

## Message# 266\_12-03-2023 - Who is Israel?

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Good morning everyone. Thank you for tuning into the message this morning.

There is so much to talk about this morning, I'm just not quite sure where to begin. I know that God has laid some things on my heart this week and we will get to them in the message this morning; continuing with the theme - Who is Israel?

I hope you enjoyed what I brought out last week with Lysander Spooner regarding the CONstitution. I plan to get back to it - hopefully next week - because - in my opinion it offers an excellent look at how covenants work. Spooner said the CONstitution "covenant" - he didn't say the word "covenant" - I did - but that's what it was. It was a covenant that bound the people of the late 1700s who entered into the covenant. The covenant was binding on them. It wasn't binding on their posterity - unless - their posterity bound themselves also. The New Covenant that God instituted in the first century. That covenant was binding on those who believed and received. The next generation also had to believe and receive. And if they didn't - they weren't part of the New Covenant. This idea that the New Covenant was race based - and then automatically passed on to someone - just because of race - is not Biblically sound. And I plan on getting to it, soon. Hopefully next week.

Also, I want you to know how encouraged I am at how many people have been writing in - acknowledging that they realize how they have been lied to about - pretty much everything - in their entire lives - and again - I'm talking about elderly people - in their 70s and 80s - and realizing that they have been lied to about the shape of the world. When we finish with this series on Who is Israel - it is my intention to bring a series on the Genesis account of Creation - and more importantly even than that - why it matters. Why does it matter? It matters because science falsely so-called - teaches that science has proven the Bible wrong concerning creation. And, if the Genesis account of Creation is wrong - then the rest of the Bible cannot be trusted. And friends, if you don't believe that has happened - then as kindly as I can say it - you have your head in the sand. The Bible has been discredited in the eyes of the great majority of people in the world - and science is one of the biggest reasons why.

So, as followers of Christ, we have to choose - the Bible - or science. Apparently, Creation is important - otherwise - it probably wouldn't have been the opening of our

Bibles for thousands of years!

It never ceases to amaze me at how little “churchmen” give value to the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah - in the first century - besides a “fire insurance policy” that they believe Jesus brought them to escape their catholic inferno - their false doctrine on hell. Which is just designed - like pretty much everything else they teach - to keep people in fear. Fear - that if they fall away from “church” - they will be damned to eternal fiery torment forever to live with the “devil” - which - if their “devil” is in “hell” - I don't know how he/she/it could be running around the world hiding under everyone's beds at night waiting to jump and grab people by the ankles and torment them.

The “church's” mystical, fairy tale devil is not, was not, will never be what they have tried to brain dirty people into believing it was - and worse - is.

The reality is - the “devil” many times in Scripture is referencing men's little g “governments”. But of course, the “church” could never teach such a thing because then it would be biting the hand that feeds it. On our way to our Who is Israel portion of the message this morning, I want you to turn to Revelation chapter 2. And let's begin reading with verse 1.

[1] Unto the angel of the Ekklesia of Ephesus write;

The Greek here in verse 1 that is horribly, deceptively, corruptly, wickedly translated as “church” - is Ekklesia. The Greek word from which the English word “church” comes from is not Ekklesia - it is kurios or kuriakon. It is not Ekklesia. This is one of the most blatant deceptions that has been perpetrated against mankind in the history of mankind. Ekklesia is meant to be understood as men that gathered themselves together for the administration of the Government of God. Turn to Judges chapter 21. If you want to know the original meaning of the Greek word Ekklesia - you need to go further back than the first four Books of what most people refer to as the “New Testament.” Just like the water rituals shown in the last 27 Books of our Bibles - Ekklesia - did not come onto the scene with Jesus Christ in the first century. The water rituals that most people erroneously refer to as “baptism” - did not originate in the first century. It was not something new. If you want to be able to understand water and its usage according to the Creator - you must go back to its origins - at Creation - and in the Law God gave Moses.

Same thing with Ekklesia. Ekklesia was not something that Jesus brought new onto the

scene in the first century. Ekklesia is as old as Israel and when the writers of the last 27 Books of our Bibles used the word Ekklesia - their understanding of Ekklesia was what they had known about for hundreds and hundreds of years. It wasn't new.

