

KINGDOM SPIRIT

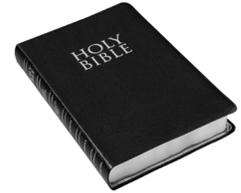
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1008

GENESIS:21-25

Recall in Gen. 18 that three men had approached Abraham's tent and Abraham had invited them to stop for a meal. One of the men, whom Abraham called LORD, or Jehovah in verse 3, said to Abraham in verse 10, **“I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. We're told that Sarah overheard this conversation and laughed, saying within herself, “after I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” Sarah denied laughing when the LORD confronted her about it, but the LORD said, “nay; but thou didst laugh.”**

With this in mind read Gen. 21:1-8. There is record of other women older than Sarah bearing children and Abraham himself fathered children later. However, the key to understanding this is probably in Gen. 18:11 where we are told, **“it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.”** This truly made Isaac the son of promise, likewise a type of Jesus Christ.

The fact that both Sarah and Abraham were old, as this verse also relates, explains how Abraham's brother's granddaughter, Rebekah, was old enough to marry Isaac later on, as we will see.

The name “Isaac” means “let him laugh” in the Hebrew. The fact that Sarah laughed when she heard the LORD tell Abraham that they would have a son obviously influenced this naming. I believe this became a family characteristic in that

in the world today, the people who laugh most and most easily are the descendants of Isaac, more especially the descendents of Jacob-Israel. (Not the so-called Jews of today.)

(Read Gen. 21:9-21) The King James translation says that Ishmael was mocking Isaac. Though I cannot vouch for the accuracy of “The Book of Jasher”, there are stories related in this book that, if true, help us to better understand what is often understated in the Bible. “The Book of Jasher” in relating this story says that Isaac was 5 years old which would have made Ishmael 19 years old when this event happened. Instead of merely mocking Isaac, we're told that Ishmael took his bow and attempted to shoot Isaac with an arrow when Sarah saw him. Ishmael was aware that Isaac would be the heir of Abraham's estate, which included the promises. This is brought to our attention in verse 10 where Sarah told Abraham that the son of the bondwoman **“shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.”** Her solution was to cast out the bondwoman, Hagar, and her son. Abraham complied with her request and providing food and water for Hagar and Ishmael, sent them into the wilderness.

The apostle Paul uses this story as an allegory in Galatians 4 where he is explaining the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

Reading this story of Hagar and Ishmael reaching the point that they thought they were going to die might lead us to think that Ishmael was a small child, but remember that, according to Gen. 17:25, Ishmael was 13 years old when God commanded Abraham to circumcise all of the

males in his household, which was before Isaac was born. So the age of 19 as recorded in the “Book of Jasher” has some credibility. The point I think we should remember is in verse 18—God told Hagar that He would make Ishmael a great nation. We know today that the Arabic nations are descendants of Ishmael.

(Read Gen. 21:22-34) We have to remember that Abraham did not own any land at this point, even though God had promised that Abraham’s seed would inherit all the land of Canaan. However, as it is today in our nation, Abraham at least felt that he owned the water rights from the well that he dug by virtue of the fact that he dug it. When the Philistines stole it, the existence of the well came to the attention of King Abimelech. Abimelech came to Abraham, apologized, and then the two of them made a covenant granting the water rights to Abraham. As a token of the covenant, Abraham gave Abimelech seven ewe lambs. The name Beersheba, the name given to the place, means “Well of the Oath” or “ Well of the Seven.”

(Read Gen. 22:1-14) This story of Abraham being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac has several very important aspects. This story is usually portrayed as Isaac being a young boy. In reality, he was a grown man, some say 37 years old. So this adds another aspect to the story that is often not considered. Not only did Abraham offer his son, a type of God offering His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, but Isaac, like Christ was willing to be offered. Note in verse 2 that in the instructions that God gave to Abraham, He says **“thine only son, whom thou lovest.”** This was not just a test of Abraham’s faith, but a test of his love as well. Whom did he love the most, God, or his son? How do most of us stack up against this test of love? What, or whom, do we love the most? It was a test of Isaac’s love as well. We find the same with Jesus Christ. In John 14:30, 31 Jesus is speaking to His disciples, **“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.”**

Also note that Abraham laid Isaac on the altar. Even though God provided a ram for the burnt offering, Isaac was first laid on the altar. By this act, Abraham dedicated Isaac, thus his seed, to the service of the Lord. As one reads the law and the prophets, the fact that the seed of Isaac, i.e. Israel was dedicated to God and was to be His servant, His witness, is quite evident.

