

KINGDOM SPIRIT



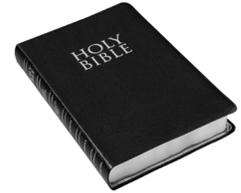
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 706

EXODUS 1-18

The next 200 years in our study covers the transition of Jacob-Israel's family of 70 souls, as they moved down into Egypt proper, to the status of nation or kingdom. Keep the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in mind as we move along in this story. To be a great nation (one of the promises), this small family would have to multiply greatly, again in accordance with another of the promises. Well, multiply they did! In fact, so much so that they became a major concern to the Pharaoh of Egypt in whose land they were living. To the Pharaoh, they were a valuable labor and production resource, but there were getting to be so many of them that the Pharaoh feared they could take over the kingdom. Joseph had long since died and the children of Israel no longer had a powerful representative in the government.

The Pharaoh's first solution to the problem was to work the people harder. He had them build some of the great treasure cities of Egypt. However, as Laban learned with Jacob, the harder he worked them, the more they multiplied.

After increasing the servitude more and more to no avail, the Pharaoh finally resorted to instructing the midwives among the children of Israel to kill all the male babies. Fearing God more than the king, these midwives refused to carry out this order. Finally, in desperation, the Pharaoh commanded all the children of Israel to

cast all of their male babies into the river.

It is under these circumstances that we meet a couple of the family, or tribe, of Levi who had a baby son. At first, they defied the king's order and hid the baby for three months while looking for a solution. Remembering God's sovereignty, it is interesting to note that not only was the Pharaoh's order complied with, as the baby was put into the river, though in an ark, but their solution actually put this baby into the Pharaoh's own household, with his own mother as his nurse. But very importantly, he had all the rights and privileges of the son of the Pharaoh. God provided, from the beginning, the very training He needed for this baby Moses in preparation for the job He has in mind for him. First, he had the training of his parents, then all the education and training befitting a prince in preparation for ruling. When Moses was grown, God somewhat forced him into the wilderness where he continued his training as a shepherd for another forty years.

The job God had in mind for Moses was somewhat similar to that of our president; and the environment where he was to perform this job was primarily in this wilderness. When God was ready to use him, He spoke to Moses out of a bush that was burning but not being consumed. God identified Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Though Moses accepted this, after God told him He wanted him to go and bring Israel out of Egypt and lead them to the land of Canaan, Moses questioned God as to whom he should tell the people sent him. God's answer is recorded in

Ex. 3:14-15, **“I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”** God is known by many names throughout Scripture, with the name used at the time usually indicating some particular personality characteristic. In the above Scripture, the word **“LORD”** is translated from the Hebrew word **“YHWH”** or **“Yahweh.”** It’s proper English translation is **“Jehovah.”** It essentially means *the Eternal, the Existing One, or the Immutable One.* While this name is used quite frequently in the rest of the Old Testament, we find it incorrectly translated **“LORD,”** with all the letters capitalized in the King James Translation, so when you see this as you read your Bible, remember its true meaning.

“God” here is from the Hebrew **“Elohim”** which essentially means *the Creator.* So God gave Moses two names as one here. The phrase, **“I AM THAT I AM,”** is essentially that, just a phrase, not a name. In Hebrew, it is **“’ehyeh, ’asher ’ehyeh** meaning **“I will be what I will be (or become).”** **“I AM”** is just **‘ehyeh—I will be (speaking of Himself).** None of these words have the emphasis in the Hebrew that capitalizing the letters has in the English. This reminds me of our 9th promise, **“I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.—(I will) be God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.—I will be their God.”** It appears to me that to anyone familiar with the promises, this phrase authenticates the name as the one who gave the promises.

The children of Israel were clearly a very productive people, and while the Egyptians feared them, they were not willing to let them go. After Moses and his brother, Aaron, first confronted the Pharaoh asking that he let them go, the Pharaoh, in his wrath, increased the work load so much for them that they too became angry with Moses and Aaron and didn’t want to leave. So Moses had to

not only convince Pharaoh to let them go, he had to convince the Israelites to leave. It is a terrible thing to face the power of our Living God, but Israel had to learn this as well as the Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

A very dramatic change is getting ready to come about in the lives of the children of Israel, the Egyptians, and the world. God tells Moses that He established His covenant (promise) to give Israel the land of Canaan and now was the time He was going to do this. In Ex. 6:7, He says, **“I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD (Jehovah) your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”** Further study will help us fully appreciate the importance of this promise.

