

# KINGDOM SPIRIT

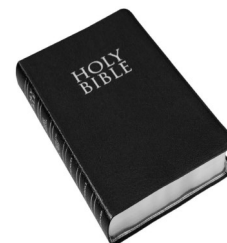
P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail [ksm@fone.net](mailto:ksm@fone.net)

**"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2209

## MARRIAGE-DIVORCE-RE-MARRIAGE A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

We are studying the book of the prophet Hosea who was a prophet to Israel before, during and after her captivity by the Assyrians. (Read Hosea 3) I don't know for sure whether the woman spoken of here is Gomer or another woman. Different commentaries vary, but either way, it appears that this took place after Gomer had birthed the three children we read of in the first two chapters. It is not real clear whether she went back to her harlotry or she had died and this is another woman. Either way, Hosea had to buy her which he did. But once he bought her, he tells her that she is to abide without him for many days and is not to play the harlot during those days and that he will remain true to her during that time as well. This was a prophecy foretelling the fact that Israel would be in captivity for a long time and during that time would have no king or ruler. We're then told that when that time period was completed, the children of Israel would seek the LORD their God and David their king. I believe we are still in that time in the sense that we still do not have the true King of Kings ruling over us yet, but I believe we are nearing the end of that time.

(Read Hosea 4:1-5) The next several chapters of Hosea deal with the judgment of the Assyrian captivity and the reason for it. However there are several prophecies and other pieces of information that we need to look at as we read Hosea. God says He has a controversy with the people of the land (Israel) because He says there is no truth, mercy or knowledge of God in the land. Sound familiar? The inevitable result is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery and they break out of all restraints until bloodshed follows bloodshed. The people have become weak and are

wasting away and even the animals are faint. Yet no one warns or reproves. All, including their priests and prophets, will fall.

(Read Hosea 4:6-11) The primary reason for all of this is in verse 6, **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God. I will also forget thy children."** This is the problem we face today. This is what upset me so bad when I was telling you recently of our experience in a recent church Bible study. People think they are doing as they should because they attend church and they participate in the so-called Bible study, but when it is over they know nothing more from the Bible than they knew before they entered the church. To me this is a very serious problem and I am convinced that this is the reason we are plagued with all of the problems we face today whether they be political, financial, or religious. To me it is criminal and we as a people will pay a price in God's judgment.

As the people increase, their sins increase as well. We could point fingers and blame the preachers completely. However, the saying, "we get the leadership we deserve" is the same thing that Hosea is saying here. I heard Rush Limbaugh talking about the situation in California. "The people vote for people they know to be of very low character, they vote to raise taxes (usually thinking they are causing only the rich to pay the taxes), they vote for more and more welfare. A vast majority of the people do not see the inevitable result of all of this though businesses are leaving the state in droves, people are leaving on the average of several thousand a day and the state revenues continue to decline and the state debt continues to climb and morality is falling off a cliff. The people get the leadership they deserve." The same thing applies to those who should have the responsibility of teaching the people the ways of God. The people get the kind of preachers and teachers they want. The result, as Hosea is telling us here in verses 10 and 11, **"For**

**they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase; because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.”**

(Read Hosea 4:12-14) Instead of turning to God the people were asking counsel of their idols and divination rods. We can say that we don't do that now, yet I believe that if you will pick up any newspaper and look at the community events scheduled for the next week, a large portion of them will be different groups providing counseling from a psychiatric approach. If a tragedy happens where people are killed, immediately psychiatric counseling is made available to the surviving people. When I was on the fire department, if the department had to deal with a particularly terrible tragedy, someone would always want to provide psychiatric counseling. Our problem is widespread, we have left God and His ways out of our lives. I don't mean to relegate mental illness to non-existence as I know it does exist, but far too often we as a people are turning to counsel from a man-made science that should not have near the prominence that it currently enjoys. Psychiatry can be blamed to a great deal for the behavior problems that we face today in our young people as well as in our leadership. To me, it parallels asking counsel of idols and divination rods. If we would learn of God, His law and His ways, the need for psychiatric counseling would greatly diminish.

God says that because the people sacrificed on the mountains and burn incense upon the hills, their daughters shall commit whoredom and their wives will commit adultery. The pagan religions that they were following apparently not only allowed these sins, but some of these Canaanite religions required at least some of the women to become “temple women” and as part of their worship the men were to engage in whoredom with these women. In some translations, verse 14 is posed as a question while others like the King James pose it as a statement. Either way God is saying that He is not going to punish the women because the men are separating themselves with these harlots. Because of all of this, God says that the people that do not understand will fall.

