

# KINGDOM SPIRIT



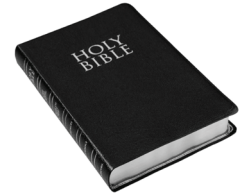
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**“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 802

## ISAIAH 40-53

With Israel now in the Assyrian captivity, Isaiah's message of warning of the captivity changes to that of advising them as to what they are to do now. He also changes from speaking to both Israel and Judah to speaking primarily to Israel only.

Isaiah 40 outlines the general theme of the rest of the book of Isaiah. Before dealing with Israel in captivity, Isaiah looks ahead to the end of Judah's, or Jerusalem's captivity (which hasn't taken place at this time) and God tells Isaiah to tell her that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity pardoned. Then Isaiah outlines the preparations for the coming of Christ, His actual coming, and the His ruling. First, we see the commandment in verse 3, later given to John the Baptist, to prepare the way of the Lord; then **“The glory of the LORD shall be revealed”** in verse 5, then in verses 10-11, **“The Lord GOD will come with a strong hand,”** and **“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.”**

God will re-gather His people and take care of them true to His promises to both Abraham and David. However, the sin that put Israel in captivity has to be dealt with first. Isaiah asks in verse 18, **“To whom then will ye liken God? To the men who made gods with their hands, he asks, “Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?”**

He answers the question in the next verse, **“It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:”**

God has all power, He created all things. So Isaiah asks Israel why they think their ways are hid from God or their judgment passed over by Him.

God calls upon islands to keep silent and let the people renew their strength in Isa. 41:1. Since Israel is not in any islands, we can assume that either they will go to some, or the term “islands” means something else. Reading further confirms the former. Referring to Israel as **“the righteous man from the east”** indicates that Israel will move west from the location of their Assyrian captivity. He goes on to say they will travel a way they had not gone before and that God would be the moving force behind them. Then we're told, **“The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.”** I believe this indicates that Israel would go to the isles and to the ends of the earth. Israel is told by God that they are God's servant whom God has chosen and God has not cast them away.

A brief review of our story may be in order at this point, that we might better understand what Isaiah has yet to say. Beginning with the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God unconditionally made promises that included that they and their seed would become a very great multitude of people; a great nation and many na-

tions; they would rule the world, the world would bless their seed and their seed would bless the world and they would receive a land inheritance. Later in the form of a marriage, God made a conditional covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai that **if** they would keep His laws, He would make them a very special people and they would be a kingdom of rulers over the rest of the world. But now, they have not only refused to keep His laws, they have made an active effort to worship the works of their own hands. In keeping with the terms of the conditional covenant, God has had to cease honoring the marriage contract with the kingdom of Israel and has been forced to cast them out of the land He gave them. This has been in effect, a divorce. Yet the unconditional promises are still in effect and the prophets we have looked at so far have all prophesied an ultimate restoration, a release from captivity and a future of total peace and great prosperity. But according to God's law, the sins of this people are sins unto death, or punishable by death. So again we seem to have a paradox.

How can God keep His promises and yet adhere to His law? Many will answer, "But God is a merciful God." This is true, but we have also seen God to be a just God. A question, the answer of which may help us understand the rest of the Bible, is, "Can mercy override justice?" The answer to this is probably understood better by Isaiah, at least as he dealt with it in his writings, than any other prophet. The fact that no one has seen God in all His glory face to face and lived, tells us that God cannot tolerate imperfection. In the same breath, we know man cannot survive true justice. In the example of Israel, if they had received true justice, they would have been totally destroyed. However, since God cannot tolerate imperfection, justice has to prevail. It is truly fortunate that God made the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob unconditional. It now becomes incumbent upon God that both His requirement of complete justice be met and His promises to Abraham be kept. Isaiah understood how God, through Jesus Christ was going to accomplish this and spends most of the rest of his text explaining

it. So let's continue our study of Isaiah and see how Isaiah answers our question, "Can mercy override justice?"

In chapter 42, Isaiah presents Jesus, though unnamed, as the servant of God. God promises to uphold Him, His elect, as He is given the job of bringing forth judgment to the Gentiles (nations). He is to do this by humble service, not by exalting Himself.

