

## How Apostasy Starts III How the World and Christianity Were Deceived #2

*Survey of Acts 4-7, and the witness and example of Stephen*  
Fred R. Coulter—December 15, 2018

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services!

Today the whole world is being overwhelmed by Satan the devil, as well as the Churches of God! Let me just give you a summary of some of the reports that I have:

**#1**—The Jews are going to build a temporary altar for sacrifices, built out of crushed stones and put together with concrete. That is in preparation for it to be running while they are building the temple.

They still have not found the red heifer. Every time they get one and when its three years old and look at every hair on the body, there's always some white hair somewhere. God has a way of doing it. Remember, *everything is according to the timing of God*, not our timing.

**#2**—Just recently, the Supreme Court in a 6-3 vote—you might say they are the six black robes continue the curse on America, because of abortion—not to withhold funds to Planned Parenthood. You go back when it originally came down, it was 7-2. *That is a curse that is causing all the problems!*

**#3**—The Canadian government says that anyone giving birth to live humans is a threat to the planet. Canada promotes abortion and infertility.

Once Satan gets a hold, remember how it works: *a little leaven leavens the whole lump!* Satan always starts out with something 'good.' How do you think some of these things come along? *One of the ideas is:* How do we get more people? *We need to be a little softer on the Catholics and Protestants! NO!* You need to be harder on the Catholics and Protestants, otherwise, you're just going to get people who are not converted.

When they're baptized, they're never told about what a covenant baptism is, *that it is your sacrifice joined to the sacrifice of Christ!*

But since He's perfect and resurrected, and you're not, you come out of the water, because you have to grow in grace and knowledge in order to qualify for the ultimate of eternal life at the resurrection. How's that for a wonderful country?

**#4**—Shocking survey finds that American's find more meaning in life from money than they do from faith.

Why is that? *Remember what Jesus said in Matt. 24. 'Then shall arise many false prophets and false christs'!* All the Sunday-keeping preachers are, in one form or another, false prophets! Anyone who says that the Law of God has been done away flies right in the face of the double-negative in the Greek, meaning *the impossibility* that He came to abolish the Law or the Prophets.

They don't teach the Truth. The Truth is that the Law was not complete given to Moses. There are prophecies of Christ given in various places throughout the whole Old Testament. He came to complete, or fill the Law to the full, *not abolish it!*

The translators of the *King James Version* fell into the trap to make the Epistles of Paul look like that God did away with the Law. If any man can do away with something that God has said, he becomes 'God.' You find all the prophecies concerning circumcision, non-circumcision, Sabbath, the Messiah, etc.

**#5**—This one is shocking, but think about what is happening. How many times have I have asked: How does Satan indoctrinate children? *Cartoons!* Now they have a cartoon out by Netflix that pushes pedophilia and sexualizes children. It is called Big Mouth, and it shows genitals of children.

That is going to probably lead to a Supreme Court decision somewhere down the road, that sex with children is perfectly acceptable.

We will see that the Bible proves exactly what I've been saying for years, because it's from the Bible. Matt. 4—this is Jesus' temptation by Satan the devil; the first one was:

Matthew 4:3: "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" *There were probably other words:*

Just think how nice that aroma will be; remember how fresh bread is? Yes, and You [Jesus] can command that these other little stones become butter. Wouldn't that be nice, hot bread and butter! Think of it, you haven't had a bite in 40 days!

Verse 4: "But He answered *and* said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God."'"

When you are in doctrinal trouble and difficulty, remember this:

- **What does the Word of God say *completely*?** *Not partial, but completely, because leaving out some words creates a lie!*
- **What does God want me to do?**

Then the next one was when Satan took Jesus to the temple (v 5) and he said to cast Himself down and the angels of God will cover you. But that was a temptation; you don't do anything like that to dare God.

Verse 8: "After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, **All these things will I give You...**" (vs 8-9).

You can have Your rulership over the world under me right now. You don't have to go through everything that there is, because You know the prophecies and I know the prophecies, and if You do one little thing, I'll guarantee that you can have it now.