(Read Gen. 22:15-19) Upon seeing the obedience of Abraham, God re-affirmed many of the promises He had made to Abraham, including God’s blessing, the great multiplication of his seed, the promise that Abraham’s seed would possess the gates of his enemies, and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Abraham’s seed.

(Read Gen. 22:20-24) This gives us the genealogy of Rebekah whom we will see was to become the wife of Isaac.

(Read Gen. 23: 1, 2) Sarah is the only woman listed in the Bible that has her age given at the time of her death. In this case, Sarah was 127 years old, so Isaac would be 37 at this time.

(Read Gen. 23:3-20) The purchase of the field in Machpelah, that contained the cave in which Abraham buried Sarah, was the only real estate owned by Abraham and his family until the children of Israel returned to the land of Canaan from Egypt some 400 years later. Later, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all buried in this cave, a site that remains sacred to this day and has not been vandalized.

(Read Gen. 24:1-9) Abraham is adamant that his servant does not choose a girl from among the Canaanites as a wife for Isaac. We have already seen that Rebekah is a great niece of Abraham’s, a second cousin of Isaac. There is concern among some that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others were violating the law by marrying next of kin since the law given to Moses prohibits it. In genetics, marrying next of kin would have been no problem at that time, but 400 years later when the gene pool had become greatly expanded and mixed, it then, as now, presents problems, thus the prohibition in the law.

(Read Gen. 24:10-28) Abraham’s servant is surprised that God answered his prayer almost

before he was through uttering the prayer. Rebekah was a very beautiful young woman. The servant of Abraham certainly recognized that all that was happening was according to God's plan and he blessed God for it.

(Read Gen. 24:29-60) This is pretty self explanatory. Everyone seemed to recognize that this was God's plan, so were willing to let Rebekah go and she too was willing. The blessing that Rebekah's family gave her in verse 60 is prophetic and certainly in conformity with the promises to Abraham.

(Read Gen. 24:61-67) The word "meditate" in verse 63 probably meant that Isaac had gone into the field to mourn the loss of his mother. Rebekah eased this mourning and comforted him once Isaac took her as his wife.

(Read Gen. 25:1-11) While it is difficult to remember genealogies, it is important that we remember where they are listed, as it is important, as we continue our study, to know where some of the people we will encounter came from. For example, the Queen of Sheba is recorded coming to Solomon to learn of his wisdom. Sheba was a grandson of Abraham through his wife Keturah. We will also be dealing with the Midianites descended from Midian, a son of Abraham by Keturah.

We're told here that Abraham died being 175 years old, however, keep in mind that Abraham lived until Esau and Jacob were 15 years old. Abraham had lived in the land of Canaan 100 years, a period to which our Bible devotes 13 chapters. In this extremely condensed history, this much space devoted to the life of this one man indicates the importance that God places on what all happened with him.

As we have mentioned before, Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah with Sarah.

(Read Gen. 25:12-18) As God promised Abraham concerning Ishmael in Gen. 17:20, these are the twelve princes that Ishmael begat.

(Read Gen. 25:19-26) Isaac and Rebekah had been married 20 years before these two babies were born. Rebekah recognized that there was something different about her pregnancy that caused her concern. Her solution was to enquire

of the LORD as to what the problem was. God's answer in verse 23 is important for us to remember. The twins that she was to give birth to certainly were not identical twins. In fact they were about as different from each other as they could be. The people of one would be stronger than the people of the other and the elder would serve the younger. When they were born, the first born was Esau (hairy) who was red all over and very hairy. The second born was Jacob (supplanter or deceitful). In reality, the descendents of these two boys, respectfully, ultimately represent the two opposing sides in most of the worldly conflicts throughout history, so it is important that we learn all we can about them as we continue our study.