The time has come. God is ready to act. The 80 year old Moses and 83 year old Aaron are ready to begin their jobs. God explains to Moses that the Pharaoh isn’t going to yield to the plagues He is going to bring on Egypt, but this will be according to God’s plan (again His Sovereignty) that His mighty power and plan will be well known.

God begins by changing Aaron’s rod into a serpent in the Pharaoh’s presence. He sent for his magicians who came and did the same thing, but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. We’re told that God hardened the Pharaoh’s heart and he wouldn’t let the children of Israel go. So God began a series of ten plagues on the Egyptians. He first turned the river into blood; then He covered the land with frogs. It is interesting that the magicians of Egypt did the same thing with their enchantments, and as a result, the Pharaoh would harden his heart and not let them go. But when God brought the third plague, the turning of the dust of the land into lice, they could not duplicate it and told Pharaoh it was the finger of God working. Still he refused. Next God sent swarms of flies; then He plagued the cattle, horses, camels, and sheep; and then He caused boils to break out on man and beast. Still the Pharaoh refused so God sent a very grievous hail; then He covered the land with locusts; and finally, He caused three days of total darkness. All of this only hardened

the Pharaoh's heart and made him more determined to not let the people go. However, all this had elevated Moses to a very great man in the sight of all the Egyptians.

It was time for the great and final plague, the death of all the first born in the land, both of man and beast. Knowing this would be the final plague upon which the children of Israel would be virtually thrust from the land, God instructed Moses to prepare his brethren. These instructions were very specific and were to ultimately be repeated annually as a memorial of this momentous evening. This repetition came to be known as the "Feast of Passover" to commemorate the passing over the children of Israel by the death angel that night. The instructions included selection and preparation of the lamb and the bread for this meal. Finally, the blood of the lamb was to be painted on the outside of their doorposts and would signal the death angel to pass over their house. Anyone, including the children of Israel, not having this blood on their doorpost, lost the firstborn of their houses that night. Before the night was over the Egyptians were extremely anxious for the children of Israel to leave and gave them much silver, gold and great substance to get them to go ASAP.

We're told in Ex. 12:37 that there were 600,000 men of the children of Israel. This would probably translate to a minimum of 3,000,000 if we added their wives and an average of three children per family. There was also a mixed multitude that went with them as well as their flocks and herds, so this would have been a very large movement of people and animals.

The prophecy God made to Abraham had come to pass. First, Abraham, then Isaac and finally Jacob had lived in a land, not their own, from the time of that prophecy in Gen. 15. Then the seventy members of Jacob-Israel's family had moved to Egypt, still a land not their own, and were now, 430 years later, coming out over 3 million strong with great substance.

God's presence, as He promised, was signified by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. A little understanding of God's

sovereignty might be demonstrated in how He now dealt with Pharaoh. God said He had hardened Pharaoh's heart, yet He punished Pharaoh by destroying him and his army at the Red Sea as they pursued the children of Israel, because Pharaoh hardened his heart and defied God.

The true character of these descendants of Jacob-Israel is not long in surfacing as they accuse Moses and Aaron of bringing them into the wilderness to die only thirty days after witnessing all the strength and power of God in the plagues and their deliverance through the Red Sea. However, God patiently provided for their food needs with manna (a bread like wafer that formed on the ground much like dew) and quail. Water became short and complaining was the first thing that came to mind. When Moses asked God what to do, as he feared that the people were going to stone him, God told him to go before the people and take the elders of the people with him and to take his rod with him and **"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."** (Exodus 17:6) Many believe that **"the rock"** referred to here is the rock that Jacob set up and anointed twice in Bethel.

