



ACM BIBLE STUDIES

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Record of the Beginning of Jesus' Reign

Chapter Four

INTRODUCTION

QUESTION: Isn't rebellion immoral? The Bible says, "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*" I Samuel 15:23.

QUESTION: How can you compare the U.S. Constitutional government to the government in Jerusalem at the time of the apostles? That government was more like a dictatorship. Doesn't our government have checks and balances (separation of powers) to prevent tyranny? Aren't there just a few men in government who are bad – not the whole system itself?

CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE is the point of this chapter. Peter and John are presented as examples of standing against the ungodly system of their day. The early Christians were quite different from today's herd of passive churchgoers. The clear record of the ecclesian WAY of Christ and His apostles stands in stark contrast to the typical churchianity of later centuries – particularly our own day and time.

This chapter features men who, when they learned the way of Christ, turned away from man's system ... opting rather for the liberty found in God's Kingdom and the Reign of Christ. The record these men left us in the Book of Acts is a far cry from the pathetic "obey the rulers" message heard in churches today.

In Acts 4, the freedom-fighters aligned themselves with Christ!

The conclusion is obvious. Central government – as a matter of common practice – plots and schemes against its own citizens. This crime, shown in Acts 4, works the same with all central governments – even where people ignorantly claim "their" government and "their" constitution are "inspired by God" (as some claim about the U.S. Constitution).

The truth is, any government or law system invented by men is an anti-Christ system. It is a serpent government patterned after the one that ruined Eden, Israel, and many other societies throughout history. It oppresses and hurts the people. There is no such thing as a good democracy, or a good republic! Neither is it possible that God would inspire a document like the U.S. Constitution that empowers a central government to enslave the people.

There is hope for Christians who exercise faith in their reigning King Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Peter and John are role models for us in their treatment of government. They exemplified real faith for all Christians! They showed us, by example, our own duty to believe in Christ, not man. They demonstrated the power of faith in Jesus. Great works occurred in Jerusalem as a result of their strong belief in the WAY of Christ – the ecclesia system.

As we follow this record of the early years of Jesus' Reign, please notice that the men who adopted HIS WAY were not satisfied to just passively acknowledge that an enemy existed. They did not sit back and leave the job of standing against sin to God so they could keep their own hands unsoiled. They actively stood against the evil Beast System. They went to work, got their hands dirty, and exposed that government as the repository for the worst evils and abuses in the land.

In Acts 4, we see no "passive Christians." Real FAITH inspires boldness and commitment. Americans have ignored the problem far too long. Centralized conspirators (politicians and bankers) have conquered us and taken our land.

ACTS 4:1-4 SEPARATISTS ARE ARRESTED

And as they spoke to the people, the high priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

Being annoyed that they were teaching the people, and declaring Jesus' raising from the dead.

And they seized them with their hands, and put them in custody until the next day: for it was already evening.

But many of them who heard the word believed; and the number of those men came to be about five-thousand.

THE Sadducees were more politically-minded than the Pharisees (two sects of the Judeans). The Sadducees didn't like anyone teaching the "good news" (the gospel) that Jesus is King. It was treason!

Neither did they like anyone teaching about the raising of the dead. The Sadducees, as opposed to the Pharisees, did not believe in any sort of "raising."

Therefore, the police (military

hirelings of the establishment) arrested Peter and John and threw them into jail. This, they hoped, would quell the growing mood of anti-government sentiment among the people.

Despite the arrests, five-thousand people heard the gospel and believed. That's remarkable considering the unpopularity of these teachings in the eyes of the establishment. The message Jesus and His apostles carried was anathema to the establishment system. It was not

"politically correct" then, and it still isn't today. By government standards, it was totally unacceptable ... because it was TRUTH. We, today, do not claim the degree of accuracy that the apostles had – although that is our goal. Back then, they would have been even more offensive to the central establishment than we today.

And yet, in the time frame of only a few days, over five-thousand people heard and believed. This made an impression on the rulers.

ACTS 4:5-7 THE CHARGES

But on the next day in Jerusalem it occurred that the rulers and the elders and the scribes were gathered together,

And Annas the chief priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were from the high priestly line.

And having forced them (the disciples) to stand in their midst, they were asking, By what power, or by what name (i.e., authority), did you do this?

THE rulers demanded to know: "*By what power, and by whose authority did you heal this man?*" This event is related back in Acts 3:6-8, when Peter responded to the lame man at the temple and said:

6. ...*Silver and gold I do not have; but such as I have I give you:*

7. *In the name (i.e., authority) of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

Acts 3:6-7

The lame man gained strength in his feet and stood up. He leaped, walked and rejoiced.

This healing resulted in the disciples getting investigated by the rulers to see if they had licenses

(permission granted by the rulers) to practice healing. It was for this cause the disciples were called before the Sanhedrin the next day. The trial was not to see if they had harmed anyone, but rather to see if they had received “government authority.”

This is, in essence, the same thing as when a traffic cop stops you and demands to see your license (your authority to drive on government roads), or when the building inspector comes upon a building site of a new structure. These officers are not concerned about quality or safety. Rather, they want to prevent anything

being done without a license (authority) from government.

