

KINGDOM SPIRIT



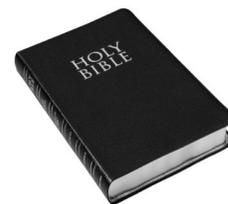
P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail ksm@fone.net

“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1307

A STUDY OF THE BOOK REVELATION

(Read Rev. 8:12) In the first three soundings of the trumpets, we have seen God’s judgment poured out on the people and citizens of particularly the Western Roman Empire, the isles and shores of the Mediterranean, and the outlying northern provinces. The sun, moon and stars depicted in this fourth sounding represent the leaders, the emperor, the senate, and other lesser leaders of the empire. By 470 A.D. the Western Roman Empire was basically divided into three parts, the Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy itself, the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain and the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa. Puppet emperors came and went with the last emperor of the Western Empire, a six year old boy named Romulus Augustulus, being named as emperor in 476. The same year, Odoacer, king of a group of Teutonic tribes, conquered Augustulus ending the rule of emperors in the Western empire. Following is what the Britannica encyclopedia had to say about Odoacer.

Odoacer was a German warrior, the son of Idico (Edeco) and probably a member of the Sciri tribe. About 470 he entered Italy with the Sciri; he joined the Roman army and rose to a position of command. After the overthrow of the Western emperor Julius Nepos by the Roman general Orestes (475), Odoacer led his tribesmen in a revolt against Orestes, who had reneged on his promise to give the tribal leaders land in Italy. On Aug. 23, 476, Odoacer was proclaimed king by his troops, and five days later Orestes was captured and executed in Placentia (now Piacenza), Italy. Odoacer then deposed and exiled Orestes’ young son, the emperor Romulus Augustulus.

Odoacer’s aim was to keep the administration of Italy in his own hands while recognizing the overlordship of the Eastern emperor, Zeno. Zeno granted him the rank of

patrician, but Odoacer styled himself “King.” He refused to acknowledge Julius Nepos, Zeno’s candidate, as Western emperor.

Odoacer introduced few important changes into the administrative system of Italy. He had the support of the Senate at Rome and, apparently without serious opposition from the Romans, was able to distribute land to his followers. Unrest among the German tribesmen led to violence in 477–478, but evidently no such disturbances occurred during the later period of his reign. Although Odoacer was an Arian Christian, he rarely intervened in the affairs of the Roman Catholic church.

In 480 Odoacer invaded Dalmatia (in present Croatia) and within two years conquered the region. When Illus, master of soldiers of the Eastern Empire, begged Odoacer’s help (484) in his struggle to depose Zeno, Odoacer attacked Zeno’s westernmost provinces. The emperor responded by inciting the Rugi (of present Austria) to attack Italy. During the winter of 487–488 Odoacer crossed the Danube and defeated the Rugi in their own territory. Although he lost some land to the Visigothic king Euric, who overran northwest Italy, Odoacer recovered Sicily (apart from Lilybaeum) from the Vandals. Nevertheless, he proved to be no match for the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, who was appointed king of Italy by Zeno in 488 in order to prevent the Ostrogoths from raiding in the Eastern Empire. Theodoric invaded Italy in 489 and by August 490 had captured almost the entire peninsula, forcing Odoacer to take refuge in Ravenna. The city surrendered on March 5, 493; Theodoric invited Odoacer to a banquet and there killed him.

The darkening of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, as John tells us symbolically, has to do with the destruction of the ruling families of the Western Roman Empire. The generally accepted date of this final destruction is with the conquest of Odoacer in 476. Quoting from “A Study of the Book of Revelation” by Dr. Stephen Jones, *It is possible, though not provable, that the population of the Western Roman Empire had been reduced by a third, because of the wars, famine, and pestilence of that century alone—the time of the first four trumpets... In the following*

century, an eighteen-year war with the Goths completed the destruction of Italy. By the time the war ended in 553, Rome's population had been reduced from a million to a mere 40,000 with half of them supported by papal alms. Milan had been destroyed with its entire population. Farms were abandoned, and in the region of Picenum alone, 50,000 died of starvation. Will Durant tells us in *The Age of Faith*, page 111,

"The aristocracy was shattered; so many of its members had been slain in battle, pillage or flight that too few survived to continue the Senate in Rome; after 579 we hear of it no more."