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, a priest of Midian, helped Moses structure a government from the people by establishing rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens to help lift the tremendous burden of ruling from Moses' shoulders. By doing this, only the most important and difficult problems and judgments were brought to Moses with the other rulers taking care of the lesser ones. The time Israel spent in the wilderness was a time of education and organization. Prior to this they had been ruled over, but had never ruled themselves. Our own forefathers obviously studied and were guided by the form of government developed by these people in the wilderness.

Though the trip to Canaan by the straightest and shortest route was a relatively short trip, God first led them south, once they crossed the Red Sea, to Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula. It

was here that one of the most important events in history took place. In Ex. 19 we find God making a covenant with the children of Israel that had far reaching effect and has led to much confusion in Christendom because of a lack of a good understanding of this covenant and its effects. We'll begin with this covenant next month. If you are reading along with us, please read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. JRL

RESURRECTION

It was our intent to discuss resurrection this issue. However, after reading our last issue, a friend wrote saying he needed an explanation of the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, as well as a couple of Paul's comments in II Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23. I agree and feel these explanations need to be made before we proceed. Following are our explanations of these passages.

The Rich Man and Lazarus -Luke 16:19-31

This story, that is related by Christ to the Pharisees, is used by many today as the foundation of a teaching that Christians go to heaven as soon as they die while the non-Christian goes to hell when he dies. As I have heard it, it is taught with the assumption that both the rich man and Lazarus are literal men who died with Lazarus going to heaven and the rich man going to hell. But I submit that this is a parable, for at least a couple of reasons, with the intent to teach something very different. First, Matt. 13:34-35 and Mark 4:33-34 tell us that Jesus taught those other than His apostles and disciples, like the Pharisees, in parables only. Look at Mark 4:11 as well. Luke 16:14-15 clearly tells us Jesus was talking to the Pharisees here.

Secondly, if this was just to teach the concept of heaven and hell, why did Jesus go into such detail as to describe the rich man's apparel, his financial status, him only wanting just a few drops of water, his 5 brethren as well as Lazarus' financial condition,

his sores, the dogs licking his sores, etc? All of this additional information has meaning which is supplied from other parts of the Bible. If Abraham was in heaven, why doesn't the story say so? A number of other questions come to mind, but in the interest of space, we'll forego them for now. I believe that if we answer some of the questions I have asked already, we'll see that this parable is not intended to teach the commonly accepted heaven-hell concept, but rather will tell us a very different story. I'm not sure I can cover it all in the limited space we have, but let's give it a try.

First, we are told in vs. 19 that it was a certain rich man. This tells us he is identifiable. In addition to telling us he is rich, we're told he was clothed in purple and fine linen. This tells us something about the man. Purple is considered the color of royalty and/or rulership. An example of this is found in Judges 8:26. Also Mark 15:16-20 tells us of the soldiers mocking Jesus just prior to His crucifixion. Thinking He had made Himself out to be a king, to mock Him about this they clothed Him with a purple robe and a crown of thorns and **“began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews.”** (vs. 18)

So because this man was dressed in purple, I believe we can consider him to be in a place of authority. However, we are also told that he was dressed in fine linen. If we look at a few examples of men who were dressed in linen, I believe we will see that this indicated he was also a part of the priesthood or at least one who represented himself as God's representative. For example, Ex. 28:1-5 and Lev. 6:10-11 tells us that Aaron and his sons were to be clothed in fine linen as they carried out their priest duties. Eze. 9:1-4, Dan. 10:4-6 and Dan. 12:5-7 all tell us of messengers of God being dressed in linen. In Rev. 15:6, the seven angels with the seven plagues were all dressed in pure and white linen. In Rev. 19:8, we're told, **“the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”** The gospels tell us that Christ's body was wrapped in linen in preparation for His burial.

Is there a person wearing both purple and linen identified in the Bible? In Rev. 17 we find the account of the great whore that sitteth on many waters being arrayed in purple and scarlet and that she had a name written on her forehead, **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”** Then we are told in vs. 18, **“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which**

reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Further in Rev. 18:16, we’re told, **“Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!”** The book of Revelation is written to a large extent in simile, meaning what is stated is symbolic of something else. Here the discussion is about the Babylonian system, which to identify and explore is a very large study in itself, so we will have to forego that as we pursue the current study. But that our “rich man” might have some connection to this Babylonian system is borne out in the fact that both are arrayed in purple and linen. So, while we will not be discussing the Babylonian system, keep this fact in mind as there really is a connection.