The building inspector demands of the owner: “*By what power or by whose authority did you build this?*” He isn’t concerned about the quality of the building – as one might think is his job. No, instead, his job is to insure that no one dares to build upon the land without government’s permission – seeing as how it claims ownership of all the land, and requires a fee from all builders before they can build. And if the builder/owner hasn’t paid the fee to get a license he must either tear the

building down or go ahead and pay the ransom (bribe; fee) to get the “authority” to keep the building standing.

This is the same situation, in principle, with which the apostles were faced in Acts 4. The rulers saw a good work: a man was healed. But, the officials were not interested in the blessing of the healing. They were only interested in keeping the populace under their thumb and controlled. Therefore, they demanded to know if the disciples had official “authority” from government to do good works.

ACTS 4:8-10 THE REAL AUTHORITY

Then Peter, being filled with holy spirit, said to them: “Rulers of the people, and elders,

If we this day are being judged because of a good deed to an ailing man, as by whose authority he was saved;

Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name (authority) of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised up from the dead, even in Him does this man stand here before you well.”

HERE, is Peter’s bold answer to the man-made “authorities” of Jerusalem’s government. In effect, he replied:

“Jesus authorized the healing of this man! The same Jesus you conspired against and murdered! ... that same man you nailed on a cross! You couldn’t find fault in Him but you murdered Him anyway because He didn’t acknowledge your authority ... and He didn’t ask for your permission to do His work. But, God raised Him from death, and He now lives and is immortal – on the Throne of Israel! It is HE who reigns! All authority from God is through Him! It is HE who authorized the healing of this man you see standing before you.”

This is the kind of witness that is hard to ignore. Peter not only troubled the political water ... he created a political tidal wave.

Peter was not intimidated because he knew that Jesus had given him authority! The miracles were witnesses to Christ’s victory over sin and death, and to His Kingship.

It wasn’t Peter who healed the man. It was Jesus! The

central tyrants may be able to stop Peter, but how could they stop Jesus? How could they bring charges against Jesus now? They couldn’t arrest Him. He was out of their jurisdiction. They had no power over Him.

Jesus was reigning. They could complain, conspire and pass all the laws they wanted, but they couldn’t stop the risen Jesus from healing whom He wanted healed. They could not stop Him. They could choose to align with Him, or fight against Him. However, as Paul would find out later (in Acts 9) fighting against Jesus was a losing battle.

QUESTION: Are you saying we should disregard the laws of the government?

ACTS 4:11 KINGDOM CONSTRUCTION

This is the stone which you builders rejected, but which has become the head of the corner.

IN addressing the priests and rulers of the temple, Peter was talking to “the builders” of the current Babylonian system. Thus, using the analogy of a literal building, Peter explained that they (the Babylonian builders) had rejected the very stone that was the true cornerstone. In other words, they had built their system upon the wrong building site, the wrong foundation, and the wrong cornerstone.

Religious and political “builders” are everywhere. They build religious edifices and organizations. And, even though they may pay lip service to Christ, their true goal is to acquire power over people – usually through some charismatic man or a central committee or council. Churchgoers are reluctant to admit this, but it is true nonetheless.

The church/state concept is programmed into the minds of citizens as the only option. Thus, the church/state becomes the idols of the land, and of the people. Thus they practice their ill-conceived patriotism, stumbling over “the Stone of Stumbling” and rejecting the true “Cornerstone” (Jesus) in exchange for a counterfeit savior: the state.

In the government these builders are called “politicians.” In conjunction with this, most politicians as well as many high-profile evangelists are members of a sect called “Masons” (Freemasons). This label (builders) relates particularly to them since the Masons happily claim the label of “builders,” and refer to their god as “The Great Architect.”

Both religious and political “builders” are indebted to Freemasonry for their forms of organization. The Masons have infiltrated them and styled them after Masonic patterns. These are the proverbial “builders” who always

reject the true Cornerstone. They build their religious and political structures upon wrong foundations.

42. “... The Stone which the builders rejected is the one that became the head of the corner;”

Matthew 21:42

For a society to be godly and free it must be constructed upon no other foundation than the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Cornerstone.

19. ... you are no longer strangers and alien residents, but you are fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20. Having been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Ephesians 2:19-20

While the religious world competes between churches to determine which sect, which preacher, which denomination can out perform the others. In the process, families are split, and friends become divided. Such divisiveness and cruelty naturally follows the spiritual confusion and insecurity of men who choose to follow other men instead of Christ. In pursuit of security they resort to a herd mentality where they embrace conformity at the expense of reality.

These are the results of man’s attempts to create his own foundations instead of trusting the foundation laid by Christ. Christ’s reign is the only system for Christians. The only political construction that can protect freedom and liberty is that ONE that is built

directly upon that foundation that is locked into The Chief Corner Stone.

21. In whom all the building fitly joined together in spirit grows into a holy temple of God:

22. In whom also you are being built up together in spirit for a habitation of God.

Ephesians 2:21-22

“The temple of God” is another way of saying “the Kingdom of God.” This is depicted figuratively as a building of “stones.” Any good building must have a good foundation. A kingdom built “in Christ” is built upon his authority. He is the Foundation Stone. He is our “Authority.” No other kingdom is authorized by Him.