Not only is God dealing with individuals here, but He is also dealing with nations, particularly Israel as He regards her as a harlot because she has gone after other gods. (Read Hosea 4:15-19) So far Judah has not got as bad as Israel in this respect. He is warning Judah not to go the same way. Gilgal was the place where King Jeroboam of Israel had erected an idolatrous temple. Bethaven is put for Bethel which means “House of God”. However, to keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship after the kingdom of Israel divided. King Jeroboam put one of the two golden calves that he had made at Bethel and told the

people that this was their god, so Bethel was polluted with idolatry as well. The following is the Ferrar Fenton translation of verses 17-19:

— **“Let Ephraim alone;--for his idols seduce.**

**— Their drink is drunk out; they have whored with their whore,**

**And his Princes delight in their shame!**

**A furious wind will enfold in her wings,--**

**And their altars become their disgrace.”**

I can't help but feel that we are in very much the same condition that Israel was in just prior to her captivity. I see much of the same things going on, especially the people going after their other gods, whether those gods are money, power, material things, or things to fulfill their lusts. I believe this why we are currently under judgment as a nation though most people don't seem to yet realize it yet.

(Read Hosea 5:1-7) Dr. Bullinger, in his Companion Bible, has the following note concerning Tabor and Mizpah: “*Tabor is on the west of Jordan and not connected with Ephraim; but Tabor means a mound; so that the idolatrous altar may have been called Mizpah while Tabor was the ‘mound’ of Gen. 31, both belonging to the same district.*” The mound of Gen. 31 is the mound that Jacob and Laban, his father-in-law made to signify their covenant that neither of them would pass beyond it to the other. Jacob called it Galeed (Heap of Witness) and then Laban added “Mizpah” (watch) to the name as they made their covenant.

God is telling the priests, the people and the king that the judgment is toward them all. He says that the apostates are deeply involved in slaughter, but He will exterminate them all. Ephraim is the largest of the tribes of Israel and is looked to as the leader of Israel. The name Ephraim is often used in place of Israel for the northern kingdom. God says He knows them. They are not hid from Him, He is telling them to their face what is going to happen and when they seek Him they will not find Him.

(Read Hosea 5:8-15) He is warning Benjamin and parts of Judah as we have already seen that a large percentage of Judah ended up in the Assyrian captivity as well. God says that when He is done the land of Ephraim, or Israel, will be desolate. He says that Israel will even make the mistake of turning to Jareb, an appellation for the king of Assyria, for help when Assyria will actually be their enemy. God says that He is going to return to His place until Israel acknowledges their offence and seek His face. He says they will seek Him early in their affliction.

(Read Hosea 6:1-3) I recently read a commentary that included these verses in a very interesting light. The full commentary suggested that the six

days of creation has been played out throughout our history taking one day to be a thousand years (**But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** II Peter 3:8) Each day of creation provided a template for what would happen in the corresponding millennium. I would like to skip to the fourth day of creation for our purposes in this lesson. On the fourth day of creation, **“God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.”** (Gen. 1:16) If we look at the fourth millennium, Jesus Christ was born near the end of this millennium. The apostle John tells us in John 1:4-5, **In him (Jesus Christ) was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”** In correlation with the fourth day of creation, Christ would be the greater light and the church would be the lesser light that was to reflect the light of the sun (Son), but had no light of its own.

On the fifth day of creation, God created the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and said for them to be fruitful and multiply. This then could be considered the template for the fifth millennium. God instructed the church to multiply which it did. Sometimes it shone brightly as the full moon and sometimes there was just a sliver.

On the sixth day of creation **“God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.”** (Gen. 1:24) and then we see toward the end of the sixth day, **“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”** (Gen. 1:27) The ultimate purpose of creation was and is to create man in His own image.

When God created Adam, He gave him a dominion mandate to rule the earth. From Adam to the present, this dominion mandate, though the authority is real, has been badly abused as man has ruled for his own benefit. When Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon and had deposed Zedekiah, king of Judah, God gave the dominion mandate to Nebuchadnezzar. From that time to the present, the beast (corresponding to the creation of beasts) kingdoms (Lion—Babylon, Bear—Persia, Leopard—Greece, nameless beast with iron teeth—Rome) have ruled in accordance with their false gods. In the last century, man has made himself the gods of the earth. These “gods” have their own kingdom known as “Mystery Babylon” which tries to mimic God’s kingdom. However, the fruit of their kingdom is bitter and poisonous, yet these two kingdoms have contended for the ultimate dominion for a long time.