Before I move on. Let me go back and say something else about the water. Not just for those who demand the application of physical water to the flesh in the New Covenant as the "means by getting under the blood of Jesus." And, for those who may not be familiar with the lengthy series we did on water last year.

When people ask me about "water - physical water - as the means of salvation" the first thing I ask them to do is tell what that looks like. If I am commanded to apply physical H2O water to my flesh - and if I don't - I am not in Christ, or accursed for preaching another Gospel - if the application of physical water to the flesh is required - then shouldn't it be in our Bibles as to how that water is supposed to be applied?

I never have been able to figure out why it is so offensive to just ask the simple question, "What does it look like? Where are the instructions provided in the Word of God as to what is supposed to take place at this event - erroneously called "baptism?"

I'm supposed to have a faith that commands the application of physical water to the flesh or I will be damned - but there's nothing in the Word of God that tells me how to apply it? I'm just supposed to trust the words of men and supposedly believe that their traditions that have been handed down are what I'm supposed to trust in?

And not only that, but I'm supposed to trust in a doctrine that was created by "churchmen" - the same ones who command obedience to men's "governments" - the same ones that don't even have enough Biblical sense to know they should not be 501(c)(3) government corporations? No thanks. Not interested.

The method of salvation is clearly laid out in the Word of God. It is salvation by grace through faith - faith - believing in Who Jesus Christ was and is - and then trusting in that faith and receiving the free gift of God - not of works - lest any man should boast. Whatever the application of physical water to the flesh was - and any honest man has to say it that way because other than the narrative of Naaman and his baptisma in the river Jordan for the purpose of obeying the Law God gave Moses concerning leprosy - there is very little else given by way of details as to what baptisma according to the Law God gave Moses, the teachings of the prophets, what John the Washer was doing - and what Peter and James were doing when it was said - as clearly as anything ever was in

our Bibles - they were zealous of the Law God gave Moses - when they were demanding the first century Christians living in and around Jerusalem - to obey the Law God gave Moses - but to do so in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing more clearer than that when the Gospel according to James, Philip and Peter - is compared to the Gospel according to Paul - as described in Acts chapter 21. There was a Gospel of the Circumcision and a Gospel of the Uncircumcision. They both existed at the same time in the first century while the Old Covenant was passing away - and once the temple was destroyed - the Gospel of the Circumcision gave way to the Gospel of the Uncircumcision and at that point - there truly became One Faith, One Lord, One Washing. All the physical aspects of the Old Covenant Law God gave Moses - were replaced with the Spiritual aspects of the New Covenant.

If you think that applying physical water to your flesh is a means of salvation - or that it has any Spiritual value in the New Covenant World - you have been deceived. Just like Paul said to the Galatian Christians - "Who hath bewitched you?" This is some of what he was referring to. Who is it that has made you go from faith in Christ - to trusting in an act of the flesh.

And let me say one more thing, anyone who would say that "baptism" - is not an act, it is not a work - simply has either ignored the water requirements found in the Law God gave Moses - or doesn't - because they've been played by something called "church" - know that the water requirements in the Law God gave Moses were every bit as important - and I've said this before and I believe it to be so - a case could be made that the water requirements under the Law God gave Moses were at least equal in importance to the blood requirements - and a case could be made that the water was even more important than the blood.

I'm not going to make the case either way. But anyone who studies the Law God gave Moses - without being influenced by "church" should be able to see how important the water requirements in the Law were. Look at the life of John the Washer. Where do we find him requiring men and women to sacrifice animals? We don't. We saying him washing in water. We are not told what it looks like - other than the story of Naaman - but we do see John the Washer leading the children of Israel in some sort of physical water ritual - for the remission of sins.

We were always taught in "church" that it was the "blood of Jesus" that "washed our sins away." But when the stories surrounding John the Washer spoke of washing for the

remission of sins - very little has ever been said about that. Except for - the catholics, the mormons, some pentecostal charismaniacs, and of course, the "churches of Christ" - who all say that John's washing was for the New Covenant - when absolutely nothing could be further from the truth.

