

# KINGDOM SPIRIT



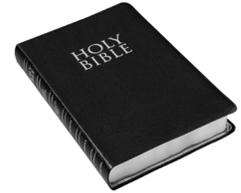
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**“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 912

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The book of Revelation is a difficult book to understand because it is history written before it happened, and it is written in terminology employing the use of symbolism. In our initial study of the book of Revelation, we want to deal more with how to study the book than to try to interpret it. It was written by the apostle John while he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos. We need to first note that the title of the book is **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”** We’re told in the first verse that Jesus is showing John things that must shortly come to pass, so it at least began to come to pass during or immediately after the time of Jesus Christ, but we need to note that Jesus is giving John this Revelation after the resurrection.

There are usually two basic ways that people look at Revelation, either from a historicist view point or a futurist view point. Since the futurist view is relatively a new way to view this book and the historicist view is the view taken by the early church fathers, I believe to understand it properly we need to look at it from a historicist view point. There are three things necessary for one to know and understand to comprehend this Revelation to its fullest. First, One has to understand the principle of the two world systems, or kingdoms: one being the Babylonian system, or succession of empires and the other being God’s

system, or kingdom, as presented and developed particularly by the prophet Daniel. Without a good knowledge of what Daniel dealt with in his writings, Revelation is pretty much a closed book.

Second, one has to have a reasonable working knowledge of the symbolism used throughout the complete Bible. While the terminology used by the author employs a great deal of symbolism, God has provided the key to this terminology throughout the complete Bible.

Third, since Revelation is history pre-written, a thorough knowledge of history that has taken place, particularly in the last 2000 years, is necessary that one might compare actual events with the symbolic events of Revelation. Only by making this comparison can one begin to understand the order of history as planned by God.

In saying this, it certainly is not my intent to discourage anyone from studying this book. In fact, I hope what we will be discussing here will have the opposite effect and help all of us realize that we all can understand what Jesus is telling John, but that we will have to study to do so.

It is necessary to remember that Daniel dealt only with the Babylonian succession of empires and the Kingdom of God in his writings. So it is with Revelation. One has to know who the principle players are and follow these players in history to be able to understand the plan and purpose of Revelation. All other nations or kingdoms are dealt with only as they affected these major players.

Because a detailed study of Revelation is really necessary to understand it and since that is

beyond the scope of this series of lessons, what I am offering in this series are some suggestions and possible guidelines that may help in your own study of this wonderful book.

There are probably nearly as many opinions as to the interpretation of Revelation as there are people studying it. I need to stress that what I am going to say is my opinion and should be taken as only that as you seek to form your own. First I need to mention a major problem that I have with most of the opinions that I have studied regarding this book. They do not maintain any degree of consistency throughout the whole book. By this, I mean that if you determine an interpretation of a particular term used symbolically in one place, it should mean the same thing when used symbolically two chapters or ten chapters later. If it doesn't, you probably have the wrong interpretation. It can't mean one thing in chapt. 4, for example, and another in chapt. 6, yet most of the studies I have seen will deal with the symbolism in only one event, or in reference to one player, usually without even acknowledging that the same symbolic terminology is used in dealing with another event or player elsewhere in the book. They make no attempt to make their special interpretation apply elsewhere when the same symbolism is used.

To illustrate what I am talking about we need to look at a symbolic description of an event. Please read chapt. 4 of Revelation. In this case, I want us to look at the word "heaven" and presume that it is symbolic of something other than what we normally consider heaven to be. Verse 1 tells us that John saw this scene in "heaven" through an open door. Presumably, if we can understand what he is seeing here, then the next time we find the word "heaven" used symbolically, we should be able to apply the same meaning we find here to the word, thus giving us a greater understanding of that next passage.