When God gave man the dominion mandate the intent was for man to have the dominion authority, but recognizing that his authority is not independent from God and His law. It is God’s plan that these beast empires will be brought into compliance with God’s law with the creation of man in the image of God, i.e. the pouring out of the fullness of the Spirit and the first resurrection. Rev. 20 tells us that the first resurrection will take place near the beginning of the seventh millennium. Gen. 1 indicates that it will be at the end of the sixth millennium.

With this in mind, going back to Hosea 6, this prophecy would be in line with the fourth, fifth and sixth millennium with the first two days representing the time from the beginning of Israel’s fall to Christ, and the first millennium after Christ and the third day representing the second millennium from Christ in which the full creation of man in the image of God will be achieved as will be seen in the first resurrection. The latter and former rain would represent the two comings of Christ, the first when He was crucified and the second when He establishes His kingdom among men. Though He has torn, He will heal and though He hath smitten, He will bind or bandage us up.

(Read Hosea 6:4-11) The problem with both Israel and Judah is that their faith and obedience has always been a fleeting thing. There have been times when their faith has been strong and their obedience proper, but they have never been consistent in either. Because of this, God says He has hewed them by the prophets: and slain them by the words of His mouth. When we read of God slaying people by the sword, keep this Scripture in mind as this is what is meant by God slaying people with the sword that goeth forth out of His mouth. This was the problem with the Pharisees as they wanted to take such saying literally instead of trying to understand that when God kills with the sword, it is the old man that is slain, that the new man in Christ may rise up. It is not literal, rather it is man subordinating his spirit, his life to Christ.

Verse 6 is the thing we need always to remember, **“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”** This the people of Israel did not understand. They couldn’t see past the letter of the law. They did not understand the principle the law teaches. We have the same problem today as people want to hold to denominational doctrines rather than try to live Christ like lives and study to learn all they can of God. It is how you live and think that God is interested in rather than rituals and doctrines that are part of some denominational doctrine.

He then says that like men, they have transgressed the covenant, or His law. If we feel we have

to be like everyone else, we are not being like God wants us to be. It does not make any difference what other religion there is, or what man places his trust in other than God, it is idol worship as he is worshipping the works of man's hands or mind. The most common idol worship in our day is humanism, the worship of man himself. Not only have men set themselves up as gods, people in general have placed their trust in these men as if they were a god. We see this in the so-called Christian society as well as the pagan society. It is something that we all need to continually guard against as we are susceptible to it.

Dr. Bullinger says that Gilead is probably a reference to Ramoth-Gilead which was a city of refuge. I believe that it is used here for all of Israel and Judah in that God is saying that both nations or kingdoms are guilty of blood. He then likens the priests to robbers waiting for a victim in that they are actually committing murder by the lewd practices in the way they lived, i.e. in the example they set that then gives the people an excuse for lewd acts of their own. I suspect that the lewdness is a reference to their idolatry.

Israel is the first to come under judgment for their idolatry, but God says there will be judgment on Judah as well as she is and will be guilty of the same thing. This could apply to the Judahites that went into captivity with the Israelites or to the coming Babylonian captivity of all that is left in Judah or both.

We'll continue with Hosea 7 in our next lesson. JRL

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

We were looking at the 7th chapter of Hebrews in our last issue and are ready for verse 18.

(Read Heb. 7:18, 19) This confirms what we discussed in verse 12. We need to understand that the law we are talking about is the law or laws concerning the High Priest and all the rituals that went with it. It is this law or laws that are disannulled. With the exception of this law concerning the Aaronic priesthood, the rest of the law is the same under the New Covenant as it was under the Old Covenant. The difference is that under the Old Covenant, the law was external and worked against the flesh to subdue it unto God. With the new Priesthood, under the New Covenant, the law is internal, i.e. it is written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit to bring us into agreement with God. The Holy Spirit changes our hearts to come into agreement with the law and the will of God so that we no longer have two wills in conflict with each other, but rather two wills in alignment with each other functioning as one.