I was saddened to read an obituary this week of a lady that I went to school with all the way back in the 70s. The obituary said that she "was baptized just like her Lord and Saviour was, in following His example...." So sad. To be so deceived for an entire lifetime. Jesus, the Messiah, the Saviour, the Lamb of God - was "baptized" by John the Washer - for the remission of sins. For the remission of sins?

Again, this goes to what I said in my opening statement that there is really hardly any significance placed on the Jesus Christ of the first century. The "church" - pretty much - except for the fire insurance of Jesus' death - their main focus is on the future. It's a future coming of their supposed messiah. The true Messiah, the One Who came in the first century - simply did not do very much - beyond allowing Himself to be crucified - rising again - leaving - and then nearly all the importance of Him is not on what He did - but what He will supposedly do when He comes again.

Jesus is not coming here again. He did every single thing He was supposed to do and He has nothing left to do. He completed His mission in the first century - and emphatically stated - which means very little to most people - because of the deception of "church" - but the True Jesus said - "It is finished." He did what He was supposed to do. Now, it's our job to believe that Jesus was the Christ - the Promised Messiah, the Saviour, the King - and we are to live accordingly. We are to come out from the little g "governments" of the world - we are to quit following men who believe that God has somehow ordained them to make their own definitions of good and evil - then force everyone through acts of terror and fear to obey their definitions - when the Bible clearly says that men are to exclusively obey the Laws, Commandments, Statutes and Ordinances of God - simple. That's the entire theme of the Bible and the purpose of Creation.

Alright - all of that - well - plus everything else - that was free. No charge for that commentary. Let's get back to Judges chapter 21, verse 1, from the Septuagint.

1 Now the children of Israel swore in Massephath, saying, No man of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin for a wife. 2 And the people came to Baethel, and sat there until evening before God: and they lifted up their voice and wept with a

great weeping; 3 and said, Wherefore, O Lord God of Israel, has this come to pass, that to-day one tribe should be counted [as missing] from Israel? 4 And it came to pass on the morrow that the people rose up early, and built there an altar, and offered up whole-burnt-offerings and peace offerings. 5 And the children of Israel said, Who of all the tribes of Israel, went not up in the congregation to the Lord? for there was a great oath concerning those who went not up to the Lord to Massephath, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

This was court. This was a judgment. This was Government.

The word congregation here in verse 5. What do you think that is? The word is Ekklesia.

for there was a great oath concerning those who went not up to the Lord to Massephath, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

Does this sound like a weekend social organization? There is a death penalty here in this discussion. Who carries out death penalties? Who is supposed to carry out the death penalty? It is Government. And clearly, in this passage, it is the Government of the children of Israel. The English word is congregation. It's talking about a coming together for the purpose of government. Keep your finger here and turn over to Numbers chapter 35. The reason I want you to see this is because if you look up the English word congregation in Webster's 1828 dictionary, he says to look at Numbers chapter 35 as an example of the word congregation. Verse 1, reading quickly.

1 And the Lord spoke to Moses to the west of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 2 Give orders to the children of Israel, and they shall give to the Levites cities to dwell in from the lot of their possession, and they shall give to the Levites the suburbs of the cities round about them. 3 And the cities shall be for them to dwell in, and their enclosures shall be for their cattle and all their beasts. 4 And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give to the Levites, shall be from the wall of the city and outwards two thousand cubits round about. 5 And thou shalt measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and your city shall be in the midst of this, and the suburbs of the cities [as described]. 6 And ye shall give the cities to the Levites, the six cities of refuge which ye shall give for the slayer to flee thither, and in addition to these, forty-two cities. 7 Ye shall give to the Levites in all forty-eight cities, them and their suburbs. 8 And as for the cities which ye shall give out

of the possession of the children of Israel, from those [that have] much [ye shall give] much, and from those that have less ye shall give less: they shall give of their cities to the Levites each one according to his inheritance which they shall inherit. 9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them, Ye are to cross over Jordan into the land of Chanaan. 11 And ye shall appoint to yourselves cities: they shall be to you cities of refuge for the slayer to flee to, every one who has killed another unintentionally. 12 And the cities shall be to you places of refuge from the avenger of blood, and the slayer shall not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment.

