

KINGDOM SPIRIT

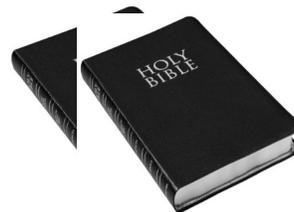
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1506

From The OLD To The NEW

Having finished our study of the Book of Revelation in our last issue I feel it may be time to start over in the New Testament. I feel that it is a mistake to separate the Old and the New Testament and deal with them almost as two unrelated books. I believe there is a continuous story from Genesis to Revelation and to not connect the two is to only get part of that story regardless of which one you read. I would like for us to review the history of the major players of the Old Testament as we follow them into the New Testament.

Though we don't know for sure when Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, prophesied, there are approximately 400 years between the last writing of the Old Testament and the first history presented in the writings of the New Testament. If the Bible as a whole is a continuous story, as I believe it is, then continuity of all the elements of our story must be maintained. Let us quickly review the status of each of the major elements of our story before we proceed so that we can have them all in mind as we begin the New Testament. We have seen that there are three divisions of the whole house of Israel: Israel or the Northern Kingdom, sometimes referred to as Ephraim; Judah, or the Southern Kingdom; and the house of David and his throne. Both kingdoms have been destroyed, but the people of both kingdoms continue to exist and according to the unconditional promises to Abraham they will continue to do so forever. David has also been un-

conditionally promised that his throne would continue to exist forever, thus his house, or descendants, will also continue to exist.

Because of their sin we have seen that Israel, or the Northern Kingdom, plus a substantial portion of Judah have been taken captive out of their land by the Assyrians and placed in the land south of and between the Caspian and Black Seas in the area south of the Caucasus mountains. According to Jeremiah, God has indicated He has plans for them as a nation, or nations, but they will not be allowed to return to their homeland. They have come under Babylonian domination as Babylon has conquered the old Assyrian Empire. Israel has been told by God through the prophets to get out of this Babylonian bondage and move north and west to the isles of the sea. A check of a map will show that if they do this, they will cross into Europe and the nearest isles of the sea will show that if they do this, they will cross into Europe and the nearest isles of the sea are what we now know as the British Isles. If they move out as they have been told by God and migrate north and west, I think we can presume they will complete this during this next 400 years.

Also, because of their sin, the Southern Kingdom, Judah, some 100 years after Israel went into captivity, were taken into captivity by the Babylonians and moved to the provinces of Babylon. They spent about 70 years in bondage before a remnant was released to go back to Judah and rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem that was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar when Judah was taken captive. These people were told by God, through the prophet Jeremiah, that they will cease to be a self-governing nation, or kingdom, and the people will be scattered among the nations. The remnant that has returned

has rebuilt the temple and the city and has re-established the orders of sacrifice and worship in the temple. However, they have also reverted back to the sins of their forefathers including intermarriage with the people of the land. Descendants of the Aaronic priest line and the grandson of Jehoiachin, of the Davidic royal line are among this remnant.

The house of David and the throne seem to have been destroyed. The last heir to the throne in the normal order of passing the throne from father to son was Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah. However, God has cursed him and his father's house saying that Jehoiachin shall not have an heir to sit on the throne. Jehoiachin sat on the throne for a brief 3 months and was taken captive into Babylon. His father's brother, Zedekiah, took the throne and reigned another eleven years before Judah as a whole was taken into captivity. Then he also was taken into captivity and all of his sons were killed. However, Jeremiah, the prophet, appears to have custody of Zedekiah's daughters as we left him, free, but in Egypt headed back for Judah. Jeremiah had a commission from God to build and to plant that he had not done yet, as we left him. The prophet Ezekiel prophesied through a riddle that a princess of the Davidic royal line would be plucked up and taken to another land and replanted where her kingdom would grow to very great proportions. It should be safe to assume that this is God's way of keeping His promise to David, and his throne's kingdom and influence will grow during this next 400 years.

All of these elements of Israel are part of the fifth kingdom, or the stone that was cut out without hands, as prophesied by Daniel, that God has promised will ultimately destroy the four successive world kingdoms, or empires, that started with the kingdom of Babylon. We have seen this first kingdom fall and the second, the kingdom of Persia arise. We can assume some further development in this succession of empires during the next 400 years also.

