

KINGDOM SPIRIT

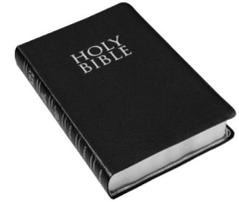
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1303

ISAIAH 64-66

(Read Isa. 64) Isaiah continues to plead for God to return to His people. He acknowledges the sin of the people, but then says that God is the potter and Israel is the clay. Because they are all the work of His hands, Isaiah beseeches God to not be wroth or angry. They still acknowledge themselves as being His people. The Apostle Paul quotes verse 4 in I Cor. 2:19, **“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.”** Paul says that through the Holy Spirit, he and the other apostles can now see what God has prepared. He doesn't attempt to give a description, but rather likens his vision to that of being like minded with Christ, to see things as Christ sees them. It appears to me that Isaiah is asking to be able to see in this manner as well.

In verses 10-12 I don't know whether Isaiah is seeing the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in vision or if he is referring to the destruction and captivity of Israel as being the destruction of Zion and Jerusalem. Either way, he, on behalf of himself and Israel is asking God if He is going to hold His peace, which would mean further suffering of the people, or if He is going to do something about it.

(Read Isa. 65:1) As I read this, God is responding to Isaiah's question saying, now I am being sought by a nation not called by my name

and who had not sought Me. Keep in mind that when God divorced Israel and sent them into captivity, they lost their name, Israel (ruling with God), so that they are no longer called by God's name, “El.” So He is responding to Isaiah's question. (Read Isa. 65:2-7) Before they were sent into captivity, God had spread out His hands to them, but they were rebellious and continually provoked Him. He reminds them that it is written that He will not keep silence, but will bring judgment upon them. They have broken His laws, have blasphemed Him in worshipping idols, and have put themselves above God, therefore, He is rendering judgment on them.

(Read Isa. 65:8-10) Having told them He is bringing judgment upon them, He now reminds them that He has not forgotten His promises, He will not destroy them all but that **“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.”** In saying He will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, I believe He is referring to the birthright, or the kingdom that is to come from Israel and the inheritor of His mountains (kingdoms) from Judah is a reference to the sceptre that Jacob promised to Judah, i.e. Jesus Christ. Then His elect, the overcomers, will inherit His kingdom and His servants will live there. Sharon is a reference to the west part of Ephraim and Manasseh, i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh will be the place for the people who seek God.

(Read Isa. 65:11-16) “But” in verse 11 is a big “but.” Though God has some very pleasant plans for those that seek Him, the Israel that He is

speaking to and has sent into captivity are there because of their idol worship. The words “that troop” and “that number” are from the Hebrew words “Gad” and “Meni” respectfully and were actually names of pagan deities that the Israelites were worshipping. Because they were worshipping idols and did not respond to God through His prophets, He says He will number them to the sword. His servants, however will survive and sing for joy of heart. But those of the wicked He will kill and they shall leave their name for a curse unto the elect and God will call His servants by a new name. As we have said before, I believe this new name to be “Christian.”

(Read Isa. 65:17-25) Parts of this paragraph read much the same as parts of Rev. 21 which speaks of the time after the Great White Throne of Judgment. (Read Rev. 21:1-5) Isaiah is looking at a time when restoration is being completed, a time of complete peace. I think it noteworthy that even the animals will be at peace with each other.

(Read Isa. 66:1-4) God is still answering Isaiah’s questions from the end of chapter 64. Isaiah, speaking for the people, is concerned about Jerusalem and the temple and questions God’s concern. God, in answering him, says that with heaven as His throne and the earth as His footstool, all of which He created, what could man build that He hasn’t already made? God is more concerned about the humble man with a contrite spirit than he is about some literal earthly temple. The people have chosen the way they are going, so God says He is going to help them by choosing their delusions and bringing their fear upon them. All because they would not hear Him nor answer His calls.

(Read Isa. 66:5-24) The rest of chapter 66 is a bit difficult to understand without some New Testament information to go with it. God is addressing those who have not gone the way of the majority, but rather have continued to believe God and worship Him, apparently at their own peril. Ferrar Fenton translation of verse 5 makes it a little easier to understand I believe.

“But hear the LORD’S promise, you fearing His word,

And report to your brothers, who hate and drive out,

**That His Power the LORD will display,
And appear to your pleasure, but to their disgrace.”**

Then, He begins to speak of Zion and Jerusalem referring to the New Zion and the New Jerusalem, not the old city. I believe He is looking forward in time, to the time of the apostles and the disciples that begin to take the Word of God to the nations. If we can think ahead with Him to the construction, if you will, of the New Jerusalem, or the new temple, then I believe what He says here will be a little clearer.