Speaking of this temple or kingdom, Peter says:

1. Therefore, having put off all badness, deceit, hypocrisy, and envies, and all slander,

2. As newborn infants, covet the trustworthy milk of the word, that in it you may grow into salvation:

3. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4. Coming to Him as to a living stone, disapproved by men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5. You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, through Jesus Christ, acceptable to God.

6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I am laying in Sion a chief corner stone, chosen, precious: and anyone believing in it shall not be disappointed.

7. Therefore it is precious to you who are believing: but to the ones who are not believing, this stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner,

8. And a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling, to them which are offended at the word, believing not; being also determined.

1 Peter 2:1-8

Jesus is the “Chief Cornerstone.” Jesus was disallowed of men. We too, as living stones in God’s temple, are disallowed of men.

In actual stone masonry of that day, the “chief corner stone” in a building foundation was the largest, heaviest, squarest stone. It was the stone first laid ... into which all the other stones are anchored. The principle is obvious. The big corner stone will not move. Thus, the smaller foundation stones (as well as the stones used to construct the walls upon the foundation) – as long as they are anchored into the big, solid corner stone – will also remain in place and secure.

Jesus is the Corner Stone in God's Kingdom. He is the Rock upon which we are built. This is the only way we

can be secure, solid and free. He is the Founder and Keeper of Kingdom Life.

The apostles and the prophets are the foundation stones that are anchored into Him to form the foundation of God's Kingdom. We are the living stones that are built upon that foundation. We are the stones that form the walls of God's Kingdom.

These verses echo the concept of a current active building process. The Reign of Jesus Christ is God's plan for society. This building began when the Chief Cornerstone was laid almost 2,000 years ago.

To understand this construction analogy is to realize the absurdity of the popular church fable that has Christ “returning” in a future utopian kingdom physically descending from outer space.

QUESTION: How can you say that churches reject Jesus Christ when they preach and teach about His life and works continuously?

QUESTION: How can you speak ill of the Freemasons when they perform good deeds and have produced most of America's presidents?

CHRISTIAN SEPARATISTS

It has been said you can judge a man by his enemies. If that is true, then these Christian Separatists were good men. They definitely had the right enemies.

The central rulers were disturbed by the open proclamation that there was no king but Jesus, and that there was no other government on Earth by which men can be blessed. The men in government realized their motives were being exposed. Thus, they mounted a campaign to monitor and destroy the “rebels.” They could not tolerate men teaching that “Jesus” was the ONLY name (authority) among men. This was rebellion to man’s government!

“Rebel” is a label that we accept – as long as it is our enemies who label us so.

ACTS 4:12 SAVED FROM MAN’S “HELL ON EARTH”

And there is no salvation in any other (than Jesus): neither is there any other name (authority) given among men under heaven, whereby we must be saved.

JESUS is the only authority through which salvation must come. There is no other access to the “authority of God” except through Jesus – our reigning King.

In the churches there is much talk of “salvation.” The typical church teaches a meaningless one. They coerce worshipers to come forward to an altar and say “I accept Jesus.” This, then, is supposed to cause Jesus to “save” their “souls” from going to a burning hell, and provide entrance into a future Utopia. And, Jesus is supposedly motivated to do this because of their condescending gesture of acknowledgment.

This, of course, is absurd! He is King of kings and Lord

of lords with or without our acknowledgment! Acceptance by men is not what made Jesus King.

Jesus says no man comes to Him on his own accord. Left to themselves, men destroy themselves. We must be drawn toward Christ ... by the Father!

44. No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him;

John 6:44

So, who are men trying to flatter? Themselves?

Salvation is initiated without the consent or help from man. Salvation is Christ reaching out to people who are incapable of saving themselves, and basically unaware that they need saved.

Salvation is the rescuing of men who are lost and don't know it.

The message was: Jesus is the ONLY name (authority) men must

accept as their Savior. The rulers heard this and realized the implications. Christian Separatists were declaring that all governments (except the kingdom of heaven) were frauds, with no authority from God. Like the central governments of today, they were built by organized criminals (politicians and bankers) using our blood and our lives.

(For more on the meaning of "salvation" see *The Doctrine Of Salvation*. - from ACM)

ACTS 4:13 "UNLETTERED" AUTHORITIES

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, having perceived that they were unlettered and common men, they took notice; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

HERE were disciples who didn't have licenses or certificates for teaching or preaching. They were considered "unlearned and illegitimate" because they hadn't learned to dance to the government's tune. They weren't parroting the government line. They weren't even playing according to government rules. They rejected the state's rules in favor of God's rules.

It was pretty obvious by their testimony that these "unlettered and common" men had been with Jesus and were teaching the same things He taught.

Jesus, also, had been accused of being "unlettered" ... as recorded in the book of John, chapter seven:

14. Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and was teaching.