Much more has been written and prophesied to come to pass, but this at least gives us the status of these major elements of our story so that we can follow them as we pick up our story again in the New Testament.

A full understanding of New Testament history and doctrine can be enhanced somewhat if

we at least take a brief look at what secular history tells us had transpired with these primary elements of our story during the approximately 400 years between the history of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Looking first at the world empires foretold by Daniel, we left the Persians as the dominant kingdom. The Greeks were a group of states, or smaller nations in southern Europe who were also under Persian rule. They rebelled openly in 496 B.C. when they captured and burned Sardis, the capital of Lydia. Darius, king of Persia, set out to avenge this rebellion and ended up being defeated at the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. However, the Greek states still remained un-unified though they did form a confederacy to defend themselves. Philip, father of Alexander the Great and king of Macedonia, succeeded in uniting all Greece into one kingdom in 338 B.C. and started building an army to invade Persia in 337 B.C. He was assassinated in 336 B.C. so the project of invading and conquering Persia fell to his son Alexander, who successfully carried out this ambitious mission. However, Alexander died while on this mission and the kingdom of Greece was divided among four of his top generals. Greece then remained at peace for nearly 100 years.

About 210 B.C. the Romans who had been advancing with rapid strides, found occasion to interfere with Greek affairs. Philip V of Macedonia, had allied the Greeks with Hannibal of Carthage and when the Romans defeated Hannibal, they sent an army to punish Philip V. They defeated him in 197 B.C. and forced him to agree to a peace treaty that supposedly recognized Greek independence. The Greeks soon learned however, they formed a league of states to resist Rome. But even the league was still subject to Rome.

Rome demanded that certain states and cities be removed from the league and the league openly resisted the demand in 147 B.C. Corinth was captured and destroyed by the Romans in the ensuing war in 146. With the destruction of Corinth also went the end of any independence the Greeks had. Greece became a state of the Roman Empire. However, Greek thought and culture made a definite conquest of the more primitive Roman civilization. So by New Testament time Rome was the kingdom in power, but Greek language and culture was predominant among the people.

Israel, as early as 700 B.C. was being called Ghomri or Khumri by their Assyrian captors after Omri, one of Israel's former kings. This name took on different forms and a large group who attempted to escape by moving north in 679 B.C. Were called Gimira according to evidence uncovered by archaeologists early in the 20th century. They were pursued and defeated by the Assyrian army, but a large number did make good their escape to the shores of the Black Sea. In recording some of these same activities, the Greeks referred to these Israelites as *Kimmerioi* (Cimmerian in English). They tell us the Cimmerians were driven to the regions west of the Black Sea about 600 B.C. However, the larger body of the Israelites, by a treaty with the Assyrians, when the Assyrians were being threatened by the Medes and Persians, were allowed to establish colonies as far north as the south side of the Caucasus mountains and east of the Caspian Sea. Assyria fell to the Medes and Persians in 612 B.C. and when the Israelites were also attacked, they moved through the Dariel Pass of the Caucasus mountains into the steppe regions of what is now south Russia. The Greeks this group Scythians.

Secular history picks up from these fairly recent archeological findings. The Scythians and the Cimmerians collided with each other and the resulting battles drove the Cimmerians west and north where they became known as the Celts, Gauls, and Cimbri.

By the end of the 4th century B.C. the prosperous kingdom of Scythia had been formed by the Scythians. The Sarmations, a mixed, non-Israelite people of probably Iranian origin advanced into Scythia and drove the Scythians to the shores of the Baltic Sea. The Romans called these original Scythians Germans to indicate that they were the "genuine" Scythians. These Germans broke into several divisions that became known as Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Vikings to name a few.

The Celts, during this time, were expanding in all directions in Europe with some invading Italy and sacking Rome in 390 B.C. Another group moved back into Asia Minor in 280 B.C. and were called Galatians by the Greeks as were another group of Celts who settled Gaul, or modern France. Some moved to Spain where they became known as Iberes (Gaelic name for Hebrew) and then later these Iberes moved to Ireland as

Scots and then to northern Britain and established the nation of Scotland. Other Celts moved into Britain becoming the foundation of the present day British race. As the Celts moved out of Europe, other Germanic tribes poured in behind them establishing the Gothic nations of the Vandals, Lombards, Franks, Burgundines, and others.