Just so you understand, the Greek word for congregation here is not Ekklesia in this instance. But that's not my point. My point is in trying to get us to understand the English meaning of congregation. Once again, does this sound like a weekend social organization? "Churches" have wrongly, deceptively, purposely, taken another word that does not belong to them - and have made it their own - and they've done it for deceptive purposes. Congregation - as far as it should be understood in the Bible - is Government. It is the gathering of the people of Israel for the purpose of administering the Laws of God in their communities.

And when the writers of the last 27 Books of our Bibles used that Greek word - Ekklesia - and others that were later translated into English - it was meant to understand Government - and more specifically - the Government of God. It is not a weekend social organization. Back to Judges 21. We left off on verse 6.

6 And the children of Israel relented toward Benjamin their brother, and said, To-day one tribe is cut off from Israel. 7 What shall we do for wives for the rest that remain? whereas we have sworn by the Lord, not to give them of our daughters for wives. 8 And they said, What one [man is there] of the tribes of Israel, who went not up to the Lord to Massephath? and, behold, no man came to the camp from Jabis Galaad to the assembly. 9 And the people were numbered, and there was not there a man from the inhabitants of Jabis Galaad.

Verse 8 assembly - that is from Ekklesia. Concerning numbering, that means they were counted. That doesn't mean they were assigned a number that a tag in the ear of a cow. There isn't anything wrong with counting the number of people. In Nehemiah chapter 7 you can read about how there was a registry made of the children of Israel. And it was performed by Hananiah, the ruler of the palace who was faithful and feared God. He made a registry of the names of the people. He counted the number of people

in the tribes. It is in great detail in Nehemiah chapter 7 and when he was finished, verse 66 says:

[66] The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

The Greek word for congregation - yes - Ekklesia. Verse 10 of Judges 21.

10 And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the strongest, and they charged them, saying, Go ye and smite the inhabitants of Jabis Galaad with the edge of the sword. 11 And this shall ye do: every male and every woman that has known the lying with man ye shall devote [to destruction], but the virgins ye shall save alive: and they did so. 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabis Galaad four hundred young virgins, who had not known man by lying with him; and they brought them to Selom in the land of Chanaan. 13 And all the congregation sent and spoke to the children of Benjamin in the rock Remmon, and invited them to [make] peace. 14 And Benjamin returned to the children of Israel at that time, and the children of Israel gave them the women whom they [had] save alive of the daughters of Jabis Galaad; and they were content. 15 And the people relented for Benjamin, because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. 16 And the elders of the congregation said, What shall we do for wives for them that remain? for the women have been destroyed out of Benjamin. 17 And they said, [There must be] an inheritance of them that are escaped of Benjamin; and [so] a tribe shall not be destroyed out of Israel. 18 For we shall not be able to give them wives of our daughters, because we swore among the children of Israel, saying, Cursed [is] he that gives a wife to Benjamin. 19 And they said, Lo! now [there is] feast of the Lord from year to year in Selom, which is on the north of Baethel, eastward on the way that goes up from Baethel to Sychem, and from the south of Lebona. 20 And they charged the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; 21 and ye shall see; and lo! if there come out the daughters of the inhabitants of Selom to dance in dances, then shall ye go out of the vineyards and seize for yourselves every man a wife of the daughters of Selom, and go ye into the land of Benjamin. 22 And it shall come to pass, when their fathers or their brethren come to dispute with us, that we will say to them, Grant them freely to us, for we have not taken every man his wife in the battle: because ye did not give to them according to the occasion, ye transgressed. 23 And the children of Benjamin did so; and they took wives according to their number from the dancers whom they seized: and they went

and returned to their inheritance, and built the cities, and dwelt in them. 24 And the children of Israel went thence at that time every man to his tribe and his kindred; and they went thence every man to his inheritance. 25 And in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own sight.

This is definitely not a weekend social organization. It is not what has evolved today as what nearly the entire world believes is that thing called “church.” The “church” of today resembles absolutely nothing from what Ekklesia was in Bible times.

Now, go back to Revelation chapter 2. We were in verse 1 when we left for all that.

These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

[2] I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Any principles there for today? Absolutely.

[3] And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

[4] Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

[5] Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Sounds very similar to Judges 21 concerning removing Benjamin.

