Archives.

In 1825, a steel die was cut by a Washington D. C. jeweler and silversmith by the name of Seraphim Masi and was used then for 46 years and because it was used almost exclusively on instruments of ratification of treaties, it was known as the “Masi treaty-seal.” A third die was cut in 1841, but because of changes made from the original 1782 seal, it was known as “the illegal seal” though instruments on which this die was used have not had their legality questioned.

Each of these dies had some changes in them that have been carried forward and used in the seal as we know it today. Due to criticism of the failure of these dies, and another cut in 1877, to conform to the law passed in 1782, Congress passed an act in 1884 “to enable the Secretary of State to obtain dies of the obverse and reverse of the seal of the United States and the Appliances necessary for making impressions from for the preservation of the same.” James Whitehouse, chief designer for Tiffany & Co., was given the task of drawing the official versions of the seal as approved by Congress. His designs were accepted by Congress in 1884 and a new die of the obverse was cut in 1885. By 1902 this die had worn down to the extent that Congress ordered that a new die should be produced as exactly as possible to the design of 1885. This die was cut in hard-

ened steel and is still in use today and still in good condition.

Though the reverse was approved by Congress in 1782, a die was never cut of the reverse until 1935. The then Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, takes credit for making the suggestion that eventually led to the inclusion of the Reverse Seal on the dollar bill where it can still be seen today.

Most of us in the United States pay little heed to heraldry, much unlike our European cousins. As a result, most of us have not been impressed with the significance of the various items designed into our Great Seal. Officially, each part of the seal has a special significance such as the eagle, in American heraldry, “symbolizes the ‘People of the United States,’ who, speaking with sovereign voice in the Preamble to their Constitution, expressly show themselves to constitute the government with power inherent in themselves alone to ‘ordain and establish’ its form.” (quoted from [Our Great Seal](#))

Though many of our founding fathers apparently regarded our new nation as Israel in some way, it is not apparent that they intentionally set out to represent Israel in The Great Seal. That there are so many things in the seal that were a part of Israel in some way can only be considered the work of the Holy Spirit, but should be of great interest to us today.

The number 13 of course had to do with the original 13 colonies. However, the number 13 has a great deal to do with the Israel of the Bible. Though Jacob-Israel had 12 sons, thus 12 tribes of Israel, in Genesis 48, we find the story of Jacob adopting the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his sons basically in the place of Joseph and giving them his name, **“The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”** (Gen. 48:16) This was in keeping with the birthright, which passed to Joseph when Rueben, Jacob’s firstborn lost it for cause, in that Joseph received a double portion of inheritance from Jacob through his two sons who took on

equal stature with the rest of the sons of Jacob, thus making 13 tribes of Israel. Manasseh became the 13th tribe. According to those who have done extensive study on the subject, Manasseh is today represented by the United States and Ephraim is represented by Great Britain.

So 13 is a very important number in the history of Israel. On the Great Seal, there are 13 paleways on the shield, 13 letters in the motto, "E. Pluribus Unum," 13 leaves and 13 berries on the olive branch in the eagle's right talon, 13 arrows fledged with 13 feathers in the eagle's left talon, and 13 stars in the constellation in the glory cloud overhead on the obverse. On the reverse there are 13 courses of stones in the unfinished pyramid and 13 letters in the motto "Annuet Coeptis."

The eagle has several Biblical ties to Israel in Scripture. Following are a couple of examples. Ex. 19:4, God tells Israel, "**Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.**" In Rev. 12:14, the woman being Israel, "**And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.**"

The shield symbolizes the "Shield of Faith" which protects our nation from the evil designs of our enemies. "**Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**" (Eph. 6:16)

The official explanation for the olive branch is that it represents peace. But again, Israel is symbolized by the olive tree in various scriptures such as Romans 11.

The arrows also are tied to Israel, more particularly to Joseph. In his blessing of Joseph, Jacob says of Joseph in Gen. 49:23-24, "**The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him and hated him; But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.**"

The Glory in the crest denotes the presence of God. There are numerous Scriptural references to the Glory of God appearing.

Probably the best known reference to the cloud is in the story of the Exodus where first the cloud stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians allowing the Israelites to escape through the Red Sea and then the cloud leading the Israelites through the wilderness.

Officially the unfinished pyramid on the reverse represents the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and symbolizes strength and duration. Isaiah referred to this pyramid in Isa. 19:19 as an altar to the Lord. It ties Israel to Egypt in that Joseph's wife and the mother of Ephraim and Manasseh was of Egypt.

The "All Seeing Eye" symbolizes Jesus Christ and the triangle it is in symbolizes the cap stone for the Great Pyramid which was rejected by the builders and reminds us of "**The stone which the builders rejected**" of Matt. 21:42, a direct reference to Jesus Christ.

I highly recommend the book we have been reviewing, OUR GREAT SEAL for your reading. There is much more important and interesting information about our Seal in it. It is available from Artisan Publishers, P.O. Box 1529, Muskogee, OK 74402. JRL