

KINGDOM SPIRIT



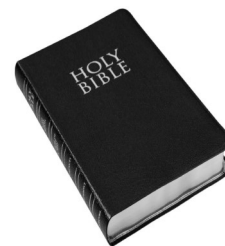
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2208

MARRIAGE-DIVORCE- REMARRIAGE A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The creation of the Old Covenant in Ex. 19:1-8 is also looked at in scripture as a marriage ceremony and a last will and testament. I want us to look at the divorce from that marriage and then the re-marriage, i.e. the Bride of Christ in this lesson.

In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, we find a list of blessings God would bring upon Israel if they continued to worship Him and keep His commandments and then beginning in verse 15 we find a list of curses that He would bring upon them if they forgot His commandments and went to worshipping idols. In verse 48 God says that **"he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."** As we study further in the book of Jeremiah, chapters 27 and 28, we find that there were yokes of wood and yokes of iron. The yokes of wood, as applied in these chapters referred to a nation being in captivity to another nation, but allowed to remain in their own land. A yoke of iron referred to being in captivity to another nation and being removed from their own land. As we have studied the history of Israel, we have now seen that God had placed a yoke of iron on them by putting them into captivity to the Assyrians who had removed them from their own land and placed them in another land south of and between the Black and Caspian Seas.

However, both the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah also referred to this captivity as being divorced from God. Isaiah 50:1 says, **"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's**

divorcement, (referring to Israel) whom I have put away?" Jeremiah 3:8 says, **"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."** In God's law, we're told in Deuteronomy 24:1 **"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."** This is the law of divorcement and as we see, it requires two elements, a written bill of divorcement and the casting of the wife out of the husband's house. We have seen in our studies that Israel was cast out of God's house, the land that God had given Israel in the land of Canaan. We now want to look at the written bill of divorcement, or disownership. In spite of the objection of many of our modern women to the idea of the husband owning his wife, this is as God intends it. It is a mutual arrangement as both husbands and wives refer to each other as MY husband or MY wife. But, it is the responsibility of the husband to give the written bill of divorcement.

God gave the responsibility of delivering His bill of divorcement to Israel to the prophet Hosea. In a sense, He did so in a strange way, but I don't think we will have any trouble understanding just what He did. (Read Hosea 1:1) Like most of the prophets, Hosea identifies the time when he was commissioned to prophesy by referring to the kings of Judah, during whose lifetime the prophet lived, and prophesied and also the king of Israel. In naming the kings of both king-

doms, Hosea acknowledges that at that time Israel and Judah were separate and distinct kingdoms. We see that Hosea then was a prophet during a time coinciding with that of the prophet Isaiah. It was during the time of these kings that Israel refused to repent and turn back to their God and ultimately was taken into captivity by the Assyrians.

(Read Hosea 1:2-5) God has to have a sense of humor. He first tells Hosea to go and marry a harlot because Israel had in effect played the part of harlot by going to the other gods instead of her true husband, the true God. Hosea did as he was instructed and married a woman by the name of Gomer, a somewhat symbolic name as this became one of the names of the various groups of Israel as they later escaped the land of their captivity. It came from the name of King Omri, an earlier king of Israel. The Assyrians referred to Israel as Beth-Ghomri or Bit-Khumri which translates to "house of Omri."

We're told that she conceived and bare a son. God begins His "bill of divorcement" in the names He tells Hosea to give to the children that Gomer was to bare him. This first child, a son, was to be named Jezreel. The word "Jezreel" has two meanings, "God Scatters" and "God Sows." We'll come back to this in a moment. There are two cities that are named Jezreel in Scripture. One was a city in the hill country of Judah and the other a city in the tribe of Issachar, but belonged to Manasseh. Little is said about the former, but much is said about the latter. King Ahab lived in Jezreel of Manasseh and the vineyard of Naboth, which wicked Jezebel appropriated for her husband, Ahab, after having Naboth killed, was located there. It was here that Jezebel was killed and eaten by the dogs. It was also here that Jehu slew all the remaining descendants of King Ahab.