[6] But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

[7] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ekklesias;

Unto the groups of Christians who were trying to live according to the Kingship of Christ and the Government of God wherever they happened to be in the first century.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst

of the paradise of God.

[8] And unto the angel of the Ekklesia in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive;

[9] I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

And, yes, we will be coming back here in just a minute as we continue our Who is Israel message. But for now, keep in going to verse 10.

[10] Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

If you recall, and I know I'll have to refresh each of you because some times I know the message might be hard to follow because I go off on many trails - but I was talking again about "the devil." Matthew sent me a Facebook post from a guy that he looks at from time to time - and the guy had made the statement that he was beginning to believe that "government was the devil." Well, exactly. That was one of the definitions of "devil" in the Bible. And right here in Revelation 2:10 we are seeing just that.

When has the "church's" redtailed, pitchforked "devil" thrown someone into prison? No. This is talking about men's little g "governments" from the first century - who had taken true followers of Jesus Christ who were trying to live as Ekklesia - the Government of God - following King Jesus - and they had suffered - some of them thrown into prison because of their faithfulness to Ekklesia - and our Bibles say that it was "the devil" that caused them to suffer and had thrown some of them into prison.

And that, upon being faithful, even unto death, they would receive a crown of life. Friends, that principle remains today. Friends, I want you to listen to something that one of our new listeners from Canada sent me last week. This is Canada. And if you think this will never happen here, all I can say is, "I hope not." But this is surely what is being planned. Listen to this. The link is in the notes.

[https://twitter.com/resist\\_05/status/1719173412520927679](https://twitter.com/resist_05/status/1719173412520927679)

Now, of course, I do not agree with her that people need to contact their politicians and they "can't do this without our support" and all that sort of stuff. Men's little g

“governments” do all sorts of evil things without the express consent of their people. That is a fairy tale that voting and getting in your political party is the answer. The answer is in God's people - people who call themselves Christians - must stop participating in these things, they must say no to these devils - come out from among them and be the people of God. Friends, when things like this come to this point - the reason it happens is because God's people did not resist when the resistance was easy. When you wait to resist until it gets to a point like this - it's way too late.

The things we see in our Bibles are everlasting principles. Christians are to overcome devils. Devils are men's little g “governments.” We are to resist them. We are not to go along with them. And, it's not just in the things we disagree with. It is everything. You can't give them an inch - they will take a mile. Verse 11.

[11] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ekklesias; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Now, let's go back to verse 9. As I've been meditating on this all week, I've been wondering if maybe we haven't fully understood what is in this verse. I think a lot of us has grasped a good part of it, but I think we may have missed some very important things. Go back and read it again.

[9] I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

I'll admit to you that for most of my life - I felt like the best way to understand this to just point to the people in the middle east and say - “They are the synagogue of Satan.” And that's fine. They are. Anyone who says they are anything related to anything concerning the God of the Bible, Who His people are, etc., anyone says anything other than those people who are followers of Jesus Christ - they are God's chosen people - to say anything other than that - is the synagogue of Satan. And, principally speaking, I believe that to be the case. And, to say that someone is God's chosen people - and those people have not embraced the Jesus Christ of the first century - they too - are the synagogue of Satan.

But here's what I think we are missing here.

...the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews...

As I said a minute ago, for most of my life, I just used the word “Jews” here as pretty much the same way everyone else does - even “church people.” And, using Jews and Israel or even Israelites - interchangeably. But the word here is “jews.”

In the Greek, it's ee-oo-dah'-yos. Judæan, i.e. belonging to Jehudah:—Jew(-ess), of Judæa.

