



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Record of the Beginning of Jesus' Reign

Chapter Twelve

INTRODUCTION

NOTE: This chapter takes us out of the analytic mode of fine tuning doctrine, back into the chronicling of Jesus' Kingship.

Man's system had run amuck in Jerusalem. The powerful enemies of Christ in Jerusalem were persecuting his disciples. Christians were forced to "flee to the mountains" (i.e., "nations").

Casualties were growing. Lines were being drawn, and sides were becoming more defined. More and more the enemy was being forced to show its hand.

AS we continue chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse in this remarkable letter, a picture is developing. The picture does not resemble anything painted by the churches. Instead of a picture of religion, it is a picture of basic logic and beauty. It is the picture, or theme, of the Reign of Christ among men.

Understood properly, this theme – although it has been neglected and covered under centuries of church tradition and myth – explains its title: *The Acts of the Apostles*. Those recorded *acts* reflect the operations of a different system; a new Reign.

Israel's new King, and his ministers, were going into action. These *acts* are recorded herein. The apostles were the new King's ministers, and this book is a history of the confrontations and the victories of that new Kingship (Reign) as it came to Israel via the New Covenant.

"And through this he (Jesus) is the mediator of the new covenant, so that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the former covenant, those called might receive the promise of the eonian inheritance."

Heb. 9:15

In Acts 11 we found that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first labeled "Christian." There in Antioch a vital Christian ecclesia was forming. It was an active and growing community, building upon the principles of law and freedom as taught by Christ. They were pioneers – introducing Christ's Reign and disaffecting the rule of men. But these works were not just *theirs*. The apostles "*acts*" were, in essence, the new King's engagements of war against the Beast.

The world was seeing something new. The established governments and their rulers were coming in contact with the Kingship of Christ, and they didn't know what to do with it. It wouldn't go away, and it wouldn't be manipulated and used like other systems they'd seen. Something was happening that they couldn't control.

Jesus' Kingship, also known as "the Reign of Christ," defied political science of that day. It didn't fit accepted parameters of religion and politics. Christ's ecclesia recognized no king but Jesus. It became known as "the Way," and "Christianity."

In subsequent generations, churches arose and claimed to speak for Christianity ... but taught a different gospel. These churches reinvented Christianity, all the while retaining the label "Christian." They were merely reincarnated pagan synagogues. They usurped the name "Christian," and in truth did not resemble true Christianity. Churches have usurped and soiled the name "Christian," and have misused and

redefined the term.

Terms such as “the Christian system,” “the Christian way of life” or “Christendom” (a contraction meaning “Christ’s Kingdom”) did not originally mean “the church” as commonly thought today. Rather, it meant “the Way of Christ” as manifested in the Christian Community (i.e., the Ecclesia).

The Christians at Antioch grew in number. Prophets, teachers, men of wisdom were drawn there to work in the vineyard of the Lord. The Jerusalem area, for a time, had been the focus of Jesus’ work until the persecution drove Christians out.

Now, Antioch was becoming the hub of Christian activity in accordance with Jesus’ command in Acts 1:8. He instructed His apostles to declare the gospel of his Kingship in Jerusalem and Judea first, then in Samaria, then in the farthest reaches of the land.

And, while Antioch wasn’t “the farthest reaches of the land,” it was a jumping off point for disciples on their missions to the “farthest” places. Antioch, being removed from the Babylonian stronghold of Jerusalem, was more conducive to ecclesian culture and better suited to facilitate the work of Christ. Jerusalem, being proud of its hybrid central church/

state (a conglomeration of Babylonian, Jewish, and Roman civics) rejected Jesus’ Reign, crucified Him, stoned Stephen, and ran out most of the Christians.

Antioch lay about 300 miles due north of Jerusalem, in Syria, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Antioch served as a natural rest stop for Christianity as it began to work its way toward Europe, Ireland, Scotland, England, and eventually America.