So at the beginning of the New Testament times, the Israelites have obeyed the commandment to move out of the Assyrian/Babylonian captivity and now occupy a good part of Asia Minor, most of Europe, Spain and the British Isles.

As for Judah, the book of Esther, which depicts events that took place after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem as recorded in the book of Ezra, tells us that at that time the kingdom of Persia consisted of 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia and that there were Jews in every province. In the New Testament we find this to still be the case. (Acts 2:5)

The group that returned to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem are the only Jews we have a written Biblical history of as a group. We have seen that descendants of David are among this group including descendants of the royal line, though they are under the curse God put on Jehoiachin and Jehoiakim. We have also seen their problems with interracial marriage and this apparent bent for sin. However, the work of Ezra in trying to prepare himself in the law of God and to teach it to others has been continued by others who tried to master the text and teaching of the law in every detail. The scribes of the New Testament were the spiritual descendants of these people. There was a wider circle then of those who meticulously tried to carry out their teachings. These became known as the Hasidim (God's Loyal Ones) two centuries before Christ. Differences developed among this Hasidim however, and they divided into different sects known as Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, etc. By New Testament time the sect of the Pharisees had obtained dominant positions in the Sanhedrin, or Jewish senate. However, the high priest was a Sadducee.

The Pharisee's religious conception was that the Babylonian captivity was caused by Israel's failure to keep the Torah (what they called the Mosaic law). To them the Torah did not merely consist of fixed commandments, but was adaptable to changing conditions. God's will could be inferred from it for situations not ex-

pressly mentioned by it. They set out to establish the content of the Torah and then make a hedge (a series of interpretations) about the basic laws so no one could accidentally break a law. (For example—the law said there was to be no labor on the Sabbath. To hedge this they came up with 39 specific activities that were then prohibited on the Sabbath.) They were convinced that they had the right to interpretation and then they claimed these interpretations (which they called “traditions of the elders” and we now call the Talmud) came from Moses at Mt. Sinai. Understanding what they were doing will help to understand why Christ was so opposed to them and their law.

We have discussed where we think the throne of David was at New Testament times and still is. An English friend of mine told me that they were taught in school that approximately 580 years before Christ, there appeared on the shores of Ireland a patriarch accompanied by an eastern princess and another man. Traditions has it that they had with them a harp, special chest, and a special stone. Irish traditions claims the harp was David’s harp, the chest was the Ark of the Covenant, and the stone is claimed to be Jacob’s pillar that he anointed with oil twice at Bethel. The one man in the Bible who could have had custody of these items following the Babylonian captivity was the prophet Jeremiah who we know had custody of the king’s daughters and had a “secretary” name Baruch. I believe it is more than a coincidence that the time of this appearance in Ireland and Jeremiah’s time were the same and that the throne that was established by the marriage of this princess to a prince in Ireland has continued and today is the monarchy of Great Britain. As we discussed at the time we studied Jeremiah, there isn’t full agreement as to whether this princess was a daughter or a granddaughter of King Zedekiah, but it is generally agreed that she was descended from Zedekiah and came to Ireland with Jeremiah.

If so, as we saw in our study of the migrations of the tribes of Israel under the name of Celts and other to become the basic population of Britain, the throne would be back among Israelite people where we were told prophetically it would be. The important point for us to realize as we begin New Testament times, is that the throne does still exist, the line of David from which Jesus Christ was to come is intact and represented in

Judah, and all that has been promised and prophesied in conjunction with Jesus Christ is in readiness.

In 126 B.C. the Jews of Judah fought and defeated what was left of the house of Esau. The Jews then gave the surviving Edomites a choice of either accepting and following their laws and traditions or be killed. The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that these Edomites basically became Jews. So as we begin the New Testament, we find that the king of Judea is King Herod the Great, who is certainly not of the line of David, but is half Edomite and half Jew and had obtained political favor from the Roman government to name him king of Judea. As such, he is subject to the Roman government as we have discussed in the past is, as an Edomite, very opposed to Jesus Christ.