**"...if You will fall down and worship me."** (v 9)—*because Satan always wanted to be like The Most High!*

Verse 10: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve."'"

Jesus is talking the Himself as a man, because that's what all human beings will do. It would be foolish to think that He was saying this to Satan, that somehow Satan would do that. *He won't! He is completely incorrigible and deserving of eternally inflicted punishment!*

Miley Cyrus says to 'worship Satan if you want to be rich and famous like me.' That's what she says! Doesn't that tell you owns and runs Hollywood? And New York? Look at the basest cities in the United States: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, New York, Boston and Miami. Those are the greatest sin-filled places in the United States, ***because they're giving themselves over to Satan!***

If you come to Satan and say, 'Bless me,' *he will!* But he doesn't tell you the end. How many of the stars—so-called... What do 'stars' represent in the Bible? *Angels, fallen stars!* They all end their lives early with drugs or whatever.

We will see that Satan can inspire, because he puts it into the heart of people. Didn't he do that with Judas Iscariot? *He put it in his heart to betray Jesus!* There's one man who, every time I say that

Satan can inspire, says 'Satan can't inspire.' I hope he gets the point this time. That's how Satan does it:

- he inspires it
- puts it in their mind
- puts it in their heart

Of course, you tie that with the other one that I read, that more Americans find satisfaction in money than faith.

- How do you get money? *Worship Satan!*
- What does it say in Rev. 12 & 13? *Satan's deceiving the whole world, and he's being worshipped by the world!*

***That's the way this society is going!***

When we look at the Church and we see all the things that are going on, and the troubles and difficulties that are coming... And next week I will have a very shocking thing about what's happening in one of the Churches of God 'big time.'

Before I go on, I'm not saying that everyone who is rich is following Satan. However, how many people are really following God? They may not be doing it directly, but it can happen indirectly.

#6—Did you know that there about 30-40 different organizations that come out of the Masonic movement and the Jesuit movement that are working toward a *one-world government*?

*Let's reverse it:*

How many organizations are working on behalf of God to proclaim the Kingdom of God and the visible return of Christ to take over the whole world in a blaze of glory? *Not very many! There are a few!* And the men who fight against Christ are going to be more than half of the entire population of the earth!

Here we have all these things that we are fighting, and we're looking at how apostasy comes into the Church. We're also looking at why the traditional Orthodox Jews rejected Jesus Christ, and continue to persecute the Church. Let's understand something very important. Here is what has to happen in order to understand the things of the Old Testament. You need the Spirit of God and the Truth of God, rightly dividing the Word of God.

Luke 24:44: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (vs 44-45). **How does God open our minds?** *His Spirit! It depend on our believing and our obeying!*

If a person studies on the Sabbath and get convinced in his own mind that he ought to keep the Sabbath and then goes to a Sunday-keeping preacher and says, ‘You know, I think we ought to keep the Sabbath.’ *Now, now, dear boy, it was changed!*

They start out by blaming the Jews! Didn’t the Jews hate Jesus? Didn’t they crucify Him?

Starting out in the book of Acts, God had to start it at the temple with a great thrust of His Holy Spirit spread strongly throughout that whole crowd.

Go back to when John the Baptist started his ministry, because he was the messenger to prepare the way for the Lord. The area of Judea and Galilee were geographically a very small area.

When these things started—and it goes back to the birth of John the Baptist—how can a 70-year-old woman have a child? Don’t you think everybody was talking about that? How did that happen? *Well, God said it would occur!* Then Christ and His birth and how He came suddenly to His temple (John 2).

They had to preach from the Old Testament, the Gospel, because there was no New Testament! That’s why the signs and the healings, because they couldn’t point to a New Testament and say, ‘You Jews just don’t understand. Look at our New Testament.’ *NO! It was all in the Old Testament!*

Let’s look at one of the reasons why the Jews were so vehemently against Jesus.

