

Message# 284_4-21-2024 - "Baptisma in the Name of..."

Preached first on 4/21/2024 on www.molibertyradio.us

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

I have a lot to cover this morning - so I want to get right into the message.

If you recall last week, I made a pause in the message when I was dealing with the writings of A.N. Sherwin-White when I was reading to you why he said Christians were persecuted in the first century. This week, I did a little more study as to who this A.N. Sherwin-White was. Turns out - at least according to the world - and again - if you can believe what the world says - you decide. I know for me, I tend to believe only what I see in any instant - when it comes to those people. But, according to the world, A.N. Sherwin-White was - he was born in 1911 - died in 1993 - was one of the leading historians of the Roman empire - in particular the first century. Quote:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._N._Sherwin-White

Adrian Nicolas Sherwin-White, FBA (10 August 1911 – 1 November 1993) was a British academic and ancient historian. He was a fellow of St John's College, University of Oxford and President of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies. His most important works include a study of Roman citizenship based on his doctoral thesis, a treatment of the New Testament from the point of view of Roman law and society, and a commentary on the letters of Pliny the Younger.

The British attributes, the Oxford attributes, etc., win no points with me. Not impressed. But, if you are going to read from history - and you are going to try to find out how the early, first century Christians dealt with Rome and were dealt with by Rome, it might prove, at least, interesting reading to read what he claims he discovered. And that's what I did last week.

The man unequivocally states that Rome persecuted Christians in the first century. He unequivocally states that Christians were - at least in the eyes of the Romans - responsible for bringing it upon themselves - because, quote:

1) Nero had an older resolution forbidding the introduction of new religions, but the application to Christians is seen as coming from the much older Republican principle

that it was a capital offense to introduce a new superstition without the authorization of the Roman state.

In other words, without permission, without the authority of the Roman government.

2) Christians were punished by Roman governors through the ordinary use of their power to keep order because Christians had introduced "an alien cult which induced 'national apostasy', [and] the abandonment of the traditional Roman religion.

Stop right there for a minute. What do you mean Christianity induced “national apostasy and the abandonment of the traditional Roman religion?”

That's easy. Brethren that is easy. They preached that there is another King, One Jesus, and they preached come out from among them and be separate. And they preached that Jesus Christ had All Power - All Authority in Heaven and in earth - and people were to forsake their own human created “governments” with their rebellious definitions of good and evil - and they were to take up a cross and follow Jesus. This meant leaving Rome, leaving Greece, leaving whatever, as in - citizenship with the world - and become a citizen of the Commonwealth of Israel - which makes no claim of earthly citizenship - but rather Heavenly Citizenship - Ambassadors for Jesus Christ - in reclaiming the world that His Father Created - calling on men and women, boys and girls to live exclusively by the definitions of good and evil, right and wrong, as defined by the Creator Himself.

When these things are preached - when the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, of God, of Heaven is preached, men and women boys and girls will renounce their allegiances to men's little g “governments” thereby creating “national apostasy.” And men's little g “governments” despise these acts - because they are the ones who love to exercise dominion over other people - in direct rebellion and defiance to the Words of Jesus Christ which said - “among you, it shall not be so.”

Christians were persecuted in Rome because, quote:

Others substituted for this a general aversion to the established order and disobedience to constituted authority.

Friends, this is great. Proves a point to be used in battle. But we still don't need this. We don't need history - a general aversion to the established order. Turn please to I John chapter 2. Read with me beginning in verse 15:

[15] Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Particularly, from our studies from Matthew 24, we know the word world has several different definitions from several different Greek words. Funny how I can go to the exact same Greek dictionary that pretty much every other “preacher” in this world has available to them - from the most conservative likes of John MacArthur and Chuck Swindoll - to the most liberal preacher freaks like Greg Locke, John Lindell, Mark Driscoll and others - we can read from the same thing - but come away with entirely different understandings. From the blueletterbible.org website containing Strong's Concordance online, we look up the word world as it's found here in I John 2. The Greek word is cosmos. Love not the cosmos.