In Matt. 16:13 Christ asks His disciples **“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”** Their answers varied from John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremiah, to one of the other prophets. But then He asked **“But whom say ye that I am?”** The Apostle Peter answered Him, **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Christ then tells Peter that this answer did not come from flesh and blood, but from the Father which is in heaven. Then He says to Peter, **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** The rock upon which He will build His church is the revelation that the Father gave to Peter, **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** “Church” is from the Greek *“ekklesia”* which according to Young’s Analytical Concordance means “That which is called out. “Hell” is from the Greek “hades” which means “the unseen world” and usually refers to the grave. The church, or more properly those who God has called out, the elect, are to be built on Christ, the Son of the living God, referred to elsewhere as the stone which the builders rejected and the chief corner stone, and death, or the grave, will not keep it from happening because all those “elect” will be resurrected.

Peter says in I Peter 2:5, speaking to the elect of Asia Minor, **“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”** Then Paul says in I

Cor. 3:16, **“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”** and again in 6:19, **“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”** and again in II Cor. 6:16, **“Ye are the temple of the living God.”** and again in Ephesians 2:19-22, speaking to the Christian Ephesians, says, **“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”**

I believe that this spiritual temple, this spiritual city, new nation that Israel was to become is what God is talking about to be born. To some, I'm sure, because God had divorced them, they felt that all was lost. But God says, **“Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth.....shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb?** i.e. can He not complete His plan. I'm sure most could not see the whole plan, the big picture, but I believe we can with all the additional information from the other prophets and from the New Testament. He tells us that when we see this happen to rejoice. If we look at the big picture, I believe we are now seeing His whole plan coming to fruition.

He then warns of His judgment. He says by fire (His law) and His sword (His Word) He will plead with all flesh. He says that the slain of the LORD shall be many. I don't think “slain of the LORD” means to be literally killed, but rather they have died to self and turned to Christ for life. Ultimately all people and nations will come to Christ. Speaking of the elect, I believe, in verse 19, He says that they are going to all nations and declare His glory among them. Then as we're told in verse 23 all flesh will come to worship before God.

Verse 24 is a reference to the valley of Hinnom. (Read Jer. 19) In the gospels of Mat-

thew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus Christ is quoted 11 times using the word “*Gehenna*” which is translated “hell” in the King James translation. Gehenna is the name of the valley of Hinnom. Because Jeremiah used the place to express judgment on Judah and Jerusalem, Jesus uses the word as a symbol of judgment. In New Testament times, it was the city dump for the city of Jerusalem. It is said that it was a place where the worm dieth not. It is not inferring that the worm is immortal, but rather that there was a continuous supply of maggots eating the flesh of dead animals and other trash deposited there, which included the bodies of men who were executed for some reason and their bodies not claimed by relatives. As with trash piles of this type, there are always burning. The fires will start from spontaneous combustion and it seems they never go out on their own. It is not saying that the fires cannot be quenched, at least in the original texts, but that man cannot quench them. This does not refer to a place where people are sent to fry and cry for eternity, but rather is used as a symbol of judgment and I believe that is the intent of verse 24 here.

I would like to go to the prophet Hosea next as he appears to be contemporary with Isaiah throughout the reign of these four kings, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. So we will start with Hosea 1 in our next issue. JRL

A Study of the Book of REVELATION

In our last issue, we studied up through Rev. 5:10. We are continuing starting with verse 11 this issue.

(Read Rev. 5:11-14) It is difficult for us to comprehend how John is seeing the end from the beginning, so to speak. He is seeing the crucified Christ with the power to open the book and then the next scene He is seeing Christ as King of Kings, events that are over 2000 years apart so far as we as humans are concerned. But in this scene millions are proclaiming Him as worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory

and blessing. Not only are humans and angels saying this, but every creature in heaven, on the earth and under the earth and in the sea.

Keep in mind John's vantage point as he watches history unfold, though prophetic at that time, it is history to us. Time is not a factor so far as God is concerned. He sees everything in one scene, something we cannot do because time is a factor to us. In a sense, it is like something we saw in a cute movie the other night. A little girl who seemed prone to always be in trouble had become sick at school and her father, who was temporarily out of work, came and picked her up. He was quite an artist and the little girl liked to draw with him. So to entertain her for the rest of the day, he told her they would draw the world's longest picture. He took a roll of white wrapping paper and unrolled it across the floor and the two of them got down on the floor and drew and painted the story of what had happened since the little girl was born with the house, and events that had happened. She then took the picture story to school for show and tell and unrolled it around the room and then told the story to her classmates, using the picture that she and her dad had drawn and painted. This is kind of the way God sees things, all in one picture. If we can keep this in mind as we continue our study, I think it will help us understand better.