If we go back to Numbers 2, we'll see a scene surprisingly similar to the scene John sees here. This scene in Numbers 2 depicts the encampment order, or marching order, for the house of Israel while they journeyed through the wilderness in route to Canaan. (Please read Numbers 2

looking in particular at verses 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, and 29.) What we are seeing is the Tabernacle with its Holy of Holies, signifying the presence of God, in the center of this encampment and it is surrounded by the Levites. On each side of the tabernacle are three tribes of Israel with one of the three being the dominant tribe. On the east side is Judah with Issachar and Zebulun. On the south we see Reuben with Simeon and Gad; Ephraim with Manasseh and Benjamin on the west side, and Dan with Asher and Naphtali on the north side. Each of tribes had their own standard, or flag, that they put up where they were to camp. It takes a little study to figure out what was represented on each of these flags that each tribe had. Some can be found in Gen. 49, while others are found scattered throughout the Old Testament and some we have to learn from other historical sources. Some had more than one thing that represented them, but each had one primary flag. In this case, the primary standard for Judah was one depicting a lion (Gen. 49:9); for Reuben it was a man (Gen. 49:3); for Ephraim it was a calf or bull and for Dan it was the eagle.

Rev. 4 tells us there were 24 elders around the throne. The twelve patriarchs of Israel (Ephraim and Manasseh would both be under Joseph) here in Num. 2, account for half that number. But if we look at Rev. 21, we find the description of the new Jerusalem and we find in addition to twelve gates with the names of the children of Israel written on them, there are also twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles on them (vs. 14). So if we added the twelve apostles, we would have twenty-four elders. I think we could say, without stretching our imagination too much, that the scene we are seeing in Rev. 4 represents the kingdom of God, or that "heaven" symbolically represents the kingdom of God.

Though we are not given a symbolic scene similar to this for the term "earth," we do find the usage of the term symbolically rather frequently. If "heaven" is a symbolic term, then we should also expect "earth" to be one as well. I think we can again determine what "earth" represents with-

out stretching our imagination too far. If we have read the book of Daniel, we know that the prophet dealt only with two entities, the Babylonian system, or kingdom, and God's system, or kingdom. As heaven is the opposite of earth, so also is God's kingdom the opposite of the Babylonian kingdom. If we are correct here, and heaven is symbolic of God's kingdom, I think it would be safe to say "earth" is symbolic of the Babylonian kingdom. At the time Revelation was written and for many centuries afterward, the Roman Empire in one form or another was the representative of the Babylonian succession of empires.

If we are correct in our interpretation, this explanation should serve two purposes. One, it shows how the Bible interprets the symbolism of Revelation and two, it gives us a tool to help us understand as we study further.

As we studied the Old Testament, we saw how the actual time line of history was given in Genesis through Nehemiah. Then as we studied the various prophets we saw how they fit into that same time line. We basically did the same thing in the New Testament, using the book of Acts as our time line and then fit the various epistles into that time line.

I think we can see somewhat the same thing here in Revelation. The actual time line is given to us four times in four different series of events. Though these four series of events do not necessarily appear to be particularly related, they all seem to lead up to the same event, the return of Jesus Christ. The rest of the events of Revelation can be fitted into that time line.

The first series of events is seven messages that John was instructed to write to the seven churches. I assume that these churches all actually existed, but I believe that the real message here is that each of these churches represent a different period of time in the history of Christendom, or the kingdom of God, from the time of Christ to the return of Christ. The condition given for each church would be the condition of Christendom in general during that particular period of history. For example, the church at Ephesus would represent the period of time immediately following the ascension of Christ. Christendom was laboring

for Christ, patient, non-tolerant of those who were evil, and they proved anyone calling themselves apostles. Their only problem seemed to be that they were losing some of their enthusiasm. The time period represented was probably only a short time period, basically 30-64 A.D.

The church at Smyrna probably represented the time period from 64-312 A.D. It began with the edict of Nero in 64 A.D. which brought about great persecution, trial and tribulation to the church. There is more to the interpretation than this but let us follow through quickly with each of these churches with a general identification of the time period represented to give us an idea of how the other three series of events listed in Revelation can be looked at.

The time period represented by the church at Pergamos probably extended from 313 A.D. to 529 A.D. The church was freed from persecution by the Emperor Constantine. But when persecution ceased, apostasy and worldliness set in. When Babylon was overthrown, the Chaldean Mysteries were transferred from Babylon to Pergamos, so it became referred to as to where Satan's seat was. (vs. 13) The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was that of advocating for a strong central church authority intent on lording it over the laity.