This might be a little dry here, but let's read from Mr. Thayer's Lexicon. I'm not so sure I'm going to be in as much agreement here maybe as usual. And one of the reasons is, I think he reverts to a lot of churchology in his definition. But nevertheless, here goes:

*Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰουδαία, Ἰουδαῖον (Ιουδα) (Aristotle (in Josephus, contra Apion 1, 22, 7 where see Müller), Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, Plutarch, others; the Sept.; (cf. Sophocles Lexicon, under the word)), Jewish;*

*a. joined to nouns, belonging to the Jewish race: ἀνὴρ, Acts 10:28; Acts 22:3 (1 Macc. 2:23); ἄνθρωπος, Acts 21:39; ψευδοπροφήτης, Acts 13:6; ἀρχιερεύς, Acts 19:14; γυνή, Acts 16:1; Acts 24:24; γῆ, John 3:22; χώρα, Mark 1:5.*

And right here is where I tend to start questioning what he's giving out as a definition. All of the Bible passages he cites are from the Book of Acts and one from Mark. Keep going. Well, where I'm headed here is why he isn't taking us back to Old Covenant Israel and the tribe of Juda. Mr. Strong says that ee-oo-dah'-yos comes from ee-oo-dah which when you read from the Greek Septuagint, and you read concerning the tribe of Juda - that's the word. That's the same word. So, I'm thinking that we should be considering more of Revelation 2:9 as in the tribe of Juda - as opposed to “the jews” as in the way people call the jews today as in the “jewish race.”

*b. without a noun, substantively, Jewish as respects birth, race, religion; a Jew: John 4:9; Acts 18:2, 24; Romans 2:23f; plural, Revelation 2:9; Revelation 3:9; οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (Ἰουδαῖοι), before the exile citizens of the kingdom of Judah; after the exile all the Israelites (cf. Wright in B. D. under the word)), the Jews, the Jewish race: Matthew 2:2; Matthew 27:11, 29; Mark 7:3; Mark 15:2; John 2:6; John 4:22; John 5:1; John 18:33, etc.; Ἰουδαῖοι τέ καί Ἕλληνες, Acts 14:1; Acts 18:4; Acts 19:10; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Ἰουδαῖοι τέ καί προσήλυτοι, Acts 2:11 (10); ἔθνη τέ καί Ἰουδαῖοι, Acts 14:5; singular, Romans 1:16; Romans 2:9; οἱ κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη Ἰουδαῖοι, who live in foreign lands, among the Gentiles, Acts 21:21; Ἰουδαῖοι is used of converts from Judaism, Jewish Christians (see ἔθνος, 5) in Galatians 2:13. [SYNONYMS: Ἑβραῖος, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰσραηλίτης: "restricting ourselves to the employment of these three words in the N. T. we may say that in the first is*

*predominantly noted language; in the second, nationality; in the third (the augustest title of all), theocratic privileges and glorious vocation" (Trench, § xxxix.); cf. B. D. under the word Hebrew, Isarelite, Jew. E. Höhne in the Ztschrft. f. kirchl. Wissensch. u. s. w. 1886, pp. 607-617.] The apostle John, inasmuch as agreeably to the state of things in his day he looked upon the Jews as a body of men hostile to Christianity, with whom he had come to see that both he and all true Christians had nothing in common as respects religious matters, even in his record of the life of Jesus not only himself makes a distinction between the Jews and Jesus, but ascribes to Jesus and his apostles language in which they distinguish themselves from the Jews, as though the latter sprang from an alien race: John 11:8; John 13:33. And those who (not only at Jerusalem, but also in Galilee, cf. John 6:41, 52) opposed his divine Master and his Master's cause — especially the rulers, priests, members of the Sanhedrin, Pharisees — he does not hesitate to style οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, since the hatred of these leaders exhibits the hatred of the whole nation toward Jesus: John 1:19; John 2:18, 20; John 5:10, 15ff, John 5:18; John 6:41,52; 7:1,11,13; 9:18,22; 10:24,31,33; 18:14. (Cf. B. D. under the word; Franke, Stellung d. Johannes z. Volke d. alt. Bundes. (Halle, 1882).) Ἰουδαϊσμός, Ιουδαϊσμοῦ, ὁ, (Ἰουδαῖζω), the Jewish faith and worship, the religion of the Jews, Judaism: Galatians 1:13ff (2 Macc. 2:21, etc.; cf. Grimm, commentary on 2 Maccabees, p. 61. (B. D. American edition under the word ).)*

Now here's where I'm going with this. Go back to Genesis chapter 49. Remember just a short while back when we were looking at Jacob's comments to his sons concerning the last days? Look at Genesis chapter 49, beginning in verse 8.