It was only natural, then, that the bishop of Rome would assume power. He was the only one who could keep any kind of order as anarchy reigned in Italy. Durant says on page 94,

"Amid this chaos education barely survived. By 600 literacy had become a luxury of the clergy. Science was almost extinct."

(Read Rev. 8:13) This verse gives us kind of an interlude between the first four trumpet soundings and the last three telling us that these last three are called "woes." This interlude might indicate that had the Church repented, God might have ceased in His judgments. Though I believe that everything that happens, happens as part of God's plan for mankind. However, we often find such an interlude as this in which man has the chance to be obedient to God with the implied promise that he will be rewarded for doing so. Such was the case when God told Israel to enter the promised land, but because the spies that Moses had sent ahead to spy out the land came back and convinced the people that because there were giants in the land that they could not take it. As a result they spent another 39 years wandering in the wilderness before they were allowed to enter. This may have been the case here. Had the Church repented and turned to God, the ruling of the world under Christ could have begun at that point. Instead, the Church determined they would rule the world, but do it by conquest. We are still paying the price for that sin.

Due to the fall of the Western empire, the vacuum thus created was filled by the Church, which had changed from a simple way of life that focused upon manifesting the love of God in the way that Jesus did, to a full-blown religious empire that ruled over the minds and bodies of men and treated members as subjects.

This interlude lasted from 476 to 606 A.D. and during this time the prophetic events we find described symbolically begin to shift toward the Eastern Empire. Keep in mind that the Eastern Empire is still a vibrant empire and has not been severely affected by the events leading to the fall of the Western Empire. During this interlude, the overhaul of the Roman law code by Justinian, which laid the groundwork for the papacy assuming temporal power, took place. We will discuss this in more detail in Rev. 13. As this temporal power increased, instead of calling the ruler a king, religious titles such as "Bishop of Rome" and "Pope" came to be used. Speaking of the ideas that promoted this temporal power, H. G. Wells wrote,

"In later years these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an overlordship of their kings. In a few centuries the Pope had become in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge, and divine monarch of Christendom... For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom... dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of the great idea of a divine world government to realize itself in practice."

Quoting Dr. Stephen Jones, *"In fact, the reason that the Church failed to realize its dream of a "divine world government" was because God raised up the religion of Islam to oppose and weaken it. To understand God's purpose for Islam is one of the keys to understanding the purpose of God, even in our own time."*

It is this rise of Islam, and from God's perspective, this Islamic judgment on the Church, that we are going to be dealing with in the three woes, or sounding of the last three trumpets. In 606 A.D. Pope Boniface III laid exclusive claim to the title of "Universal Bishop." Pope Gregory I, Boniface's predecessor had insisted that the Church was headed equally by the bishops of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. He wrote a letter in 596 in which he declared *"Whosoever calls himself universal priest or desire to be called so, was the forerunner of AntiChrist."* So it is remarkable that Boniface laid claim to this title so soon after his predecessor had condemned such an

action. So, 606 marks the time when the Roman Bishop assumed full authority over the entire Church. Others had done this before him, which set some precedent, but their successors had denied this power. But it became a permanent fixture in the Church religious system from 606.

To understand a little better the bigger picture, we need to go back to the book of Daniel for a little bit. Recall that in Daniel 2 we had the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great metal image that, when interpreted, showed that there would be four successive empires that would dominate the western world. In Daniel 7, in a vision Daniel had, we see the leadership of these four empires represented by four beasts. The last of these beasts which would represent the leadership of the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, was not named by Daniel but rather described in verse 7. (Read) In verse 8 Daniel is contemplating about the horns of this beast. (Read vs. 8) Daniel didn't know the meaning of this little horn, so he asked one who stood by what the meaning of this little horn was. (Read Daniel 7:19-25) We now know that the Emperor Justinian represented the rising of this little horn. One of his first acts was to basically annul the whole of Roman law and write a new law system which he put into effect in 529 A.D. Then after revising it four years later (533 A.D.), he published it under the title "Pandectae." There were two major problems with this law as I see it. First, it incorporated orthodox Christianity into this law....All ecclesiastical, like all civil, law, was to emanate from the throne. Second, it ignored divine law, relying primarily upon the Church's lawless view of right and wrong. These dates of 529 and 533 are important as they appear to be the starting dates of a time, times and the dividing of time. In Revelation 13:5 this was interpreted as 42 months. In Bible prophecy, 42 months is computed as 42 x 30 days, or 1260 days in short term prophecy or 1260 years in long term prophecy. A time would be one 360 day year, times would be two 360 day years and the dividing of time would be ½ of a 360 day year, or 3 ½ years. Again 1260 years in long term prophecy. 1260 years added to 529 is 1789 and to 533 is 1793, the beginning and end of the French Revolution, which was the beginning of the end of Papal supremacy over Western nations. France had become the main bulwark of Roman Catholicism up to that time.