Well, wait a minute. Because cosmos can also mean God's created world. The grass, the birds, the sky, the firmament - the stamped in the clay shaped earth - the encompassed waters - God created those things. He loves His Creation. Nothing wrong with loving His Creation and the awesome things that He created. So what does this mean? This I John 2:15:

[15] Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

[16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

[17] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

And if you do - if you do love the world, the things of the world - the love of the Father is not in you. What does that mean? It obviously doesn't mean His Creation. Looking at the exact same thing that every other preacher in this world looks at. Listen to how the blueletterbible.org authors define the very first meaning of cosmos in their dictionary. This is definition number one:

an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government

So how is it that we can all read the exact same thing - but yet when I read it and say that Love not the world means to come out from men's “governments” and into the Government of Jesus Christ - there's not another preacher out of millions that agrees? That is so strange to me.

My faith - my system of belief - has not come about because I have come up with all these strange, wild no-basis in fact or truth suppositions. I am reading things from the same thing that all the rest of them have.

an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government

I just sit and shake my head at the criticism I receive because I just actually believe the stuff that others claim to use as references - but clearly refuse to yield to.

There's this stupid, utterly ridiculous fight going on again within the clown show world of churchianity. It is not Christianity. It is churchianity. There is nothing Christian about churchianity. But last week in Springfield Missouri, the clown show of James River "church" held their "Stronger Men's Conference". Their opening act - which is exactly what it is - it's an act - was a male stripper who swallowed a sword, climbed a pole, then slid down the pole with the sword in his mouth. Most of the men there loved to see the half naked man perform his act. There was at least one man there that claimed to be offended by the half naked man and spoke up about the act. The whole thing was a total fiasco. It proves again that all of them are a clown show - even the guy that said he was offended. They are an affront to Jesus Christ, to the Holiness of God - and their love of the world, the things in the world, their lusts, etc., are abominable.

Anyway, the "preacher" who was putting on the show told the other "preacher" who was supposedly upset about the stripper - told him to get off the stage - he was out of line. Long story short, the "preacher/promoter" of the huge show started quoted Matthew 18 to the other clown show performing "preacher" and saying that if he was offended by the male stripper, he should have come to him privately, instead of getting on stage and preaching against the male stripper and the "preacher/promoter" who put on the whole show.

Apparently, the clown "preacher" that was offended by the male stripper is refusing to repent. So the other clown "preacher" is telling his paying customers that they now have completed the Matthew 18 process against the unrepentant clown - and he read from the following verse in his NIV - his New International Version "bible." Which is NOT a Bible.

This is from the NIV, Matthew 18. What an absolute joke. Total mockery of what Jesus preached.

15 "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church,

Now listen. This is what this clownshow “preacher” read - with a straight face - to his paying customers and this is what they are supposed to do to the other clown show, but unrepentant preacher who was seemingly bothered by the male stripper.

If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Treat them like a tax collector? Oh. You mean fawn all over them. Tell everyone they are God's ministers. Tell everyone they are supposed to give them their money. These people - these 501(c)(3) government owned churches and churchmen - LOVE their tax collectors. What in the world are these double-minded people talking about? Total hypocrites. It's infuriating. It's maddening that these people so twist the Word of God, the Words of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said treat an unrepentant sinner like a pagan and a tax collector. In a real Bible, the Words of Jesus are translated in Matthew 18 as a heathen man, treat the unrepentant man as a heathen - an alien to God - and as a publican - the KJV has it as publican - but it means tax collector. Their modern “Bible” actually says tax collector - yet they read it and it means absolutely nothing to them. Says volumes to me.

Jesus Christ equated the tax collector on the same level as the pagan - the heathen. Avoid them. That's what Jesus was saying. But these modern, illiterate, Biblically inept 501(c)(3) government mouthpiece “preachers” can't even see the significance of what they say as it comes out of their mouths.

We read from a lot of the same study material. The KJV uses the word publican - and it means tax collector.

Love not the world in I John 2:15 - means government - and it certainly can't mean God's Government - any two year old should understand that - it means man's little g “governments.” Love not man's little g “governments” - if any man love men's little g “governments” the Love of the Father is not in him.

So when I read the historian and he says that Christians in the first century had

...a general aversion to the established order and disobedience to constituted authority...

I get it. I understand exactly what that means and why it was said. The follower of Jesus Christ takes up a cross and follows Jesus. Jesus Christ was killed by men's little g "governments" because He spent His entire life calling men and women, boys and girls back to the Laws of His Father. That's what God's Creation is all about. That's why we were created. We were created to do the Will of God. Thy Will be done - on earth - as it is in Heaven. Who's Government do you think rules Heaven? Does the u.s. CONstitution rule Heaven? Does the IRS tax code rule Heaven? Do men's millions and millions of laws, statutes and ordinances rule Heaven?