The Roman Senate has bestowed a new title on Caesar Augustus. He declared that it had to be confirmed by the people, so everyone had to register, or vote their confirmation. This registration had to be done in the city of a man’s birth. It is with this in mind that we are ready to begin our study of the New

tion had to be done in the city of a man's birth. It is with this in mind that we are ready to begin our study of the book of Matthew in our next lesson.
JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

We were studying in the 36th chapter of Ezekiel in our last issue. (Read Eze. 36:8-15) God says to the "mountains" of Israel, that they are to become very productive and men will multiply in them and will bring forth fruit. Vs. 13 seems a little strange, **"Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations."** While this was the case when the people were worshipping idols and God sent Assyria and Babylon against them and many, many were killed, think about where we are today with millions of the unborn being killed in abortions. Vs. 14 says this will come to a stop. It is mind boggling to think of what all will change when Christ rules and we turn to His ways. He says that the shame of the nations will no longer be heard in the mountains of Israel, neither will the people bear the reproach of the other nations (heathen) nor will nations of Israel fall anymore.

(Read Ezekiel 36:16-20) God points out that when Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled that land by their own ways and doings, i.e. the blood they shed in their own land and the idols that they worshipped. Because of this God scattered them among the nations. Then He says that when they went into these other nations, they profaned His Holy name there.

(Read Ezekiel 36:21-38) God says that He had pity on His Holy name, therefore, He says to the people of Israel that what He is doing for the house of Israel He is doing it for His Holy name's sake, not for their sakes. He is going to sanctify, or set apart His great name and the heathen, or nations, are going to know that He is the LORD God. Remember that when we see "LORD" with all the letters capitalized, but with the "ORD" in a smaller font in the King James, it is the translators way of indicating the name Jehovah, or Yewh, a name indicating a covenant keeping God.

God continues to tell us what great blessings He is going to give to Israel in verses 24-30. Then He says that they will remember their evil

doings and will lothe themselves because of all that they had done. He reminds them that all that He is doing for them He is doing for His own name's sake. Israel will know that He is the LORD God. In Ezekiel 37, Ezekiel is carried out in the spirit and set down in the midst of a valley of dry bones. (Read Eze. 37:1-14) This, of course, is the source of the old spiritual, "Dem Bones." I don't think there is any question but that this is talking about resurrection. However, I believe it can be taken two ways. First, the resurrection of the individual. Keep in mind that the Bible talks about two resurrections, the first resurrection in Revelation 20:4-6 and the second at the time of the Great White Throne of Judgment in Revelation 20:12-13. We won't go into the reason for the two resurrections in this lesson, however, we need to be aware that all people who have ever lived will be resurrected in one or the other of these two resurrections. There are some who believe in a spiritual resurrection when a person becomes a Christian, however, to me the only time that I find resurrection mentioned or inferred, it appears to me to be a literal physical resurrection.

The second way to look at this resurrection is brought out in verse 11. God says that the **"bones are the whole house of Israel."** The kingdom of Israel technically died when they were divorced from God as per the bill of divorce we find in the book of Hosea. They lost their name, their God, and their nationhood as a result of that divorce. That God speaks of the "whole house of Israel" could also indicate the resurrection of the house, or kingdom of Israel. While the people of this former house of Israel continued to exist and multiply and became many nations, the day will come when they will again become one nation, or kingdom, with one king, Jesus Christ. This of course must of necessity require the resurrection of the individuals, but when that happens, the nation itself will be literally resurrected as well.

(Read Eze. 37:15-20) This should help us clarify some of the questions that might have arisen as we have studied. First off, when we consider the promises to Abraham, that they were totally unconditional, we have to assume that Israel, the inheritor of those promises has to continue to exist in spite of what we have seen happen to first the kingdom of Israel as it divides into two kingdoms, then the divorce of the kingdom of Israel from

God and the prophecy Jeremiah 18-19 telling us that the kingdom of Judah was to be destroyed. God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 18 that Israel was like the pot that the potter marred while he was making it on the wheel, but that as the potter took the clay and refashioned it into a different vessel, so Israel, who was in the Assyrian captivity at the time of the prophecy, would also be remade into a different nation or kingdom. However, the time would come when Judah would no longer ever be an independent totally self governing kingdom again. We saw that begin to happen with the Babylonian captivity and though they were allowed to return to Jerusalem and Judah, they technically remained in subjection to first the Persians, then the Greeks, and finally to the Romans, to be finally destroyed as a nation of any sorts in 70 A.D.