(Read Gen. 25:27-34) As the boys grew, Esau became a cunning hunter while Jacob became a "plain" man according to the King James Translation. The Hebrew word *tam* is the word translated plain here but it is usually translated "perfect." Esau was Isaac's favorite and Jacob was Rebekah's favorite. The Book of Jasher adds considerable to the story of Esau selling the birthright to Jacob that is not in the Bible. Again, I am not vouching for the accuracy of the Book of Jasher, but it is interesting. According to Jasher, the garment of animal skins, that God sewed together for Adam, had come to represent the right to rule by the one possessing it. At this time, Nimrod was in possession of it. A jealousy had developed between Esau and Nimrod and one day when Esau was out hunting he came across Nimrod with a couple of young men. He attacked them and killed all three men, but not before they had been able to call out to others who were hunting close by. Esau took the valuable garment that Nimrod possessed and fled. By the time he reached home, he was on the verge of total exhaustion. This is the reason given for selling the birthright to Jacob. Besides, he had the valuable garment that apparently represented a more valuable possession to him at the present time.

At any rate, he sold the birthright to Jacob and with the birthright thus went the promised inheritance of Abraham. Jacob certainly took advantage of his brother, but I don't think we can consider Esau totally innocent either. We're told

in verse 34 that once Esau sold the birthright, he despised it.

Traditionally the birthright went to the first born son by right of birth. It consisted of a double portion of inheritance, i.e. if there were 3 sons for example, the father's estate would be divided into 4 parts. The one holding the birthright would be entitled to 2 parts and the other 2 brothers would each be entitled to 1 part each. However, the responsibility to be the family patriarch went with the double portion of inheritance as well. The birthright could be lost for cause and, as we saw in this case, it could be sold or traded.

There is also a spiritual birthright, I believe, that we will discuss in our next lesson, that may be the larger part of the birthright discussed here. JRL

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

We looked last lesson at the people to whom Paul is writing in his epistle to the Romans and was able to see that there were a number of non-Jews, particularly some from Britain, who were probably better educated than the people in Asia Minor, to whom he had written, as well as some Jews, all of whom had been Christians for some time. They had not written to Paul with questions or stated positions, but rather Paul had heard of their activities and about the people themselves. This gives Paul a chance to take them deeper into a theological discussion than he has been able to with any of the other groups to whom he has been writing epistles.

(Read Romans 1:1-7) This salutation is similar to the beginning of most of Paul's letters. The word "declared" in verse 4 is from the Greek word *horizo* meaning "marked out," i.e. Jesus, in the flesh, was born of the seed of David, but was marked out as the Son of God by power and holiness (being set apart) which together resulted in His resurrection from the dead. No one else has, to this point, achieved resurrection unto eternal life, so this certainly marks Jesus out as the Son of God. Paul then makes the point, that it is from

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that he has received grace and apostleship, for the obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name. We define the word "grace" as "free gift" quite frequently. But I believe to understand how seriously Paul uses this word, we need to understand its relationship to the law. If a person has committed a sin against someone and is brought before the judges for that sin, and the judges find that person guilty and pronounces a sentence, or judgment, against that person, that person is then considered under the law until the judgment has been completed or commuted by the forgiveness of the victim of the sin. At that point, the sinner is then said to be under grace, he has a clean slate, the sin is no longer held against him. Unlike our laws today, he or she is no longer considered a felon once the judgment has been completed. The same applied so far as God is concerned, since any sin was also a sin against God. Paul had been guilty of bringing about the murder of Christians. By the forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice for our sins, Paul was forgiven so far as God was concerned, he had a clean slate, he was under grace. So when he says that he received grace from Jesus Christ, it has real meaning. He is not using the word lightly, nor should we. Paul is also telling those of the Roman church that his authority, his apostleship, came directly from Jesus Christ. He is not bragging, but establishing a fact that his authority, his apostleship, came from Jesus Christ in person. He then points out that the people he is writing to are no less called of Jesus Christ than he was.