John 10:23: “And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s porch.” *That’s right close to where the disciples were after His resurrection, too.*

Verse 24: “Then the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, ‘How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘**I have told you, but you do not believe.** The works that I am doing in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.** And **I give them eternal life...**” (vs 24-27). *Think of that as a statement to the Jews by a man: Jesus!*

Who are You? *Think about what they’re thinking inside!* That will help you understand when we get further into the book of Acts why they were so vehemently against the Church.

“...and they shall never perish; and no one shall take them out of My hand. My Father...” (vs 28-29). *Whoa!* What do the Jews say about God? *One God*—‘monotheos.’ But what does the Hebrew word ‘Elohim’ contain? *It’s plural!* ‘Let Us make man in Our image!’

The Jews even got stronger on the ‘one God’ after the Church began. But look at how they looked at Jesus. They were trying to stop this, because everything that Jesus was doing, the people were following. They even said that they had to kill Him, because all the people are following Him. ‘What’s going to happen to us?’

“...Who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one has the power to seize *them* from My Father’s hand. **I and the Father are one**” (vs 29-30). *That’s like saying that **the Lord God and The Most High are one Elohim!***

Verse 31: “Then the Jews again picked up stones so that they might stone Him.... [See their reaction?] ...Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have showed you from My Father. For which of them are you about to stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘We will not stone You for a good work, **but for blasphemy...** [that’s how they viewed the Church and the followers] **...and because You, being a man, are making Yourself God**” (vs 31-33).

Remember, the book of Luke was not written, yet. ***You couldn’t say,*** ‘Go to the first chapter of the book of Luke<sub>[transcriber’s correction]</sub> and you will see God’s intervention with Zacharias the high priest, and then the virgin Mary, and you will understand.’ *So, they were reacting vehemently!*

Verse 34: “Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law...’” How many times did Jesus say to them, ‘Have you never read...?’

In other words, it happens the same way with everyone who gets entrenched in their little positions. Once you are there, you don’t study, you don’t pray, you just stick to the things that you have learned, vehemently, and you don’t grow in grace and knowledge. That, unfortunately, is what has happened to too many people in the Church and the ministry.

Remember the parable about the Ten Virgins? Five foolish/five wise? *The wise did what they should do, and the foolish didn’t!* The foolish came to the wise and said, ‘Give us of your oil.’ *We can’t! You have to go to the one who sells and buy it!*

***IF you’re not growing in grace and knowledge along the way***—and continuing to do so because the Bible is so filled with the Truth of God, inspired by the mind of God and Christ—***there’s no way that any human being, even with the Spirit of God, can understand the entire Bible!*** That’s how great it is! That’s fantastic!

“...‘Is it not written in your law, “I said, **‘You are gods’**”?’” (v 34). *That’s quite a statement!*

Verse 35: “‘If He called them gods, to whom the Word of God came’ (and the Scriptures cannot be broken).”

- you can twist it
- you can turn it
- ***But the Truth never lies!***

Verse 36: “‘*Why do you say of Him Whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’*’”? *Think about how astounding that was to these religious leaders!*

Even at that time what did Jesus say to them in John 8? *You are of your father the devil!* Think about all these things when the Church explodes.

Verse 37: “‘If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me. But if I do, even if you do not believe Me, believe the works; so that you may perceive and may believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.’ Then they again sought to take Him; but He escaped out of their hands...” (vs 37-39). Kind of like, ‘all right we’ll blind them all’!

- Why did they reject Jesus when they should have accepted Him? *Because He did not accept them!*
- What did He say in Mark 1, after His baptism and came into Galilee? *Repent and believe the Gospel, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!*

*They didn’t repent!*

John the Baptism called them to repentance. Remember they came out to his baptism (Matt. 3), and He called them *vipers!* ‘*Who has warned you to flee the wrath to come, bring forth fruits unto repentance!*’ Then later they came to Jesus and said, ‘You tell us where You get Your authority to do what You are doing.’

He said, ‘Okay, I’ll ask you one question and you answer Me and then I will tell you: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or was it of men?’