In the case of both Israel and Judah, the people, though they were initially diminished in number, remained and continued to multiply and expand. Now we get a little larger look at the picture, or the plan of God. Judah completed her mission, that of bringing forth the King of Kings. Now it is Israel's job to bring forth the kingdom, or the Sons of God. So God says that He will bring them back together, He will join the two sticks so that they become one again. This, of course, has not happened in the fullness of God's plan, but I think we can see it happening. The western nations, though independent nations, are usually found united economically, religiously, and politically. There are always elements without and within these nations to keep this unification from happening in its fullness, but the tendency is there so that when the King of Kings appears in His second coming, it will be relatively easy for them to unite around Him.

(Read Eze. 37:21-28) Though there are those that believe that the "Jews" taking over the land of Palestine in 1948 fulfills this prophecy, I think any person reading this prophecy can see the fallacy of such a belief. The promise to Abraham that his descendants would be like the sand of the sea in number does not match up with the "Jews" of today being the most numbered people on earth. These "Jews" taking on the name of Israel does not make them Israel. Israel's job was to bring forth the "Sons of God" whereas these people reject the true Son of God. Vs. 23 tells us that they shall defile themselves no more with their idols. Yet, the Zionist goal is to build another

temple, an actual idol in itself when treated in one's mind as these Zionists do. They are to have one king, yet these people have no king and have a very unstable government with many leaders vying with each other for supremacy. We could go on, but this should give us the picture. By their own admission, the majority of the people who call themselves "Jews" today are not even related to Judah, Jacob-Israel, Isaac, or Abraham.

The point is that while God is bringing all the elements of this prophecy together, it hasn't happened in its fullness yet and won't until the return of the King of Kings. When that happens, God tells us in vs. 27, **"My tabernacle also shall be with them, yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."** The whole world will know that God is Jehovah.

Chapters 38 and 39 are often referred to as the Russian chapters of the Bible. There are several interpretations of these chapters that obviously don't agree with each other. Before the fall of the Soviet Republic, it was pretty much agreed that these prophecies meant Russia would invade Israeli, but when the Soviet Republic fell new interpretations came to light. As with all prophecy, we have to wait for the fulfillment of the prophecy to see and understand the full significance of the prophecy. So it is with this prophecy. I have read or listened to different interpretations, and though the one that I would like to present in this lesson makes sense to me, the complete fulfillment may be quite different from what I think it will be. So only time will tell if it is the correct interpretation. I was alerted to this possibility from some papers written by Dr. Stephen Jones. While I may not follow his thinking completely, I have to give him credit for the idea.

(Read Eze. 38:1-13) The first thing we need to do is identify the names and characters and places involved. The name Gog appears only in these two chapters and in Rev. 20. Young's Analytical Concordance says of Gog, "*A prince of Rosh, Meshek, Tubal, and Tiras, in ancient Scythia or Tartary.*" The NASB translation renders vs. 2 as, **"Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him."** In Gen. 10:2-3 we find that Gomer, Magog, Meshech and Tubal were sons of Japheth, son of Noah. These verses read, **"The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and**

Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.” Then we also see that Togarmah is the son of Gomer.

There is a marginal reference in the King James translation concerning the term, “**the chief prince**” saying that this should be “**prince of Rosh**” which would then put it in agreement with the NASB translation. Before we look at who “Rosh” is, let us look to see where the land of Magog is. Rev. W. M. H. Milner in a booklet titled “The Russian Chapters of Ezekiel”, (a collection of articles by the above author that appeared in The National Message in London, England in 1923) makes the statement, “*Magog is Mongolia. That is, the country so named, and the adjoining areas peopled by those the actual Mongolians—nothing whatever to do with the use of the term Mongolian as a generic designation for the “Yellow Race.”* He then goes on to say, “*M’gog, as a geographical term used by Hebrews of old and Arabs of today (Majuj), denoted that vast stretch of country to the north of the Black Sea, Caucasus, Caspian Sea, Hindu Kush, and Altai, known to the later Greek geographers as Skythia, and to us as the Russian Empire in Europe and Asia.* Thus, without proceeding further, we may know the land which is identified with Gog.” Rev. Milner was a noted philologist (one who studies written records, their authenticity and original form, and the determination of their meaning, a linguist.)