What are we doing? What have we been doing? We are doing the exact opposite of everything that Jesus Christ came here for - and we do it - because we are scared of offending someone. We are afraid of losing something. We are afraid of what men can do to us and we are not at all concerned about what God could do to us.

The first century Christians had

...a general aversion to the established order and disobedience to constituted authority...

Why? Because the King of kings and Lord of lords walked among them in the first century. They saw what He did. They heard what He said. Most doubted. But when He rose from the dead - most of the doubt went away and those men and women were filled with the power of God and they preached and lived No King but Jesus.

A third school asserted that Christians were prosecuted for specific criminal offenses such as child murder, incest, magic, illegal assembly, and treason – a charge based on their refusal to worship the divinity of the Roman emperor.

This is where I asked to be reminded of illegal assembly. Were the first century saints guilty of illegal assembly? It turns out I did not need a reminder because it has pretty much been all I've been able to think about all week long in preparation for this message.

I submit to you, brethren, that there is no doubt in my mind, that the early, first century followers of Jesus Christ were accused of illegal assembly. Now, just like most

everything of substance in our world today - I believe the understanding of the word assembly has - in this particular usage - been lost to our generation. Of course it has. Just as Ekklesia has been turned into a weekend social organization - as opposed to what it really means - the Government of God on earth - most people today do not understand the meaning of assembly - even though there are signs pointing to it all around us. They still don't get it.

I want you think about something with me this morning. Focus on this accusation of illegal assembly. Keep in mind the allegations of creating national apostasy. Remember an aversion to the established order and constituted authority.

The first century Christians were accused of illegal assembly.

In the U.S. CONstitution, they have an amendment that says the people have a right to peaceably assembly. Why did they put this in there? Let me tell you why I believe it's there - and what I believe it means. Now, I am putting no validity on this. I am not claiming this for myself. I believe the CON is rebellion in the face of God. But why is that statement there? In a nutshell...

Back in the 1700s, America was considered to be the property of who? That's easy. The British, mainly. There isn't a need to go into a whole lot of detail - it's not my purpose here - but I'm only saying that the people living in America felt like they were still under the British crown. So, the historians told us that as time passed, the British rule over America became less and less desirable, until finally, Americans finally declared "independence." Right? Isn't that what they have told us for all these years? And, I don't have a problem believing that at all. So a whopping number of 56 men signed a "declaration of independence" directed at the king of England and the more than 800,000 people that were living in England. Eight hundred thousand and 1 - against 56 men who signed their "declaration of independence."

How could the preachers in America stand for this? What about "render unto caesar?" What about "obey the powers that be?" What about submit yourselves to every human institution men make?" I don't get it. The historians claim that in America in the 1700s you basically had two types of preachers - one group was called loyalists (obviously loyal to the king of England) - and they were dead set against what they called "rebellion to the king of England." Then, you had another group:

...New England ministers (especially those in Massachusetts and Connecticut) had preached on political theory and natural rights derived from God for many decades leading up to the American War of Independence, and thus, by the time the war came, the people throughout New England were very much inclined to fight for independence. These ministers included Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. Some of these ministers included, by way of example: Jonas Clark, Jared Eliot, Jonathan Mayhew, John Wise, Samuel Cooper, John Davenport, Stephen Johnson, Naphtali Daggett, Andrew Eliot, Richard Salter, Ezra Stiles, and Solomon Paine.

Interestingly, the majority of Anglican ministers supported the British and were opposed to the movement for independence. Not surprisingly, some of the loyalist pastors criticized these New England ministers for not confining "themselves to Gospel truth" and for having "unlearned the Gospel and has substituted Politik in its Stead". Loyalists referred to these New England ministers as the "black regiment".

One major theme of the New England ministers is the idea of government by "compact" or covenant and natural rights. These ministers believed that any government is obligated by the law of God to protect its citizens' natural rights. Natural rights are derived from the nature and character of God, as revealed in the Bible. These natural or fundamental rights include: the rights to life, liberty and property, as well as the freedom of religion. The Bible helped to reveal the law of nature.