The church at Thyatira probably represented a 1000 year time period from 529 A.D. to 1529 A.D. The church at Rome came to power and the Christian zeal turned to ritual, and idolatry came to be common practice.

The Sardis church period probably represented the dark ages when great apostasy had spread over all Christendom. This lasted from 1529 to 1789 when the protestant reformation had its effect.

The church age represented by the Philadelphia church saw the great missionary effort take place and an awakening to the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent expectation. This age would have been from 1789 to 1914.

And of course, the Ladiocean church period would be the one we live in now, when Christians are neither hot nor cold, i.e. they are not really doing anything to further the kingdom, but are not really doing anything to hinder it either,

they simply are not doing anything.

If we study the history of Christianity, it will be fairly obvious that there were different time periods (of various lengths) where Christianity would have been represented by the descriptions of each of these churches starting with Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We need to note that the word “church” here is from the Greek word “ekklesia” meaning “that which is called out” according to Young’s Analytical Concordance. The Greek word meaning “church,” as we think of it today, is not in the Bible.

Two other points that we should make is 1) note how Christ, or God, introduces Himself to each church, and 2) note that in each period, there were always at least a few who were able to overcome the evil listed during that particular period. Following each church period, we find a list of rewards for these overcomers.

The second series of events is the opening of the seven seals, as we find recorded in chapters 5,6, and the first part of 8. I suggest that as the messages to the churches represented the history of Christendom, or God’s kingdom, so this series represents the history of the Roman Empire, (Imperial and Papal) as the final empire in the Babylonian succession of empires. The opening of the sixth seal ends with the coming of the great day of wrath, leaving us with the feeling that the opening of the seventh seal will be the return of Christ.

The next series John saw, the blowing of the seven trumpets, leaves us at the same point. When the seventh angel sounded, we’re told in chapter 11:15 that **“There were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”** So, while it first appears that this series of events happened after the opening of the seals, we see that the events of the blowing of the trumpets were contemporary with at least part of the events of the opening of the seals.

When the first angel sounded (chapt. 8:7), we see hail and fire mingled with blood cast upon the earth. In the rest of the Bible, we find hail,

fire, and blood associated with war (see Eze. 38-39, for example). Here it is being cast upon the earth, which we have interpreted to mean the Babylonian succession of Empires, here represented by the Roman Empire. I suggest this series of events is a series of judgments on this last of the Babylonian succession of empires, again culminating in the return of Christ.

In chapters 15 and 16 we have another series of events depicted in the pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of God. Again, with the pouring out of the seventh vial, we get the feeling of the return of Christ. Verse 17 of chapt. 16 tells us, **“There came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.”** Thus again, the pouring out of the rest of the vials would then be contemporary with some of the events we saw with the blowing of the trumpets, the opening of the seals and the messages to the churches. While there is a certain amount of similarity to the events of the blowing of the trumpets, this pouring out of wrath appears to be more general in nature than the judgments of the blowing of the trumpets. Studying and understanding chapter 14 will probably help in understanding this pouring out of the wrath of God.

While understanding all of these events in detail requires a knowledge of history, I think we can see how they could serve as our base time line of history. If this be the case, then we should be able to fit the rest of the events of Revelation into this time line. We will try to briefly do this in our next issue as we conclude this series of studies.  
JRL

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

(Read John 10:1-6) The phrase, “a thief and a robber,” is not intended to be two words meaning the same thing. A word translated “thief” infers someone who uses craft to do his stealing while the word translated “robber” infers someone who uses violence to do his stealing. The word “parable” in verse 6 is a mis-translation. The Greek word used here is normally translated “proverb” where translated elsewhere in the New

Testament.

(Read John 10:7-18) As we studied before, when Jesus says, **“I am the door of the sheep.”** in verses 7 and 9 and **“I am the good shepherd”** in verses 11 and 14, these are a figure of speech that mean “I represent” the door, or the good shepherd.