Though the Western Empire fell in 476, the Papacy rose out of its ashes, and actually gained more power than the original emperors. As we have pointed out before, 529 was the beginning of the Papacy having temporal powers. It came to full bloom in 606 then when Boniface III claimed exclusive title to the title "Universal Bishop." As Daniel said of this little horn, it had "**a mouth speaking great things.**" Rev. 13:5 interprets this as "**a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.**" This claim to the title of "Universal Bishop" was the beginning of such blasphemy. Even Boniface's predecessor said that to make such a claim was "blasphemous anti-christian assumption." As we will see in further studies, the Roman Popes were to claim the authority to overrule Christ and His apostles.

The sounding of the last three trumpets, called the three woes, begins with the rise of Mohammed and the religion of Islam. Just six years after Boniface made his blasphemous claim, we see the beginning of the rise of Islam as Mohammed began preaching his doctrine in 612 A.D. It is God's way of bringing judgment on an unrepentant and idolatrous Church and is the story in symbolic language we have in chapter 9.

The following is a brief history of Mohammed from Wikipedia: Born in 570 in the city of Mecca,^[8] he was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. He later worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and was first married by age 25. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. islām) is the only way (dīn)^[9] acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as other Islamic prophets.^{[6][9][10]}

Muhammad gained few followers early on, and was met with hostility from some Meccan tribes; he and his followers were treated harshly. To escape persecution, Muhammad sent some of his followers to Abyssinia before he and his remaining followers in Mecca migrated to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, which is also known as the Hijri Calendar. In Medina, Muhammad united the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to 10,000, conquered Mecca. In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from his Farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam; and he had

united the tribes of Arabia into a single Muslim religious polity.^{[11][12]}

It is recorded also that his mother died when he was six months old and his father died when he was two. When he first married at age 25, he married a well to do 40 year old widow. It was she who encouraged him when he started having revelations, or whatever he had, from which he began writing what we now know as the Qur'an. He was fearful that it was an evil spirit that was influencing him, but she convinced him that he was a prophet and encouraged his preaching. This marriage was a happy one and lasted 25 years, after which he either married or took another 12 women as wives or concubines.

(Read Rev. 9:1-12) We are going to be using the term "Saracen" as we proceed. At first, the Romans used this term to apply to Arabs. It then came to be applied to Muslim Arabs and eventually to all Muslims. As we have said above, the rise of Islam began its rise in 612 with Mohammad preaching the revelations that he had received. In a relatively short time, the whole of the Arabic world had been converted to Islam. At first Islam was headquartered at Medina, then Mecca, then moved to Damascus, Syria. The rise probably reached its peak in 762-63 with the moving of the Islam capital from Damascus to Baghdad. This pretty well ended their expansionist moves. This being 150 years from the beginning with Mohammad preaching it in 612 could be what verse 5 is speaking of when it says **"that they should be tormented five months."** Five thirty day months would be 150 days, or in long term prophecy, 150 years.

The Islam policy was to conquer and convert people to Islam. If they did not convert, they either had to pay a special tax, or die.

The "bottomless pit" is symbolic, but I am not sure what of. Smoke came out which darkened the sun and the air. This could mean that Biblical understanding was darkened as it certainly was during this period. Locust also came out of the smoke. Locust come out of the soil, or in the case of the Saracens, they come from the land of locusts. The description of these locusts corresponds with the appearance of these Saracens of that day. In verse 7 we're told that they were like horses prepared unto battle. The Saracens were among the best, if not the best, horsemen of the world at that time. They fought on horseback.