So anyway, they declared independence and they created their own new "government."

When they created their own "government" - they decided to codify what they believed were a "bill of rights" - basic human rights that every man had. Every man has these basic human rights. One of those rights is the "right to peaceably assemble."

I am telling you today that what they meant by that was not that they had a "right" to go to the church of their choice. Or they had the "right" to meet in the parking lot for a rally. Or they had a "right" to establish a workplace union. Yes. Those insignificant things have some value. But that's not what "peaceably assemble" meant back then. It's not what it meant in the first century - when Christians were accused of "illegal assembly" and it is not what is meant for today.

"Peaceably assemble" comes from God. One of the very best teachings on this is found with the story of Joshua which we have read many times. It's about Government.

“Choose you this day who you will serve. Choose the God of Heaven and His Government, or the gods of your fathers from the other side of the [Potomac].”

God was telling Joshua that men have the “right” to choose their God - hopefully capital G - not little g. This is what is meant by peaceably assembly. It is assembling yourself with others for the purpose of establishing Government. This is what OUR forefathers did with the New Haven Colony Covenant. They peaceably assembled.

This is why most of the states in America refer to their legislatures - even today - as their assembly. Assembly is government. Listen to this. This is under the heading “freedom to assemble.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_assembly

Freedom of peaceful assembly, sometimes used interchangeably with the freedom of association, is the individual right or ability of people to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue, and defend their collective or shared ideas.[2] The right to freedom of association is recognized as a human right, a political right and a civil liberty.

The terms freedom of assembly and freedom of association may be used to distinguish between the freedom to assemble in public places and the freedom to join an association. Freedom of assembly is often used in the context of the right to protest, while freedom of association is used in the context of labor rights and in the Constitution of the United States is interpreted to mean both the freedom to assemble and the freedom to join an association.[3]

Now, listen to this, under the heading “freedom of association.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_association

Freedom of association encompasses both an individual's right to join or leave groups voluntarily, the right of the group to take collective action to pursue the interests of its members, and the right of an association to accept or decline membership based on certain criteria. It can be described as the right of a person coming together with other individuals to collectively express, promote, pursue and/or defend common interests.[1] Freedom of association is both an individual right and a collective right, guaranteed by all modern and democratic legal systems, including the United States Bill of Rights,

article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and international law, including articles 20 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 22 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work by the International Labour Organization also ensures these rights.

Freedom of association is manifested through the right to join a trade union, to engage in free speech or to participate in debating societies, political parties, or any other club or association, including religious denominations and organizations, fraternities, and sport clubs and not to be compelled to belong to an association.[2] It is closely linked with freedom of assembly, particularly under the U.S. Bill of Rights. Freedom of assembly is typically associated with political contexts. However, (e.g. the U.S. Constitution, human rights instruments, etc.) the right to freedom of association may include the right to freedom of assembly.

Now they've started to water it down.

Now, understand that these are much more modern writings concerning “freedom of assembly” and “freedom of association.” What I’m trying to get us to see today is that it is the “freedom of assembly” that gave the people in the 1700s - their perceived “right” to leave the government of England and create their own new government. Don't misunderstand me, please. What they did in 1789 was wrong. It was terrible. It was horrible. They sinned against God. Not because they broke off association with the king of England - that was one of the very few things they actually did right - but then by creating their own CONstitution - the love of the world, the things of the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him - they completely undid all the good they had by breaking off association from England. All they did was exchange one evil for another one.

So, when they put together their “bill of rights” - when they said “peaceably assemble” - they were saying they had the “right” to their own “peaceful 'government.’” That's how they justified their “independence” from the king of England. Every man has a “right” to assemble with who they want to assemble with - or leave any other assembly or association that they previously had been a part of.

Freedom of association encompasses both an individual's right to join or leave groups voluntarily, the right of the group to take collective action to pursue the interests of its

members, and the right of an association to accept or decline membership based on certain criteria.

So they claimed that they had the “right” to leave their association with the king of England. Christians not only had the “right” to leave association with Rome - but they had a command to leave association with Rome. To the point where if any man love the government of man, the -

harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government

If they didn't leave that arrangement, the love of the Father is not in Him. Love. What's it mean? We've talked about it many times before. Love and serve are the same thing. Whoever's “laws” you obey - that's who you serve - and that means love. That's who you love. Who you serve is who you love. That's what that means.