Back to who the “Rosh” were or are. The Rosh were obviously not related to Japheth. According to Russian history, the Rosh were Scandinavian Vikings who moved into what we now call Russia. The Encyclopedia of World History, by Peter Stearns, p. 224 tell us, “*The eastern Slavs settled on the territory of present-day European Russia from the 5th to the 8th centuries. In the 8th century some of the eastern Slavs were under the protectorate of the Khazars, an Altaic people who established a strong and prosperous state along the lower Volga. After the end of the 8th century, the northern part of Russia began to be penetrated by the Scandinavian Vikings, called in the old Russian chronicles **Varangians** or **Rus** (hence the name of Russia)”. Reading further we are told that in 957, “*The Russian princess Olga visited Constantinople and was converted to the Christian faith.*” A few years later, in 965 her son Svi-*

atoslav “*defeated the Khazars on the lower Volga and proceeded to establish a Russian state in place of the Khazar Empire.*”

So Russia got its name from some Scandinavian Vikings who apparently ruled Russia for a period of time and in the process defeated the Khazar kingdom, which incidentally was located at that time where the ex-Israelites of the Assyrian captivity had been taken over 1000 years before.

At the time the prophecy we are looking at in Eze. 38 begins to take place, Gog appears to be the ruler over the Rosh, and the descendants of both Meshech and Tubal. He is to be joined by Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya plus Gomer and Togarmah are to invade the mountains of Israel. The history we just read about the Khazars is very important as they claimed to be descended from Togarmah. Even though Kazaria was at one time a very strong and prosperous and great kingdom, very little is known of them today. However, in 1976, a Jewish author, Arthur Koestler wrote his book, “The Thirteenth Tribe”, in which he wrote how the Khazar leaders had converted to Judaism around 740 A.D., and how the rest of the people soon followed the example of the leaders. His premise was that the Russian and Eastern Jews of today are the descendants of those Khazar converts to Judaism. They are known today as Ashkenazi Jews. Most of the rest of today’s Jews were at one time centered in Spain and are known as Sephardic Jews and they trace their lineage to those Jews who were dispersed by the Romans in the first century.

What Koestler had to say about the Khazars was not new, just more widely read. The Jewish Encyclopedia, under the heading of Chazars (I.e., Khazars) has this to say, “*A people of Turkish origin whose life and history are interwoven with the very beginnings of the history of the Jews of Russia. The kingdom of the Chazars was firmly established in most of South Russia long before the foundation of the Russian monarchy by the Varangians (855)....*”

“*It was probably about that time that the chaghan (king) of the Chazars and his grandees, together with a large number of his heathen people, embraced the Jewish religion. According to A. Harkavy (‘Measef Niddahim,’i), the conversion took place in 620; according to others, in 740. King Joseph, in his letter to Hasdai ibn Shaprut*

(about 960) gives the following account of the conversion....”

Hasdai ibn Shaprut was a Jewish doctor in Cordova, Spain, which was the seat of the Muslim government during that time. He heard about the Jewish kingdom of Kasaria from merchants that traveled through the area and that their king’s name was Joseph. He wrote a letter to King Joseph asking him many questions about his kingdom, the land, what tribe of Israel they belonged to, about their religious rituals, and more. The king answered his letter. Quoting Mr. Koestler as he wrote about the contents of King Joseph’s letter, “*Joseph then proceeds to provide a genealogy of his people. Though a fierce Jewish nationalist, proud of wielding the ‘Sceptre of Judah,’ he cannot, and does not, claim for them Semitic descent; he traces their ancestry not to Shem, but to Noah’s third son, Japheth, or more precisely to Japheth’s grandson, Togarma, the ancestor of all Turkish tribes.*” The king added in his letter that Togarma had ten sons, and that they were descended from Khazar, the seventh. Mr. Koestler indicated there was a bit of a mystery as to why they named themselves after Ashkenaz rather than after Togarmah, his brother.

The king’s account of their conversion to Judaism was that his ancestor, King Bulan, found his religion wanting and looking for another religion asked a Christian bishop from Constantinople, a Muslim cleric and a Jewish Rabbi to present their cases for their religion. After hearing from all of them, he asked the Christian and the Muslim both the same question, “Which religion came closest to their religion?” Both answered Judaism. Being a kind of buffer kingdom between the Christians on the west and the Muslims on the east, taking up the Jewish religion seemed the right thing for him to do both from the standpoint of the question he asked and the political situation

his kingdom was in between the two competitive religions of Christianity and Islam.

There is still considerably more to discuss on this subject, but we don’t have room for all of it in this issue, so will continue our study of this subject in our next issue. JRL

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Prov. 15:1