Before explaining further, God very emphatically makes the point that this is His doing, He the Creator of all the earth. He says He has called Christ (servant in the text) in righteousness and will hold His hand and keep Him, yet He will give Him for a covenant (promise or agreement) of the people, "**for a light of the Gentiles; (nations).**" (Isa. 42:6) This servant is to open the blind eyes and bring out the prisoners from the prison. As we read further, we find Israel to be those referred to as blind and prisoners. This would mean Christ, whose job it is to cause the blind to see and to release the prisoners, was to be the one to redeem or repurchase Israel.

God tells Israel in Isa. 43 they are not to fear, He has redeemed them, they belong to God. (A couple of notes: first, while Israel has been disowned by God at this point, we need to know and remember that when God has something planned, it is as good as done. So in this case, He can speak of the redemption of Israel as an accomplished fact even though it had not taken place yet. Second, we need to be sure to understand the law of redemption. For review, you will find this law in Leviticus 25:47-55. It is the principle of the law that we need to understand, as God applies this principle to Israel whom He says He has sold into slavery, as we will see in Isa. 50.) God calls Israel His witnesses, His servant whom He has chosen.

God continues to exhort them to believe Him and to understand that He and He only is the LORD, besides Him there is no savior. True to His promise to tell them of things to come before they happen, He looks ahead many years and foretells of Cyrus, even naming him by name, and his proclamation to rebuild the temple and the city

of Jerusalem following the 70 years Babylonian captivity of the people of Jerusalem. We will later learn Cyrus to be the king of Persia who brought down the Babylonian Empire. This prophecy is given even before Babylon became a great power. He says of Cyrus that it is for God's servant Jacob, Israel His elect, that He has called Cyrus. Cyrus is to release God's captives and rebuild His city. He tells Cyrus in Isa. 45:6-7, "**I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.**"

God also foretells the fall of Babylon. He says, Babylon will brag that she will be a lady forever, but because she had not mercy on Israel and has trusted in wickedness, nothing will save her. God made it clear to Israel that He is telling her of things to come before they happen so that Israel can't give credit to her idols and that all He does for Israel is for His name's sake and not because of anything good Israel has done to deserve it. We will see quite frequently that God does things for Israel "**for His name's sake.**" This is usually in reference to the fact that God has unconditionally promised several things to Abraham. It is then incumbent on God to do certain things to carry out those promises, or to not do things, like destroy Israel as they deserved. God's name is at stake because of the unconditional nature of the promises, so He does these things, or doesn't do others to protect His name, not because Israel deserved good or didn't deserve destruction.

In Isa. 48:20-22, God gives Israel marching orders to leave Babylon. By the time these orders were to go into effect, Babylon had defeated Assyria, so the Israelites were then captives of Babylon rather than Assyria. They were to go forth and to sing, "**The LORD hath redeemed His servant Jacob.**"

Isaiah asks both the people already in the isles and the people from far (I believe this refers to the people of Israel in captivity) to listen to him in what he is saying on behalf of God. Though Isaiah feels he has worked in vain, he leaves his work to God for His judgment.

It would appear that the isles, so often <sup>3</sup>

mentioned, are to be Israel's destination. We have earlier seen that these isles are west of their present location in captivity. It also appears there are people already there waiting for them, as the main body of Israelites move out of the land of their captivity. We'll discuss later who they are and why they are there.

Beginning with Isa. 49:5, Isaiah prophesies again of Jesus Christ explaining that even though Israel is not re-gathered (i.e. not as it will be in the last days), yet Christ will be glorified in God. Not only is Christ to be God's servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel, but He is also to be "**a light to the Gentiles (nations) that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.**" (Isa. 49:6) God tells Christ, "**I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;**" (Isa. 49:8). To do this, he was to say to the prisoners (Israel), "**Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.**" (vs. 9), then God promises that they shall not hunger or thirst—God will take care of them in every way.

Keep in mind that Israel and the portion of Judah that are in the Assyrian, and now Babylonian captivity, have a totally different destiny than the portion of Judah still left in and around Jerusalem. This will help us understand when Zion (Jerusalem) says God has forsaken her. God answers that though a mother with a sucking child may forget her child, God will not forget Zion.

As a reminder of the reason Israel is in captivity, God asks, "**Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?**" (Isa. 50:1) He again tells them it is for their iniquities they are put away. If He can dry up the sea, make rivers a wilderness, or clothe the heavens with blackness, would it not be possible for Him to redeem? He asks. He assures them He can do what He says. He tells them to seek the LORD by looking unto the rock from whence ye were hewn. In other words, study their history back to Abraham and see how God called him alone, blessed him and increased him. Therefore, will God comfort Zion, i.e. be-

cause of the promises to Abraham, God will redeem.