In verse 8, Jesus is not referring to Moses, David and the prophets as they only pointed to Him as the way. He is referring to those who tried to come as the Messiah. We still have people trying to do this today. The difference between Jesus, the real Messiah, and the imposters is spelled out in verse 10—the thief, or imposter, comes to steal, to kill and to destroy, whereas Jesus came to give life and give it more abundantly. Jesus indicates in verses 11, 15, 17, and 18 that He will give His life for His sheep, or His people. As a side note, turn to Psalms 22. (Read) The word “Psalm” in the title does not mean “song” as many of the Psalms are but rather indicates that this is intended for meditation. I think we can consider this referring to Jesus as the Good Shepherd here on the earth ultimately dying as He says in John 10. Heb. 13:20 says, **“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”** If we continue on with Psalm 23, we see pictured that “Great Shepherd” in heaven by resurrection. (Read Psalm 23) I Peter 5:4 says, **“And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”** This is then depicted in the 24<sup>th</sup> Psalm. (Read) So we see that Jesus is the Good Shepherd in His life here on the earth, in His abode in heaven following His resurrection, and finally in His return to rule here on the earth as depicted in these three Psalms.

(Read John 10:19-21) This is the third time that John has told us that there was a division among the Jews, one side saying that He was demon possessed while the other side saying that no one demon possessed could do the miracles that

He was doing.

(Read John 10:22-30) Following is a quote from The New Bible Dictionary concerning the feast of dedication. “Held on 25 Kislev (ed. Roughly our December), and lasting eight days, it commemorated the cleansing of the Temple (ed. Temple built by Ezra) and altar by Judas Maccabaeus in 165 or 164 B.C., three years to the day after their defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes. Its resemblance in mode of celebration to the Feast of Tabernacles was deliberate, though, unlike the great feasts, it might be celebrated outside Jerusalem. The prominent feature of illuminations gave it the name, Feast of Lights.” The cleansing is recorded in I Maccabees 4:47-59 in the Apocrypha. (Read)

The Jews were unwilling to accept any answer Jesus gave them as to who He was except for Him to say outright that He was the Christ. Remember, when He finally did so before Caiphas, the high priest, the Jews immediately convicted Him of blasphemy. Jesus is insistent that they acknowledge that the works, or miracles, that He does to be witness by the Father that He is the Christ. If they don’t believe either Him or the works, He says it doesn’t go any good to tell them who He is. He again tells them that through Him one can have eternal (age-lasting) life and emphatically says that they will not perish. Again, the translators use the word “never” for the four Greek words that we looked at last lesson to indicate that Jesus is talking about the age, not mortal life as we know it.

In verse 30, He tells them **“I and my Father are one.”** According to the concordances that I have, the word “one” comes from the Greek *“heis.”* However, Dr. Bullinger indicates that it comes from the Greek *“hen”* which is the neutral gender and as such would mean “one in essence.” He says that if it was *“heis,”* which is masculine, it would mean one person. The concordances say the two words mean the same and do not say anything about the gender.

(Read John 10:31-38) The Jews again were ready to stone Him, but He asked a question that stopped them, at least temporarily. Jesus says “law” in verse 34 which would normally mean the

Pentetuch, but He is quoting from Psalms 82:6. His premise is simple. The Psalmist is referring to mighty ones, or judges as gods. Jesus is saying that since they accept this Scripture as sure, why do they say of Him, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, that He is a blasphemer because He says **“I am the Son of God.”** He says that even if they don’t believe Him, at least believe the works that the Father does through Him.

They again tried to take Him but He escaped and went beyond the Jordan River where John had first started his ministry. Many came to Him and many believed we are told.

(Read John 11:1-46) This is the 7<sup>th</sup> sign, or miracle that is recorded by John. As we said in our last lesson, the second and the seventh signs appear to be connected to each other. We were told in the second that the ruler’s young son was at the point of death when he came to Jesus to ask Him to heal his son. Here in this seventh sign Lazarus has died. The healing of the nobleman’s son took place during the first part of our Lord’s ministry during the proclamation of the kingdom, and might be looked at as signifying that the national life of the kingdom as being near death. Here in the latter part of our Lord’s ministry after the King had been rejected, Lazarus is dead, which might signify that the national life of the kingdom, in God’s eyes, was as good as dead. In both cases, it was Jesus that healed and brought back to life. With Israel, the hope is Jesus Christ, the great Lifegiver. Also there is mention in John 4:43 that Jesus waited two days before going into Galilee where He met the nobleman. In John 11:6 we’re told that Jesus abode where he was for two days after He heard of Lazarus being sick before He left to go see him.