8 Juda, thy brethren have praised thee, and thy hands shall be on the back of thine enemies; thy father's sons shall do thee reverence. 9 Juda is a lion's whelp: from the tender plant, my son, thou art gone up, having couched thou liest as a lion, and as a whelp; who shall stir him up? 10 A ruler shall not fail from Juda, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of nations.

The tribe of Juda was supposed to be the keeper of the Law. It was supposed to be the tribe through which Shiloh was supposed to come. It was supposed to be the tribe that would be faithful to the Rulership of the Messiah.

Those that had refused Jesus, those that had failed in their mission to make sure that Messiah came from Juda - they were impostors. They were claiming to be Juda - the tribe from which the Ruler, the Prince would come. But they rejected the Ruler. They

rejected the Prince. They were now persecuting the saints. They were persecuting those who had embraced Jesus as the Christ. They were not the Juda that Jacob said would be Juda in the last days. If they had been that Juda - they would have embraced Jesus. Jesus would have been their King, their Messiah.

The same still continues today. The spirit of the tribe of Juda - that spirit is found in the follower of Christ.

A ruler shall not fail from Juda, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of nations.

Those people who allow this Ruler from Juda to Govern their lives - they are the people of God. Those that refuse this Ruler - those that say that are from Juda - but refuse the One Who came from Juda - they are the synagogue of Satan.

These are those that continue to promote their own "governments." They promote their own definitions of good and evil, right and wrong and defy the King that sprang from Juda. They are devils. They are the synagogue of Satan.

For all who refuse the King, the Ruler, the Prince that came from Juda - and that King is Jesus the Christ - from the first century - that is the synagogue of Satan. It is a synagogue - a collection of devils. Devils, with the power - not authority - just raw power to persecute the saints - to bring trials and tribulations against those who have chosen to Rule and Reign of King Jesus in their lives. All of that, that belief system, the people that adopt that belief system for themselves, their rulers, their laws, statutes and ordinances - that all makes up - what the Bible calls - the synagogue of Satan.

Go on now with verse 12.

**[12]** And to the angel of the Ekklesia in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

**[13]** I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is:

Here is something else that has been overlooked and has been lost to our understanding because "church" thinks that "Satan" is the "prince of darkness" that possesses people and makes them speak with scary voices and causes their heads to spin around and makes their eyes bulge out. Instead of the understanding that Satan is the author of men's little g "governments" and making people do scary things - means

that he / government forces people to obey its definitions of good and evil, right and wrong - thereby making people - through threats of violence - choose their government or choose God's Government. And when they choose God's Government - they persecute them because they have stolen away the command of Juda to make sure that the Ruler and King - King Jesus - is the Ruler of the people.

If you can believe the historians - which in this case - the Bible is all that's necessary - Pergamos was a very rich, very powerful city - according to history, quote:

*Pergamon [they say Pergamos is the same] still remained a famous city, and was the seat of a conventus (regional assembly). Its neocorate, granted by Augustus, was the first manifestation of the imperial cult in the province of Asia. Pliny the Elder refers to the city as the most important in the province[18] and the local aristocracy continued to reach the highest circles of power in the 1st century AD, like Aulus Julius Quadratus who was consul in 94 and 105.*

*Yet it was only under Trajan and his successors that a comprehensive redesign and remodelling took place, with the construction of a Roman 'new city' at the base of the Acropolis. The city was the first in the province to receive a second neocorate, from Trajan in AD 113/4. Hadrian raised the city to the rank of metropolis in 123 and thereby elevated it above its local rivals, Ephesus and Smyrna. An ambitious building programme was carried out: massive temples, a stadium, a theatre, a huge forum and an amphitheatre were constructed. In addition, at the city limits the shrine to Asclepius (the god of healing) was expanded into a lavish spa. This sanctuary grew in fame and was considered one of the most famous healing centers of the Roman world.*

*A model of the acropolis of Pergamon, showing the situation in the 2nd century CE. In the middle of the 2nd century Pergamon was one of the largest cities in the province, and had around 200,000 inhabitants. Galen, the most famous physician of antiquity aside from Hippocrates, was born at Pergamon and received his early training at the Asclepieion. At the beginning of the 3rd century Caracalla granted the city a third neocorate, but a decline had already set in. The economic strength of Pergamon collapsed during the crisis of the Third Century, as the city was badly damaged in an earthquake in 262 and was sacked by the Goths shortly thereafter. In late antiquity, it experienced a limited economic recovery.*

Pergamos, during the time of the book of Revelation was one of the centers of the Roman empire. And, Jesus Himself, called it the seat of Satan. Seat - that's

“government” - think in modern terms - the “county seat” the “seat of government”.