God then addresses Jerusalem. She is told to stand up, loose herself from the bonds of captivity. They have sold themselves for nothing and shall be redeemed without money and proclaim God hath redeemed Jerusalem. Then in Isa. 52:11, marching orders are given to Jerusalem to leave their captivity, **“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence.”** Again, we must study further because Jerusalem has not yet gone into captivity, so remember this command as we continue.

Isa. 53 fills us in further on Jesus Christ and the part He is to play in God’s plan. He is to grow up before Him as a tender plant (i.e. from a baby); was to have no form nor comeliness (i.e. there was to be no beauty or physical attraction to really set Him apart); His mission was to be a costly one (He would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.) **“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.”** (Isa. 53:5) **“He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken, and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”** (Isa. 53:8-9) We’re told it pleased the LORD to bruise Him, then because He did this, God says, **“Therefore, will I divide him a portion with the great...because he hath poured out his soul unto death;...and made intercession for the transgressors.”** (Isa. 53:12)

Isaiah has presented us the paradox of the promises to Abraham, the penalty of God’s law and then the promises of future peace, blessing and prosperity. Now he has told us Christ will make all these things happen in harmony, but, this job will require His being rejected by men, being acquainted with grief, and finally to willingly give His life for the transgressors. Later as

we study Jesus Christ in the New Testament, we will see that He was God manifested in the flesh, so we find here that our merciful God is going to willingly give His life, as we understand life, in the place of Israel’s. His life will be the price of redemption of Israel.

Now, we can see the answer to our question. Justice is served in that the death penalty that Israel deserved is decreed. But mercy intercedes in that the judge (God) steps down after decreeing the sentence and takes the penalty in the place of the ones upon whom it was decreed. God, manifested as man in Jesus Christ, pays the penalty for Israel. So justice is served, but while mercy does not override justice to keep it from being carried out, it does protect those who were sentenced in that the judge took the penalty He decreed Himself.

Later, in the New Testament, the apostle Paul will explain this taking on of the penalty by the Judge (God) also fulfills the law pertaining to marriage, divorce and remarriage. We’ll continue in Isaiah next issue. JRL

## BAPTISM

There is one more, or possibly two, types of baptism discussed in Scripture. Mark and Luke, in first discussing it, say the same thing but Luke then adds another element so let’s begin in Luke 3:16. John the Baptist is speaking and says, **“I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.”** We want to discuss the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but since Luke has added

the element of fire, let's first take a look at fire before we continue. I think it safe to say that fire here is symbolical of something else, a symbolism that we need to understand. Moses tells us in Deut. 33:2, **"The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them."** In the margin of some Bibles "fiery law" is "fire of law. In Dan. 7:10, Daniel is relating the scene of the final judgment and says, **"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."** In Rev. 20, John sees this same scene with the dead being judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was then cast into the lake of fire (vs. 14) In each of these cases there appears to be a relation between fire and law, possibly more specifically the judgments of the law. I believe the "fiery stream" that issued forth from before God represents God's judgments as does the "lake of fire" of Rev. 20. The books referred to in both passages are the books of the law by which each man will be judged according to his works. But keep in mind that the principle of God's judgments, that portion of the law that specified the penalties for transgression of the commandments and statutes, is restitution. When Peter speaks of **"the times of restitution of all things"** in Acts 3:21, I believe he is referring to the time of the "fiery stream" and of the "lake of fire." If I am correct, then I feel that we all will go through the baptism of fire, those in this life who learn obedience as we strive to serve God, and those who are forced to learn obedience by virtue of judgment of law in the lake of fire. Keep this principle in mind as we look at baptism of the Holy Spirit as I believe there is a definite relationship.

In Matt. 3:16 we're told, **"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened**

**unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** In effect, the descending of the Holy Spirit and lighting upon Christ was God's stamp of approval, was it not? He says He is well pleased in His Son.