Bethany was a small town about 1 ¾ miles from Jerusalem. We’re not told when Jesus became friends with these two sisters and their brother or under what circumstances, but obviously they were very good friends. In his book “Dedicated Disciples” Henry W. Stough says that this family was quite well to do and owned property in Jerusalem, Bethany, Magdala and Bethabara and were noted for their fine character and in-

telligence, and for their knowledge of the language of the Hebrews. He also makes the case that Mary is the same person as Mary Magdalene and says that apparently she had at one time lived a rather loose life and had become demon possessed. Thus the reference in Luke 8:2. He also maintains that the woman which washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, then anointing them with a box of ointment is this same Mary.

It seems probable that Jesus stayed with them whenever He made a trip to Jerusalem as well as some of their other property. At any rate, the message from the two sisters to Jesus was that **“he whom thou lovest is sick.”** That this sickness was part of the plan of God, Jesus makes evident in verse 4. Why he abode 2 days where He was before going to see Lazarus we’re not told, but obviously this was part of God’s plan as well.

Jesus’ disciples were quite concerned for Jesus’ safety when He announced that they needed to go to Judaea again. His answer about there being 12 hours in the day, to me, would be another way of saying that His hour had not come, so there was nothing to worry about. I was somewhat amused as I looked up this story in my Bible dictionary in that the author of the article on Lazarus seemed somewhat disappointed that there is no record of Lazarus saying anything, especially about what he saw during the four days that he was dead. Jesus is rather explicit about the situation saying that Lazarus was asleep. This is a term used many times in both the Old and the New Testament referring to the state of the dead. Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 9:10, **“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”** But Jesus finally had to tell His disciples that saying Lazarus was asleep meant that he was dead. Lazarus’ sisters thought that had Jesus been there, Lazarus would not have died, but Jesus told His disciples that He was glad He wasn’t there for their sakes, so that they might believe, though He did not tell them why at this point.

Martha and Mary both believed that Jesus

was the Christ, but like the apostles, they still had a lot to learn. However, Martha went to meet Jesus as soon as she heard that He was coming. She told Jesus that she understood that Lazarus would be resurrected “at the last day.” Remember this phrase was used idiomatically for “the age to come.” Jesus told her that He was the resurrection, and the life. Note that He says that, **“he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”** and then He follows this with the statement that **“whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”** Again remember what the word “never” means. These two statements together should clarify what He means by “never die” if there is any question.

Even though Jesus knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, we’re told in verse 35, the shortest verse in the Bible, **“Jesus wept.”** What Paul told the Romans in chapter 12:15 came to mind as I prepared this lesson, **“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”** This is actually part of our Christian duty. Jesus exemplified this here.

It is interesting that Jesus had to explain, in His prayer of thanksgiving, that the Father had heard Him, that He needed to say that to the Father for the benefit of those that were with Jesus that they might believe that the Father had sent Jesus to perform this miracle. Even after seeing this miracle, though some believed, there were those that went to tattle to the Pharisees of what Jesus had done.

(Read John 11:47-54) The Pharisees knew they could not let Jesus continue to perform such miracles for fear that the Romans would come and take away their authority that they were exercising over the people. This they could not bear to think about. But Caiaphas, the high priest at the time had the solution, though I doubt he even knew what he prophesied. But it prompted the decision to do everything in their power to put Jesus to death, whatever it took. As a result, Jesus no more walked openly among the Jews but went to a town named Ephraim probably about 16 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

(Read John 11:55-57) We are now to the very last few days before Jesus was crucified.