15. Therefore, the Jews took notice, saying, How does this man know letters, having never learned?

John 7:14-15

The insinuation was that anyone who taught anything other than the

government-sanctioned doctrine of the Jews had to be a criminal.

Jesus had no credentials from the establishment. He didn't carry a diploma. He didn't have a certificate. He didn't qualify for a license. And, furthermore, he didn't want one!

Reading between the lines, we see that the policemen, the courts, and the churches of their day considered Jesus and His disciples basically ignorant rabble-rousers and unacceptable misfits because they were un-indoctrinated by the religious and political establishment. Being independent thinkers, they were not "company men." They were "politically incorrect." Furthermore, they were trouble makers.

These men stood out ... not being company men. A "company man" usually doesn't know much about real life because he never thinks on his own. He just lets the company handle all things for him. He is only good at doing things by rote - things that don't require thinking. He passes the buck, puts the burden on others, and relies on the company to do his thinking for him. He is loyal to the company because he depends upon it

... like a slave depends upon his master to take care of him.

Being trained in the system (starting early in public schools) is not education. Training is different than educating. Training can condition a man to follow orders and fit into government programs. Sometimes there are even manuals to direct you: "*If 'Problem A' occurs follow 'Procedure B' ... etc.*" That way government (the company) keeps everyone carefully contained right there in the system so nothing escapes their control. Rulers fear that people may discover they can resolve their own problems better than the government can do it for them. Therefore, the government cannot allow uncontrolled problem-solving. It would put government out of business.

Following orders and asking no questions is the very essence of government control over the mind and spirit of man. Blind obedience is the goal. Some people claim that this method works in military scenarios ... however, military rules in the Bible indicate nothing of this nature. Nowhere does it say it is wrong to question a leader. God invites questions. He suggests we "test" everything to "prove" what is right.

21. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I Thessalonians 5:21

10. "... prove me now herewith," says Yahweh of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Malachi 3:10

Truth does not fear exposure or test. It is darkness that hides error and deceit. Rulers control people by spreading darkness (fear and confusion) over the land to hide their evil schemes.

Jesus and His men were not blind followers. They sought light, and they radiated the light of Christ. They weren't from the accepted schools. And, they weren't beholden to the system.

Would that men of this kind would rise up in America again. We need some men who are not brain-dead; who have not been trained to be "politically-correct"; men who are not the neutralized, emasculated products of the accepted government schools of today; men who can still observe, discern, analyze and function on their own ... using the sense God gave them.

ACTS 4:14-18 EVASION AND COVERUP: TYPICAL RELIGION AND POLITICS

And seeing the man who was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But having commanded them to go outside the hall of the Sanhedrin, they began conferring among themselves,

Saying, "What shall we do to these men? For indeed it is obvious to all who dwell in Jerusalem that a known miracle has occurred through them; and we are unable to deny it.

"But in order that it spreads no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they no longer speak to men in this name."

And they called them, and charged them all not to be speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus.

THE church/state rulers wanted to publicly vilify the disciples, but they couldn't quite figure out how to do it. It was obvious that a good work had been done through the disciples, and all Jerusalem was aware of it. But, the politicians and priests preferred to discredit them to make the good works appear bad.

This is the mark of a politician.

This shows the difference between rulers and leaders ... as we pointed out in lesson three. Rulers are people who take power unto themselves and squash anyone who stands in the way or teaches truth or liberty.

A leader, on the other hand, leads by example ... living and knowing life as an honorable man.

The prime concern of the politician is NOT the welfare of the

QUESTION: But don't licenses and graduation certificates help insure high standards in businesses and turning out well-educated individuals?

QUESTION: What is so wrong about a loyal company man? He does things by the manual because he is loyal to the head of the company. Is that any different than Christians doing things by the manual called "The Bible" because they are loyal to Jesus?

people! A politician knows that it is not to his advantage to seek truth. No! His own cause is served by hiding and covering up truth, and by seeking power – which requires lying, scheming, and back-stabbing.

Does government hire policemen to keep the public safe? No. They hire policemen to protect themselves from the public. Their purpose is to keep people under the tentacles of government control. People are forced to bow to the government, acquire licenses, and pay fees which pay the policeman's wages.

Now, the disciples wouldn't have encountered any problem at all if they had first gone to the religious rulers and asked what they should teach, and then ask for a license to teach their doctrine. If they had gone on record saying, "*We humbly petition the state for authority to teach*" ... the rulers would not have objected to any miracles that might have occurred. Indeed, the state would have taken credit for them. That would have upheld the state (and not Jesus).

But, the disciples worked in the name of Jesus rather than in the name

of the state. This irritated the rulers. And, it didn't set well that 5,000 people had already been spiritually raised and liberated from the idolatry of state worship.

So, the rulers did what rulers usually do. They issued threats to intimidate the disciples by a display of force. Politicians and priests conspire to bully, steal, and murder. They punish anyone who tries to evade or challenge them, or who prefer the Reign of Jesus.