In Acts 1:5, Christ tells His apostles, **"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."** To see then what this baptism was we need to go to chapter 2. This happened on the Day of Pentecost and all of the apostles were together. Verses 2-4 tells us, **"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."** Luke continues by telling us there were Jews from every nation at Jerusalem at that time and they were hearing these apostles talking in their native languages. He even lists many of the nations so that we know the variation of languages in which these apostles spoke. While some were amazed and some were mocking saying the apostles were drunk, Peter stood up and told them they were not drunk but rather what they were witnessing and hearing was what had been prophesied by the prophet Joel. **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the LORD come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall**

**call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.**" (Acts 2:17-21 quoted from Joel 2:28-32)

Certainly what was happening there on the Day of Pentecost was part of what Joel prophesied, but Peter, by quoting the whole Scripture, is saying this was not all that was going to happen when God poured out His Spirit on man. Speaking in tongues was **a** manifestation of God pouring out His Spirit, but this would not be the only manifestation.

In Acts 8:14-17 we have an example of men hearing the word of God, then being baptized, and then receiving, or being baptized in the Holy Spirit. While this would appear to be a logical order, it doesn't always happen in this order. Acts 10:44-48 gives us another example. This is the story of Cornelius, a non-Jew, and his family. Vs. 44 tells us, **"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."** Then in vs. 48, we're told, **"And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."** In chapter 11, Peter is telling the elders at Jerusalem what happened and beginning with verse 15, he says, **"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?"** Peter is saying that when he saw that God had given them the Holy Spirit, His stamp of approval, Peter didn't have any choice but to see that they were baptized. Up to this time the Jews of Jerusalem had not gone to anyone else but Jews, but now Peter had found that God was extending His Spirit, His approval to others as well.

The principle we need to understand is that as with the baptism of Christ, when God approves, He shows His approval through a manifestation of the Spirit. In the case of the apostles at Pentecost, it was talking in other languages.

Before we go further, let's pause and define a couple of things. Let's first look at what the Holy Spirit actually is. In the Greek, it would

be expressed "hagion pneuma". "Hagion" is from "hagios" which according to "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance" means "sacred." "Young's Analytical Concordance" gives the meaning as "separate or set apart." Dr. Strong adds in parenthesis (physically—*pure*; morally—*blameless or religious*; ceremonially—*consecrated*.)

"Pneuma," according to Dr. Strong means "a *current* of air, i.e. *breath* (blast) or a *breeze*; by analogy or figuratively a *spirit*, i.e. (human) the rational *soul*, (by implication) *vital principle*, mental *disposition*, etc., or Christ's *spirit*, the Holy *Spirit*."

This still doesn't give us a good definition that we can put our finger on. We've seen in our study that life, or soul, is in the blood so our spirit is not life, but rather it gives life. It is not an entity or personage, but is intangible, yet very real and powerful. Without it life cannot exist, but it is not life itself. Yet it witnesses who we are or what we are to those around us.

We find one's spirit referred to as evil or good, wise or foolish, sad or happy, etc., in Scripture. Paul says in Rom. 8:16, **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**". If we regarded one's spirit as a witness then of that person, it is a witness of our mind, our thinking, our mood as determined by our mind. With this in mind, the above quote could be rendered, "The witness of God (or God's mind) witnesses to our witness (or witness of our mind) that we are the children of God," or more simply, God's mind bears witness to, or teaches our mind that we are the children of God. Though this is probably not an absolute true comparison, to me it helps to think of God's Spirit as His mind and my spirit as my mind, my thoughts that determine mood, that expounds or takes in knowledge, that manifests me to those around me.

Jesus, in the book of John gives us some more clues to help us understand the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. We will look at some of these next issue and try to conclude this article on baptism. Suggested reading includes John 14 & 15, Matt. 7, I Cor. 12, and I John 5. **JRL**

## ASIA MINOR-TURKEY

In the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Galatians, he explains the "adoption" in chapter 4. Because most people make the mistake of thinking of "adoption" as we think of it today instead of the manner of adoption in Paul's day, (as well as OT times) the significance of Paul's explanation, at the least, is compromised. The custom of Paul's time was that when a son reached the level of maturity to be able to take the father's, or the family responsibility, the father "adopted" his own son to be a son. Being a "son" then meant that he had responsibility with his father. Part of the reason we need to understand this is that it will help us understand better the country of Galatia, the country of Asia Minor that we want to look at this issue.