With this historical background, let’s pick up the continuing story in chapter 12.

ACTS 12:1-3 JAMES THE APOSTLE: PUBLIC ENEMY #1

Now about that time king Herod set his hand to persecute some from the ecclesia.

And he put James the brother of John to the sword.

And as he saw it pleased the Judeans, he proceeded further to take Peter also (these were the days of unleavened bread.)

SINCE the beginning of the upheaval caused by Jesus, the Herod administration had been plagued with problems. But now a window of opportunity seemed to be appearing. He had killed James, and imprisoned Peter much to the delight of the Judeans. In pursuance of more public approval, he decided to do something special for the Judeans during the time of their Feast of Unleavened Bread. He would capture and kill Peter too. It should be a good political move. After all, public reaction to his killing of James had been favorable.

The Judeans, in verse 3, who were elated at the killing of James, were the representatives of the church (synagogue) in Judea. They were opposed to the Reign of Christ.

James and his brother John, together, had been nicknamed “the sons of thunder.” Jesus dubbed them thus for their fiery dispositions. In Luke we read about one incident which helped get them that title.

51. And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received (i.e., confirmed as the Savior), he set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52. And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for him.

53. And they (the Samaritans) received him not, because his face was set for going to Jerusalem.

54. When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven, and annihilate them?

Luke 9:51-54

The Samaritans were at enmity with Jerusalem, and they resented Jesus’ attention toward Jerusalem. They claimed Samaria to be the true “holy land,” and that their temple was the true “Zion” – rather than Jerusalem. Thus, they felt insulted that Jesus was focused upon Jerusalem ... so they withheld hospitality. James and John took offense, and their tempers flared! Their reputation as the “sons of thunder” was fitting.

55. But He (Jesus) turned, and rebuked them.

56. And they went to a different village.

Luke 9:55,56

James and John had short fuses! They were good men, but their emotions tended to run away with them. In Acts 12, James was the first apostle to be martyred. It is possible that his temperment contributed to his becoming an early target. He stood out because of his nature.

THE UNSTOPPABLE ECCLESIA

Peter, also, was considered a ringleader of the rebels,

and became a target for government hit men. Herod sent his police after the perceived heads of the Christian insurrection. But, what they didn't realize, and still do not realize to this day, is that James was not the head of the insurrection. Neither was Peter, nor any other man. And neither is any man today. Christ was, and is, the Head. Therefore, neither Herod, nor any opposing power on Earth, could stop it! The Reign of Christ is unassailable! It is not subject to politics or religion. He is the King of Israel, and He is not vulnerable to the powers of man. They couldn't stop Him back then, and they can't stop Him now. Jesus, in Matthew 16:13-18, gave us His personal promise that his kingship would never fall to his enemies. Churches have tricked people into thinking this passage pertains to "church." But, it doesn't.

13. *When Jesus came into the city of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom are men saying the Son of man is?*

14. *And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.*

15. *He said to them, But whom do you say that I am?*

16. *And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

17. *And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

Mtt. 16:13-17

This basic truth – the gospel of the Kingship of Christ – does not come natural to flesh-and-blood man. Man without Christ cannot perceive it. God reveals it to man through Christ ("Jesus said to him, Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingship of God." Jn. 3:3:). The subject is misrepresented and twisted in the churches because they do not have the leading of God. Man can talk about it, but only through Christ

can it be grasped and internalized so that its meaning is understood.

18. *And I say also to you, that you are Peter ("Petros": little rock), and upon this, the rock ("petra": rock-mass), I will build my ecclesia: and the gates of hell (i.e., death) will not prevail against it.*

19. *And I will give to you the keys of the kingship of heaven: and whatever you shall bind on earth will have been bound in heaven: and whatever you will loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.*

Mtt. 16:18-19

Notice that verse 18 Jesus DOES NOT say He is building a CHURCH. Jesus never built a "church." He built his "ECCLESIA" ... and it was not a religious organization for preachers and con men to sell church paganism.