Though the prophesies that Hosea gave in the names of his children ultimately meant the apparent end of the Israel, keep in mind that for a seed to reproduce, it has to die first. In effect, the sowing of the kingdom of Israel brought about this "death" of Israel that she might reproduce as part of God's plan. What happened to Israel was that she was sown and then scattered among the nations of the world to accomplish God's purpose for all mankind. Jezreel also became a symbol for Israel.

(Read Hosea 1:6-7) This second child, a daughter, is named Loruhamah which means "not pitied." God had been merciful to Israel since they were founded as a nation at Mt. Sinai, but now He says that He will no longer have mercy on her, but is going to remove her from the land. So that we know for sure that Hosea knew of the dividing of the kingdom following the reign of King Solomon, he tells us that God would still have mercy on Judah. When God says that

He will not save Judah by bow, nor by sword, not by battle or by horsemen or horses, He is foretelling what He was going to do when King Sennacherib of Assyria came against the city of Jerusalem after Assyria had taken all of Israel and the rest of Judah captive. If you recall the story, King Hezekiah had prayed for deliverance from Sennacherib's army and God killed 185,000 of the Assyrians while they slept after which Sennacherib went home in shame.

(Read Hosea 1:8-9) The name of the third child, another son, Loammi, completed the bill of divorcement. Loammi means "not my people." God had disowned them, withheld His mercy and was sending them out of the land because they had gone a whoring after other gods. This fulfilled the law of divorce.

The kingdom of Israel had officially lost their name "Israel," lost their land, and lost their kingdom and worst of all, had lost their God, their Husband. No doubt many lost their lives as well in the process that was to follow. As we have discussed before, the process of removing Israel from the land as well as a part of Judah took place in three successive captivities and we're told that the people were moved to the land south of and between the Black and Caspian Seas and that they were settled in the cities of the Medes.

But our story doesn't end there. (Read Hosea 1:10-11) In spite of this divorce, this disownership, God says that the number of the children of Israel would continue to increase and become as the sand of the sea in that their number would be so great that it could not be numbered. Then He says that it would come to pass that where it was said to them that they "are not my people," it would be said to them, "Ye are the sons of the living God."

The apostle Peter addresses his first epistle to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadoacia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied." Then in verses 9 and 10 of chapter 2, speaking to these same people, he says, **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.** The word "generation" is from the Greek *genos* which Young's Analytical Concordance says means "race or kind." When God made His first covenant with Israel, or His marriage with her, He said in Exodus 19:5, "then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" "Peculiar" here refers to ownership—God is say-

ing that this new nation, Israel, belonged to Him and Him alone. Then He went on in verse 6 to say, **“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”** The priests in God’s system are rulers under God. Not only did they have ecclesiastical duties, but civil duties as well such as school masters, keepers of the law, medical duties, etc., i.e. they ruled by service, not by oppression. The apostle John tells us in Rev. 20:6, speaking of those who will have part in the first resurrection, **“they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”**

The word “holy” simply means set apart. Israel was set apart from all the other nations to be of service to God. The argument could be made, but they were disobedient and finally God divorced them and sent them into captivity never to be heard of again. This is the point of what we are looking at in the prophecies of Hosea and at least the partial fulfillment of those prophecies in the Apostle Peter’s time. Again, we have to look at the big picture. Just because God “divorced” Israel and sent her into captivity did not mean His plan failed. On the contrary, the divorce was part of His plan the purpose of which was that these Israel people would be positioned throughout the world to carry forth the gospel to all nations. Hosea and Peter are explaining how this was to come about. They are both writing to the same race or family of people. We know from history that it was the people that Peter was writing to and their descendants that ultimately migrated to western Europe, the British Isles, and the desolate heritages of the earth which included North America, Australia, etc., who have been the primary missionaries of the world and will be even more so in the future.