Make no mistake – these rulers were aware of what was happening! They were careful and deliberate. When they plotted against the disciples they weren't acting in ignorance or error. They knew what they were doing. And, earlier, when they crucified Jesus, their actions were not the result of error or because they couldn't understand Him. They were not ignorant of the fact that Jesus was doing good works. Indeed, it was precisely because they DID understand what was happening that they chose to attack Jesus and His disciples. They knew their power base was threatened by the Reign of Christ.

The rulers also used publicans (tax collectors) to help control the masses through taxation – much like the IRS today. They used every means to get and keep control of the people. The best liars, thieves and murderers rise to the top. It is the nature of central government.

QUESTION: Aren't separatists and radicals militant, violent, and mentally unstable? Aren't they usually just plain losers who want to take it out on everybody? The apostles weren't this way, so why do you call them "separatists"?

ACTS 4:19-22 FAITH IN CHRIST DESTROYS MAN'S GOVERNMENT

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God, you judge.

"For we are unable to stop speaking the things which we have seen and heard."

But, having further threatened them, they released them, finding no excuse to cut them off, because of the people: for all were glorifying God for that which occurred.

For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing occurred.

PETER and John stood their ground and were not deterred by government threats. They had the confidence and boldness that men seem to lack today.

As they carried the gospel to the people, great works were manifested. Five-thousand people heard the good news and their eyes were opened to the evils of man's government. God's light began to expose the dark corners of the system. Peter and John had the boldness to publicly decry the system. They said, in effect, "*Where you (the powers) force us to take sides, we must side with Jesus. You go ahead and do what you think you must do to us ... but we're going to continue to do what we must do!*"

They saw a better way, and taught it. They had faith that there was advantage in following Christ. They believed that the blessings for following Christ out weighed the risks and threats from the rulers.

That faith in God actually caused the rulers to back down. That doesn't happen often. But this time it did.

The government men wanted to nail the disciples' hides to the wall, but they realized it was not politically expedient at that time.

The significance of this drama is not at once apparent to most readers – especially those conditioned already

to believe the church version of the story. The churches and the schools have thoroughly ingrained the necessity of man's government into the minds of the people. Thus, when people who are products of this system read this account of wickedness in high places they assume the problem was just a few bad individuals in government, rather than the government itself. They ignore the obvious facts. Jesus was using Peter and John to expose the evils of the institution.

Think about what Jesus and His disciples were doing. They were overthrowing accepted norms. They were challenging the establishment. They were fomenting "revolution."

Jesus had been raised from the dead. He was reigning! He wasn't retreating to another galaxy. He had ascended His throne, and the kings and merchants of the Earth were getting their first taste of the age (eon) of Christ's Reign. You can see His hand in the changed thinking and in the courses of nations during the first few centuries AD. History shows that amazing events occurred in the name of Jesus – including the downfall of some significant governments. Now that's an encouraging truth the churches conveniently ignore! In fact, since the

time Jesus' was raised from the dead, His reign has been the most important factor in the life and struggle of mankind! Why do people persist in overlooking that obvious fact? Why do people continue to accept the myths and obfuscations of church and state in place of this simple and glorious truth?

Christians need, ingrained in their hearts, the truth that the only good government is that of OUR LORD Jesus Christ – no man-made governments will do! But rulers and their lackeys – the priests – expend great effort and funds indoctrinating people to believe that Christ's kingdom (government) is only for the distant future and should not be recognized today. In accomplishing this bit of mind conditioning, the politicians and preachers are assured that their positions of control remain secure.

These studies in the book of Acts are the early record of the beginning of the reign of Christ. The Bible comes alive with meaning once you see this for what it is.

The churches have suppressed this by trying to explain these great events as only coincidental politics. However, the truth is that GOD WAS ANNOUNCING HIS SON'S REIGN AND SHOWING ITS POWER AND MAJESTY. It was active, unchallengeable, unstoppable. He showed it to Israel primarily, and to the rest of the world through Israel. Israel's new King had ascended His throne, and He had been given all authority in heaven and in earth (as per Matthew 28:18). God showed the world its new King.

The local rulers would have liked to stop what was happening, but they couldn't. The people praised God, instead of the state, for the good works that the apostles did – and the rulers could not stop the works of Christ among them.

“THE YEAR OF OUR LORD”

Since the birth of Christ, time itself has been marked by the title “*of our Lord*”! The initials “A.D.,” placed after the number of the calendar year, stands for “Anno Domini” which is Latin for “*the year of our Lord.*” That title points to the Reign of Christ, and marks the recording of time from the beginning of our King's life.

QUESTION: Instead of revolution, why didn't Jesus seek changes for the better by working peaceably within the system? Didn't their system of government provide the methods to initiate change?

ACTS 4:23-31 GOVERNMENT AGAINST JESUS AND THE PEOPLE

And having been released, they (the disciples) rejoined their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, “Master, You are the One who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things in them:

“The One who by the mouth of our father David, Your child, said:

‘The kings of the earth stood together with the rulers against the Lord, and against His anointed (David).’

“For (in like manner) it is true that, in this city, Herod and Pontius Pilate together with the nations and

people of Israel, came together against your holy child, Jesus.

“To do the things as your hand and counsel determined to be done.