That's why the God of the Bible said we are not to serve other gods. Gods in the Bible means judges, rulers and magistrates. That's what Elohim means.

If any man serves the world, or the things of the world - the little g “governments” of men - the love of the Father is not in Him.

Jeff and I have had a few conversations about this, this week. If they - the people of the 1700s - had the “right” to disassemble themselves from the king of England - then we do to. I texted Jeff and said:

“The argument for the “right to assemble” is that it is a basic “human right.” That “right” existed long before their CON. That's why they claimed was their “right” to leave England and start their own “government.”

To which Jeff replied and said, *“If ya'll can do it, so can I..!”*

Those of us that are calling ourselves Christians, Citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, claiming that we are following a different Lawbook, a different Code of Statues - we are doing this peaceably. We are not out robbing people. We aren't killing people. We don't even believe in assembling with guns. We are peaceably assembling ourselves and if they had the “right” to do it - then so do we.

And, whether they had a “right” to do it or not - we have to do it. We have to obey our King, Jesus Christ. We have no choice. Joshua's choose you this day - that decision was made for us a long time ago. We believe that Jesus Christ is King. We believe that Jesus Christ has All Authority. We believe that His Authority is not just in the Heavens - but it is on earth - right now. Ever since the first century. His Authority is not coming. His judgment is not coming. Both already came and since that time it has been the

responsibility of every living, breathing creature to conform to His Government - and His alone.

Today, man can choose. But he better choose correctly. One choice leads to life. The other choice leads to death.

If any man love the world - look it up for yourselves - the word world there in I John 2 means men's established orders, men's constituted authorities, government - the love of the Father is not in him.

As we continue dealing with the Authority of Christ and trying to bring men and women boys and girls to a place of repentance for failing to yield their lives to the All Authority of Jesus Christ by living and moving and having their being in men's little g "governments" - I am going to move away briefly from Matthew 28 - and I want you to go to Acts chapter 19. I need to deal with something because I want people to realize how serious this is. I received an email a few months ago - I believe it was more than likely from some cop who thinks he's opening up some investigation on me. Well, as the world says, "been there, done that." Investigate all you want. I'm still preaching the same way I preached 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 40 years ago, and still living the way I have lived for the past 40 years plus. My name is Charlie Steward. I am an exclusive citizen of the Commonwealth of Israel. I do not claim any citizenship with any "government" of this world. I don't take any benefits from any state or national "government." I preach that people must forsake their manmade "governments" - come out of the world and be separate.

This cop - at least I think that's who it was - sent me an anonymous email and asked me to make him Commonwealth of Israel documents. I didn't even respond. Ridiculous.

No one is playing games here. They might play games and think that's ok - but this is not a game. Being a Citizen of the Commonwealth of Israel is serious business. And let me tell you this right now - if you are not willing to take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ - even if it means the death of the cross - then the Commonwealth of Israel is not for you. We are not playing games here. Let me give you an example. This is from a message I preached many years ago called, "The seven silly sons of Sceva."

These were impostors. These were people who were acting like they were followers of Christ - but they were not. They were fakes. They were phonies. And when they got into a battle and tried to claim Citizenship in Heaven - they got destroyed.

Today, as we talk about the seven silly sons of Sceva - there's some things that I'm going to bring out that I did not bring out years ago, but the point of the message will be mostly the same. Verse 1, Acts 19.

[1] And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

[2] He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

[3] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptidzo? And they said, Unto John's baptisma.

[4] Then said Paul, John verily baptidzo with the baptisma of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Alright. Stop here for just a minute. This is where I said I needed to talk a little more about things that I didn't talk about many years ago. I ask you today, was John the Washer's baptisma - Old Covenant or New Covenant? Clearly, that answer has to be Old Covenant - he was before Christ. I spent almost a year going back through the Law and showing baptisma in the Law God gave Moses. It's everywhere - if you just pay attention. John the Washer - clearly in the Old Covenant - was leading people into fulfilling the Law God gave Moses for repentance - in those ceremonies that required - wash the clothes, bathe the skin. It's everywhere in the Law God gave Moses. Miqve - first found in Genesis chapter 1 - verse 10. Wash the clothes, bathe the skin - been around for a long long time. Wasn't new with John the Washer.