If you happened to read the rest of the divorce law from which we quoted a portion earlier as found in Deut. 24, you saw that if the wife married another husband after being divorced, she could not return and remarry the first husband. So the question that we are going to have to deal with as we continue reading Hosea is, how can God lawfully remarry Israel once He had divorced her and she had gone to all of her other gods? The answer is in Romans 7:1-3—Read. Because God, in the personage of Jesus Christ died, the law of divorce in respect to His divorce of Israel became null and void. When Jesus was resurrected and lived again, He was no longer bound by that law.

Also in His death, He paid the highest price any man can pay to redeem, or purchase back that which had been lost. This is the theme of many of the parables in the New Testament. In redeeming Israel, He also redeemed all men from

the penalty of their sin, which is death.

Getting back to Hosea 1:11, this is a Messianic prophecy. The one head is Jesus Christ. Judah had the first opportunity to accept (appoint) that one head. Some did—most did not. The apostles and others then went to those of Israel to tell them of their opportunity to accept (appoint) that one head. Again, some did, but most did not. But those of both Judah and Israel that did **“appoint themselves one head”** again became citizens of the Kingdom even while they were scattered throughout the world. Physical location did not matter anymore, for Jesus had died to redeem and was resurrected that others might believe that He was truly the Messiah. The name “Jezreel” here in verse 11 is a name for Israel, so Hosea is saying, **“great shall be the day of Israel,”** as they go from having lost their name, their land, their kingdom and their God, to being the sons of the living God, partakers in and inheritors of His Kingdom, and the position of ruling with Him.

(Read Hosea 2:1-5) Prefixing the names Ammi and Ruhamah with “Lo” makes them negative. “Lo” means “not.” Taking the “Lo” off the name reverses the meaning of the name to “My People” and “Mercy” respectfully. Once they had been named in the negative, i.e. Israel been given the divorce, the object then becomes that of seeking them back. In saying to Ammi and Ruhamah to **“plead with your mother”** God is saying to the people of divorced Israel to plead with their nation to repent and turn back to God.

(Read Hosea 2:6-13) God says He is going to take some measures Himself to teach her that it has been He who has provided for her needs and luxuries, not these gods that she has been pursuing. He is going to cause to cease her mirth, her feasts, Sabbaths, etc. This is part of the reason that we see Paul going to Jerusalem to seek guidance from the apostles and elders because Jews were following him around telling the people that Paul was wrong, that they had to be circumcised and that they had to observe certain feasts and rituals to be saved. They had forgotten them because God had caused them to cease among them. The apostles and elders at Jerusalem, after considering the matter, gave a decree in Acts 15:29 that all that they thought the people, to whom Paul and others were ministering to, needed to be concerned was **“That ye abstain**

from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.”

(Read Hosea 2:14-23) God clearly states His intent to remarry Israel. He promises to bless her and take care of her. Hosea is looking ultimately to the time spoken of in Rev. 21 after the Great White Throne of Judgment, but I think we have to understand that there is a process to take us to that time. We have seen this process taking place as we see the Israel nations of today being blessed far more than any of the other nations of the world even though they are yet to be totally obedient to God. In Rev. 21, the bride of Christ is spoken of as **“that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”** When we understand that this city, the New Jerusalem is the governmental structure of God’s Kingdom, then I think we can better understand Hosea’s prophecies concerning the bride of Christ. The city has 12 gates upon which are written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel and the foundations of the city are also 12 in number and in them are the names of the 12 apostles. If you read of the order of encampment of Israel in the wilderness and the order of the New Jerusalem, one can clearly see the similarities. Though many consider the church to be the bride of Christ because of how they read, or misread, Ephesians 5, the church is the body of Christ; Israel, or the kingdom, is the bride. As individuals, and as Christians, we are a part of both, but we need to make the distinction if we are to understand Scripture as I believe we ought. The process we mentioned includes the sowing of Israel in the world that God may have the increase. We each are where we are as part of this sowing process. Our purpose is to witness the gospel of Christ, not only, or even necessarily, in what we say, but in how we live and treat those around us.