So, like the Jews always like to do, they got a little counsel together and talked it all over, and they said, ‘If we say from heaven then He’s going to ask us why we didn’t believe and be baptized. And if we say that it’s of men, then the people are going to get mad at us because they took Him for a Prophet.’ *So, they had a lot of chances!*

Psa. 82—this where Jesus quoted from: ‘You are gods,’ and ‘The Scriptures cannot be broken.’ Remember that in the Psalms a lot of things are disjointed, because they are prophetic insets that when rightly divided you can put it together.

Therefore, if you read it as following in sequence, when it’s not intended to be in sequence, you won’t understand it.

That’s why Isa. 28 says, ‘Precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, there a little.’ You can go through the book of Psalms and just pick out all the words that apply to Christ, that are just like of put in there.

Psalms 82:1: “God stands in **the congregation of the mighty**; He judges among the gods.”

- When will “...the congregation of the mighty...” be? *At the resurrection!*
- Who are all those who are on the Sea of Glass? *Sons and daughters of God—gods!*

You talk about a great service! Talk about what a fantastic Pentecost that’s going to be! God the Father, Jesus Christ and all the saints and we’re going to have in all of our minds the new language that we have as spirit beings. We’ll be able to communicate with each other. I don’t know if they’re going to pass out hymnals, but we’re going to sing! Jesus is going to do the *great presentation*: ‘Behold, the brethren You have given Me’ (Heb. 2).

*That’s everybody in the first resurrection!*  
What a thing that is going to be!

Verse 6: “I have said, ‘**You are gods; and all of you are sons of the Most High.**”

When you read the Psalm right through without taking out those two verses... They’re put in there so that we must put it together to complete the story in John 11.

You can see the difficulty that they had in preaching the Gospel, because there was no New Testament. However, what did God give them? *Signs, wonders and healing!* Think of all that time—a total of four years with John the Baptist—and fantastic things occurring. Three years of Jesus’ ministry, beginning right at the temple, just exactly like it said in Malachi, and what John the Baptist said. What did he do?

Acts 3—the healing of the man, and they brought them into the Sanhedrin, which is like saying getting together the whole cabinet and all of the secretaries that are in the executive branch, all together. They are the ones who make the decisions. These are the same ones who condemned Jesus. Caiaphas the high priest said, ‘It’s more profitable for one man to die than the whole nation to die.’ *So, they are in this up to their necks in all of their self-righteous wickedness!*

Acts 4:4: “But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was

about five thousand.” Remember how many were converted on Pentecost? *3,000!*

So, now here we are in a few days 8,000! Here are all the religious leaders looking back at the ministry of Christ and how more people were following Christ than were coming to the synagogue and wondering what they’re going to do.

Verse 5: “Now, it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem, and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and as many as were of the high priest’s lineage” (vs 5-6). *Remember, all of these were together in that judgment that Passover night!*

- They were there!
- They saw Christ!
- They condemned Christ!
- They couldn’t find the body!

They paid the guards to say that the disciples stole the body. That’s why the disciples were up in a room afraid of the Jews, because they were afraid that the Jews would come and get them and kill them. But nobody ever found the body.

Don’t you think that the Jews had everybody going out everywhere looking where they could have put the body? *It was in the tomb but there is nothing there!*

Verse 7: “And after placing them in the midst...”—*like almost a complete circle and the great luminaries sit up front, and they bring in the apostles!*

“...they inquired, ‘By what power or in what name did you do this?’” (v 7)—*because this man had been infirm for years and years laying at the Gate Beautiful, pleading for alms!*

Verse 8: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the infirm man*, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all...’” (vs 8-10).

Think of everything that they went through during the time that Jesus was preaching, teaching and confronting them, and so forth.

Verse 10: “Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean... [Who, on the cross, was called King of the Jews] ...Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from the dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole.” *That’s a powerful message, isn’t it?*

Verse 11: “This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the

Head of the corner.”