So, here is Paul asking these people if they had been obedient to the washing that John had led people into in the first century. And they said, "Yes." But Paul is now saying that they needed to be washed again. Why? Because John's washing was done in the name of Moses - by the Authority that God gave Moses in the Old Covenant. And now we see, one of the clearest examples of all - where I had explained that now - after Jesus had been resurrected after He claimed All Power and Authority in Heaven and in earth - those still living in proximity to the temple in Jerusalem or wherever men were already keeping the Law - were required to keep the Law God gave Moses - but they were now commanded to do so - in the name of Jesus, by the Authority of Jesus. Jesus came, not to do away with the Law, but to fulfill the Law.

First century Christians who were living in close proximity to the temple that was still standing - or even those who were not near the temple - but still keeping the Law. Jesus said - when the temple would be destroyed - not one stone standing upon another - that's when the end would be. The end of what? The world. There's the word world again. This time, though, it means age. The end of the age. The end of the Old Covenant age - ended - not with the cross - not with the resurrection - not with the ascension -

not with Pentecost - the end would be when the temple was destroyed - 40 years from the time Jesus said the end would come.

In the meantime, while the temple was still standing, the Christians were keeping the Law - but doing so in Jesus' name. They were still sacrificing. They were still keeping feasts. They were still washing themselves according to the Law God gave Moses - but instead - by Whose Name do you do this? By the name of Jesus Christ. By the Authority of Jesus Christ.

Friends, if there are any of you who are still confused by this, you must read Acts 21 again - and again - and again - until you get it. It's as clear as can possibly be. James, Peter, John - and thousands of Judahites there be - which believe on Jesus Christ - and are zealous of the Law. That's what it says. Right before Paul goes into the temple to sacrifice a lamb - that's what it says - right before Paul goes in to sacrifice a lamb and wash himself according to the Law concerning Nazarites. It's clear. This is the only understanding that works. It makes the Scriptures perfectly fit. They were daily in the temple. Why? For coffee and donuts? The Book of Acts records Peter, James and John and other Christians as going to the temple at least twice a day. Why? Listen to this. Believe this or not. It's from historians, so take what you want and leave what you want. I believe it's true. Quote:

In the first century, the morning and evening sacrifices were still being offered faithfully at the Temple. Josephus comments on this sacred practice in the following manner, quoting Josephus:

“Anyone may hence learn how very great piety we exercise toward God, and the observance of His Laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations, by their fear during the siege (Roman siege of Jerusalem), but did still twice each day, in the MORNING at the 3rd hour (9 AM) and ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR (3 PM), offer their sacrifices on the altar” (Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews, 14:4:3).

Acts chapter 3, verse 1. This is me now,

1] Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

The time of the daily sacrifice! Back to the article.

The Misnah, the major body of Jewish oral law, clearly states:

“The daily whole offering of the afternoon generally is slaughtered at half after the eighth hour (2:30 PM) and offered up at HALF PAST THE NINTH HOUR (about 3:30 PM)” (Pesahim, 5:1).

The timing of the daily sacrifices is so well established that there is really no elaborate discussion required. It was offered twice each day, the first one generally mid-morning (9 AM), and the second around mid-afternoon (3 PM). The Bible calls the time of the evening or second sacrifice of the day as occurring between the two evenings. This is simply Hebrew idiom and another way of saying mid-afternoon.

Dr. J. P. Lange in his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures states:

“Into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour . . . the two apostles proceeded from the city to the mount of the Temple, which they ascended at the hour of prayer (Acts 3). Already Daniel (Dan. 6:10) prayed thrice every day upon his knees (cf. Psa. 55:17); in the later age of the apostles, custom had firmly established the three hours of prayer, namely, the third hour of the day, in the morning; the sixth, at noon; and the ninth, IN THE EVENING. The first and third coincided with the hours in which the morning and evening sacrifices were respectively offered. On the present occasion, the hour of evening prayer is to be understood, or our 3 O’CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.”

Which according to the Bible - is the 9th hour of the day.

So we have Biblical testimony that between the two evenings was in the latter portion of the day in question, and we have Jewish and extra-biblical sources that it was mid-afternoon or around 3 PM. There is, in fact, an almost inexhaustible amount of historical material available to confirm the accepted meaning of this unique Hebrew phrase. This time is established beyond the shadow of a doubt. It was the occasion of the daily evening sacrifice, and, most significantly, it was also the time of the annual Passover offering.