Hosea continues to discuss this process which includes both judgment and joy in our next issue. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The author feels he has established the fact that Christ was called of God to the office of High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, but he intends to discuss more about the subject. However he is concerned that those to whom he is writing will not hear what he has to say.

(Read Heb. 5:12-14) Though they should be teachers at this point, they need to be taught. I get the feeling that Paul and the other apostles have difficulty understanding why the Jews, in particular, can’t see that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. The Jews of that day

took great pride in their knowledge of Scripture as most of them had been taught the Scripture from the day they were born, yet when it comes to understanding God’s plan and purpose, they are still like babies in need of milk instead of meat. Needing milk is equated with being unskillful in the word of righteousness, strong meat to those who have matured through exercising their senses to discern between good and evil.

(Read Heb. 6:1-3) Keep in mind that the author of Hebrews is probably writing to Jews who have become Christians, more than anyone else, and that he is trying to explain the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Their problem is being unable to give up many of the Old Covenant rituals while trying to also be New Covenant Christians. In these verses Paul is defining what he is considering the milk of the word. They should already understand that they needed to repent, or turn from the idea that they are saved by performing various rituals. Their teaching in the various churches that not only did they need to believe in Christ, but that they needed to be circumcised is an example of dead works, i.e. works that accomplished nothing so far as their salvation was concerned. They should already know that their justification was based on their faith toward God. Baptisms refers to the ceremonial cleansings that were practiced under the Old Covenant compared to the ritual of baptism that was taught by Paul and the other apostles. These things they should already know. They also should already know about the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit. This was very much a part of the teaching of the early apostles and disciples, so it wasn’t something that needed to be taught further. Resurrection of the dead was a subject that should have had a thorough review to most of them since there was considerable debate between the Pharisees and the Sadducees on the subject. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection while the Pharisees did. If we look at Paul’s writings on the subject, it is clear that he believed as the Pharisees did and that it was not a spiritual resurrection, as is often taught by some today, but rather a literal resurrection. There were some incorrect teachings concerning the resurrection such as the teaching that the resurrection had already taken place, but since Paul has in other writings dismissed this as a definite false teaching, I think we can assume that the rest of the apostles taught the same. At any rate, resurrection should not have been a subject that these Hebrew Christians needed further instruction on.

The final subject that the author indicates should be milk of the word teaching is that of “eternal” judgment. “Eternal” is from the Greek *aiōnios* which means “age-lasting”. I don’t think it was until the word got mistranslated that confu-

sion like we have today existed over this doctrine. It was understood to mean that there was an age coming in which judgment would take place. We can know from Rev. 20 that this age is the one following the Great White Throne of Judgment, but as is evidenced by the early church writers and the apostles, this was known and understood then, so the author of Hebrews is referring to this as milk of the word. As we have said before, the people to whom Hebrews is written were quite well versed in Scripture. So they would have understood God's mercy and forgiveness. To them this should have been milk. It is to the people today that it is confusing because of the mistranslation. To consider this "eternal" judgment in the sense of our understanding of the word today, i.e. that judgment would last in perpetuity, is to say that divine judgment cannot correct a sinner, or that he will never repent, or to deny that Scripture says that every knee will bow and confess Him as Lord. But as it was originally intended, I think we should understand that there will be an age in which divine judgment will take place, but the ultimate outcome is that all men will be saved.