They had crowns like gold on their heads. The word "crown" is from the Greek "*stephanos*", the same word used to describe the wreaths worn by the Roman Emperors or Roman heros. However, here they were like gold. The Saracens wore colored turbans, which would be like the wreath, only colored, usually yellow. Their faces were like men's faces. The Saracens were usually fully bearded, so the faces, to be identified as like men would be bearded. The Saracens kept their hair long under their turban, so their hair would be like women. Their teeth were not like lions, but the set of their face when going into battle might have been like a lion attacking a prey. The Saracens wore breastplates of iron that rattled as they rode which probably accounted for the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

Abu Bakr was the immediate successor of Mohammad when he died in 632, but Bakr then died in 634. Omar I of the Omayyad family came to power in 634 and the Omayyad family then remained in power until it was overthrown by the Abbasid family in 750. It was al-Mansur of the Abbasid that established the new capital city of Baghdad in 762. He gathered together the greatest intellectuals of the world and while Europe was in the dark ages, learning flourished in Baghdad. The center of gravity for culture and civilization itself had shifted from the Christian West to the Muslim East. H.G. Wells said of this period, *"Arabic continued to spread until presently it had replaced Greek and become the language of educated men throughout the whole Moslem world."*

The Saracens took Jerusalem in 638 (which ultimately brought on the Crusades) and built the mosque of Omar on the site of King Solomon's temple. They subdued Egypt in 641, conquered Algiers in 700, had taken all of North Africa by 707, so that by 715 the Moslem Empire extended from the border of China to the Pyrenees, including nearly all of Spain. They ravaged southern France from 720-732 until finally defeated decisively at the Battle of Tours and the Battle of Poitiers in 732 by Charles Martel. They sent a large fleet of ships to attack Constantinople in 718, but the attack failed and the fleet was destroyed. They lost another fleet in 748 during an attack on Cyprus. In 755, the Caliphate at Cordova, Spain was founded by Abd-al-Rahman and in 760 a Tartar tribe founded a Turkish Empire in

Armenia, which proved to be the seed of the next phase of prophetic fulfillment starting in Rev. 9:13.

In verse 4, we're told that **"it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."** Islam's sacred color is green, and Qur'an law forbids harming trees and all green things. In chapter 7, we said that vegetation, grass and trees, was symbolic of the people of the Western Empire. It is interesting that in all of the conquest by the Saracens, Italy was spared and never attacked.

Verse 5 tells us, **"And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man."** When the Jerusalem surrendered to Omar in 638 (without resistance), H.G. Wells informs us *that "...the Christians were to be tolerated, paying only a poll tax; and all the churches and all the relics were left in their possession."*

Instead of being killed, the Saracen's "sting" was painful to the Church, but it was not normally fatal. This presented the Christians with a bit of a problem. The people themselves believed that martyrdom would bestow sainthood upon them, quoting Dr. Stephen Jones, *"they were afflicted with a strange love-hate relationship with death. They wanted to die as martyrs, but were denied that by the official Islamic policy. Hence, we read in Rev. 9:6, 'And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.'* Christians were not happy about being ruled by Islamic people. *The sting of Islam was quite painful to them. The Muslims called them dogs and infidels and had great contempt for what they saw as idolatrous people who had images everywhere and worshipped three gods in a sort of divine triumvirate, with Mary being a fourth with ever increasing influence upon the Christian gods."*

The Saracens were never able to take the city of Constantinople, but for 300 years tormented the Eastern Roman Empire, its territory, and outlying districts following the rise of Omar. Finally the Greeks were able to overcome the Sara-

cens and recover some of the territory they had taken until finally the Crusades came, creating a new state of affairs. Thus the Saracens were unable to destroy, or kill, but were able only to harass their Empire.

Verse 11 says, **"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."** The name "Abaddon" appears in the Old Testament six times and is always translated "destruction." It is nearly always associated with *sheol*, or the grave. So I think we can think of this king over the locusts as being destruction, or death.

