



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Record of the Beginning of Jesus' Reign

Chapter Six

INTRODUCTION

QUESTION: The Book of Acts seems to expose the weakness of Israel and her perennial need to be saved from her mistakes and sins. Why didn't God create people that would naturally keep His laws instead of constantly failing and reverting to pagan ways? Why didn't God make a more perfect creation?

IN CHAPTER SIX we continue following the events surrounding the Apostles and their works in Christ's Reign. This chapter, like the earlier ones, describe these events in terms of how they relate to government.

Unfortunately, the churches have given it a religious twist, making it impossible for people to understand. But, if people can shake that religious/mythological view of the Bible and history and use a common sense approach, they will be able to see that the pervasive Beast System government has been the great enemy of liberty all down through history.

History shows that governments have always controlled and twisted the records and information before giving it out for public consumption. These tricks were being used in ancient Jerusalem as they are today. All central governments are basically the same – including the U.S. Government. They ALL, by their very nature, are at war against the reign of Christ.

The issue of Jesus's nature surfaces again in verse seven as we focus on the word “logos.” Study this definition carefully, for it is another scriptural evidence that Jesus is not Yahweh, but Yahweh's Son.

Finally we take a close look at the man Stephen. It is important to correctly identify the reason he was murdered by the Pharisees and Sadducees. They hated him and feared him, but not because of his church membership; not because he liked to sing and pray, or wouldn't cuss, smoke, drink, or lose his temper. He wasn't martyred for being a nice guy.

He was murdered because he advocated a Kingdom that conflicted with the Sanhedrin. His crime was sedition. He was killed by religious/political zealots.

As chapter six unfolds, notice that the Word of God was increasing, and the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was up in arms. The reign of Christ had started “turning the world upside down,” and the Jerusalem government found itself dealing with the possibility of revolution. There was excitement and perplexity: excitement among all who followed Christ ... and perplexity among the priests and politicians.

What we must emphasize here, more than anything else, is that **THIS HISTORICAL CONFLICT WAS NOT ONLY RELIGIOUS IN NATURE, IT WAS ALSO POLITICAL.** Jesus and his apostles offended not merely the heads of religion but also the heads of government ... because they were offering a higher form of society. Oppression under man's establishment was being exposed by truth and exposure to God's system.

As a background to this lesson, a brief review of Israel history is in order. Seven hundred years earlier, Yahweh had put away Israel (divorced her) because she was whoring after heathen governments (other husbands). He let her go, to pursue the

things she preferred. She wanted to be taken captive (taken as concubine) by heathen government ... including the ungodly kingships that came from within the Israel nation after the time of the judges. From that time, up to the writing of the Book of Acts, Israel was, in one way or another, captive under ungodly governments. She was enslaved under Assyria's government, then under Babylon's government. Later, Persia's government ruled them. Then, Greece's government ruled them. By the time of the writing of Acts, Rome had become ruler of the known world. Israel, scattered and disoriented, was subject to each of these kingdoms which came to power.

Each successive ruling empire had the basic characteristics of Babylonian Centralism.

These empires, each in turn, absorbed and ruled over Israel for approximately 700 years. During that time Israel was not a sovereign nation. The majority of the Israelites were scattered away from Jerusalem, all around the world, leaving just a few there in the Jerusalem area.

The Book of Acts shows that after centuries of idolatry and chasing after heathen systems, Israel had lost most everything she once had. That was the backdrop into which Jesus was sent for the purpose of reintroducing Israel to her forgotten God.

The times were changing. Yahweh was offering freedom and a new way.

He had given Israel a godly system before. Some twenty four centuries earlier God gave Moses principles and laws for a system to righteously govern the people. That system worked perfectly until, about fourteen centuries later when Israel decided she preferred human kings like the heathen nations around her. They demanded kings ... so God gave them kings (1 Sam. 8).

It was hard times from then on.

In the book of Acts, after so long a time, Israel was once again offered new life ... to be redeemed from her lost condition. It was a great and momentous time.

In the previous lesson I pointed out that the beast system was starting

to lose its grip over the followers of Christ. But before this, Israel had gotten lost by following men

For instance, in Micah 4, speaking of the people of Israel:

9a. Now why do you cry out aloud? is there no king in you?