(Read Heb. 6:4-6) This is probably one of the most misunderstood Scriptures in the Bible primarily because so many of the pastors have used it in their fear tactics to keep people in their churches. The author is talking of someone who has become a Christian, has been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and has understood the Word of God and the first resurrection, who then falls back into Judaism with the old temple, the old priesthood, all of the rituals and ceremonial cleansings and the animal sacrifices. If a person went back to animal sacrifices for sin, it would be impossible to find forgiveness since the animal sacrifices were no longer acceptable to God once the perfect sacrifice had been made, and this person has rejected that perfect sacrifice. There is no other messiah for him to turn to. There would be nothing left. A couple of different translations might help our understanding of this. The Ferrar Fenton translation expresses verse 6, **"It is useless to renew them into a change of mind:--they having by themselves crucified afresh the Son of God, and openly disgraced Him."** The Moffat translation states, **"It is impossible to make them repent afresh, since they crucify the Son of God in their own persons and hold him up to obloquy."** The making an animal sacrifice has actually become an act of defiance toward God. This is what this verse is saying.

(Read Heb. 6:7, 8) Verse 7 is talking about one who is in Judaism and receives the rain (God's Word), is converted to Christianity and brings forth produce good for eating. Verse 8 is talking about one who receives the rain, but reverts back to Judaism and instead brings forth thorns and briars. These people

are worthless and close to being cursed. I Cor. 3:15 tells us, **"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."** Remember that fire is symbolic of God's judgment. So even a person who was once in Judaism, became a Christian, and then reverted back to Judaism where he had no sacrifice for forgiveness will still be saved, but will have to go through judgment for his sins. We are not talking about justification here, but rather after one receives justification.

(Read Heb. 6:9, 10) The author expresses confidence in the recipients of this letter that they will not need to go back to the milk of the word, but rather will move forward, even though he has just said all that we have just read about in this chapter 6. God is not unjust in that He would forget what these people have done and are doing.

(Read Heb. 6:11,12) It is the author's desire that all continue to show the same diligence that they have at the beginning of their conversion until the end, i.e. until they die or until Christ's return, whichever comes first. Keep the example of the Exodus in mind. The end would have been when they entered into the Promised Land at the appointed time. The goal is the same in both cases, the glorification, the Feast of Tabernacles, or however we want to express it, we are talking about the first resurrection. The promises are to rule the world with God, or Jesus Christ. To inherit these promises, we have to not be slothful, but as verse 11 says, show the same diligence unto the end.

(Read Heb. 6:13-15) When God made the promises to Abraham, if you will recall, God in the form of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp went between the divided animals by Himself making Himself totally responsible to bring the promises to pass. Abraham was not allowed to be a signatory to the contract, so to speak. Remember that when God made the promises to Abraham, they were to his seed, his descendants. Yet at the time and for some time after, Abraham and Sarah did not have any children. Yet Abraham believed God, even though he and Sarah were getting quite old, and patiently waited on God, Who, true to His Word, gave them their son, Isaac, thus Hebrews tells us he (Abraham) obtained the promise. In our thinking today, Abraham was an overcomer. . This is part of what Hebrews is about, explaining the difference between an overcomer, or ruler, and one who has just been justified, or became only a citizen of the kingdom. Ultimately, all people will become at least a citizen of the kingdom, but some will attain to the status of ruling this kingdom with Christ. The latter is what the author of Hebrews is encouraging his readers to be.

(Read Heb. 6:16-20) When we sign a contract today, we in effect swear to an oath that we will do as the conditions of the contract demand. When we are called as a witness in court, we swear to an oath that we will speak only that which is true. There are many other instances in which we swear to an oath as to what we will do or won't do. These oaths are then law. God, when He made the promises unconditional, in effect swore an oath that He would bring the promises to pass. We have been using different terms referring to the same thing, so there is no confusion, rulership in the kingdom is the equivalent of Sonship. Attaining Sonship is the equivalent of glorification, or attaining to the Tabernacles experience. This is achieved first by justification through faith. This is a gift, all we do is accept it. It cannot be earned. This is our Passover experience. At this point we are in a servant-master relationship with God. Through sanctification, being set apart, we strive to attain to Sonship, or glorification. This requires effort on our part. It can be referred to as our Pentecostal experience. It is a time of learning and practicing, of God writing His law on our heart through our obedience. Then vs. 17 tells us, that to show the inheritors of this promise of Sonship the unchangeableness of His counsel, He confirmed it by an oath. This is what we have discussed in Genesis 15. The oath that God swore to Abraham was ratified in the blood of the five animals that were divided. This was the first of the immutable or unchangeable things that confirm this promise. [(Read Gal. 3:25-29) This cuts both ways. For the Jew who was claiming his genealogy assured him of the promises, Paul makes it clear that he was considered seed of Abraham only if he were Christ's. To the non-Jew who did not claim genealogical association with Abraham, if he were Christ's, he is considered seed of Abraham, thus an inheritor of the promise of Sonship.]