Getting back to identifying our “rich man,” in Matt. 23:2-3 Christ acknowledges that the scribes and Pharisees were rulers, that they **“sit in Moses’ seat.”** Even though they were ultimately under Roman rule, they had a government of their own in which the scribes and Pharisees played a part as rulers. To further verify their position as rulers, John 11:47 - 48 tells us, **“Then gathered the priests and the Pharisees a council and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.”** We know then that as priests, part of their apparel was linen and now we know that they appear to also be in a position of rulership—purple and fine linen. We also know they were rich, though not necessarily legitimately. Matt. 21:12 tells us of Jesus casting the money changers out of the temple because of their defrauding the people.

In the parable, we’re told the “rich man” died. Matt. 23:27-29 and Luke 11:44 tell us that Jesus considered these scribes and Pharisees symbolically dead.

Let’s continue to identify this “rich man” before we continue the parable. Note in verse 24 that the rich man calls Abraham “father” and then in vs. 25 Abraham calls him “son.” In both cases, the Greek words used indicate a definite genetic relationship, as does the words “father” and “father’s” in vs. 27. So Abraham and the “rich man” were related.

In vs. 28, the “rich man” says he has five brethren. The word, “brethren” is from the Greek word, *“adelphos”* which according to Strong’s Concordance means *“a brother (literally or figuratively).”* If you look at the many places where this word is used, you will see that it is used both literally and figuratively, so it could mean literal brothers, sons, etc.

or non-related brothers or sons. We have a man in Scripture who had five sons that was related to Abraham and also to the priests and rulers of Christ’s time. This man is Esau, or Edom, a grandson of Abraham. If you remember the story of Esau and Jacob, you remember that though they were twin brothers, their destinies were very different from each other, with Esau representing that which is anti-God and Jacob representing that which is pro-God. In the book of Obadiah (a prophecy against Edom), we’re told that every time Israel or Judah had a calamity, Edom was among those who helped bring the calamity on them. So Obadiah tells us Edom, or Esau, was always an enemy of Jacob-Israel. However, Josephus, the noted Jewish historian, tells us in his book, Antiquities of the Jews, that in 126 B.C. John Hyrcanus of Judah conquered Edom, or Idumea (their Greek name) and forced them, as a people, to comply with Jewish laws and customs, so from that time, they were no longer Edomites, but Jews. (This is confirmed by numerous other historians as well as the Jews themselves.) In so doing, it wasn’t long before Judah had Edomite rulers. At the time of Christ’s birth, the king of Judah, Herod the Great, had obtained the authority of King of Judah from the Roman Caesar. Herod’s father was a Jew and his mother an Edomite. He and his sons that followed him then chose the high priests, mostly from among their relatives, so the high priest at Christ’s time was a political appointee rather than a direct descendant of Aaron. This Edomite rule continued until 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed and the kingdom of Judah ceased to exist. This should help explain why the priests, scribes and Pharisees were the enemies of Christ during His ministry, a fact that is integral to this parable.

As to the identification of Lazarus, I think verses 30 and 31 of Luke 16 make it clear that he represents Jesus Christ. “Beggar” is from the Greek word *“ptochos”* which literally means *to crouch* indicating subservience. This represents the difference between types of rulership. To the Jews, and the world, rulership is by oppression. To Christ, rulership is through service. As we see from what Christ did, though He was all powerful, He was subservient to the priests, scribes and Pharisees in their desire to crucify Him.

Dogs, according to Matt. 15:21-28 references non-Israelites. Though the woman in this story was a non-Israelite and Christ referred to her as a dog, He healed her daughter because of her faith. I believe her faith and that of many non-Israelites to follow was the

equivalent of licking Lazarus' sores, i.e. being in sympathy with Christ, or believing and trusting on Him. Cornelius is another example of a non-Israelite being sympathetic or having faith in Christ. There were many others as we read of Paul's missionary journeys. While a majority of the "gentiles" that Paul preached to were former Israelites migrating westward from the land of their Assyrian captivity, many were non-Israelites as well.