The ecclesia system is very different from "church." It is defined in the *Acts of The Apostles*. Ecclesian communities are shown to be branches of Christ's Reign. That ROCK-MASS (His Kingship) was the foundation upon which Jesus built His ecclesia. Peter, the "little rock," was mortared into Christ's foundation rock-mass.

19. *Now, therefore you are no more strangers and sojourners, but are one with the body of saints and the household of God;*

20. *Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself being the foundation corner stone, in whom all the building being jointed together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together into God's spiritual house."*

Eph. 2:19-22

No power on Earth can prevail against Christ's Reign ... and his ecclesia. The "KEYS" to this Reign, as given to Peter, consisted of "eyes to see" two points: 1. Man can judge (bind) only what is judged (bound) by God (heaven), and 2. Man can forgive (loose) only what is forgiven (loosed) by God (heaven). That requires man to understand and obey heaven's

laws. Having the keys to Christ's Reign means knowing what heaven binds, and what heaven looses ("Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven" – Mtt. 6:10). Of course, one must first have "eyes to see" this Kingship. And that ability comes with the new life that Christ gives us. Earthly powers have no power against this. Jesus' Kingship, and its ecclesia, cannot be stopped.

Since Christ's enemies cannot stop Him or make Him go away, their only option is to confuse and blind the people so that they won't have eyes to see the Kingship.

QUESTION: If the ecclesia is "unstoppable," why hasn't it flourished like the churches? Why do we see so much more of what the church has done than what the ecclesia has done?

ACTS 12:4-11 PETER'S MIRACULOUS PRISON BREAK

And (Herod) laying hold on him (Peter), he put him in prison, delivering him to four sets of four soldiers to guard him, intending after Passover to bring him before the people.

Therefore, Peter was being guarded in the prison: but fervent prayer was being generated to God for him from the ecclesia.

And when Herod was about to bring him forth, that same night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers, with guards before the door watching the prison.

And, behold, a messenger of the Lord stood by him, and light shined in the cell: and he struck Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the messenger said to him, Gird yourself,

and bind on your sandals. And so he did. And he said to him, Wrap your cloak around you, and follow me.

And he went out, and kept following him, and was not sure if what was happening through the messenger was real; but thought he was seeing a vision.

When they were past the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and went down one street; and suddenly the messenger departed from him.

And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know truly, that the Lord sent his messenger, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all that the Judean people were expecting.

THE JUDEAN “police” of that time caught Peter and put him in the custody of SIXTEEN guards: four sets of four soldiers! They put sixteen guards on one man locked in a prison cell. Apparently, the government considered Peter very dangerous.

It's interesting to see what the enemy perceives as dangerous. Obviously, Peter didn't have any powerful weapons or armed men. He had a concept! The concept of Christ's Reign. This was considered dangerous. Would that we, today, could be so effective; so dangerous.

Their fear of the concept Peter was teaching was revealed in their over reaction. They locked him in prison, shackled between two soldiers, and with fourteen more soldiers guarding the door. Think about it. How many prisoners have ever been guarded with such diligence? I guess you could call that “maximum security.”

Now, Herod had captured this “dangerous extremist” and was

planning to bring him out in a public display, and probably kill him. But his plan was thwarted by the Lord's messenger. Peter simply walked out of prison without so much as a struggle.

The messenger may have been supernatural, or natural. Considering the tight prison security, this messenger from God was probably supernatural. If he was a supernatural messenger, he was probably a temperal messenger manifested for a momentary purpose.

The messenger tapped Peter on the side, waking him from his sleep. As Peter rose up, the chains fell off his hands ... the locks having been opened or broken by the messenger.

Now, the guards obviously hadn't considered the possibility of a supernatural escape like this. They were secure in the heart of the prison, chained to the prisoner, and not even realizing what was happening. Peter sat up and the chains fell off!