Remember what Jesus told them? *They perceived that He was talking about them, that this Stone, if anyone falls on it in repentance will be saved; but he who doesn’t, it’s going to fall on them and crush them to powder.’*

Verse 12: “And there is **no salvation**...” Go back to John 5, Jesus told the Jews to search the Scriptures and Moses ‘because in them you think you have eternal life, but they are the ones who talk about Me.’

You bring all of this together. This was really quite a fantastic and marvelous thing that was going on.

“...**no salvation** in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we **must**... [obligated] ...be saved.’ Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men...” (vs 12-13)—*meaning they never attended the rabbis’ schools!* Just like today:

- ‘Who does Fred Coulter think he is translating the New Testament?’ *Well, I studied the Greek for 20 years under the tutelage of Dr. Dorothy!*
- ‘Where is he?’ *Unfortunately, he’s dead!*
- ‘How can we verify it?’ *Read the translation! Is it accurate? or Is it not?*
- ‘You didn’t go to this university or college, who do you think you are?’ *That’s what they were saying here!*

Listen! I don’t think I’m anything, but I tell you that we have got to have the Word of God and Truth, **and if we don’t stand for it we will have nothing, sooner or later!** I felt obligated to do it! Look at what was going on in the Church. How are you going to stop this? **By the Truth of the Word of God!**

Verse 14: Yet, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them... [here he is right there] ...they said nothing to oppose *them*. But after commanding them to go outside the Sanhedrin, they conferred with one another” (vs 14-15).

Isn’t that what they always do? *Let’s have a conference*; what do we do? Listen! I have learned that every stinking committee is a political center. Everyone on the committee is a political entity to himself. The next time you watch some of these church committees get together, you will see that’s exactly what it is. *You must:*

- love God
- believe His Word

- stick to the Truth
- do what God says

*And not try and find a way to make it easy to get more converts! Pray, and God will send them!*

Verse 16: Saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For a remarkable miracle has indeed come to pass through them *and is* manifest to all those living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.’”

I think that’s great the way God worked it out and put it right there. What else can you produce as a witness to them? We’re going to see that in this process God gave them three distinct warnings to repent and change. Perhaps if they would have, the temple might not have been destroyed!

This is kind of a stupid statement for ‘converted’ people; v 17: “‘But that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them with a *severe* threat not to speak any more to anyone in this name.’ And after summoning them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered *and* said to them, ‘Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge, for we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.’ And after further threatening them...” (vs 17-21). *We don’t know what went on with that!*

“...they let them go, finding no means by which they might punish them, because of the people, for all were glorifying God on account of what had been done” (v 21). *Think about how great this was at that time!*

(go to the next track)

Why didn’t they accept Jesus as the Messiah?

1. they thought He was born of fornication
2. He didn’t come and embrace them, He corrected them

So, after the destruction of the temple in 70<sub>A.D.</sub>, scattering the Jews even more, there was a whole group of Jews up north of Jerusalem, and they had a rabbi called Akiva. There was a real strong leader called Bar Kokhba. Rabbi Akiva declared Bar Kokhba to be the Messiah.

They came down and almost took Jerusalem, but they were defeated. You’ve heard of Masada, way up there looking down; that was the last place where the Jews could go. The Romans had the Jewish slaves to build a ramp to get up there. When they got up there the people had all committed suicide. That rebellion—and I’ll get into it when I get into the book by Samuele Bacchiocchi about anti-Semitism and how that really came against the

Church hard—also led to a lot of false doctrine and changing things.

Even after John died—a little projection forward: Those who read the book of Revelation say that John didn’t write this because ‘it’s not like the Gospel and his Epistles.’ Why? ***Because it’s from Jesus Christ, and John was only the scribe!***

One of the leader, right after John died, who was Ignatius. By a few years after John died, and right after the book of Revelation came out, Ignatius rejected it and said, ‘This couldn’t be from John.’ He was particularly angry about the section of the Church to Pergamos about the Nicolaitans and the hierarchy. That was his job, to get all the churches out of the houses and into cathedrals. Guess what the doctrines were? *You have the listen to/read the rest of the story!*

The apostles were let go after further threatening, they all got together and prayed and thanked God, and so forth.