The second confirmation of the promise was ratified through the blood of the True Sacrifice, that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In both cases, the blood sacrifice is unchangeable. Keep in mind Lev. 17:11, **For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.** So when we read "blood" think "life". It was the giving of His life that makes atonement for our life. The word "soul" in the above verse is from the Hebrew *nephesh* which is also often translated "life". I consider soul and life interchangeable terms as both terms are usually used in the Old Testament. Heb. 10:20 tells us that the veil we need to enter through is Christ's flesh.

Vs. 18 tells us that these two immutable, or unchangeable things are a strong consolation to us as

we lay hold onto the hope set before us. This hope is an anchor that is sure and steadfast to us as we enter into the presence of God through the veil, i.e. the Most Holy Place. Christ, the forerunner for us has already entered inside, or through, this veil as our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

In the 14th chapter of Genesis we have a story of five kings who were defeated and put in subjection by King Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, along with three other kings that were confederated with him. "Put in subjection" means that they had to pay a tax to King Chedorlaomer. After paying the tax for 12 years, the five kings, which included the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, rebelled and refused to pay the tax. This brought the four kings down on them again and they were defeated again and the four kings took a spoil of people, livestock and goods from the cities of these five kings, which included Abram's nephew Lot and his family and goods. When Abram heard about it, he took 318 of his trained servants, armed them and pursued after the four kings. When he caught up with them, he defeated them and released the people that had been taken and took spoil of these four kings and headed back home. To complete our story, read Gen. 14:17-24.

(Read Heb. 7:1, 2) This introduces us a little more to this Melchisedec. He was king of Jerusalem, for Jerusalem means City of Salem, or literally City of Peace. Melchisedec is a title rather than a proper name as the name means "King of Righteousness." "Melchi" means king, and "Zadok" means righteousness. It is my understanding that secular history claims that Shem, son of Noah, was the builder of Jerusalem and its first king. Even after Shem's descendants were overthrown by the Canaanites, the official title of the king of Jerusalem was Adonizedek, "Lord of Righteousness." Joshua 10 tells us the story of Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, confederating with four other Amorite kings to go against Gibeon, the people who had deceived Joshua and the elders of Israel into thinking they were from a far land and had secured from the Israelites an agreement to protect them, and how God gave these five kings into the hands of Joshua and the Israelites. Joshua (*Yeshua*), was a type of Christ and Adonizedek would be a type of anti-christ opposed to the true *Yeshua* (Joshua).

The 16th chapter of the book of Jasher says that Melchisedec was Shem. We're told in Gen. 11 that Shem lived 600 years which would have meant that he was 490 years old when Isaac was born and 550 years old when Jacob was born. He would have been 565 years old when Abraham died.

When God created Adam, He gave him two mandates, the dominion mandate (Gen. 1:28), and the fruitfulness mandate (Gen. 1:28).