In verse eight, the messenger tells Peter to put on his sandals and wrap

his cloak around him, because they were leaving. Can you imagine sitting on death row in the heart of an impregnable prison, bound between two thugs, probably beaten and bruised and bloody from the chains and the thugs at the ends of the chains, knowing that Herod is about to call you out and kill you? Then suddenly, in the middle of the night there appears a man out of nowhere who says, in effect, “Follow me. We're getting out of here”? You rouse out of sleep, still a bit groggy, and as you sit up, your chains fall off your arms! You think, as did Peter, “This has got to be a dream! It cannot be true!” But even though you think it might be a dream, you hope it is not. And if it is a dream you hope it will not end.

Peter, still in partial stupor from sleep, slipped on the rest of his clothes, his shoes and his cloak, and started following the messenger. It was strange how the guards didn't wake up. They just slept on. In the quiet of the night the two escapees

silently walked down the deserted corridors, past the first guard, then the second guard, until they stood before the massive iron gate beyond which lay the city. As if in a dream, the iron gate swung open of its own accord and the two walked out to freedom.

Once out, the messenger departed from Peter. The escape had happened so fast, so easily, so successfully, that Peter just stood there ... still thinking he was in a dream. But finally, his head cleared, the world around him came into focus, and his wits returned to him. He realized that the Lord had delivered him. He was standing out in the night on the outside of the prison! At this point it was graphically clear to Peter that the "gates of hell" could not prevail against Christ.

Peter was unchained from between two thugs, walked past fourteen guards, out of the heart of the prison and beyond the iron gate, without anyone even trying to stop them.

EASTER OR PASSOVER?

In verse 4, the King James translators unfortunately inserted the word "Easter" instead of "Passover." The Greek word "Pascha" (Strong's #3957) is PASSOVER, not Easter. Here is another case of blatant mistranslation. You will find the word "Easter" only in the King James Version. All other versions – all other translators – refused to sink that low.

"Easter" is not even a Christian word. It is an anglicized form of "Astarte": one of the names of the ancient Babylonian goddess Beltis, the "queen of heaven." The Assyrian name for Astarte was "Ishtar." You can see a similarity between all three words: "Easter," "Ishtar," and "Astarte."

"Bel" or "Moloch" was Astarte's male-god counterpart. The worship of Bel and Astarte was carried out in a solemn fast of 40 days in the spring of the year (around April) followed by the festival of "Beltane" which fell on the first of May (i.e., May Day).

Pagan rituals and false gods were built into church doctrine ... mostly through Catholicism. Pagans brought their customs with them into the Church. Bel's and Astarte's 40 days of abstinence became "Lent," and "Beltane" became Easter: the paganized version of Christ's death and raising, observed in March or April every year. Along with it came pagan amenities such as "hot cross buns," Easter bunnies, Easter eggs, etc.: fertility symbols.

**CONSIDER THIS
TOPSY-TURVY SITUATION:**
Today, people who call themselves "Christians" in churches actually support anti-christian precepts. For instance:

1. Churches claim to agree with Peter who said: "*We ought to obey God rather than man*" - Acts 5:29. But the churches and the world system together condemn Bible believers who today believe that Jesus is King, Yahweh is Lawgiver, and that men are not meant to be kings and lawgivers.

2. The churches claim to believe in Jesus and to follow the examples of Peter, James, John, and Paul who were all enemies of the state, arrested, jailed, and executed by it. But the churches and the world system agree that it is sinful to be at odds with government, or to be arrested and/or put in a government prison.

3. The churches are not considered a threat to the world system (New World Order) like Jesus, Peter, James, John, and Paul were. WHY?

QUESTION: Why do you focus so much attention on the negative aspects of Easter? Easter is a perfect time to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. We should be thankful that so many people are thinking about Jesus. Besides, churchgoers are worshipping Christ on Easter, not some forgotten Babylonian god or goddess.

ACTS 12:12-17 PETER ASTONISHES THE ECCLESIAIANS

And after resolving it, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

And when he had knocked at the door of the gate, a servant girl came to attend, named Rhoda.