Here, God is using satire. Israel had once honored Him as King during the time of the judges. But the people came to prefer human kings over them – like the other nations. Subsequently, in Micah 4, as they struggled with their oppressive government ... God poses a rhetorical question: "Can't your preferred kings help you?"

9b. is your counsellor perished?

(Where are the wise among you?)

9c. for pangs have taken you as a woman in travail.

Trouble was upon Israel ... and she couldn't suppress it. Nobody could stop the process any more than childbirth can be stopped once it starts.

10. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now you shall go forth out of the city, and you shall dwell in the field, and you shall go even to Babylon: there shall you be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

Micah 4:9, 10

This prophecy says that Israel would go into Babylon, but it didn't mean only a geographical area. Rather, it meant that Israel was taking on Babylonian ways. When Babylonian-type governments rule a land, no matter where, the people there are "in Babylon."

Now look at Micah 5 where the Bible talks about yet another change of government:

2. But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the

thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth He that is to reign in Israel; whose place of going forth was established in antiquity.

3. Therefore will He (God) give them (the thousands of Judah) over (to Babylon), until the time that she (Israel) which travails has given birth: then the remnant of his (Judah's) brethren shall return to the sons of Israel.

Micah 5:2,3

This agrees with Revelation 12 which portrays deliverance of the remnant from the beast through the manchild system that was to be born. In Acts we see the beast system trying to destroy that manchild (ecclesia system). However, the Head of the ecclesia system, Jesus, is indestructible. He cannot be destroyed and neither can His ecclesia.

In Matthew 2, there is a quote from Micah 5:2:

6. And you Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of you shall come a Governor, that shall shepherd my people Israel.

Matthew 2:6

Again, this refers to Jesus and His ecclesia system.

Most people tend to interpret the Bible from a religious mind set. I keep telling people to interpret it from the standpoint of government.

In Luke 1 we see a prophecy from Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. This prophecy has to do with the coming of a savior/leader – the new Shepherd of Israel:

67. And his (John's) father Zacharias was filled with holy spirit, and prophesied, saying,

68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has taken notice and delivered his people,

69. And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

"Horn" depicts something strong and solidly fixed in place. God raised up a strong and solid Savior who came from the house of David.

70. *As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from that age:*

71. *Of salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

Churches claim that Jesus "saves" people from going to "Hell" so they can go to "Heaven." But, Zacharias, prophesying by the holy spirit, said that God's salvation was from our enemies! In this case Israel's present enemy was the Dragon System ... the same as today: man's central government and those who enslave us religiously and financially.

72. *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;*

73. *The oath which he swore to our father Abraham,*

74. *That he would grant to us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him fearlessly,*

75. *In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

Luke 1:67-75

Notice that "serving God fearlessly" was a salvation that took place there, in their lifetime – not in some other age, and not in the outer-space "Heaven" of church myth. Churches teach the old pagan doctrine of the "immortal soul" that continues living after a man dies. That "soul" then is supposed to go to "Heaven" (if it is "saved") and continue to live without its body. Verse 75, however, destroys that myth. It describes the time of salvation as "all the days of our life." That's what is meant by the Reign of Christ. This salvation – this change – began there in Judea. Then as the persecution of Christians forced them to leave Judea they took the gospel

message with them to other nations.

QUESTION: Are you saying that "religious" people who attend churches are bad people?

QUESTION: How can bankers be the enemies of the people? Aren't they providing a necessary service to keep our economy working? How could we exist without bankers?

ACTS 6:1 GREEKS AND HEBREWS BOTH ISRAELITES

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

DISCIPLINEMENT was growing. If you think of the disciples in terms of citizens of the Kingdom of God, or citizens of Christ's Reign, you can see that the Kingdom (Christ's Reign) was taking root in their minds.