The Passover is close, and as Jews went to Jerusalem for it, Jesus appeared to be the topic of the day. He was expected by all to be at the Passover Feast. Some wanted to see Him to see His miracles, others wanted to kill Him. The chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if anyone knew where He was to tell them that they might take Him.

As a side note, Mr. Stough in his book “Dedicated Disciples” traces what happened to the Bethany family along with several of Jesus’ other disciples. Very briefly, because of the chief priests decision to also try to put Lazarus to death (as we will see in John 12:10-11), this Bethany family as well as many of Jesus’ other disciples were forced to leave Judaea. Mr. Stough quotes from an old manuscript entitled “The Life of St. Mary Magdalene” written by Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mayence who lived from 776 to 856 A.D. that is currently in the Magdalen College Library at Oxford, England. In this manuscript Rabanus says that there were a number of disciples who sailed, probably from Caesarea, to Marseilles, France, that included Mary, wife of Cleopas; Salome, wife of Zebedee; Mary Salome; Mary Magdalene; Martha, with her maid Marcella; Lazarus; Joseph of Arimathea; Trophimus; Maximinus; Cleon; Eutropius; Sidonius (or Restitutis, the man “who was born blind”); Martial (the young man who was raised back to life in Nain); and Saturninus. He also says that Mary, the mother of Jesus was on the boat as well. Though not mentioned by Rabanus, tradition has it that these people were set adrift in a boat without sails or oars. At any rate, they landed at Marseilles, France. Maximinus was a prominent leader of the “seventy” disciples whom Jesus sent out. He went to Aix and Mary Magdalene went with him and they established a thriving church there. Mary died there in Aix and is buried there, later to be joined by Maximinus and their crypts can be seen there today.

Martha and her maid, Marcella, apparently first went to Arles but was later replaced by Trophimus who remained there and built a church. Martha and Marcella then went on to Tarascon, where they settled and ministered to the

people there. Martha died there after spending a long life ministering to the spiritual and material needs of the people. Her crypt is located there.

Lazarus apparently stayed in Marseilles and started a church there and became its first "Bishop." When he died (the second time) after a very fruitful ministry, he was buried in a cave in the city. Later, "The Church of St. Victor" was built over his tomb, and in the subterranean chambers of the church can be seen the place where his body had been buried. JRL

## GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

If we are to understand both the Old Testament and the New Testament, one of the most basic pieces of information that we must have are God's unconditional promises to Abraham that we find interspersed in the text of Gen. 12 –22. Some are repeated with slight variations. As I see them there are 10 basic promises which I am listing below:

1. **I will make of thee a great nation.** (Gen. 12:2)
  - A) **Thou shalt be a father of many nations.** (Gen. 17:4)
  - B) **I will make nations of thee.** (Gen. 17:6)
2. **Kings shall come out of thee.** (Gen. 17:6)
3. **I will bless thee.** (Gen. 12:2)
  - A) **That in blessing, I will bless thee.** (Gen. 22:17)
4. **(I will) make thy name great.** (Gen. 12:2)
5. **Thou shalt be a blessing.** (Gen. 12:2)
  - A) **In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.** (Gen. 12:3)
  - B) **In thy seed shall all the nations of**

**the earth be blessed.** (Gen. 22:18)

6. **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.** (Gen. 12:3)

7. **Unto thy seed will I give this land.** (Gen. 12:7)

A) **Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.** (Gen. 15:18)

B) **I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee...all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.** (Gen. 17:8)

8. **I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.** (Gen. 13:6)

A) **Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.** (Gen. 15:5)

B) **In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.** (Gen. 22:17)

C) **I will make thee exceeding fruitful.** (Gen. 17:6)

9. **I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.** (Gen. 15:1)

A) **(I will) be God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.** (Gen. 17:7)

B) **I will be their God.** (Gen. 17:8)

10. **Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.** (Gen. 22:17)

The apostle Paul considered these to be one promise, "**that he should be the heir of the world.**" All of these promises were needed to bring Abraham and his seed to the point of becoming rulers of the world under Jesus Christ as King and Priest. That these promises were unconditional meant that God alone was responsible to perform them. That is the story of the Bible! JRL