The Christians viewed the Moslems as a threat to their religion, which it was, because God had raised them up precisely for that reason. It was designed to judge the religious system that had forsaken God and had substituted the rule of man for the rule of Christ. This, however, they never really understood, and so the lawless apostasy continued unabated, increasing as time progressed. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

(Read Hosea 11:2-4) Verse 2 is a little confusing. The first “they” refers to the prophets. As the prophets called the people, the people turned from the prophets and what the prophets were telling them and went and sacrificed to Baalim and burned incense to idols. God says He taught Ephraim (used as a name for Israel) to walk taking them by their arms. But He says they did not know that it was He who healed them. He drew them from the land of Egypt with bands of love, removed the yoke of slavery that had been placed on them in Egypt, and fed them.

(Read Hosea 11:5-11) Even though some of the people were trying to go to Egypt for their own safety, God says that they are not to go back to Egypt, but were going to go to Assyria because they had refused to repent. There is going to be war as the Assyrians march on the cities of Israel. Many will be destroyed. Dr. Bullinger render the phrases in verse 7, “**though they called them**” as “**though they called upon the Most High**” and “**none at all would exalt Him**” as “**He shall not altogether lift them up.**” This rendering appears more in line with the next 2 verses. Admah and Zeboim were cities that were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorah. God is asking how He could give up Israel, how could He destroy them as Admah and Zeboim as this is the judgment that Israel had actually brought on herself. He then says that His heart has turned within Him and His compassions are burning. Then in verse 9 He says “**I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man; the Holy One**

in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the city.” He is not going to destroy Israel because He is God and not man. The love of God is something that we humans cannot fathom completely. Israel had done everything against God that they could do it seems, and with many nations, God had destroyed them for less than this. But because God is God and because He has made promises to Abraham, He will keep His promises and not destroy Israel completely like He had done to Sodom and Gomorah, and Admah and Zeboim. Because God is God, not only Israel, but mankind overall has a hope. This doesn’t mean that Israel is going to escape judgment, but their judgment is not going to be utter destruction, as we have seen already in Hosea 1. Rather through their judgment they are going to accomplish what God has chosen them to do. The day will come when they will walk after the LORD, but it will come after their judgment of captivity to the Assyrians, and they recognize God as God. We are still to see the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy, but I believe most of us can see that the fulfillment is in process.

Verse 12 should probably have been a part of chapter 12. (Read Hosea 11:12-12:2) Keep in mind that the name Ephraim here is used for the whole kingdom of Israel. We find further charges by God against Ephraim of lying and being deceitful toward God. Judah is still in God’s good graces but verse 2 tells us that this may not last as God says He has a controversy with her. However, Israel has already gone too far. They have made a covenant with Assyria and have taken oil to Egypt to try to buy their protection. But God is bringing judgment upon her.

(Read Hosea 12:3-6) The prophet brings to memory how Jacob, or Israel, came to the point they were at. He relates the birth of the twin boys, Jacob and Esau, and then later the encounter Jacob had with the Angel as he returned to his own land from Padanaram with his wives and family. If you recall, he wrestled all night with an angel and when it appeared he might be winning, the Angel struck Jacob’s hip throwing it out of joint. Jacob, though appearing to win lost, but in losing he won as he apparently came into the right relationship with God and the Angel, or God, gave him the name Israel. Based on this, the prophet then urged Israel to turn from their ways and turn back to God’s ways.

(Read Hosea 12:7-14) Hosea accuses Ephraim of being like a merchant who cheats in business. Ephraim's argument is, "but it has made me rich, therefore, how can you say that I have done something wrong." God's answer is that He has been their God since He brought them out of Egypt, He knows what they have been doing. He has warned them through the prophets, through visions, symbols and by the ministry of the prophets, yet they have continued in their idolatry. Therefore, what is going to happen to Israel is solidly on their own shoulders.

(Read Hosea 13:1-8) When Israel obeyed God, they were exalted as a nation. When they turned to their idols, God says they died. Because they have continued in their idolatry, God says they are going to be as the morning cloud and early dew that passes away. God makes a statement of fact in verse 4 that remains always. Israel, then and now, must at some point recognize this fact. **"Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."** Because Israel has forgotten this fact at the point of our study, God says He is going to be unto them as a lion and as a leopard by the way. He will meet them as a bear bereaved of her whelps and will tear them and devour them as would one of these wild animals.