WHEN Peter finally realized he wasn't dreaming, and that he was actually delivered from the prison by the mysterious stranger, he set off in the direction of Mary's house.

Mary was the mother of John (also known as "Mark"). John was the brother of James who had been killed. The others were fellow ecclesiastics who were praying for Peter's safety and rescue from the prison.

When Peter knocked at the front door, Rhoda came to answer, but was so astonished at seeing him she forgot to open the gate for him. Instead, she ran back to where the people were praying and told them Peter was at the front gate.

Of course, knowing the

And having recognized Peter's voice, she opened not the gate, but ran in, and reported that Peter stood at the gate.

And they said to her, You are mad. But she insisted strongly that it was so. Then they said, It is his messenger.

But Peter continued knocking: and when they opened the

impregnability of Herod's prison, and how tight the security was, the other ecclesiastics thought Rhoda was hallucinating or that they were hearing her wrong. Yet, Rhoda persisted that Peter was actually at the gate!

They guessed that the man may be a messenger sent from Peter. Now this doesn't mean they thought he was a supernatural messenger, but merely a man bearing a message for them.

James, in verse 17, is obviously not the James that had been killed by Herod. There seems to have been three men named James:

1. James, the brother of John, one of

door they saw him, and were astonished.

But he, motioned to them with the hand to be silent, and told them how the Lord brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go and report these things to James, and to the brethren. And having gone out, he went into another place.

the "sons of thunder."

2. James, the son of Alphaeus.

3. James, the half-brother to Jesus.

This third James, apparently, is the same James that wrote the epistle of *James* in the New Testament. He is also the one assumed to have been the patriarch of the ecclesia at Jerusalem. When the disciples fled the persecution in Jerusalem, and went to Antioch and other places, James, along with a few others stayed at Jerusalem.

So, after Peter escaped from jail, he said, "Don't make a big noise about this. Just go and tell these things to James and the brethren." Then he went elsewhere.

THINK ON THIS: Remember, most Christians never experience an extreme ordeal like Peter did. You don't have to experience miracles such as an escape from an impregnable fortress, or die as a martyr like Stephen, in order to be doing your duty as a Christian. Diligence, faith and honesty are the earmarks of a saint.

NOTICE: Consider the difference in the way Peter reacted to a miracle in his life, compared to the way church people act when they claim to have experienced something from God. Instead of broadcasting his experience and the seemingly impossible escape from his prison, Peter instructs the ecclesiastics to simply tell James what happened. Preachers today sell alleged "miracles" as advertising and publicity ... like Simon Magus in Acts 8:9-21.

ACTS 12:18-23 AN IDOL DESTROYED

Now when it was day, there was a sizable stir among the soldiers, over what had become of Peter.

And when Herod sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and stayed a while.

And he was displeased with the Tyrians and Sidonians: but they came with one accord to him, and after befriending Blastus the king's chamberlain, they sought peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's country.

Then upon a set day Herod clothed himself in royal apparel and sat upon his throne, and was making an oration to them.

And the public shouted, God's voice, and not man's!

And instantly a messenger of the Lord struck him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten up by worms, and expired.

CAN you imagine being a guard, shackled, along with another guard, to a political prisoner like Peter? How would it feel to be inside an impregnable fortress and then suddenly realize that the prisoner who was shackled securely between you and another guard has vanished? There would be quite a stir!

When the two guards were sent to explain to Herod what had happened to Peter, he was less than amused. He had them executed! The guards' reward was approximately the same they had planned for Peter.

In verse 20 the Tyrians and Sidonians are mentioned. These were in the north near "Caesarea." Herod was upset with these people because they allowed Peter, a fugitive from the law, to live amongst them without arresting him and escorting him back to Herod's custody. But they entreated Herod for peace. They realized their country needed imports from Judea and that normal relations were needed to maintain their source of food.