The country of Galatia occupies the highlands of central Anatolia, or Asia Minor which today is the country of Turkey. In Bible times it was bounded on the north by Bithynia and Paphlagonia, on the East by Pontus and Cappadocia, on the south by Cilicia and Lycia and on the west by Phrygia. This area, for the most part is only suitable for grazing with a little of the valleys in the south suitable for farming.

Through the centuries up until the third century B.C. it had been occupied by the Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians and others. In the third century B.C., a large group of Celts who had settled in what is now France and part of Germany, known then as Gaul, decided to move east. They were led by a Chief named Brennus Prausus (Brennus the Terrible). They invaded Greece and the group divided with Brennus and his group heading for the temple at Delphi intent on sacking it. The Greeks defeated them and they were forced to rejoin the rest of the group in Thrace. From here they were invited by the King Nicomedes of Bithynia to come help him fight against his brother. The battle was successful and the king gave them the central part of the Anatolian Plateau as a reward. Not really being agriculturally oriented, they hired themselves out as mercenaries or they plundered their neighbors.

We need to back up a little and see just who these Gauls, or Celts were. We know now from archeological findings and secular history that the Israelite and Judahite people who were taken captive by the Assyrians eventually began to escape their captivity and began a westward migration. As they did so in groups, these groups had different names. Known first to the Greeks as Scythians and Sarmatians and Sacsons, as they moved westward they continued to divide and became known under a variety of names including but not limited to Cimmerians, Teutons, Getae, Germans, Jutes, Cimbri, Saxons, Celts and Gauls. If we remember the promises to Abraham, he was promised that his seed would become a great multitude of people and many nations. The Celts, though they settled in central Europe, continued to migrate into Spain and the British Isles, for the most part going west.

But, here we find a group of Celts moving back east into Asia Minor. Historians have linked this group in Asia Minor with the Gauls in France and Germany by their language, customs and even some of the animals that they had including their dogs.

The point we need to understand is that the Galatians that Paul was writing to and who occupied this portion of Asia Minor were descended from the Israelites who had been taken captive by the Assyrians several centuries before. Paul understood who they were and speaks of them as children of Abraham in his letter, but makes it clear to them that genealogy was not enough, but that they also had to be Christ's as well.

Galatia, or sometimes called Gaul of the East, was not an easy country to be missionary to both from a topographical and a demographic standpoint. There were three basic groups, or tribes of Galatians. The largest group was the Tectosages and they occupied the central part of the country. Being on a major trade route, their capital city, Ancyra, was a fairly large city. Today it is called Ankara which is the capital city of the nation of Turkey. The Trocmii occupied the northeast portion of the country and they made Tarium, or Tavia their capital city. The Tolis-



tobogii occupied the southern part of the country and Pessinus was made their capital.

They had no central government. Each tribe was divided into 4 tetrarchies. Each Tetrarch then had one judge and one general under him. Each year the twelve Tetrarchs and 100 senators from each tribe would meet at the sacred Oak Grove, or Drynemeton near Ancyra. Inter-tribal disputes were judged and trade agreements were set out at these meetings.

After helping King Nicomedes of Bithynia, they spent the next 50 years plundering their neighbors or hiring out as mercenaries. Finally in about 230 B.C. through a joint effort by Bithynia, Pontus and help from the Romans, Galatia was pacified and stopped a lot of their plundering. They still continued to hire out as mercenaries, but they kept seeming to hire out to the losing side. Finally in 179 B.C. the Romans invaded Galatia and eventually made it a client state of the Empire. In 38 B.C., they were fighting against the Roman general, Octavian and they suddenly changed sides. As a result, Octavian proclaimed Amyntas as King of the Celts. But Amyntas was killed 6 years later and when Octavian became Emperor Augustus, he recinded the kingship and made Galatia a Roman Province.

Things remained pretty quiet then for about 75 years at which time Christianity was brought to Galatia by the Apostle Paul and oth-



## ASIA MINOR IN BIBLE TIMES

ers. According to Acts 16:6 and 18:23, Paul apparently traveled through the country on his second and third missionary journeys. Peter includes Galatia in the address of his first epistle. The problem faced by the apostles appears to be the Judaizers who worked among the Galatians insisting that to be a true Christian, the people had to be circumcised and follow other aspects of the law. JRL

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*Many of you enjoy Celtic music. May we recommend the website of some fellow Kingdom Seekers who perform and have Celtic music CD's and information you might enjoy. The website is:*

***whisperingroses.net***