(Read Romans 1:8-13) The faith of the people at Rome had gained a very favorable reputation throughout the whole world, Paul says. It is his very great desire to be able to visit and fellowship with them and he says that part of his prayer is always that he might have a prosperous journey to Rome that this might be accomplished. He says that he has tried frequently in the past to get to Rome but has never been able to make it.

(Read Romans 1:14-19) Remember that the word barbarian just refers to the non-Greek speaking people. Greek was the predominant language, but not the only language spoken. Paul is simply saying that he feels his obligation is to

speak to both groups of people as well as the wise and the foolish, or unwise. He is ready to speak even in Rome, though it is, at that time, the foremost city in the world. He is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. The gospel, i.e. the good news of Christ, His sacrifice and His resurrection, is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, and also unto the Greek. In verse 17 the righteousness of God that is now revealed, is not an attribute of God but rather true righteousness. To man, righteousness is something measured by what he does or doesn't do as prescribed by the law. To God it is total perfection, not just what man does or doesn't do, but by what he thinks or feels and more. It is the perfection of man's moral nature. It is out of our reach by our own physical means. It can only be attained through Jesus Christ, and that through our faith, or belief. It is by faith that we seek this more perfect moral status, it is by faith that we receive it. Thus Paul says, quoting from Habakkuk 2:4, **"The just shall live by faith."**

Paul is revealing the law of the conscience by saying that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Just because people don't have the law of God, as did the Jews, does not excuse their unrighteousness. Their conscience tells them of God, or right and wrong by His standards, because God has shown this to them and it manifests to them via their conscience. (Read Romans 1:20-25) God's eternal power and His divine nature, are invisible, but Paul says they are certainly known by what He has made, thus the unrighteous are without excuse. (Incidentally, the word "eternal" here is from the Greek *aidios* meaning perpetual.) Today we would say they seared their conscience. Paul says that when they knew God, they neither glorified Him, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imagination professing themselves to be wise. As a result, they became fools. Then he tells us some of what people have done because of this. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, or various animals and creeping things. I think man today, because many consider the worship of idols wrong or undignified, instead

of making physical idols, make idols of the heart and worship them, which is more dangerous to me than worshipping some physical idol, because it is harder for him to give those up. As it says in verse 25, they change the truth of God into a lie and worship the creature (man or themselves) more than the creator. God has given them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart. As a result men dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

(Read Romans 1:26-32) Because man has changed God's truth into a lie and are worshipping the creature, rather than the creator, God had given these men unto their vile affections. I don't know how bad things were then, but this could certainly be a commentary on what is happening in the world today, especially here in the United States. I assume that with there being as much homosexuality and adultery and debauchery in the leadership of the various royal families through the centuries that there has been a like amount among the citizenry as well, and obviously it was worse at times than at other times. As we read these verses, I don't think we can help but think of our own national situation. As we see the all out effort to indoctrinate homosexuality and other sexual perversion in our school children today, verse 32 certainly rings true. When society sinks this low morally, then all of the things listed in verses 29-31 are sure to follow, as I believe we are seeing it today. Though I certainly believe there is far greater judgment to come for these people, the fact that the average homosexual's life span is 40 years tells us something of verse 27 where it says, **"and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."**

(Read Romans 2:1-11) I don't think Paul is saying that man is inexcusable for judging, but rather for doing the same thing that he is judging someone else for doing. This is the same thing Jesus said in Matt. 7:5, **"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."** Paul then asks that person if he thought he could escape the judgment of God. He assures us that God's judgment will take place and there is no escape. He then contin-

ues his question, asking if that person despises God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing these things of God leadeth to repentance. The answer to our problems today, nationally and individually, is repentance, and yet how many of us are truly willing to repent of our sins? Certainly, within our nation, instead of repentance, we see the storing up of wrath to come when God judges the nations and the individuals. It seems that we as a people are, even though we know it is wrong, (the law of the conscience) bent on doing more of the same. Yet Paul tells us that for the righteous, the judgment is eternal (age lasting) life, but for the wicked, the judgment is God's indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. It is the same whether Jew or non-Jew for, he says, **"For there is no respect of persons with God."**