Putting what we know together, God commanded the Israelites to set their chosen lambs aside on the 10th day of the first month, keep them until the 14th day, and slay them between the two evenings or mid-afternoon of the same day. After that, the lambs were prepared, roasted, and eaten after sunset on the approaching day, which would commence the 15th day of the first month.

The first-century Jewish historian and general Flavius Josephus has left us an invaluable source of eyewitness information with respect to the practices of the Jews in Israel at that crucial time in history. Not only does he comment on the time of the daily sacrifice, but also specifically of the Passover offering itself. He writes:

“So these high priests, upon the coming of the feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the NINTH HOUR TO THE ELEVENTH HOUR (3-5 PM), but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice (for it is not lawful for

them to feast singly by themselves), and many of us are twenty in a company” (Wars of the Jews, 6.9.3).

Another first-century Jewish commentator was Philo Judeaus. He also testifies concerning the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread as follows:

“And afterwards . . . comes . . . the Passover, which the Hebrew people call pascha, on which the people offer sacrifice, beginning at noon and continuing till evening. And this festival is instituted in remembrance of, and as giving thanks for, their great migration which they made from Egypt, with many myriads of people, in accordance with the commands of God given to them . . . And there is another festival combined with the Passover, having a use of food different from the usual, namely, of unleavened bread . . . And this feast is begun on the FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH . . . the feast is celebrated for seven days . . . And of the seven days, Moses pronounces two, the first and the last, holy; giving, as is natural, a preeminence to the beginning and to the end” (The Works of Philo, The Special Laws II, XXVII). End quote.

The disciples were going into the temple - at the 9th hour. They went in to participate in the daily sacrifices. This is after the resurrection.

In the Book of Acts, when the Christians were going into the temple, when the Christians were washing themselves - erroneously translated as baptizing - they were keeping the Law God gave Moses - but they were doing so in the name of, by the Authority of Jesus Christ. As long as that temple was still standing - not one jot or one tittle passed from the Law. But, we see a further, clearer explanation. And that was the difference between the ministry of James, Peter, Philip, John, and the ministry of Paul. Paul was - you might say - jumping the gun somewhat. Paul was (a little bit later) teaching Christian converts that were not near the temple - that they did not have to keep the Law God gave Moses - not in Moses' name - or in Jesus' name. The day was coming, when the temple would be destroyed - that no one would be keeping the Law God gave Moses - as in the ceremonial Laws - no one would be keeping them any longer. They were not going to last forever. They were going to end. But while the temple was still standing - those near the temple - were still keeping the Law - including the sacrifices - but doing so in the Authority of Jesus Christ.

And, including the water washings. This is why Paul told them they needed to wash themselves now in the name of, by the Authority of Jesus. Verse 5, Acts 19.

[5] When they heard this, they were baptizdzo in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

[7] And all the men were about twelve.

[8] And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.

For those of us living in what is commonly called America - I have said this before - we should cross out the word Kingdom - and replace it with Government. Americans do not understand kingdom - as in England - the United Kingdom - which for hundreds of years was ruled by a "king." Paul was preaching the Government of God. Paul was telling people to leave Rome, to leave the Jewish system, to leave men's little g "governments" - to commit national apostasy - to go against established order and constituted authority of men - and enter the Government of God - which Paul would later reveal as being named, the Commonwealth of Israel.

[9] But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude,

Nothing's changed. Nothing's new under the sun. Speak to people about the Government of God, today and people will call that way - evil. They won't believe. They'll speak evil of that way.

he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Isn't it interesting that he was disputing in the school of one Tyrannus. Tyranny, the definition of men's little g "governments." Nothing's changed.

[10] And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

[11] And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

[12] So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Now watch. And friends, don't let your mind wonder off into Hollywood. We may not know exactly what this means, but it doesn't mean Linda Blair's head spinning around.

[13] Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying,

You know what? That's really interesting. I just noticed this. Whenever we see the real Authority of Jesus - it's in the name of. But here, it's just the name of... It's not just saying the sound J-e-s-u-s - but it's living by the Authority of Jesus Christ.