(Read Hosea 13:9-16) God points out that Israel has destroyed themselves, but their only help is in God. He says He would be their king and asks where they can find any other king that can take them out of their troubles. He says He gave them a king, speaking of Jeroboam I believe, and took him away in His wrath, speaking of Hoshea. Ephraim's or Israel's sin is bound up. Judgment is coming. God likens it to the sorrows or pains of a woman travailing in birth. He says Israel has been an unwise son and he won't have long to wait for the judgment to come, likening the coming judgment as the birth of a son.

However, as we have seen time after time, when God pronounces judgment on Israel, He also assures them of ultimate peace with Him. Verse 14 is paraphrased by Paul in I Cor. 15:54-55, verses that we frequently hear repeated at funerals. Again, it is a fact that God is bringing about the resurrections. He is not going to repent from this. It is a comfort to us and should have

been a comfort to Israel at the time He told them this. Nevertheless, an east wind, i.e. Assyria, is coming up that will destroy the fruitfulness of Ephraim. Samaria, used here representing all the land of Israel, will become desolate and many of the people will be killed in the process. Again, Israel has destroyed herself.

(Read Hosea 14:1-3) Looking beyond the upcoming war and captivity, Hosea encourages Israel to repent and turn from their idols, to acknowledge God as their God. This appears not only as an encouragement, but a prophecy of this repentance actually taking place. (Read Hosea 14:4-9) When this happens, God says He will heal their backsliding and will love them freely. Great blessings are promised and Ephraim, or Israel has a change of heart and turns from their idols unto the one true God. Verse 9 is a fitting finale to the writings of the prophet Hosea, **"Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."** This completes our study of the book of Hosea.

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. Prov. 12:1

A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. Prov. 12:23

from the editor...

For our next book to study, I would like to take up the book of Jeremiah. However, we don't have enough space this issue to really get started, so I would like to editorialize a little bit on some subjects that have become a concern to me.

When my wife and I first started Kingdom Seekers Ministry, our goal at that time was to help young people in particular develop a foundation of Bible knowledge that could be built on by other ministries. At the time we were attending some of the Bible conferences that were being held by various ministries that we enjoyed immensely. However, though in most every case there were a good number of young people present, it seemed to us that the various ministries concentrated heavily on the adults and kind of left the young people to either be entertained or to fend for themselves. We thought that if we could help young people develop a Biblical foundation, they could be more productive members of these various ministries. Unfortunately, for the most part, the various ministries did not see what we were trying to do, so neither offered their help nor attempted to include the young people, at least as we thought they should. While we admit that we were quite inexperienced and know that all that we were trying to do did not necessarily achieve the goals that we set out, we did get acquainted with a fairly large number of good solid young people. We learned a lot, some too late to help toward our goals.

Through the years those young people have grown up and have families of their own. Some can still be found enjoying the fruits of the various ministries, or their successors, but many are outside of the ministries we all loved at the time and because denominational churches very seldom offer anything close to solid Biblical teaching, there is a tendency to drift away from God's Word, plan and purpose. I know from ex-

perience that it is not easy to take the bull by the horns, so to speak, and develop one's own ministry with one's own home, but I encourage all who read this and don't have a good place to learn from others to take your Bibles and begin at the beginning and teach and learn in your own home, if you are limited to that. It is too important and time is too short to neglect doing this. If we at Kingdom Seekers Ministry can be of assistance in any way, please let us know. Don't let few in number be a stumbling block. You don't have to be a preacher or a teacher to share what you know and learn with others, whether it be just family, friends, or your community.

A major problem, at least as I see it, is that too often we all have a tendency to zero in on one particular doctrine, whether it be baptism, identity, or one of a number of doctrines, and that becomes our gospel. We refuse to look outside that particular doctrine to see if there is more that we should be learning. In the past I have been warned by different ones, often ministers, to stay clear of a particular doctrine. Sometimes I was familiar with that doctrine, sometimes I had never heard of it. But when I investigated a new doctrine, sometimes it filled some blanks that I had in my own understanding, sometimes it did not fit what I saw as God's plan at all. It is not wrong to reject something after you have investigated it, or to accept it if it teaches you something you did not know. The point is we need to learn to investigate and to receive or reject it on the basis of whether it is Biblical in our mind. Don't base reception or rejection solely on what someone else tells you about it. Study, learn, share. JRL