Adam became known as king of the earth and these two mandates became a birthright responsibility that was passed from Adam to Seth, and from father to son to and including Noah. It would then have normally passed to the oldest son, but for reasons we are not told, Noah passed it to his youngest son, Shem. Shem outlived his descendents, his son, his grandson, great grandson, etc. to whom it would have gone. Even though Abraham was 9 generations from Shem, I am speculating that the meeting we read about in Gen 14 was probably the intended prelude to Shem passing this “birthright” to Abraham, but Shem outlived Abraham, so the “birthright” went to Isaac instead who would have been next in line to inherit it after Abraham. Then we know that Jacob and Esau contended for it with Jacob becoming the inheritor of it. He then split it, with the dominion mandate, the scepter, going to his son, Judah, and the “fruitfulness mandate,” the “birthright” going to his son, Joseph. The point is that this Melchisedec order of priesthood and this “spiritual” birthright were related and probably originated with Adam and was passed down father to son to Shem. II Peter 2:5 says, **“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.”** This reference to Noah as the eighth person could be looked at two ways: 1) there were 8 persons on the ark; and 2) since he is also referred to as a preacher of righteousness, he would have been the 8th person from Adam to receive this “birthright,” or the job of king-priest. He was actually the 9th generation, but Enoch died before his father, so it passed from Enoch’s father, Jared, to Enoch’s son, Methuselah.

Ultimately this “birthright” with both the mandates will rest with Jesus Christ. We have spoken in the past of the two works of Christ. The first work was to come of the tribe of Judah, or the house of David, to receive the dominion mandate. He died on the cross, was resurrected, and ascended to the Throne of God to function as our High Priest. When He comes again, it will be to the house of Joseph (see Rev. 19:13 **“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood”**), a reference, I believe, to Joseph’s coat of many colors being stained with the blood of a goat that the sons of Jacob used to convince Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal) to obtain the fruitfulness mandate, thus He would then function as King-Priest over all the world.

Hopefully, this gives us a brief look historically and prophetically at the order of the Melchisedec priesthood that we might better understand what Hebrews has to tell us concerning this priesthood. (Read Heb. 7:3) For many years my thought was that this had to apply to Jesus Christ as being Melchisedec. Finally, verse 6 was pointed out to me and I un-

derstood how this applied to Shem. **“But he whose descent (genealogy) is not counted** (i.e. not recorded here nor mentioned in the story) **from them** (the Levitical priesthood) **received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.”** Melchisedec is not a part of the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood. In fact, in the story of Melchisedec, there is no mention of who he is, who his mother and father were, nor does it give a birth or death date. This genealogy was intentionally left out of the story in Gen. 14 by the Holy Spirit so that it makes him a type of Christ (**“like unto the Son of God”**). I would be reasonably sure that the author had access to Jewish literature that showed Shem to be Melchisedec, but this Scriptural silence on who he was lends to the type and shadow of this Old Testament type of Christ. By not mentioning either a birth date or a death date, it leaves the feeling of ever-living, thus like Christ.

(Read Heb. 7:4-7) The fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec shows that Abraham was under the authority of him. Verse 7 verifies this authority. The Levitical priesthood whom God had appointed as priests, were commanded to take tithes of men, but here a man who was not descended from Levi took tithes, in effect, took tithes from Levi though Levi was yet to be born as a descendant of Abraham.

Read Heb. 7:8-10) Not only was Abraham under the authority of Melchisedec, but this also made the Aaronic priesthood the lesser of the two priesthoods, thus subordinate as well to the Melchisedec priesthood. The author points out that while the Levitical priesthood received tithes from men, they paid tithes to Melchisedec in Abraham since they descended from Abraham. The fact that Melchisedec’s birth and death are not recorded (at least under this name), he in effect continues to live. Literally this is not the case, but the effect is that he lives, again a shadow of Christ as we said earlier.

Read Heb. 7:11, 12) If it had been possible to attain to perfection under the Aaronic priesthood, there would have been no need of another priesthood. The author points out that it was under the Aaronic priesthood that we received the law, so he is pointing out that the law does not make one perfect in and of itself. If the people had been able to do as they said they would, when God made the covenant with them at Mt. Sinai, this would have brought perfection, or completeness. But they couldn’t keep the law perfectly. Again the purpose of the priesthood is to intercede for man to God and present man to God perfect, or complete. This the Aaronic priesthood could not do. But that Aaron and his descendents were to become the high priests and the priesthood was part of the law, there could not be another priesthood without changing the law. Since God gave the law, only He could change it. This is the only law that I am aware of that