“And now, Lord, see their threats: and grant to your servants to be speaking your word with all boldness,

“In that You will stretch out Your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may occur in the name of Your holy child Jesus.”

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled of holy spirit (motivation), and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

PETER and John were at odds with the rulers and kings of the earth. The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against Jesus. This was a battle of government against the people. And, in as much as the government warred against the people, it also warred against God.

Now, it was also warring against Peter and John.

In the book of Psalms, David put the kingdoms of the Earth in perspective:

25. *Since times of old You (YHWH) have laid the foundation of the land: and the heavens (authorities) are the work of your hands.*

26. *They (the governments) shall perish, but You shall endure: yea, all of them shall grow old like a garment; as a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed:*

27. *But You are the same, and your years shall have no end.*

28. *The children of Your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You.”*

Psalm 102:25-28

The “kings of the earth” came up against Jesus and His disciples. They tried to stop the new kingdom before it got started – but of course they failed.

4. ... and the dragon (the Beast System of “kings of the earth”) stood before the woman (Israel), who was about to give birth, so that when she would give birth he might devour her child (the ecclesia).

5. And she gave birth to a son, a male, who is to be shepherding all the nations with a staff of iron; and her child was caught away to God and to His throne.

Revelation 12:4-5

The “dragon” (Beast System) plotted not only against Jesus, but against the Ecclesia – the System of Christ’s reign. The Beast System began flooding the Earth with disinformation (Rev. 12:15) to prevent righteous judgment. The churches are tools of the Beast System. They neutralize millions with counterfeit “gospels” and a false “christ.”

The common citizens, both then and now, share the blame for this because they have given allegiance to the government systems. The people have acquiesced to popular movements to establish rulers and blindly follow them. Instead, they should have resisted them.

5. ... now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

7. And Yahweh said to Samuel, ... they have not rejected you, but they have

rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

1 Samuel 8:5, 7

2. You shall not follow a multitude (i.e., a majority) to do evil; neither shall you pervert judgment by agreeing with popular opinion when you speak in a cause.

Exodus 23:2

31. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof?

Jeremiah 5:31

The pattern is as old as history itself. Unregenerate man prefers to create his own gods, and make his own laws – i.e., create his own government. Eden was the epitome of this. In Eden, the way of the serpent was systematized into a government. That system is what the Bible calls “the Beast.”

This serpent institution of church/state was the same proverbial dragon that sought to destroy the ecclesia. The beast system was the very thing that Jesus and His disciples exposed ... but most of the people weren't listening.

Even though the common people were not literally fighting against Jesus, they nonetheless gave complicit support to the rulers who were fighting against Jesus. Thus, the people left Jesus’ disciples to face the

enemy alone. Yet, Jesus raised up and enabled his apostles and gave them new life and new inspiration ... so that thousands were hearing of Christ through them. There were over five-thousand already identified in the area. Christ's kingdom could not be stopped, and it was threatening the central establishment.

In verse 31, we see that the disciples' prayer was being answered. There is a boldness that comes to a person who has confidence in Christ. Lack of faith is the result of looking to ourselves. But, when we look to Jesus and understand that He is unstoppable, then it's just a matter of going forward and doing what we must. No one can stop Jesus. We mortals may be stopped, but not Jesus.

At that point, the disciples were seeing great success. They were plowing right through the old obstacles that had stopped everyone before. God was working miracles amongst them.

QUESTION: How can society have any sense of order without a visible government and flesh and blood law enforcers? Aren't men inherently wicked and untrustworthy to govern themselves? Isn't central government the only way to prevent anarchy? The ancient ten commandments cannot fit every possible modern situation and circumstance ... can it? Don't we need legislators who can understand modern law problems and adjust the law system to work in our day?

ACTS 4:32-37 PREPARATORY FUNDING

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: and not one of them was saying that any of the things which he possessed was solely his own, but was shared by them all.

And with great power the apostles were giving witness of the raising up of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

There was not anyone in need among them: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses were selling them, and bringing the values of the things that were sold,

And placed them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made to each according as he had need.

And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is translated, The Son Of Consolation,) a Levite, and a Cyprian by birth,

Having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and placed it at the apostles' feet.

A GAIN, as with Acts 2:44-45, gainsayers have suggested that these verses depict an experiment in Communism. As we explained in lesson two, the ecclesia was preparing for departure. The people were liquidating their stock in Jerusalem and Judea (which was rejecting and killing them) and were investing their "stock" in the new enterprise: the Reign of Christ. The apostles were at the forefront of this ministry to spread the gospel of the kingdom to other lands, and they

were being supported by the many believers who had been awakened. In verse 34 "them" refers to the apostles. So, this verse says that the apostles were supplied the basic needs because ecclesiastics sold their Judean assets and invested themselves and their money to the work. Verse 36 lists Joseph as an example of someone who did this. "Each," in verse 35, means each apostle. Distribution was made to each apostle according to his need.

This was not Communism. It was preparation for another exodus.