The identity of the Greeks and Hebrews in this verse is interesting. Most of the disciples in Jerusalem were Greeks by nationality and Hebrews by race. But here we have a statement that says: "There arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews." I suppose this could be interpreted, on the face of it, to be a disagreement between two races of people. Upon further study, however, it turns out that this verse refers to their language and nationality – not their race. They were Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking Israelites. Greek was the major language of the day, but some Israelites still spoke Hebrew ... and apparently they tended to form into groups. So, the Greek-speaking group was complaining to the Hebrew-speaking group that their widows were being neglected in the daily administration and distribution of the funds for widows. The administrators of the fund were the Hebrew-speaking group.

ACTS 6:2-6 TEACHERS NOT BOOKKEEPERS

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples to them, and said, It is not reasonable that we should leave the word of God to keep records.

Wherefore, brethren, select among you seven men of honest report, full of holy spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and holy spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them (i.e., commissioned them).

THE leaders, or patriarchs, of the ecclesia called the disciples to a meeting of the body politic. They heard complaints about the Greek widows being neglected in the daily ministrations. So they identified the problem and rendered a solution. They said "It is not reasonable that we (the apostles) should leave the word of God to keep records." (In the King James Version it says "tables" instead of "records." In the vernacular of 1611, these were not tables for meals, but tables of numbers ... record books, ledgers, etc.). The twelve apostles couldn't do their work and keep the records too. They were the patriarchs of Christ's Reign, and had their hands full with their primary work. They needed others to help with record-keeping and the domestic caretaking of the widows and the needy.

So, seven men were chosen from among the disciples. They had to be honest men so they weren't bankers or lawyers. They were just honest men. Honesty is the main qualification for an official in Christ's system.

Today, bankers and treasurers learn economics via man's law. They learn the Babylonian skill of usury. But the apostles didn't want bankers or lawyers; they wanted honest men.

The scope of the ministry must have been sizable if they needed seven men to keep records of their treasury and administer the benevolent fund. These were the

original deacons (or servants) taking care of the records of the money and possessions. It shows an interesting non-church perspective of their operation.

When the apostles said, in verse 4, that they would be continually praying, we should not envision this as traditional religious paintings have rendered them. Religious paintings picture the apostles as passive, effeminate creatures with long hair, standing around looking "holy." Being "holy" in the traditional church sense consists of having a halo over your head, tilting your head downward, looking pitifully passive, and clasping your hands together.

Of course, that image is absurd.

The apostles were men of action. They didn't while away their time meditating on mysterious and meaningless religious puzzles. They dealt with Kingdom questions. They were busy teaching Kingdom principles.

Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas were the seven original deacons. They managed the treasury and kept records.

"Laid their hands on them," in verse 6, means that they appointed them, commissioned them, and gave

them authority. It doesn't have anything to do with the superstition of mystical forces being channeled into other people through one's hands.

QUESTION: Does verse 3 admit that the work the apostles were doing was indeed a "business?" What is the difference between the business the apostles were doing and typical church business?

QUESTION: Why do you claim that all bankers and lawyers are dishonest?

ACTS 6:7 THE MEANING OF "LOGOS"

And the logos of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

THERE is an on-going controversy in the churches about who Jesus really is. Much of the argument revolves around the Greek word "logos" as it is used in John 1:1. "Logos" was translated in the King James Version as "Word" (capitalized, as if a proper noun). Church theologians claim this "Word" in John 1:1 is actually Jesus. And people who rely on the King James Version can get confused about the relationship of Jesus to Yahweh because John 1:1 (KJV) says "... and the Word (logos) was God."

But, the first chapter of John isn't the only place we find the "logos." "Logos" here in Acts 6:7 is commonly translated "word" (not capitalized). It is the exact same Greek word in both instances. In John 1:1, some claim "logos" equals "Jesus." However, "logos" in Acts 6:7 obviously cannot mean "Jesus" –

... and this is also the case in scores of other occurrences of this word. The bottom line is: "logos" simply does not – CANNOT – be another word for "Jesus"!

"Logos" more closely means "communication" or "reason" ... as reflected in the old English definition:

"LOGOS: The rational principle that governs and develops the universe."

For a principle to be rational it must be communicated.

It is essential that we learn the accurate meaning of the words regardless what kings and theologians want us to believe.