Paul's message is just as strong to the Jew as it is to the Gentile, or non-Jew. As we have talked before, this was probably harder for the Jew to take than it was for the non-Jew, because of the arrogance that the Jew was taught from his childhood. (Read Romans 2:12-16) He explains. The non-Jew who sins without the knowledge of the law will perish without the punishment of the law, but the end result is the same as the Jew who sins having knowledge of the law, thus punished by the law. It is not hearing the law that makes one righteous, but the keeping of the law. If a non-Jew, though he doesn't have the written law, but obeys the law of conscience, then the law is within him and manifests itself in what he or she does. His or her inward thoughts answer to one another either accusing or defending that person in the day that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. This was probably good news for the non-Jew but would not have been taken as such by the Jew, as this put the non-Jew on equal footing with the Jew.

He then addresses the Jew. (Read Romans 2:17-24) Notice what all he says the Jew considers as his rights and privileges as a Jew. He rests in the law, i.e. because he has the law, that somehow is part of his security; he boasts of being in God's favor; he claims to know what to do and what not to do since he has been instructed in the

law; he is confident that he is a guide to the blind, a light to them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes because he has knowledge of the perfect knowledge and truth of the law. But then Paul asks, playing to the Jew's supposed superiority as a teacher, do you teach yourself? You preach that a man should not steal—do you steal? You say a man should not commit adultery—do you commit adultery? You abhor idolatry—do you commit sacrilege? The problem is that because they were circumcised, that in itself secured their eternal security, so if they committed some sin, their circumcision would save them. So Paul calls them to task. He addresses them as thou that boastest of the law, and then asks them that through breaking the law, do they not dishonor God? He then draws from some different statements in Ezekiel and Isaiah and makes the statement that they blaspheme the name of God among the nations by such hypocrisy.

We need to look back at the origin of the ritual of circumcision. (Read Genesis 17:1-14) We see first that circumcision was an act of obedience. God told Abraham to do it, Abraham did as he was told. Second, it was a sign of a covenant that God made with Abraham. It was a fleshly reminder of the unconditional promises that God gave to Abraham, and was to be done on all the male children born in Abraham's and his descendant's house plus all of the servants that Abraham, and his descendants, bought and owned. Third, any male who was not circumcised was to be cut off from Abraham's family. By Paul's time here in Romans, the purpose had been pretty badly perverted. Instead of it being a reminder to the individual of God's promises to Abraham, it had become to the Jew a physical means to eternal security, something that they could do that would give them eternal security. It was kind of like, if you are circumcised, no matter what else you do, you are good for eternity, but in the same breath, if one wasn't circumcised, no matter what they did, they did not have eternal security.

Paul bursts their bubble. He tells them that if they keep the law, circumcision is a good

thing. But if they break a law, circumcision is of the same value as if they had never been circumcised to start with. He then says that if the uncircumcised person keeps the righteousness of the law, then his uncircumcision would be counted as circumcision.

What Paul is saying here is very important. We need to understand that circumcision was man's reminder of God, not God's reminder of man. God does not look on the outside of man to see what kind of person he or she is, he looks at the inside, the heart. We are not using the word heart here for the physical organ that pumps our blood, but rather at the character of a person, that which determines what kind of person one is. It is mental, emotional and physical. We often use the term in speaking of the very core of something, "at the heart of...." The heart of a tree is the very core of that tree. The heart of the matter is the very core of the matter. The heart of a town or city is the very foundation or original buildings and infra-structure of the city, or the spirit that drives the town or city. This is the kind of thing we are talking about when we say that God looks at the heart. Circumcision means to cut around. If we are circumcised in the heart, it would mean that the core of our person was cut around, a continuous sign, a continual reminder to us of God and His righteousness. Paul is saying, that true circumcision is not an outward sign but an inward one. So for the Jews to rely on circumcision is to praise man, it is physical proof of something that they have done. True circumcision is spiritual proof of something that God has done.