(Read Heb. 7:20-22) The words "he was made priest" in verse 20 have been added by a translator. If we leave out the parenthetical statement for a moment, the statement reads, "**And inasmuch as not without an oath, by so much more was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.**" As I read this, the Aaronic priests were made, or appointed without an oath as opposed to Jesus who was appointed by an unconditional oath from the Father Himself, "**The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**". This fact makes the New Covenant, because of Jesus being the High Priest, a much better covenant.

(Read Heb. 7:23, 24) Every time a High Priest died, another priest had to be appointed to take his place. But with Jesus, because he continues "to the age," has an unchangeable priesthood.

(Read Heb. 7:25) The phrase "to the uttermost" is from the Greek *panteles* which means perfect or complete. The word "ever" is from the Greek *pan-tote* which means always, or at all time.

(Read Heb. 7:26-28) Jesus is a perfect High Priest, having no need to sacrifice for Himself because He had no sin, nor is it necessary that He, as Priest, offer up daily sacrifices for the people, since He offered up Himself once. By the Old Covenant law, priests were appointed who themselves had infirmities and weaknesses, but the word of the oath maketh the Son High Priest, who is made perfect to the age.

(Read Heb. 8:1, 2) The point of what we have read in the first 7 chapters is: we have such an High Priest. He is set at the right hand of the throne of the Father and is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Father has pitched, not man.

(Read Heb. 8:3) We're told in the next chapter, verses 11 and 12 what He had to offer. (Read)

(Read Heb. 8:4, 5) Why would He not be a priest if He were on the earth? Because the service of the Aaronic priesthood was an example and shadow of the heavenly things, i.e. the very things, or priesthood of which Jesus is the High Priest. He is that which they are to serve as an example of.

(Read Heb. 8:6, 7) To me the better promises are the promises to Abraham which were unconditional and the unconditional promise to Jesus Christ that He should be a priest after the order of Melchisedec. The first covenant, though it in effect promised the same thing as the promises to Abraham, was dependent on the people doing what they said they would. (Read Ex. 19:8) This New Covenant is dependent only on God, the evidence of His keeping it being the death of Christ on Calvary and His resurrection and ascension.

As we have already mentioned, there are those today that believe that when Christ returns, we will go back to the Aaronic priesthood and re-institute the sac-

rifice of animals in a new temple in Jerusalem. This doctrine began to be taught in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is at least in part based on ignorance of the meaning of the Hebrew word *olam*. (Read Exodus 40:15) The word “everlasting” here and other places referring to the Aaronic priesthood, is taken to mean perpetual, thus this priesthood has to continue into perpetuity. This word is from the Hebrew *olam*. A check with any good concordance will show that it has the same meaning as the Greek *aión*, i.e. “age lasting.” An age is an indefinite time with definite limits, i.e. it can last for an indefinite time, but there is a beginning and an end. So the Aaronic priesthood was to be an age-lasting priesthood that began at Mt. Sinai and ended with the coming of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

(Read Heb. 8:8-12) This is a direct quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jer. 31 was a prophecy of the restoration of Israel and Judah. It is important that we note that this New Covenant is made with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. This why it is so important for us to understand the whole Bible story to know who these people are today and why. I can assure you, for a number of reasons, that the people called Jews today do not represent either the House of Israel or the House of Judah.

We aren't given the specifics of this New Covenant, so I believe we can look at the Old Covenant for more information. Exodus 19:5-8 gives us the covenant, but the voice that they were to obey doesn't come until Exodus 20 when God spoke the 10 Commandments to them, which then included the whole law. The difference between the two covenants is a change from “if ye will obey” to “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.” This, of course, is done by the Holy Spirit once one is justified through faith.

To me it would be quite easy to read this covenant without really getting the full impact of it. I think one has to understand the Old Covenant well before this covenant is fully understandable. Though the Old Covenant embodies the whole law, the terms of the covenant are very short. Ex. 19:5 starts out, “**Now therefore,**”. This references vs. 4, “**Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.**” The people had seen all of the plagues in Egypt including the death of the first born; they had seen the Red Sea rolled back for them to cross and how the Sea returned and destroyed the Egyptian army that was pursuing them and how they had food and water as they traveled though they were probably over 3 million strong. Having seen and experienced all this, God has something important to talk to them about. Vs. 5 continues, “**if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.**” There are two major differences in the