The "logos" of God "increased." That means that reason and communication between God and Man increased. Comprehension was growing. Through Jesus, God was planting the "logos" in the hearts of people. Men who had not known God were coming to know Him. As this verse relates, even some of the priests were comprehending! Of course, that meant that they would have to give up their career in priestcraft – losing their positions of "importance."

This was the primary purpose of Jesus: to cause "the logos" of God to increase: to communicate the concept of God's Kingdom.

QUESTION: Why don't you believe Jesus' primary purpose was to save us for the next life? Isn't that important to you?

QUESTION: Don't people decide for themselves whether or not the word (the logos) increases?

GREEK "LOGOS" AS RELATED TO JESUS

It is no coincidence that the modern English terms, "**logo and logic**," are very similar to the word, "**logos**." In fact, they are from the same base.

A LOGO communicates through a logical symbol or a brand. By the same token, Yahweh's LOGOS is communication by logic. Thus, the logos is a complete and accurate transmission of reason. Jesus communicates His Father's truth: the good news of His Kingdom. His title (Christ) is even used to identify those who receive this logic (Acts 19:9, 23, 24:22). Those who IDENTIFY with the logic of Yahweh are called "Christians."

Let's look at John 1:1 where this term makes an important appearance. "Logos" is generally translated "word," inferring "thought," "something said," or "something written." However, in John 1:1 the KJV translators capitalized it ("Word") as a proper noun or actual name. Here, theologians claim it is an alternative name for Jesus.

This same passage in the KJV says that "the Word was God." Thus, they conclude that Jesus is the Word, the Word is God, thus Jesus is God.

However, correctly translated John 1:1 says, "*In the beginning was the logos (the communication). And the logos (the communication) was of God, and God was the logos (the communication)*" (God himself initiated communication with man).

Yahweh revealed himself through Adam and later through Jesus. The logos/communication came through Adam and through Jesus. Yahweh was revealing himself to mankind.

QUESTION: If Jesus and Yahweh are not the same person, then wouldn't we have two kings? And if Jesus is supernatural like Yahweh, then wouldn't we have two Gods? How can you reconcile this with the Old Testament verses which direct Israel to have ONE God and not multiple gods like the heathen?

ACTS 6:8 STEPHEN

And Stephen was full of grace and power, and did great signs and proofs among the people.

FOR the next seventy verses, starting in verse eight, we'll be reading the account of Stephen, one of the seven deacons just appointed. In verse three we read that the deacons were to be honest, full of holy spirit, and wise. As we read about Stephen, you'll see why he qualified for the office and was, therefore, chosen as one of the deacons.

Stephen may have been the first disciple, after Christ's crucifixion, to suffer martyrdom at the hands of the lackeys of the Beast System. We'll read this account in the next lesson.

Think on this: the thing that got Stephen killed was not a disagreement over church doctrine. It wasn't an argument over a religious question. No, it was a

disagreement over who was king. It was a clash between the system of God, and the system of man. Christ's Kingship vs. the Judean Sanhedrin. Two systems; two groups of people. For one brief, painful day, Stephen became the focal point of the clash between these two diametrically opposed systems.

Notice the correct word "proofs" instead of "wonders" in verse eight. "Portents" is another possible translation. The works of the apostles were not focused upon wonders and miracles as much as upon proofs of Christ's Reign and confirming the gospel of the Kingdom.

Stephen wasn't a miracle man. He was an advocate of Christ. Stephen was filled with the spirit of God. Doing "portents" does not mean that he was performing magic or working miracles. Doing "proofs" or "portents" means he was discerning the times and the circumstances and giving evidence of Christ's Reign. When you portend something you are

showing that a particular event or situation leads to a specific result. In Stephen's case he was giving strong evidence to show that Christ was Reigning. He was a political observer, or analyst, watching what the enemy was doing ... marking it, noting it, relating it to the people. He accurately analyzed what was happening and he portended for the people where these events were leading. He told the people what was really happening, rather than what they had been told by the political and religious spin doctors (the counterparts to our modern churches and controlled news media).

Its no wonder they killed Stephen. They had to. He was wrecking their con game. Some of us grew up being told that they killed Stephen because he was too godly and certain men were jealous of him. But that's not why they killed him. They killed him because he saw through their lies, and because he was helping people find truth.