As we continue, these seven seals will be broken one at a time and as each one is broken, a new phase of human history will appear. Each phase will be written in symbolic language, so what we will have to do is learn the language. The rest of the Bible will be our teacher.

We are going to be looking at several series of seven events each with each series dealing with a different major player in the course of the history of the last 2,000 years. The first of these series, as we discussed in our last lesson, is the breaking of the seven seals on the book that we first see in the hand of He who is sitting on the throne that John first sees. These seven seals deal with the history of the Roman Empire. I believe that most people who have the historicist view of Revelation agree on this, however, there are divergent views as to the actual dates and some-

times the actual events that relate to the opening of the various seals. A deep study of the book of Revelation can, and often will, come down to fairly minute details. I enjoy studying these details, but I don't feel they are always appropriate to our current study, so I am going to approach this in a more general sense keeping in mind that as one studies deeper into Revelation and the history of the last 2000 years, one could develop opinions that might appear at variance with this general sense that I am going to try to follow. But I believe we can still get a reasonable view of what we need to learn from the Revelation.

(Read Rev. 6:1-8) These are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, a term that we hear fairly often as it seems to be used pertaining to the order of events in every period of chaos and trouble. However, we need to remember that these four horses and their riders have a particular historical fulfillment in the activities of Imperial Rome as the opening of the seven seals has to do with the history of the Roman Empire and what is left of it today. Verse 2 tells us that when the first seal was opened, **"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."** We have four factors to consider here, a white horse, a bow, a crown and going forth to conquer. There are numerous references in Scripture to the use of the horse in battle. Proverbs 21:31 says, **"The horse is prepared against the day of battle."** Until just recently, in all wars of conquest, the horse played a very prominent roll. The fact that horses were used in these first four seals tells us that the government of this period relied on power and might of aggressive military strength to carry on and rule. The different colors tell us what type of government and kind of rule that was exercised over the Empire.

The white horse signifies justice. (When Christ comes to rule as King of Kings in Rev. 19, He is riding a white horse.) Though the nation was under military authority, the period of the white horse was one of peace and prosperity within the Empire. Does history verify this?

In 31 B.C. Octavius defeated Anthony and

Cleopatra and their Egyptian army at the battle of Actium. Winning this battle pretty well established Rome as ruler of the world. In 27 B.C. the Roman Senate conferred upon Octavius the title of Augustus Caesar and Rome ceased as a Republic and became an Empire ruled by an Emperor. The word “crown” is from the Greek *stephanos* which is a wreath rather than a crown like a crown of gold. We have all seen pictures of the Roman Caesars wearing a laurel wreath rather than a crown. The bow indicated that the fighting would be some distance away. During the period from 31 B.C. until 64 A.D. peace and prosperity came to Rome like they had never seen it before. The Roman armies continued to push their conquests in all directions, but all of the fighting was on the perimeter of the Empire rather than within Empire.

It is during this period that Christ was born, grew up and conducted His ministry, was crucified, buried and resurrected. The Church was born on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. and spread across a large part of the Roman Empire in relative peace.

Some students of Revelation, that I studied, extend this period of the white horse to 180 A.D. in spite of the death of Nero in 68 A.D., during the Judean rebellion, and the upheaval in finding his successor. Gibbon, in the late 1700's, wrote in his The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire the following, “During a long period of two hundred and twenty years from the establishment of this artful system [27 B.C.] to the death of Commodus [180 A.D.], the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended...But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin [he committed suicide in 68 A.D.]. In the space of eighteen months four princes [emperors] perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting this short, though violent, eruption of military license, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions.”

In verse 4, John says, “**And there went out another horse that was red and power was**

given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another and there was given unto him a great sword.” Red indicates tyranny, misrule and bloodshed. While the rider of the white horse had a bow indicating that war was at a distance, the rider of this red horse holds a sword indicating that the fighting would be close at hand. Several things happened, whether we consider this period to start from 64 A.D. or 180 A.D. The Roman's tolerated the religious belief of every nation which they conquered, but they persecuted Christians alone. Christians opposed the national religion of the empire, refused to offer sacrifices to the gods of the empire, and refused to worship the emperors. For these reasons, from the time of Nero until 313 A.D. and the Edict of Milan, Christians were persecuted, tortured, and killed in great numbers, though their numbers continued to increase and strengthen and paganism weakened.