two covenants, the first being that God says, “**if ye will.**” This makes this covenant conditional, it is conditional on the people obeying God, His voice and His covenant. The New Covenant in vs. 10 says, “**I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.**” The First Covenant is external, “**If ye will**”, the New Covenant is internal, **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.**” There is no mention of there being a change in the laws, they are the same in both covenants. This brings us to the second difference. In Ex. 19:8, “**The people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.**” In the New Covenant, there is no response expected from the people, God says, “**I will**” six times. He takes all the responsibility for the New Covenant on Himself, i.e. the New Covenant is totally unconditional. We are all far from complete, mature, or perfect, whatever term one might want to use, but I believe that we can all look back over our lives and have to agree that as we have matured both spiritually and physically, we understand God's laws more thoroughly and have become more in agreement with God. We do not wish to violate His laws. Though we still do, I believe that if we are honest with ourselves we become more repentant as time moves on. I believe this is God writing His laws in our hearts and minds. We won't achieve perfection until the first resurrection, but I think we can understand how God is working in our lives.

Going back to the First Covenant, verses 5 and 6 continue, “**then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.**” “Peculiar” has to do with ownership, i.e. they will be God's own, He will not share with any other god. “Priests” are actually rulers in the sense the Levites were rulers. “Holy” simply means “set apart”. In the New Covenant, verses 10-12 tells us, **I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.**” Virtually the same results in both covenants.

(Read Heb. 8:13) It could not be any clearer that the Old Covenant is obsolete, no longer in effect. So as with Christ being better than the angels, the Melchisedec priesthood being of higher authority, thus better than the Aaronic priesthood, the New Covenant, because of the new priesthood, is better than the Old Covenant.

The basic difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is that the Old Cove-

nant depends on the obedience of man while the New Covenant depends on the ability of God to change the heart of man. The promised result of both covenants is basically the same. To understand this difference in more detail, and the manner of worship under both covenants, chapters 9 and 10 of Hebrews gives us some of these details. (Read Heb. 9:1-5) This gives us a quick view of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The author can't give us a detailed view since that tabernacle had long since disappeared as had the Ark of the Covenant. But the Ark of the Covenant was, in effect, the throne of God from which God spoke. (Read Numbers 7:89) As we have discussed before, the Ark contained the tablets of stone upon which were written the 10 Commandments. This associates the Ark with law. A king, when sitting on his throne, issued his law and/or sat in judgment, thus the throne represented the law of the land.

Upon the Ark was the mercy seat, so not only did God judge by His law, but He ruled from the mercy seat. This is not very well understood by most people. The common thought seems to be that God put away His law through His mercy. This is not true. He rules and judges by His law, but He knows how to apply His law with mercy. Understanding this, i.e. understanding the law through the eyes of Jesus Christ, should be our goal.

Not just the ark and mercy seat, but each piece of furniture represents something greater that gives us a revelation of God's divine character that would have a greater revelation under the New Covenant. However, to give us understanding of this is not the intent of the author at this point. The author turns from a description of the furniture to a description of the manner of worship. (Read Heb. 9:6-10) Only the Levites were allowed to enter the tabernacle and only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and that only once a year. The citizens of the Kingdom had only a distant access to God in the outer court. Even the high priest was limited in his access only going into the Holy of Holies once a year. This was the way that the Holy Spirit signified that the way into the true Holy of Holies had not yet been made known. As with the furniture, each of the cleansing rituals were an outer cleansing prophesying of inner cleansings under the New Covenant. They could do nothing to change the heart. But they did symbolize matters of the heart and spiritual things.

(Read Heb. 9:11, 12) Jesus did not enter the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem but rather He entered the heavenly tabernacle, i.e. the true presence of God to finish the work once and for all. He did not sprinkle the blood of bulls and goats, but gave His own blood, His own life.

I don't know what the priests did with the blood of the bulls and goats in Jesus' time since the

ark was not in the temple. In fact none of the furniture was probably there, it was only an empty room with a stone where the ark should have been.

Verse 12 says that He entered in "**once into the holy place.**" The word translated "once" means once or once for all. Some translations use the latter. One time for all people was all that it took since He was totally sinless, the perfect sacrifice.