Then Herod, in a display of his kingly status over the people, tried to intimidate them. He dressed in his best royal gowns, strode up to his

throne atop his impressive dais and proceeded, in his very best politician's style, to deliver a public oration.

You've heard politicians or celebrities like Herod. They are "silver-tongued devils." They put words together cunningly, use just the right inflection, and sound quite authoritative and convincing! They are masters of the art of salesmanship, even if there is no substance to what they are saying, and even though their motives are evil.

What happened next was one of two possible things. It is not clear whether the people worshipped Herod, or shouted him down. It says they shouted, "*God's voice, and not man's.*" We don't know whether it was shouted in adoration, or protest.

If they shouted in adoration, it means they were indulging in "idolatry," worshipping a man, or a system of men ... declaring Herod a god.

If they shouted in protest, it means they rejected him, and in effect said that they preferred the voice of God in matters of government.

In either case, one from their midst drew a sword and put an end to

the dictator's career.

But what of this messenger who struck Herod? Those who are superstitious imagine a winged supernatural angel swooping down to give Herod a magic touch, whereupon worms suddenly crawl in and out of him and he falls down dead there on the dais. That makes a spectacular scene in a movie, but may be a little far-fetched from reality.

When we read verse 23, we need to read it using common sense, keeping in mind the difficulty of translating, and the superstition of the translators.

The passage says that this man – Herod – was trying to play god, and a "messenger" struck him down. The Greek word translated "angel" in some Bibles means "messenger." There is no indication that the messenger was supernatural. He was probably just a mortal man with a message for Herod ... delivered via a steel blade.

Now, interpreting this passage without getting carried away with superstition, what you have is simply a man from the crowd who didn't think of Herod as a god. He became overcome with zeal (like Jesus did when he attacked the moneychangers

in the temple) and ran up to Herod and mortally wounded him.

Nothing is said as to what then happened to the messenger (the assassin), but it is likely the palace guards caught and killed him. The doctors did what they could for Herod's wound with the medical

knowledge of the time.

Worms (maggots) infected the wound, and in a short time the evil ruler died.

Admittedly, this interpretation is not as visually exciting as the more popular Hollywood-style scenario of a hovering, winged angel with a

magic touch that caused Herod to be eaten alive by worms before their eyes. However, it is more realistic and sensible.

ACTS 12:24, 25 THE ECCLESIA CONTINUES TO GROW

But the word of the Lord grew and multiplied.

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had done their service, and took John, whose surname was Mark, with them.

HEROD died, and the Word of God grew and multiplied. Once again we see the recurring theme: the Reign of Christ cannot be stopped ... and the Word of God is forever.

Verse 25 refers to the beginning of what is commonly called "Paul's missionary journeys." Paul and Barnabas began to take the gospel from place to place, and Mark accompanied them at first. Their first mission was to the ecclesiastics at Jerusalem. Then they began visiting the so-called "gentiles": their brethren in the nations. The "gentiles" were Israelite brethren living in Asia Minor.

We see this trek, this northern, and eventually westward, movement of Christianity on over toward Europe. We'll read more about that as we continue in chapter thirteen.

THE GOOD NEWS IS...

Paul's travels took the gospel to his brethren scattered in the nations. The message was, "Israel has a new King! This new King has redeemed us from our sins that accrued under the Old Covenant. And now you can start life anew." "What's more, this new King cannot be stopped!"

That was good news to any man seeking truth and freedom! Of course, to a liar, a reprobate, a politician, or church builder, it was not good news. But, to those who were downtrodden by tyrannical governments, and had had enough of tyrants, bureaucrats, taxes, and were tired of religious con men, this was GOOD NEWS.

END OF CHAPTER TWELVE

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

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The Judeans murdered Jesus, Stephen, James, and others. Their hatred and persecution was pushing Christianity out of Jerusalem. "The Way" of Christ was pre-scheduled to go to "the nations" anyway, but there were still some "sheep" in Judea and Samaria who needed to hear the gospel before the Judaists banned it from their land.