IN verse nine the political spin doctors appear. They could not defeat Stephen's logic by their rhetoric, so they sought out some scoundrels-for-hire and bribed them to be false witnesses.

Modern-day news reporters and commentators are the counterparts of these spin doctors from the synagogue of the Libertines. They prostitute themselves by lying for money and whoring after the rulers instead of reporting the truth.

The propagandists were sent against Stephen to discredit and demonize him in the public's eye ... just like the media does today. Somebody speaks the truth publicly ... people start seeing the truth ... and the rulers respond by sending in some sophisticated rhetoricians with titles and credentials to redefine the "facts" for public consumption.

These were the biggest cards the rulers could play, and they still couldn't discredit Stephen! They just couldn't make Stephen's words go away. Their verbal tricks couldn't stop the exposure, so they resorted to slander and violence.

Some things never change.

Verses 13 and 14 relate how these rulers conspired with false witnesses to make the false charge of blasphemy. On the strength of this false charge they arrested him and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

The bribed liars testified that Stephen was blaspheming "this holy place," which obviously meant Jerusalem or, more specifically, the government in Jerusalem. It follows that if you're blaspheming the government then you are blaspheming the lawmakers. Thus, Stephen's antagonists were the lawmakers. Again, this is a government issue not a religious issue.

These propagandists – in true news-media form – were not only lying about Stephen, but were also lying about their customs. They claimed their customs were from Moses. That was absolutely false! Moses didn't deliver the customs held by these Pharisees and Sadducees. Their customs came from Babylon.

ACTS 6:9-14 WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS ... RESORT TO SLANDER

Then there arose certain ones of the synagogue which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.

Then they induced men to say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

And set up false witnesses, which said, This man continues to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

The political/religious system of Jerusalem at that time had been imported from Babylon. In fact, their Talmud boasts of their Babylonian origins.

The laws of the Pharisees were Babylon's twisted rewrite of the laws of Moses. Israel once had the law of Moses, but they abandoned it long before the time of Acts. For the Pharisees to claim that their contemporary customs were the laws of Moses is like someone today claiming that America is free. America once had freedom, but she lost it. Jerusalem once had the law of Moses, but she had long since abandoned her God and his laws. The Jews had imported their laws from Babylon ... from whence they immigrated some 300 years earlier.

Their claims were lawyer's rhetoric. It was deception. This is typical political trickery playing to the ears of the gullible, the ignorant, and the irresponsible.

ACTS 6:15 THE FACE OF AN ANGEL?

And those sitting in the Sanhedrin, looking stedfastly on him (Stephen), saw that his face was the face of a messenger.

THE KJV translators chose typical church phraseology here. They give Stephen "the face of an angel." In church circles that means Stephen had a mythical cherub-like face.

But what is the text actually saying? We know what kind of man Stephen really was, and he wasn't "angelic" in the modern sense of the term. He certainly was no androgynous cherub.

The Greek text says he had the face of an "*angellos*." If we translate *angellos* correctly we get "messenger." "*Face*" means "countenance" or "expression." The men in this council looked at Stephen and saw a messenger of God. They saw a man with whom God communicated. He knew who his enemies were, and what they were thinking. When they looked at him, they could see that his face was resolute, solid and sure – the face of a messenger of God who would not cave-in under their persecution.

In our next lesson we will study the message that Stephen, the "messenger" of God, gave them.

You'll see why Stephen was recognized as a messenger of God, and why the Sanhedrin hated and feared him. We'll read Stephen's message that he delivered to the Sanhedrin. That message declared Jesus (the man recently murdered by the Sanhedrin) to be the true Christ and King – the true Authority at the right hand of God. That statement fueled the already-burning fury of the Sanhedrin. In typical political fanaticism the priests attacked Stephen.

In Jerusalem the Sanhedrin was the head of government. They made law and judged cases. Their government was authorized by Rome's empirical government. For most local matters the Sanhedrin was the last word.

This religious body of priests held and enforced the Babylonian laws and customs imported to Jerusalem earlier. The sacred laws and customs of the Sanhedrin were Babylonian laws and customs.