We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

[14] And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

[15] And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

[16] And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

I am reading this to you this morning for the purpose of showing you again how serious this is. We have a command to assemble. We have a command to be exclusive Citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel. But I'm telling you today, if you make that claim, you better be ready to die for that belief. It better be real, it better be such a part of you that believe with your whole heart that you have come out of the world - you have come out of the governments of men and into the Government of God. Impostors get torn up. Impostors get stripped naked by the persecutors of the little g "governments" of men when people claim to be Christians and they really don't believe they are.

Carrying around a piece of plastic that says Commonwealth of Israel on it - means nothing if you are not willing to die for that truth. If you are not willing to lose your life for Christ - it means nothing.

When the little g "governments" of men challenge you - want to fight you - want to destroy you because of your claim to be in Christ - because of your peaceably assembling yourselves - it better be real. It wasn't real with the seven silly sons of Sceva. The persecutor said, "I know who Jesus is. I know who Paul is. But I don't know you." And the persecutor sicked his goons on them and tore them to pieces. This is serious business, friends.

Being a citizen of the Commonwealth of Israel means that you are declaring that you no longer want to be associated with the world - with the little g "governments" of men - and I'll assure you - the world will accuse you of "illegal assembly." They'll try to say your documents are forgeries. Absurd. That's ridiculous. But that's what they'll claim. They'll threaten you. And think they are scaring you - but - you better stand. If what you say you believe is true - you better stand - and you better be willing to stand to the end.

In closing, let me prove it again, from this chapter, actually. Skip down to verse 29. As Paul was continuing to preach the Government of God, the story continues. And let me prove to you again that assembly means government.

[29] And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

The theatre was a place for games and other spectacles, but in this instance it was the place for the public assembly - the assembled "government" there.

[30] And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

[31] And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

[32] Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused;

The assembly was confused. What's the Greek word there? Of course. It's ekklesia. And as we keep going we'll see that it is "government."

and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

[33] And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

[34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Great is our government. Now watch. We are talking government here.

[35] And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

[36] Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

[37] For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

I'd be remiss here if I didn't say, for those who might be new to this ministry or to this understanding, this is one of the only times the word "church/churches" is translated

correctly in the KJV. The Greek word from which churches is translated here is not ekklesia. It is *hierosylos* (yay ros a los) and it means a temple building - and particularly a pagan temple building. It's a sacrilegious temple. Verse 38.

[38] Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

We are seeing assembly for what it means. It means "government." They were assembled as "government."

The first century saints were gathering themselves - not for weekend social organizations - but as the Ekklesia of Jesus Christ - the called out from the world Citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, the Government of God. They were peaceably assembled together as they had been commanded - but the Romans called it illegal assembly - because it was causing national apostasy. It was drawing people away from Rome - and into the Government, into the Assembly of Christ.

[39] But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Lawful assembly. It means government. It doesn't mean a rally in the park. Or a parade, or a protest against abortion or a protest in favor of queer rights. The "right of the people to peaceably assemble" means they can leave an association of people - citizenship with the world - and they can choose to assemble themselves with others of like mind. And if they can do it - then we can too!

[40] For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

[41] And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to leave the world - which means men's little g "governments" - and peaceably assembly as a new Government. Citizenship in the Commonwealth of Israel. And if you make that claim - you better be willing to die for the cause of Jesus Christ. Take up the cross and follow Christ.

And, as we read the world's understanding of freedom of assembly, freedom of association - it is not just a collective right - it's not just for 56 assembled men - it is the right of an individual to choose to associate - or choose not to associate.

We choose to associate with the Commonwealth of Israel. We choose to associate with the Laws, Statutes and Ordinances of God. And we choose not to associate with the laws, statutes and ordinances of mere men. And we are doing this peaceably. We are not robbers. We are not murderers. The world has no case against us. The world can not lay any charge against us. They claim the right to peaceably assemble. If they have that right - then we have it too - whether they like it or not. The king of England certainly did not like the American's claim. But he didn't have a choice in the matter.

He responded with guns, though, didn't he? Nothing's changed has it?

The world's definitions of freedom of assembly and freedom of association ultimately have no value with us Christians. We were given a command to come out from among them and be separate. We were given a command to peaceably build the assembly of Jesus Christ. And, it's passed time that we who call ourselves Christians - individually or collectively - obey our Master's commands.