2. The winds of persecution soon carried the seeds of truth to the nations in search of fertile ground. During the preceding millennium the real descendants of the Children of Israel had been dispersed into the nations by events that had occurred. They languished there, lost. The promise of a savior had been mostly forgotten. News of the promise, and its fulfillment – their redemption – was on its way.

3. The Reign of Jesus was their redemption, not only from sin, but also from darkness, confusion, and idolatry which had left them confused and enslaved under Babylon culture. Their sin had rendered them incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, freedom and slavery; God's law and man's law.

4. As freedom's seeds started to germinate again among the

redeemed Israelites, the Beast (Babylonian-style government) began to see that Christianity was waging war against it. The Beast responded with propaganda and force. The stoning of Stephen and the murder of James had been condoned. Policemen, hitmen, special agents like Saul (Paul), were commissioned to oppress Christians.

FREEDOM was the Christian ecclesian heritage. Rulers viewed it as a breeding ground for insurrection and “hate crime” since ecclesians learned to hate slavery.

5. The best men of our race have been “WANTED” and labeled “dangerous” by man’s government. It is NOT a dishonor to have an arrest record, unless it is for actual wrong-doing, or for stupidity.

6. Messengers (“angels”) can be either natural, or supernatural. Many of the messengers we read about in the Bible were of the natural variety.

7. The ecclesia of Christ is the Kingdom of God on Earth.

ANSWERS:

pg.3

Perhaps you haven’t known where to look for the ecclesias.

Jesus sits on the Throne as King. His Kingship is beyond question and invulnerable to earthly powers.

The question that remains, therefore, is not if Jesus Reigns, but if man will accept that Reign?

The “gates of hell” (i.e., “death”) cannot prevail against Jesus’ ecclesia (Mtt. 16:18). But for man to accept it he needs “eyes to see” it (Jn. 3:3).

Christ’s ecclesia has been manifested as “tribes,” “clans,”

“communities,” “villages,” “families,” etc. They’ve gone unnoticed for the most part. While our ancestors chased after pagan church and state, the ecclesias of Christ were taken for granted. They still are today.

Christ Reigns, and his ecclesias are ALIVE. But who has believed and entered into “the holy city” (Heb. 12:22)?

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, ...

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

For truly I say to you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.”

Mtt. 13:15-17

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the trees of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie.”

Rev. 22:14-15

Obviously, men can reject the invitation – preferring the things of their own kingdoms. They can opt to stay outside with the dogs and murderers.

God allows man the free will to make his choice. To the degree that people respond correctly they are invited to enjoy the blessings of Christ’s Reign.

The other side of the coin is that men can opt to go with the Beast System ... as the majority of our people have.

The “keys to the Kingdom” are like the keys to a house. It requires YOU to put the key into the lock and turn it. You must

avail yourself of the blessing by opening the door and entering the house. It is not enough that the house just exists.

Imagine a treasure chest full of great wealth. And for hundreds of years your ancestors possessed the key to unlock the chest. But they were confused and forgot how to use the key. They all died in poverty – not because the treasure wasn’t theirs, but because they failed to use the key. We have that key, but it is up to us to use it.

Our people have chased pagan churches for centuries. Isn’t it time this stopped? Isn’t it time we used our key?

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What churches call “worshipping Jesus” is more like worshipping Baal. Church litanies and holidays are patterned after heathen festivals and idolatry. It matters not that they label them “Christian.”

For example, imagine a dinner held in your honor, where you were toasted and extolled. But the participants doing the toasting at the table are speaking of you as if you were someone else. They use your right name, but they have your address wrong, your teachings wrong, your race wrong, and your goals wrong. How would you feel? You might feel like they were honoring someone other than you!

That’s the way churches “honor” Jesus with their pagan-bred holidays and false doctrines.

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Mtt. 15:8-9