Furthermore, some have criticized God's economic laws because the law states that Israelites could not own land:

17. *You shall not therefore oppress one another; but you shall fear your God: for I am Yahweh your God.*

23. *The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine (God's); for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.*

Leviticus 25:23

According to modern dialectic propaganda about Capitalism -vs- Communism, these scriptures could be misconstrued to advocate the practice of Communism (state-owned land). However, when you properly understand God's economic law concerning land possession, the difference is obvious.

Private property is an essential facet of freedom. We must have private property and possession of land to be free. But, private possession of the land under God's Law is not the same as "owning" the land. By preventing Israel from owning land God was preventing them from selling it. Only owners can sell the land. When God owns the land it prevents speculation, usury, taxes, takeovers, private manipulation of prices, or *eminent domain* by a central government.

Under God's Law, each family is allotted a piece of land ... free and clear. The family holds it, but God owns it. Thus, it cannot be lost to other men, tribes, or nations. The land stays in the family and nation to which God gave it as a possession.

Buying and selling land is like buying and selling freedom. Land speculation is like usury ... and it is practiced by the Merchants of The Earth (Revelation 18:11).

We are to POSSESS the land over which we have rights of usage and production. We have right to the air

and the sunlight that we use freely at any time. It is harder to place boundaries on sections of air and sunlight – although governments have tried.

It is the USAGE of the land that we inherit. God does not give us absolute ownership to dispose of the land in any way we please. The land belongs to God. The free use of the land belongs to the people – the families – to which He grants it for an inheritance. These families cannot sell the land. They can sell the usage of the land ... for a limited time period. But, for the protection of future generations within that family, the usage of the land always returns

QUESTION: Under God's Law wouldn't you be restricted to living only in one location all of your life if you couldn't buy and sell land? What if you had to move to another part of the country for one reason or another? You wouldn't be able to. What kind of freedom is this?

to the family and can be leased out no longer than 49 years – maximum.

Buying and selling land is tantamount to buying and selling air and sunlight. It is wrong to buy and sell land ... for it is the basis for family and community. Possession of land – free of tax, free of government control – is a sign of freedom.

When governments assume sovereign power to own the land, the people themselves are also owned by that government. The people, their children, and their heritage are owned and controlled by the government ... to do with, and use, as it wishes.

However, Scripture tells us that we rightly belong to our Lord – NOT TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEN! Jesus told us to render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. **We have been guilty of giving Caesar the things that belong to God – namely, ourselves and the land.** This is treason and conspiracy against God. It is idolatry of the worst sort. No wonder the judgement of God is upon us as a people.

It is time we begin to re-evaluate our position upon the land. It is time we learn God's Word correctly. It is time we, and our children, STOP NURTURING STATE IDOLATRY. It is time for us to worship God instead of the Beast System!

END OF LESSON FOUR.

FOR ANSWERS AND NOTES, SEE ENCLOSED "ANSWER SECTION."

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ANSWERS & COMMENTS

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CHAPTER FOUR:

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Acts 4 brings us to grips with the reality of persecution and resistance. To stand for truth one must OPPOSE untruth. Since untruth (lying, deceiving and coverup) is the distinguishing trait of government, then to oppose untruth automatically pits us against government (or more correctly, it will pit government against us). In government parlance, that is “rebellion.”

2. The Kingdom of Christ has always been at odds with whatever government (kingdom of man) happened to be in power at any particular time.

3. The ecclesia system is the Christian alternative to man’s central government system.

4. Going to jail, or being a fugitive, is no disgrace. Nearly every historic figure we have come to respect and emulate were, in their day, resisting the establishment. Most of them found themselves in jail at least once.

5. External enemies (foreign powers) are rarely a real threat to our domestic welfare and happiness. The biggest threat to any society has ALWAYS been their own man-made government. Enemies from outside can be watched and avoided fairly easily. However, it is impossible to avoid government – because if it exists it already has control. Men who would rule over other men are the greatest enemy of mankind, and should be forbidden.

6. If we need permission from rulers in order to live and work, then we are under bondage (not free). When a body of powerful men demands that we acquire permission (authority) from them before we can function in

society, they have put us into bondage. When we acquiesce to their control, we become slaves. When that body of powerful men is our government, we are slaves to the government.

7. Christ does not require that we get licenses to do our work – providing our work does not damage anyone. A license is an authorization to do that which otherwise would be unlawful. As long as we are lawful (i.e., we are not harming others) no license should be required. In fact, we should not be engaged in activities that hurt others in the first place. Americans have lost their freedom, and their good sense ... and don’t realize it.

8. It is idolatry to seek authority or permission through any other source than the chain of authority under Christ. For children the chain of authority goes to Christ via their parents. For wives it goes to Christ via their husbands.

9. The Beast System (Babylon) has become the repository of every kind of evil and wickedness; “... *the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*” Rev. 18:2.

10. Salvation is the work of Christ upon the Earth. He saves men to live here on Earth as God intended. Salvation is NOT to take men away to another planet or some outer space Utopia.

11. Christ’s Kingdom is not an “otherworldly” experience. It is the Godly structure of ecclesian society – as guided and directed by Scripture and the holy spirit.