It was this Babylonian body of laws and customs, and its advocates (the Sanhedrin), with which Stephen

QUESTION: Should we all try to be like Stephen and suffer martyrdom or persecution? Can we still be good Christians if we don't "go out in a blaze of glory" defending the honor of Christ?

QUESTION: Don't you think news reporting is an important service necessary for a well-informed public?

found himself in mortal conflict. Unfortunately, he was their political prisoner ... at the mercy of a system that had no mercy, or honesty.

We'll study this account in detail in chapter seven.

END OF CHAPTER SIX.

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

ANSWERS & COMMENTS

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CHAPTER SIX:

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The Bible is truth and common sense ... not religious mythology. Therefore, it should be interpreted from a common-sense viewpoint – not from a religious mythical viewpoint.
2. Envision the events that occurred in Acts as if they were happening today ... and not in some remote “Bible time.” Remember, the basic elements of society and government remain the same. *“There is nothing new under the sun.”* And, of course, God does not change.
3. Governments in which the power is invested in men have always been, and always will be, a collection of criminals and purveyors of deceit and dirty tricks. Never make the mistake of assuming that governments and politicians are constrained by good motives in any of their devices. This is especially true with respect to the Sanhedrin’s reaction to Stephen.
4. Stephen’s crime was “sedition” against the Sanhedrin. He was declaring a separate Kingdom.
Sedition is a charge used by rulers to suppress dissent. Historically, among pioneers and freedom seekers, sedition has been an honorable label – a virtue. This was the case among the colonists in early America. Sedition was not thought a crime in the early decades of this country. Indeed, it was the spirit upon which independence was built. Sadly, that spirit has withered over the years.
The original meaning of “sedition,” as defined in the etymological dictionary, was: *to go apart, or to separate from.* When Americans possessed some familiarity with Holy Scripture they felt no shame for being a separate

people ... as their guide in life (the Bible) taught them to be a separate people.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17).

“But as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conduct. Because it is written, You will be holy for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

“Holy” means “separate.” Thus, man’s government has redefined the virtue of being “holy” and made it a crime labeled “sedition.”

This was Stephen’s crime before the Sanhedrin.

5. When reading the Book of Acts don’t think about “church” – think about government.

6. Remember that salvation is now. And because we are saved NOW, God expects us to serve Him NOW. Avoid the Futurist mentality of putting off salvation into the future.

7. The prophecies of the Bible that look forward to “deliverance” often call for people to repent in order to be delivered. The application of the prophecy, or its fulfillment, often depends upon the general state of mind of the public, rather than a mere time sequence.

Therefore, many prophecies apply more than once in the flow of history. Whenever the situation, or disposition, of those to whom the prophecy is aimed, matches that of the prophecy, it is applicable repeatedly. It can conceivably happen over and over. This is true of the Bible’s application of the terms “salvation,” “deliverance” and “judgment.”

8. “Deacons” were not church officers. They were “ministers and servers” appointed to assist the leaders (elders/patriarchs). In this chapter, “deacons” were appointed to serve as recorders and bookkeepers.

9. The Jerusalem government (the Sanhedrin) killed Stephen not because he was religious, but because his words threatened their hold over the people.

10. “Logos” means “communication,” “reason,” or “actual intent.” It NEVER means “Jesus” – except in reference to his communication to man. “Logos” is usually translated in the KJV as “word” ... which does not adequately represent the Greek term.

11. Stephen was no pushover. He was not just “a nice guy.” He was a MAN in the true sense of the word. The Sanhedrin was threatened by him ... and it wasn’t because of his polite manners.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

pg.1

The questions of “why,” regarding God’s reasons in creating, are often the result of people misunderstanding the creation itself. God made his creation just as He wanted it. With regard to man He created us imperfect, with an inherent need ... the need for Him. Without Him we are incomplete. That incompleteness is expressed in our imperfections and weaknesses.

God created man exactly as He wanted him ... with an inherent need for continual commune and oneness with Him – not unlike the need family members have for one another.

pg.3

a) Not necessarily. They may just be ignorant. Nevertheless, idolatry – witting or unwitting – brings problems.