Verse 31: “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul...” (vs 31-32).

They thought that Christ was going to return even at that time. Jesus never answered when will God restore the Kingdom to Israel. Jesus said, ‘You go to Jerusalem and wait for power.’ That’s all He said.

What are you going to do with all these people who are believing, and a lot of them were those out of the country coming in. You have to house them, feed them and take care of them. So, the apostles all volunteered to sell what they could to help feed and take care of the brethren who were there because there were so many of them.

“...neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common” (v 32).

A communist looks at that and says, ‘look at that, they almost have the word communist here.’ So, they say that Christians were the first communists. Guess what Pope Francis has said? *That the communists are doing what God wants!* Has anything changed?

Verse 33: “And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For neither was anyone among them in want; for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold *them and* brought the amounts of those *things* that were sold,

and laid *the money* at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made to each one according to his need. And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being interpreted, “son of consolation”), a Levite, born *in the country* of Cyprus, had land; *and he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet*” (vs 33-37).

Acts 5—a couple of interesting things here we need to cover. We will see that one part of it is where they turn to this Scripture to say that the Holy Spirit is a person. *But we will see that that’s not true!*

Acts 5:1: “Now, a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price *for* himself, his wife also being aware of *it*; and he brought a certain portion *and laid it at the apostles’ feet*” (vs 1-2).

What was the deal? *This is a thing that if you say something you better do it! God means it!* If you say before God, ‘If I sell this piece of property for \$100,000, I’m going to give it all to you.’ And lo and behold, you get \$120,000! Then you come and say, ‘Here’s the \$100,000, I sold it.’

Verse 3: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why did Satan **fill your heart to lie**... [Satan can inspire people to do things; *the prince of the power of the air* (Eph. 2:1-3)] **...to the Holy Spirit**...” *Aha! That must be a person! NO!*

- Who had the Holy Spirit?
- Who was talking to Ananias? *Peter!*
- How did Peter know it was a lie? *Because God inspired it through the Holy Spirit in his mind, to understand it was a lie!*

So, Peter said that ‘you have lied to the Holy Spirit.’

Verse 4: “...**You have not lied to men, but to God.**”

This is not showing that the Holy Spirit is a person, because Who gives the Holy Spirit? *God!* Who did He give it to? *The apostles! That’s how they understood!* Then his wife came in and both of them died and they were buried.

Listen, they didn’t need phones back then because people were close together. These things flew just like a phone call. ‘They died! They were standing there talking to Peter and lying and BANG! I saw them die and fall to the ground!’ *You better not tell lies to the apostles!*

Verse 11: “Then great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things. And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles...” (vs 11-12). *Astonishing miracles over and over again to establish the Church!*

“...(and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women)” (vs 12-14).

Think of all these ‘religious mucky-mucks’ who have to live off the tithes and offerings. All the people are going to the apostles, and they’re thinking: How are we going to continue? They’re destroying everything that we’re doing! Let’s carry on and see what this is.

Verse 15: “Insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.”

What Scripture does this fulfill? That Jesus said? *That Peter would do greater works than He did!* You never hear of the shadow of Jesus healing anybody.

Verse 16: “And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and they were all healed.* Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and they were filled with anger*” (vs 16-17).

*Rather than saying that this was a wonderful thing, all of these people being healed and receiving the Spirit of God! No!* This is one of my favorite sections of Scripture:

Verse 18: “And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the public hold.*” *We’re going to put them in there and examine them in the morning.*

Verse 19: “But during the night an angel of *the Lord came and* opened the doors of the prison...” *None of the guards knew this!* How many things have angels done for us that we have no knowledge of at all?

“...and after bringing them out, he said, ‘Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn...” (vs 19-21). What was given at dawn? *The morning sacrifice!* So, the temple was up and running.

“...and taught. Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, ‘We indeed found the prison locked with all

security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside” (vs 21-23).