What was the location of Abraham's bosom? Note that we are not told that it was heaven. If we read Matt. 8:5-12 and Luke 13:28-29, we find that Abraham will be in the kingdom of heaven. Does this mean heaven as a location or is it a figure of speech? If we read the kingdom parables in Matt. 13, I believe they make it quite clear that the kingdom of heaven will be located here on the earth.

The word "hell" is from the Greek "*hades*" meaning *the unseen state*. According to Young's Concordance this word is translated "grave" once and "hell" ten times. However, often where it is translated "hell," it clearly means the "grave" such as Acts 2:27 and 31. I believe it means the same here.

The word "torments" in vs. 23 and 28 is an entirely different word than the word "tormented" in vs. 24 and 25. The former means a test or trial and infers that he had been abased, and the latter means to grieve.

There are numerous references in the Bible of water being the word of God. "Flame" in vs. 24 is from the Greek "*phlox*" meaning "*a blaze*" from a primary word meaning "*to flash*." Five of the six times it is used in the N.T. it is followed by the words "of fire," but not here.

With this information, I believe we can put together a long term prophecy and a short term prophecy. But as I said earlier, the long term prophecy involves the Babylonian system, so we won't go into that in this study. The short term prophecy has to do with the priests, scribes and Pharisees that gave Christ so much trouble during His ministry and ultimately ended up crucifying Him. They too died, at least symbolically, in our parable but they were soon to be faced with losing their riches, authority, and status. They did not want to accept Christ whom they rejected as king and priest, but they did want just enough of God's Word to save their riches, authority, and status. They were embarrassed (in the flame) because they had been abased, and told Abraham that if they could just see Lazarus (Christ) raised from the dead, they would accept Him. Abraham told them that if they did

not believe Moses (which they really did not), they wouldn't believe even if one rose from the dead. Christ was subservient to their crucifying Him and while these Jews rejected Him, many non-Jews and non-Israelites accepted Him and His sacrifice.

So basically, this parable is about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the part the priests, scribes and Pharisees were to play in this story.

II Cor. 5:8

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." This verse is often misquoted to say "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Note the correct quote.

We need to keep this verse in context to understand its true meaning. In verse one of chap. 5, Paul is describing 2 bodies (tabernacles), our earthly body we live in now and a heavenly body, or house, not made with hands but eternal (age lasting) in the heavens. Then in vs. 2-3 he says we are burdened (we groan) with our mortal body, but our hope is to be clothed with the house which is from heaven. In vs. 4, we look forward to the heavenly body, that **"mortality might be swallowed up of life."** Does this mean we will be changed from mortal to immortal when we die? Paul says in I Cor. 15:52 that this change does not take place until the last trump. Is Paul contradicting himself here in verse 8? I don't think so. He is just confirming what he has already said; first that this mortal body is burdensome, and second, that he would rather be dressed in his resurrected body and **"be present with the Lord."**

Philippians 1:23-24

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

Again, we need to observe the context. If we read verses 12-21, it should be clear that Paul is saying that his imprisonment has seemingly caused more Christians to become emboldened and work harder to spread the gospel. So when he says in verse 21, **"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."** he is saying that if he were to die, it would actually be a gain to Christ, not to Paul.

The translation in verse 23 leaves a little bit to be desired, so if I may, let us look at it with the help of Strong's Concordance. The word "strait" is from the Greek "*sunecho*" meaning *to hold together*, i.e. to compress or to press. The word "betwixt" is from the Greek "*ek*" normally rendered "out of" or "from." This is the only place in the Bible where it is translated "betwixt."