Chasing churches makes men unwitting idolaters. They make themselves blind to reality and to the Kingdom of God.

b) Banking operates on the principle of usury (theft). Banks are therefore criminal institutions. Furthermore, bankers conspire with politicians to enslave the people under their system. Thievery and slavery do NOT help to keep an economy working or to keep our society viable.

pg. 4

a) The word “business,” as used in verse three, was rendered from a Greek word which literally means “a need.” It was a work that needed to be done. The needed work of the Apostles pertained to building and supporting the community and society – not church. In contrast, church business pertains to building and supporting churches. The difference is obvious.

b) Banking (as stated above) is thievery. Also, lawyers are agents and instruments of the state. Their business is to uphold the state. They have no choice but to “interpret” and apply law according to the dictates of the state. They legitimize bankers and tax collectors who steal from private industry.

Banks are sometimes thought of as storehouses for money. However, this is not their purpose. Banks exist to make profit by debt and usury. Both bankers and lawyers perpetuate the system of theft and corruption called “the state.”

pg. 5

a) “Salvation” and “the next life” are both important to me – as with everyone who follows Christ. However, Jesus’ Reign (his salvation) was accomplished to help man in THIS life ... not the next life. In the next life, when we are immortal, we will have no further need to be saved. Jesus lived, died, and was raised to

save us in our daily lives in the here-and-now. The “good news” of salvation was for THIS LIFE.

b) The logos (communication) is initiated from God. However, since the logos is a gift to man it can be accepted or rejected. Man can accept the light, or reject it (Jn. 1:4-5; 3:19). Christ’s logos/communication is like gravity, we can recognize it or ignore it – but choosing to ignore it can prove disastrous.

c) The commandment is, literally, “*You shall have no gods before me*” (i.e., “competing with me”). There are many gods and many kings. But, there is only one Yahweh, and only one Jesus the Son.

Scripture sometimes called men “gods”: Moses (Ex. 7:1), the judges (21:6 9; 22:8 & 9; 1Sam. 2:25) - the word “judges” in these passages is a gross mistranslation. The actual Hebrew word is “elohim”: “god.” Leaders in Israel were “gods” (22:28; Ps. 82:1, 6; Jn. 10:34-35). Thus the title “god” does not mean “supernatural being.” See 1Cor. 8:4-6. “Gods” come in all shapes and conditions.

“God” and “King” are titles which partially express the persons of Yahweh and Jesus. These titles do not fully define the Father or the Son.

Being aware of various gods (mighty ones ... real or imagined) obviously does not constitute idolatry, any more than being aware of various rulers. However, confusing other gods with Yahweh, or with Jesus, or changing the meaning of either, or giving credence to mythical gods, or believing other gods to be on an equal plane with Yahweh or Jesus DOES constitute idolatry.

By the same token, using the word “God” to express the status of either Yahweh or Jesus is no more idolatry than Moses and the judges being called “gods” in the Bible.

The law against idolatry does not preclude the awareness of more than one god. What is condemned is the thinking that other “gods” (real or imagined) can be like, or equal to, Yahweh or his Son, Jesus.

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a) Martyrdom is not the goal of the Christian. It is, however, sometimes his lot.

I have observed too many men obsessed about “going out in a blaze of glory” and too little concerned about upholding Christ’s Reign through his life here and now.

Defending the honor of Christ’s principles for mankind is our commission in this life – as well as in death ... if needs be.

We cannot know in advance what the enemy may do to us, or what God will allow. We can only live for Christ. This pursuit is the best we can do, and the best life possible for us. This will dictate our responses to whatever challenges lie ahead. As with Stephen, a man following the Way of Christ cannot always avoid conflict, either great or small. All we can do is determine, no matter how great or small the conflict, to face it in the name of Jesus. To do otherwise is to diminish ourselves and bring shame to our Savior.

b) Accurate, honest news reporting can be a great asset to a liberty-loving society. However, when the news media are owned by Christ’s enemies they manipulate, twist, and otherwise destroy truth. In this, the controlled media is nothing more than a propaganda arm of the Beast System. It not only fails to keep us informed, it works to our detriment by making us misinformed and confused.

“If you don’t read the newspapers you are uninformed; if you do read the newspapers you are misinformed.”

–Mark Twain