The morality of the emperors deteriorated greatly. Commodus was the worst of all the emperors. Gibbon says of him, “But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus...His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys of every rank and of every province; and wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence... and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of understanding... But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal.”

Commodus finally murdered so many people that even his favorite concubine, Marcia, became afraid for her life. She then poisoned him, but before he could die, another man strangled him.

The Praetorian guards were gradually formed by Augustus, not only to protect his person, but to awe the Senate and to either prevent or crush the first indications of rebellion. At first they were dispersed in nearby towns with only a few in Rome itself. But when Augustus died in 14 A.D., his adopted son, Tiberius became emperor. Under the pretense of relieving Italy of the

heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing stricter discipline among the guards, he brought them all into Rome in a permanent camp. Gibbons writes the following of them: "Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. But thus introducing the Praetorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe which distance only and mystery can preserve towards an imaginary power."

As the emperors were more and more corrupted by luxury and power, they were manipulated more and more by the worst of men. The Praetorian guards came to despise their masters more and more, but at the same time they came to understand their own military strength and potential. They began to realize their own power to decide who would be emperor. They began to insist that to become emperor, they first had to have their permission. They killed Pertinax, the successor of Commodus, and then auctioned off the position of emperor to Julian. This brought on civil war after civil war. Over the next 100 years from 193 A.D., Rome would have 32 emperors and 27 pretenders. It became very much a time of war and bloodshed within the Roman Empire.

The Goths, Germans, and Persians all began invading the empire from all directions causing considerable general confusion prompting many usurpers to spring up. It became a time of tyrants.

Some have this period extending to 284 and others to 313 A.D.

In Rev. 6:5, 6, John tells us, "**And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.**"

Dr. Bullinger, in his Companion Bible has a note regarding the color black of this horse. He

says the black signifies famine. Indeed the events that we have discussed during the red horse period brought on a very great famine throughout the whole Roman Empire that was then followed by a furious plague. This took place over a fifteen year period from 250 – 265 A.D. Gibbon, in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire says that during a part of that period 5000 people per day died in Rome itself. He indicates that in a very few years of time war, pestilence, and famine consumed half of the human species.

With this in mind the rider with the scales could very well be seen as rationing food. This would have to be looked at as judgments from God for the gross immorality that had engulfed the empire.

Viewing the opening of the third seal in this manner would put the period from about 250 to about 300 A.D.

There is at least one other way to view this third seal opening. If we consider that this seal was opened at the beginning of the reign of Constantine in 313 A.D., what looked like a very good thing to Christians, especially with his Edict of Milan, actually would turn out to be a very bad thing. As we discussed before, Constantine stopped the Christian persecution and returned land and property that had been confiscated by previous emperors, but in his effort to unify the empire once again, he began to convene Church councils in an effort to unify the various factions of Christianity. With each council through the years came edict after edict from the bishops at the councils telling the people what they could believe based on the consensus of opinion of the bishops, not necessarily that of the Scriptures. The more councils there were the less of the Scriptures that the people were supposedly allowed to believe, God's Word was replaced by creeds, thus we ultimately had a famine of the Word.

When Constantine came to power, he actually had no religious convictions. The empire had been sapped by the destruction of life and property and the confiscatory taxes and heavy tributes laid upon its citizens with the result that the people were in a real state of despair. Con-

stantine weighed the situation. The Christians, though in a minority, had zeal and enthusiasm, but the Pagans had lost their fervor and excitement. So in weighing Christianity vs. Paganism, Constantine favored the Christians. However, as time progressed and the establishment, begun by Constantine and his sons, of creeds and doctrines, wheat and barley (that we might look at as the bread of life—the Word of God and its teachings) were weighed and distributed in measure while false doctrines became truth and heresies orthodox. It became the will of the organized Church, in favor with the state, that the truth of the Scripture be given to the people only through them and in accordance with their creeds and doctrines. So as we near the end of this black horse period, we find a powerful ecclesiastical organization in the making.

However, the oil and wine, which I would regard as the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness through Christ's atonement, could neither be measured or harmed by organized Christianity. As we have talked before, there is always a remnant to keep the light burning.

In this view, the time of the black horse would be from 313-396 A.D.

When the fourth seal was opened, again John was invited to look and he says in verse 8, **“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”** Again, I would like to give you two views of the opening of this seal. Understand that in giving a couple of different views, this is not changing history, just a difference as to how it is viewed. The end result of history will ultimately be the same, regardless of how we view different events in the process.

Based on the view of the black horse era being one of pestilence, war, and famine, we could say that death is the inevitable result of famine. With roughly one-half of the people of the empire dying in a fifteen year period from 250-265 A.D., one student of Revelation, that I put credence in, considers this as the beginning of the

period of the pale horse.