Imagine what they should have thought at that time. They should have said. ‘Remember Pentecost! Remember the man who was healed!’

Verse 24: “And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also... [this involved *all* of the hierarchy] ...were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to. But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’” (vs 24-25).

Imagine if you were one of those chief priests, elders or whatever, what you were thinking: How could this be?

Verse 26: “Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people.” *This was really turning everything upside down!*

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘**Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name?** And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man’s blood upon us” (vs 27-28). *They thought it was upon the Romans, but who instigated it?*

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, ‘We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree.’”

Across was a tree in the ground, they selected a certain tree. Then they put iron flanges on the tree, so the crossbar was given to the one who was to be crucified to carry. Then they would nail his hands to that crossbar, raise him up and put his feet where they should be on the tree and nail the feet there. *That’s why Peter said ‘tree.’* That was the stauros made from a tree. That way when they died they could take them down and crucify someone else. Why throw away a whole cross? *That’s how they did it!*

Verse 31: “Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. **And we are His witnesses of these things, as is also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him**” (vs 31-32).

Where did we start when we started this series: *Obey My voice!*

Verse 33: “Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death... [now God intervened] ...But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name... [v 35]: And he said to them, ‘Men, Israelites, give careful thought to what you are about to do concerning these men’” (vs 33-35).

Verse 38: ““And now I say to you, withdraw from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or *this* work be from men, it will be overthrown; **but if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. Take heed, lest you be found to be fighting even against God**” (vs 38-39)—so they beat them and let them go.

Referring to Chronology #5, pg. 1408, from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*:

Let’s just review the first two. This is by year:

AD 30

1. Christ crucified Passover Day...
2. resurrected toward the end of the weekly Sabbath...
3. Christ appears to the apostles for 40 days...His ascension May 18
4. Holy Spirit poured out, May 28
5. Gospel preached in Jerusalem (Acts 3-5)

*That’s where we are right now!*

AD 31:

Gospel preached in Jerusalem; Apostles compile Jesus’ teachings (Acts 5 and 6)

What was it they had to have? *They had the multitude of disciples!*

Acts 6:1: “Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.” *They were all gathered together and taking care of the widows!*

Now you have some tension! This shows that there were Greek speakers and Hebrew speakers. That was they’re language.

Verse 2: “And after calling the multitude of disciples *to them*, the twelve said, ‘It is not proper *for* us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of *the* Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; **but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word**” (vs 2-4).

- What was necessary to be written *first* before the first year would come to an end?

31<sup>A.D.</sup> started in January, the Roman calendar!

- What had to be ready for all the brethren to partake of? *Passover!*
- What were they doing? *Compiling everything about Jesus' Passover, plus getting all the teachings together!*

When you have a lot of people and you don't have it written down, then a lot of strange things can happen. The New Testament Passover was completely different from the Old Testament Passover.

How many took the Passover with Jesus? *Eleven! Judas left half way through!*

It was completely different: no lamb, no meal. **Jesus completed the Old Testament Passover with the meal!** That was not part of the New Covenant Passover. He instituted that with foot-washing, breaking and eating the bread and drinking the wine. So, they had to compile that. He was probably—since Matthew was a Levite and also a tax collector—one of those who was doing a lot of the writing. I imagine John was, too.

They had to have it ready and they couldn't carryout those other things, so they got the seven deacons to do it.

Verse 7: “And the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplied exceedingly, and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

This was destroying the whole religious community in Jerusalem! This was such an upheaval!

Then it talks about Stephen. Here we come to the third and the final witness to all the Sanhedrin and all the Jewish leaders. Different ones were saying that he was speaking “...blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God” (v 11)—because Stephen was showing that the rituals were not necessary.

Verse 13: “**Then they set up false witnesses**, who said, ‘This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this Holy place and the law; for we heard him saying that this Jesus, the Nazarean, will destroy this place, and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us’” (vs 13-14). ***That is the sacrifices, not the Law of God!***

Verse 15: “And all those who sat in the Sanhedrin, looking intently at him, saw his face as *the* face of an angel.”