that the Scripture says is changed. There are laws that have been fulfilled, but not changed, the blood sacrifice for sin law for example. But the change in the law isn't just a change of the high priest, but rather a change of the priesthood, their job. Once Christ offered Himself, the perfect sacrifice, there is no longer need for a priesthood to offer animal sacrifices for themselves and the people, so the change wasn't just a change of people, but a change in the whole system of priesthood jobs, so to speak, though not a change in the purpose of the priesthood. The principle of law is that man must die because of his sins. God is willing to accept a substitute life for a life. Though this law is still in effect, the substitution has already been made. The fact that the law has been fulfilled does not do away with the law. As Paul says in Romans 6, "**the wages of sin is death.**" This is still a fact, but the remedy has already taken place.

It is believed by many today that once Christ returns, we will go back to the Levitical priesthood with all of the animal sacrifices in a temple in Jerusalem. This is Zionist thinking, dispensational thinking. If the Melchisedec priesthood is better, why would we revert to that which isn't as good?

It was not revealed under Moses that the Aaronic priesthood was temporary. However Moses understood that just observing the rituals was not sufficient. He looked forward to a time when he says God would circumcise the heart of the people. (Read Deut. 30:6, this is the New Covenant-compare to Heb. 8:8-12.)

Read Heb. 7:13, 14) The fact that the priesthood of the High Priest changes from the tribe of Levi to the tribe of Judah proves that the priesthood is of a different order since the tribe of Levi was the only tribe from which priests were to come by the law. Whereas the Aaronic priesthood applied to Aaron and his sons, the new priesthood applies to Jesus Christ and His Sons.

(Read Heb. 7:15, 16) This new High Priest ariseth after the likeness or similitude of Melchisedec, but is not made after a carnal law, as was Aaron, but rather after the power of endless life. The Greek word translated endless is *akatalutos* meaning

"indissoluble", i.e. permanent. This is not the word *ainios* that we normally find translated eternal or everlasting which means age-lasting. *Aionian* life refers to a time when the overcomers will rule with Christ in immortality. *Akatalutos* refers to the unending nature of that life, indestructible.

(Read Heb. 7:17) Again, this is quoting from Psa. 110:4 as we saw in chapter 5. The possibility that this higher order of priesthood continued to exist between Melchisedec and Christ would explain some events that took place in apparent contradiction to the law concerning the Aaronic priesthood. It would have co-existed with the Aaronic priesthood but would have been the greater of the two. Two people in particular appear to have this higher authority. Moses and David both had direct access to the Ark of the Covenant, that by the law of the Aaronic priesthood only the high priests had. Moses was of the tribe of Levi, but was a brother to Aaron, not a descendent. David was of the tribe of Judah, as was Christ, thus not eligible to be high priests under the Aaronic priesthood. II Samuel 6 tells us of David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem and putting it in a tent that he had pitched for it and that when he had accomplished this he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. There is no mention of a priest doing this for him. If he was considered by God a priest after the order of Melchisedec, this would explain an event recorded in I Sam. 21 that Christ discusses in Matthew, Mark and Luke. (Read Matt. 12:1-4) If David was of this higher order of priesthood, then he and his men would have broken no law. Actually, Psa. 110:4 was written of David, but prophetically of Jesus Christ. This being the case, it would explain that genealogy would not be a factor in the Melchisedec priesthood, as it was in the Aaronic priesthood, thus as we strive to be a part of this priesthood as the body of Christ, genealogy has no bearing.

(Read Heb. 7:18, 19) This confirms what we discussed in verse 12. With the exception of this law concerning the Aaronic priesthood, the law is the same under the New Covenant as it was under the Old Covenant.

We will continue our discussion of the law under the two covenants in our next issue. JRL

**But, Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And His Righteousness
And all these things shall be
Added unto you. Matt. 6:33**