So we could start this verse, "I am being pressed out of the two, having a desire..." The next words "to depart" are from the Greek "*analuo*." This word appears in the New Testament twice where it is rendered "depart" here and "return" in Luke 12:36. The literal meaning according to Strong's is "*to break up*." The Companion Bible has a note on this verse stating that "to depart" should be translated "for the return." Putting this together, the complete verse would read, "I am being pressed out of the two, having a desire for the return, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

Keeping in mind that Paul is in prison and doesn't know at this point whether he will be executed or acquitted, these are the two choices Paul mentioned. Either way Christ would be magnified. He doesn't know which would magnify Christ the most so he says in vs. 22 he isn't going to make a choice. Instead, he introduces a 3rd option, which is his real desire—"the return" of Christ. We all have this hope as Christians which is much better than living or dying. **JRL**

Babylon

As we continue to look at lands of the Bible and the people of them, in this issue, we want to discuss Babylon or Babylonia. Babylon was the capitol city of the country of Babylonia. As we mentioned in our look at Assyria, both countries, to a large extent, occupied the same land area at different times. Today that land area is known as Iraq. Babylonia was located primarily in southern Iraq and Assyria was northern Iraq, though their borders overlapped.

The city of Babylon was located on the Euphrates River, 51 miles south of modern day Baghdad. We're told in Gen. 10:8-10 that Nimrod, a son of Cush, the son of Ham, founded the kingdom of Babel which was the beginning of

Babylonia. Gen. 11 gives us more details of this with the story of the tower of Babel.

The Babylonians and the Assyrians fought against each other for several centuries with Assyria being the stronger of the two. Finally this began to change in 626 B.C. when Nabopolassar, a Chaldean, recovered Babylon from the



Assyrians and began to strengthen his kingdom. His work was continued by his son, Nebuchadnezzar II whom we meet in II Kings 24. It is during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar that Babylonia and particularly the city of Babylon, attained its greatest splendor. The city of Babylon became one of the seven wonders of the world with its hanging gardens which were built by Nebuchadnezzar for his Median wife, Amytis, as a reminder of her homeland.

The city was surrounded by an intricate system of double walls. The outer range covered 17 miles and was strong and large enough for chariots to pass upon the top. It was virtually an impregnable city except for one fault. It straddled the Euphrates River. Daniel 5 tells us of the fall of Babylon during the reign of Belshazzar. The Medes took the city by going up river from Babylon and built diversions that drained the river bed

at Babylon and then they entered the city under the walls through the river bed.

Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah during the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim died and Jehoichin his son took his throne, but Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem again and took Jehoichin, his mother, servants, princes, craftsmen, smiths and all the mighty men of valor captive back to Babylon. He installed Jehoichin's uncle, whom he named Zedekiah, as king but returned 11 years later and took Zedekiah and all of Jerusalem captive back to Babylon.

During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, the Babylonian Empire was strengthened and enlarged until it became ruler of the world, basically. This did not last very long as the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon and they then became rulers of the then known world.

What makes Babylon, or Babylonia so prominent in Bible history is found in the book of Daniel. Daniel was a young boy who was taken captive to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar first attacked Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoakim. Daniel was educated in Babylon and found favor with the king and began to be elevated to prominence in the government of Babylonia.

In Daniel 2, we have the story of the king having a dream for which he wanted an interpretation. However, he couldn't remember the dream so no one could interpret it for him. Final-

ly, God gave the dream and the interpretation of it to Daniel who was able to relay it to the king. In this dream, the king saw an image that had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass and legs of iron. A stone that was cut out without hands struck the image's feet and ground the whole image to powder.

Daniel told the king that the four metals represented four kingdoms. The first, the head of gold, was the Kingdom of Babylon. Three kingdoms would follow, which we know to have been the Persian Empire followed by the Greek Empire followed by the Roman Empire.

This succession of empires came to be known as the Babylonian succession of Empires and represents man's system of government as opposed to God's system of government. We find Babylon mentioned frequently in the Bible in this sense.

The people of Babylon were somewhat mixed, but was made up primarily of Chaldeans who were a semi-nomadic tribe occupying the deserts between N. Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

Many gods were worshipped in their religion. Many of their religious practices were adopted by the Judahites while in captivity to the Babylonians and were a source of problems during Christ's time. We are still plagued by many of the practices of the Babylonians in our Christian religious practices of today.

Though Babylonia itself was a small country, at the height of the Empire, its influence extended throughout the whole then known world. **JRL**

FREEDOM, A RIGHT TO EXERCISE RESPONSIBILITY