I won't read the whole thing, but Stephen goes back to Abraham and carries the whole story

through, all the way down to Christ (Acts 7). Stephen also says concerning the temple, that **God does not dwell in the temple made by hands!**

What temple does God dwell in today? ***In the temple in heaven above, and spiritually in us—the Father and the Son—and we are a temple of God, as Paul writes!***

To the Jews this is blasphemous! They said they needed the sacrifices and those things. God wants people converted! Stephen finishes up this way and notice what they do to him:

Acts 7:48: “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made by hands, as the Prophet says: ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* a footstool for My feet. What house will you build for Me, says *the* Lord, or what *is the* place of My rest? Have not My hands made all these things?’” (vs 48-50).

How can you build a temple for the spiritual God of the physical things that He has made?

Verse 51—How is this for inspired preaching; they are not meek sycophants to uphold the evil hierarchy and continue in their evil ways. So Stephen says:

Verse 51: “O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?....” (vs 51-52).

Jesus said, ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets.’ *That's why Jesus had to die in Jerusalem!*

“...And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, **of Whom you have become the betrayers and murderers**” (v 52). *Here are all these sanctimonious self-righteous people being called murderers!*

Verse 53: “Who received the law by *the* disposition of angels, but have not kept *it*.” All you have to do is go back and read all the Prophets and all the things that they have done, all the gods that they went against. And then the Jews, in the days of Jesus—after the captivity in Babylon—they came back and said, ‘We need to make a lot of laws to put around the Ten Commandment so that people won't break the Ten Commandments.’

The problem is that ***all of those traditions became a wall against the Ten Commandments, rather than a safeguard to help people keep them!***

Book: *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal

Sermon Series:

- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *Epistles of John*

Brethren, we have many things for you, and if you haven't been with us too many years, we're going to help you learn as much as you can. All you have to do is ask for it and it will be in your mailbox, or you can download it from **truthofGod.org**

Verse 54: "And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts, and they gnashed their teeth at him." *How dare this unlearned man come and correct us like this! NO! It was a message from God!*

Verse 55: "But he, being filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." *There is Jesus standing there looking down on what's happening!*

Verse 56: "And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.' Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul" (vs 56-58)—*that will be interesting from here on!*

Verse 59: "And they stoned Stephen, who called upon God, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he fell to his knees and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.' And after he had said this, he died" (vs 59-60).

This is the third major witness that God gave before He decided when to destroy the temple! They had all these chances!

They stayed at the temple and were teaching all these years. This was quite a thing. This was the third witness, but was the first witness? This is actually the fourth witness, just the third in the book of Acts. What was the first witness? *The crucifixion of Christ!* The priests were standing out there mocking Him and what did He say, the first thing He said when He was lifted up on the cross? *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!*

*This is kind of like going to the pope and preaching!* The two witnesses are going to do that! The beast, the false prophet and the two witnesses! They will be at it for that time for the witness of the two witnesses! *That's going to be a time!*

I tell you that the whole thing with the book of Revelation, I can understand why some would not accept it, because it was so far in the future that it was fantastic, everything that was written. Especially when Rev. 4 & 5 and it shows the Throne

of God and John saw the Father sitting on the throne!

*There's an awful lot here; all of this lays the groundwork for future apostasy!*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 4:3, 8-10
- 2) Luke 24:44-45
- 3) John 10:23-39
- 4) Psalm 82:1, 6
- 5) Acts 4:4-21, 31-37
- 6) Acts 5:1-4, 11-35, 38
- 7) Acts 6:1-4, 7, 11, 13-15
- 8) Acts 7:48-60

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24; 4:5
- Revelation 12; 13
- John 2; 8
- Mark 1
- Matthew 3
- Isaiah 28
- Hebrews 2
- John 11
- Acts 3
- John 5
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- Revelation 4; 5

#### Also referenced:

Book: *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal

#### Sermon Series with Transcript Books and CDs:

- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *Epistles of John*

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