12. Christ gave man the keys to the Kingdom almost two millennia ago. The Kingdom has been open to us

ever since. We have only to use the keys – and stop giving allegiance to other gods (other governments). If we follow Yahweh’s laws, believing in Jesus, we have “heaven on Earth.”

ANSWERS:

pg.1

a) In I Samuel 15:23, “rebellion” should have been translated “disobedience.” Disobedience is immoral only if it is against lawful authority. From verses 22 & 24 this is clearly Samuel’s intention.

Disobedience to idols and enemies is not immoral (as shown in Acts 4:19-20).

We are to “*resist devils*” (Jms. 4:7); “*come out of her (Babylon)*” (Rev. 18:4); and “*reward her (Babylon) even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she has filled fill, to her double. How much she has glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her*” (Rev” 18:6-7).

b) Every central government claims to have measures which make it good for the people. None really are. The federal and state system of the US is the modern version of the same beast system which persecuted the prophets, Jesus, and His disciples. Good men cannot stay in government. They are either expelled, or they resign on their own. If they stay in office, they become part of the Beast.

pg.3

No! We should not ignore the enemy. It is dangerous to disregard the Beast. We should avoid it when possible, and teach our children to avoid it ... but keep an eye on it.

Ignore NOTHING! Be aware of what your enemy is doing. Become wise as they (the serpents) so you and your children can survive and JUDGE them one day.

pg. 5

a) Churches teach about a mythical god – a character invented in the minds of pagans – to whom they have given the name “Jesus.” They never teach the true historical Jesus of the Bible – nor do they know Him. They are the ones of whom Jesus speaks in Matt. 7:22-23. These claim to have done great works in His name, but, He says they work only iniquity (lawlessness), and that He never knew them.

b) Devils usually perform some good deeds ... along with the bad. That is what makes them so cunning. If they only performed bad deeds they could trick no one. The serpent (false prophet) in the Garden of Eden told both truth and lie. If he had only lied, he could not have appeared credible enough to trick Adam and Eve.

Producing presidents (top-level criminals) is hardly a recommendation for Freemasonry.

pg. 7

a) No! Just the opposite. Licenses and certificates only guarantee complacency in a government-controlled society. And those standards are set by individuals whose goal is NOT excellence or quality, but rather keeping people under control. Therefore, the standards are set at a sufficiently low level so as to keep the slaves perpetually BELOW the masters. Licenses and certificates perpetuate ignorance and inefficiency by perpetuating slavery.

b) A “company man” (patriot) is loyal to THE COMPANY (government) rather than to TRUTH. He will uphold the company even when it is wrong – especially when there is reward for him. This is not the way of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

A “company man” is like a churchgoer who opts to support the church when the church opposes Christ. Any person, or institution, that

considers truth a threat should be avoided.

pg. 8

Politicians and bankers definitely consider separatists to be “losers.” Free-thinking researchers also are “heretics” in the eyes of the establishment. The Apostles were “losers” in the eyes of government and other “company men.” Martin Luther was a “loser” in the eyes of the Vatican. Patrick Henry was a “loser” in the eyes of Centralists.

Jesus and his disciples were rejected as losers and misfits by the elite rulers of Jerusalem. All the apostles were hated and/or slain by the governments of their day. From God’s perspective, they were precious, holy and successful.

It all depends upon one’s perspective.

pg. 9

Every government claims, as a public-relations tool, to be open to criticism. However, no government will allow change that will alter its purpose and nature. It is the purpose and nature of all government to control and use the public. Therefore, government cannot allow basic change, otherwise it would lose its power base.

Babylon always acts as Babylon. Babylon cannot be changed from within. Babylon never changes except when starved or overthrown.

God has told us how to remedy our problem. He said to “*come out of her*” and “*be separate*,” and “*touch not the unclean thing.*” He did NOT tell us to join the unclean thing and become part of her!

pg. 11

Yes, men ARE untrustworthy and can’t be trusted to govern themselves – ESPECIALLY policemen, judges, politicians and bankers! That is why

they should never have power over other men. They can’t even govern their own lives! What makes people think these devils can govern us?

It is insane to think that individual men who are untrustworthy can be trusted in groups. Devils conspiring together in congress become more dangerous ... not more trustworthy.

We do not advocate Anarchy. Anarchy is the rejection of all government. We only reject man’s government. We want a different form of government (the kingdom of God).

Crime (sin) is still the same today as when God gave Moses the 10 Commandments. It is still wrong to hurt others without cause. We need no new legislators or laws to change that simple truth. All we need is godly elders and judges to make appropriate application of God’s laws.

pg. 12

Under God’s rules of land possession, a family could lease out its land-use grant ... if they needed to move off the land. At the end of the 50-year Jubilee cycle the land would revert back to the family unless their needs had changed.

However, moving from place to place is NOT generally what people prefer. Usually, putting down roots and building family security and inheritance is the Christian ideal.

In this past century, government and banking policies have made it more and more difficult to put down roots and stay in one place. The rulers like it this way because it is much easier to control people who are insolvent and without land or property. Thus, almost all farms, ranches, and businesses turn over every few years – either from foreclosure, confiscation, or speculation investment. As a result, most people rarely live in one location more than 10 years.