(Read Heb. 9:13, 14) The ashes of the red heifer were used as a purification for sin. (See Numbers 9:2-10) It is thought that since these ashes were to be kept outside the camp that they were kept on top of the Mount of Olives for purification by those who were coming into Jerusalem from the east. "Outside the camp" was defined as 2,000 cubits outside the city walls. This was the place that David stopped to worship God as he left Jerusalem when Absalom tried to take over David's throne and is probably the place where Jesus was crucified. While the ritual of the red heifer and the blood sacrifice of goats and bulls set one apart for the purifying of the flesh, Christ through His blood, and as the true red heifer, whose death is applied to us as spiritual ashes, cleanses our conscience from sin. The ashes and the blood of bulls and goats could never truly purify the heart in the way that God required. Therefore, these rituals had to be repeated continually, thus we see their ineffectiveness. Christ, however, was the true sacrifice that all of the animals that were sacrificed before Him prophesied of as the greater sacrifice.

(Read Heb. 9:15) Because Jesus offered Himself without spot to God to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God, He is the mediator of the New Testament or Covenant. Moses spoke of Him in Deut. 18:15 (Read). Paul, I Tim. 2:5, 6 tells us, "**For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**" By means of death, for the loosing away of the sins under the First Covenant, or Testament, He provided the way that those who are called might receive the promise of age lasting inheritance.

(Read Heb. 9:16) "Testament" here is like "last will and testament" today. To understand all that is being said here, I feel we need to first understand what a will, or testament consists of. You may have seen the bumper sticker that says, "Where there is a will, I want to be in it." If you have been a beneficiary, or if you have written your own will, what qualified you to be a beneficiary, or what qualifications did you require, either written or unwritten of those named in your will to be beneficiaries? There are exceptions, but is not being a part of the family the most common qualification required and perhaps the most important qualification?

One more question. If you were a beneficiary,

or you have written your own will, was there a special condition, or conditions in the will naming you as a beneficiary that had to be met before distribution of the estate could be made or have you in your will established a special condition, or conditions that have to be met before your estate can be distributed? An example of this might be that the beneficiary would have to reach a certain age before distribution could be made.

The author of Hebrews discusses the subject of inheritance at some length. There are several references to inheritance; inheriting the promises, etc., and I believe that very often this is assumed to be the result of “salvation,” but I would like to submit to you that when this subject is discussed, the reference is to something more than salvation, as most people understand the term..

If you were to go to your library and check out a book on writing wills, the book would probably first tell you that a basic will contains two classifications of provisions—Administrative and Dispositive. The most complicated provisions are the administrative provisions. These are more or less the working provisions—the instructions and rules as to how, when, etc. the settlement of an estate is to be carried out.

The Dispositive provisions are simply those which tell who is to receive the estate and any other provision as to what is to be done with the property of the one making the will, or the testator.

The Administrative provisions could include a considerable number of provisions depending on the size of the estate, the number of heirs and a number of other situations. For simplification, I want us to just look at four basic provisions—these include, 1) Identification of the testator, 2) Appointment of an executor or administrator; 3) Special conditions for the Dispositive provisions; and 4) conclusion and authority provisions.

Identification of the testator, the one making the will is a necessity, of course. However, because changes occur in our lives that necessitates making changes (or in legal terminology, codicils) to a will or even the writing of a complete new will, it is also necessary to identify the particular will as the current will. So we might see a will start off something like this: “I John Q. Public, of Montezuma County, Colorado, hereby make, publish and declare this my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all wills and codicils made by me at anytime heretofore.” This assures that the will with latest date is the will in effect should the testator die.

Probably the most important administrative provision is the naming of the executor, or administrator, or mediator of the will. A will is just what

it says—your will—what you want or will to be done with your estate. So the person, or persons, named as the executor has to be someone fully trusted by the testator. They have to be capable both mentally and physically of doing the job. Often times the executor will need to make judgments you cannot foresee and these judgments will be critical to the plan you have devised. The will, in effect, is no better than the person, or persons, you select to administer it.

Particularly if an individual is named as executor, it is important to provide a succession procedure should something happen to the named executor before the settlement of the estate is complete. You would need to name a second person, or a lineup of persons to take over the job should they be needed.

The special conditions for the disposition provisions are not unusual. A testator, for example might be leaving his estate to his children and he might specify that they must be 21 years of age before the full disposition could be made to them. Another example might be that a named beneficiary might have a drinking problem and the testator specifies that the beneficiary must demonstrate continuous sobriety before disposition could be made to him, or her.

The conclusion and authority provisions usually include verification of the competency of the testator to make the will and witnesses that the testator is who he says he is and has the authority to make such a will. Today this includes signing the will before witnesses and a notary public and then having the witnesses sign that they consider the testator competent and then the notary public verifies all of the signatures.