In the Greek, the word is literally thron-os. a stately seat ("throne"); by implication, power or (concretely) a potentate:—seat, throne.

Jesus tells the Ekklesia at Pergamos that they were literally dwelling at Satan's seat. And what did they do?

and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

They held to the Authority of King Jesus. These first century saints remained faithful to the Authority - to the Kingship of Jesus Christ - even though they were right in the middle of the seat of men's “government.”

Mr. Thayer says this about seat - about thron-os:

*θρόνος, -ου, ὁ, (ΘΡΑΩ to sit; cf. Curtius § 316), [from Homer down], Sept. for κθῶ, a throne, seat, i. e. a chair of state having a footstool; assigned in the N. T. to kings, hence, by metonymy, for kingly power, royalty: Luke 1:32, 52; Acts 2:30. metaphorically, to God, the governor of the world: Matthew 5:34; Matthew 23:22; Acts 7:49 (Isaiah 66:1); Revelation 1:4; Revelation 3:21; Revelation 4:2-6, 9, 10, etc.; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 12:2. to the Messiah, the partner and assistant in the divine administration: Matthew 19:28; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 3:21; Revelation 20:11; Revelation 22:3; hence, the divine power belonging to Christ, Hebrews 1:8. to judges, equivalent to tribunal or bench (Plutarch, mor., p. 807 b.): Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; Revelation 20:4. to elders: Revelation 4:4; Revelation 11:16. to Satan: Revelation 2:13; cf. Bleek at the passage to the beast (concerning which see θηρίον): Revelation 16:10. θρόνος is used by metonymy, of one who holds dominion or exercises authority; thus in plural of angels: Colossians 1:16 [see Bp. Lightfoot at the passage].*

In the face of all of this, the first century Christians:

and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Do you want to know Who is Israel? It is found in those who hold fast His Name - His Authority. It is those that have not denied His faith - His system of belief - even where others have been faithful martyrs - even where the seat of men's "government" dwells.

God's chosen people are found in Christ. God's chosen people are found in the people who have rejected men's little g "governments" and have embraced the Ruler from Juda. All other belief systems. All other government systems. All other religions - though all claim to be of God - and some even claim to be of the tribes of Jacob - Israel - but instead they are the synagogue of Satan.

The synagogue of Satan - at least in what I have presented this week in this study - is a collection of people who have rejected the Prince that sprang from Juda. It is a rejection of His Kingship - His Government - in favor of their own. All "governments" that are not in the Prince of Juda - are what the Bible calls - the synagogue of Satan.

This is not just a matter of a race of people saying they can trace their lineage to Abraham, or to Moses. This is a matter of what do you believe is Government in the world? If you believe that there is only One God Ordained Government in the world today - and that is the Government of God and His Son King, Prince Jesus - and the Laws that we are to be Governed by are His Laws, Commandments, Statutes, Ordinances and Perfect Will. Or, do you believe that men are allowed to create their own "governments" and they are allowed to make their own definitions of right and wrong, good and evil. I'm telling you, that is what defines the synagogue of Satan. The synagogue of Satan is a belief system that says that men are allowed to have their own "governments."

One of the greatest evidences of this is that the principle remains today. Try being a follower of King Jesus and claiming that you will only be Governed by the Prince that sprang from Juda. Just try it. And see if you will not see the same things happening to you that are described right here in Revelation chapter 2. The Bible was true in the first century. The principles remain today.

In all my adult years, I do not know of anyone who has claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ and His Government exclusively - that has committed murder. I do not have knowledge of a true follower of Jesus Christ that is a thief, a perjurer, or a rapist.

But I have known many people - who claim that they want to be Governed exclusively by the One Who sprang from Juda - and they have been persecuted, tried, convicted,

imprisoned - by the seat where Satans dwell.