Towards the end of this period the emperor Diocletian, after he came to power in 284, divided the Roman Empire into the East and the West in 285 A.D. giving the West to Maximian. This set the stage for its permanent division a century later. Later in 292, these joint emperors once more divided their power, each appointing a lesser general with the title of Caesar to help them defend the empire from invasions. These two Caesars were Galerius and Constantius.

Galerius later induced Diocletian to destroy the Church, but Constantius, who was responsible for the defense of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, favored the Christians.

The division of the empire into four parts meant that there were now four royal palaces and courts to maintain, instead of just one. This meant a substantial increase in taxation as well in order to support the lavish courts of all four rulers, who seemed to compete with each other to portray greater pomp and luxury. Each had their own ministers as well, so this added taxation added to the problem of famine that already existed.

The other view is that the pale horse signifies the decadence of the Roman Empire and of its military power. Instead of an emperor riding the horse, we're told that Death is the rider and Hell is following and supporting him. In this view, it is thought to begin in 396 with the great barbaric invasions of the Roman Empire under Alaric the Goth, Attila the Hun and Genseric the Vandal. Keep in mind that barbarism referred to someone who did not speak Greek or Latin, not necessarily someone who is crude and uncivilized as we think of it today. This period went to the time when the Church Council at Constantinople in 536 A.D. compelled the state to execute its edicts. This laid the foundation for the establishment of a political-religious supremacy that made inevitable the terrible persecution of men and women whose souls John sees under that altar when the fifth seal is opened.

But the question that I think most of us have when reading of the opening of this seal is “who is the rider whose name is Death and who is his companion named Hell?” Who is the rider

taking the place of the Roman emperors and exercising such authority and power? We discussed this some when we were discussing the seven churches of Rev. 2, 3. Quoting from our issue #1212 of the "Spirit" in discussing the Thyatira church age, we said:

In the Thyatira church age, the state, like King Ahab, came under the authority of the one calling himself the "vicar of Christ." While the popes gave lip service to Christ, in reality they followed the precepts of another god. This era began with the Law Code of Justinian, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire who ruled from Constantinople. Justinian revised the whole body of Roman law, calling it the Codex Constitutionum in 529 A.D. This nullified all Roman legislation and laws up that time. Four years later, after getting the opinions and responses from other Roman jurists, he revised the Codex and published it under the Latin title, Pandectae. What is important about this is that it enacted orthodox Christianity into law.... All ecclesiastical law, like all civil law, had to come from the throne of the emperor. Though Justinian and his wife were zealous orthodox Christians, there is no evidence that he studied Biblical law or considered it in the law revision that he made.

A few years later, in 536 A.D., a Church Council held in Constantinople issued an edict and demanded that the emperor Justinian enforce it. He did so, which, whether Justinian thought that far ahead or not, set a precedent of the state becoming the servant to the Church. Orthodox Christianity now became the real legislator in the Empire, while the Emperor became the enforcer of the law. It wasn't long before Church leaders saw how they could increase their power by overruling God's Law and taking the power of legisla-

tion upon themselves. Thus Church law and the traditions of men came to replace any vestiges of Biblical Law that did not suit them.

This began the gradual rebuilding, upon the ruins of the ancient Imperial Roman Empire, a new and different type of Empire, which became all the more powerful because it claimed control not only over the lives of men, but over them in death as well by extending its dominion beyond this life into the grave. The development of Organized, or Orthodox Christianity is assumed by many to be synonymous with the true growth of Christianity. A study of prophecy and of history proves this to be a false assumption. As we study further, and learn more about the political-religious power that had its infancy during this time period, I believe we will see why it is really the rider named Death on the pale horse. JRL

I am a little late in doing so, but an explanation of how we are putting our "Kingdom Spirit" together is in order. For many years we have conducted regular weekly Bible studies in our local congregation. I write these lessons out each week. Through the years we have gone through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation several times and as I have learned more each time, my lessons have become more complete and sophisticated, so to speak. Over the last several months I have been putting these written lessons on different books in the "Spirit." This has necessitated, because of space, the breaking these lessons at somewhat unnatural breaks at times because of space limitations. I realize the time between publications makes this a bit awkward at times. I encourage you to keep previous copies so that you can be sure to keep the complete train of thought in your mind as you study each new issue. I have asked that you read the various Scriptures for two reasons, one to save space and two, so that you are sure to know the context of what we are studying. If anyone is having trouble following our study this way and have a better suggestion, I would be pleased to hear it. Thank you for allowing us in your home each month. JRL