Thus he tells the Jew that the uncircumcision, which is natural, if it fulfill the law, will judge the Jew who by the letter and circumcision transgresses the law. I.e. it is impossible for man to keep the law 100%, physically and mentally, which is the true righteousness of God. Since it is only this true righteousness that is acceptable to God, what can physical circumcision do to help one attain that? Only through Jesus Christ can true righteousness be attained. We'll be discussing this more as we get more into this epistle.

Paul says in verse 28, "**For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly**" comparing this to

true circumcision that is not physical circumcision, and then says in verse 29, "**But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly.**" This takes being a Jew out of the physical realm, indicating that being a true Jew is no longer a matter of genealogy but rather spiritual. A new concept, at least to me, that I have read about lately is that, in the spirit of what Paul is discussing here, being a Jew is being a Christian, i.e. being a Jew in this sense and being a part of the church (congregation) is synonymous.

I'm not sure what difference it makes, but I do find it interesting that Paul here distinguishes between a Jew by genealogy and a Jew spiritually. The last phrase, "**whose praise is not of men, but of God.**" I believe would apply speaking both of circumcision of the heart and the true Jew who is one inwardly. JRL

GOD'S LAW

FOR
YESTERDAY, TODAY, FOREVER

We want to begin our look at God's laws concerning property this issue. In Colorado, our county tax assessor divides property into two classes, real and personal. When most of us think of property laws, I think we usually think of real property or real estate. However, the laws of God deals as much or more with personal property as it does with real property.

Let us begin by looking at real property and the laws detailing who owns it, how it is transferred, how it is to be treated, etc. Very simply, there is one owner of all real property—GOD. Lev. 25:23, 24 tells us, "**The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.**" The people were to possess the land, but title remains with God. However, this possession could be passed from father to son by way of inheritance and thus would remain in that family for generation after generation. It could not permanently go out of the family. Should a man only have daughters, they could inherit the land as if they were sons, provid-

ed they married within their own tribe. If the man had neither sons nor daughters, it was to go to his brothers; if no brothers then to his father's brothers; if he had no brothers, then to his nearest kinsman, but it stayed within the family. (Num. 27:7-11; Num. 36:5-9)

There was a possibility that if a man died having no son, that a division of inheritance would still be reserved in his name. If he and his wife had no children and he died, the law specified that his brother would marry his widow and their first-born son would then take on the deceased brother's name and would receive his portion of the inheritance. The brother could refuse, but it would be considered a shame for him to do so. (Deut. 25:5-10)

If a man had three sons, the inheritance was to be divided four ways and the oldest son would receive a double portion, or in this case, half of the inheritance, and the other two sons would each receive a single portion. Deut. 21:15-17 points out that this applied even if a man had two wives, one loved and the other hated, and the first-born son was the son of the hated wife.

It was possible to sell the use of the land, or in effect, lease it, but never could title be trans-

ferred. In the case of a "lease," the land had to revert back to the original owner or his family at the Jubilee (every 49 years) so the price was based on the length of time until the Jubilee. It would technically be possible to buy the use of it for forty-nine years, but that was the limit. However, a redemption right had to be granted in every sale, meaning that the seller or his next of kin had the right to redeem the land at any time. If they exercised the redemption right, again the price of redemption was based on the length of time until the Jubilee. For example, let us assume the lease value of the property was \$50.00 per acre per year, and I bought ten acres for the last ten years before the Jubilee. This would mean I would have to pay \$5,000.00 for it. But in five years the man I bought it from came back and wanted to redeem it. The \$50.00 per acre would still be the price, but this time, only five years remained. Thus, I would receive \$2,500.00 as the price of redemption. (Lev. 25:14-17; Lev. 25:25-28) But, it always reverted back to the original owner in the Jubilee. This law did not apply to houses inside walled cities. We'll discuss the laws and exceptions to city property in our next issue. JRL

FOR THE TIME IS COME THAT JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD: AND IF IT FIRST BEGIN AT US, WHAT SHALL THE END BE OF THEM THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF GOD? (I Peter 4:17) God is not a respecter of persons. It matters not what denomination we belong to or what our political ideal is, we will be judged individually on our heart relationship to Jesus Christ. FATHER: We plead for Your mercy and forgiveness for ourselves and for our nation!