There are two basic provisions under the Dispositive provisions. First, there is the identification of the beneficiary or beneficiaries. Second, there is the actual disposition provisions.

All of these provisions may appear as we have listed them, or virtually in any order.

I submit that God wrote a “Last Will and Testament” that contains all of these basic provisions. Beginning in Ex. 19:3, let’s read the beginning of that will. (Read Ex. 19:3-8) He first establishes that it is He, the God of Israel, that is making the will. He also establishes His ownership of the estate, **“for all the earth is mine,”** (vs. 5) We’re told in verse 8 that all the people clearly witnessed this covenant or testament and so indicated. This meets the requirements of the identification of the testator and the conclusion and authority provisions. Verse 3 makes it clear that the beneficiaries are the children of Israel.

With one exception, the rest of what we read has to do with the actual disposition. It has 3 parts. The first part is, **“Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.”** The word “peculiar” restricts ownership to God only. He would not share

them with other gods or mix them with other peoples. They would be His and His alone much the same way a young woman becomes a “peculiar treasure” of her husband. But, you might ask, if this is an inheritance, what did they get? Usually, what is inherited is what already exists, is it not? In this case what was promised, whether we look at it as a marriage, or an inheritance, they would receive a special relationship with their God—love, protection, blessing, etc.

The second part of the dispositive provisions is, **“ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.”** Priest here simply means an administrator, a ruler in the sense that they would be carrying out the job of government, government designed and established by the Supreme Ruler. So again the question, What were they to receive? I think we will see that they were to receive what they were to rule over. God has already stated to them that all the earth is His. This is what He is willing, or giving—dominion over the earth.

The third provision is, **“ye shall be unto me a holy nation.”** “Holy” here means “set apart.” Set apart from all other nations. Any of you who have been involved in personnel management, whether in civilian or military circumstances, probably realize that if a person is “ruling” over others, as a superintendent, foreman, officer, etc., that person, in doing his or her job effectively, cannot socialize with those he or she is over as if they were one of them—he or she is set apart or “holy” to them.

So again, what is inherited? I think that this and the second part we just discussed together gives “responsibility.” Think for a minute about what you might have inherited, or what you are leaving for an inheritance to your family. Would you agree with me that regardless of what material thing or things any of us might receive, or be leaving to our heirs, it always involves responsibility? If we give or receive land, money, a business, or whatever, responsibility to take care of it, use it, spend it, manage it, etc., is really what we are giving or receiving. God’s estate is no different.

But as I mentioned, there is one provision that is an exception. This is a special provision that has to be met for the disposition of the estate to take

place. **“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.”** In our imperfect state and imperfect world, I fear we do not take this special provision seriously enough. The word translated “obey” literally means “to hear intelligently.” The word “indeed” is not translated from a Hebrew word but is the translator’s effort to render a Hebrew idiom into English, thus the use of the word “obey.” If we took the literal translation, **“if ye will hear intelligently my voice, and keep my covenant”** and understand that His voice is what follows in Ex. 20:2-17, i.e. the Ten Commandments, I think we can begin to see how really serious this is. The first 9 commandments address actions, mental or physical while the 10th commandment addresses the thought behind any violation of the first 9. Remember, Jesus, in His sermon on the mount (Matt. 5) tells us that the thought is as bad as the action. Who among us can claim purity of actions, but even more so, who among us can claim purity of thought? In God’s perfection—obedience must be absolute. Considering this absolute obedience and this special provision, who will be left in the nation or nations of Israel to inherit the three dispositions we have listed? Fortunately, there is still another provision of the will that we have to consider. Remember that we said the most important administrative provision of a will is the selection of an executor and if this is an individual, the succession provision for the executor.

We have an individual who was given the responsibility of helping Israel meet this special provision, not only from the standpoint of teaching the “voice” of God, but of carrying out a procedure God said He would accept to right the failures of the people to hear and obey the “voice” of God. This individual was Aaron, whom God appointed high priest. A succession was also appointed, father to son. So we have in effect with this covenant, this first covenant, or testament, made by God at Mt. Sinai, not only a charter for the establishment of a nation, marriage of Himself to the people, if you will, but also from the perspective we are looking at today, a last will and testament providing for the ultimate inheritance of the world—the Kingdom of God by this people..

We will continue with chapter 9 of Hebrews in our next issue.

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