

Chapter 9 Temples and Churches

The Church



And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:17-18

When Jesus gave Simon the keys to the Kingdom he was giving them to all of us. Simon became *Peter*, the Rock, because he answered Christ by faith. Simon listened to the revealed word of God in his own heart and mind and acted upon that revelation. With that answer Simon took his first step in his walk with God's holy spirit in the kingdom of Heaven.

Because he responded to that revelation with the Spirit of Faith he had begun to move not by flesh and blood alone, not by his own knowledge of good and evil but by the wisdom of God written in his own heart and mind. Faith is that rock.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 16:19

Jesus revealed to us that keys to the kingdom are what you bind or loose on earth is bound and loosed in heaven. God had told us not to make covenants, leagues or agreement with those who are not our brothers in Him. We are warned about striking hands, applying for benefits and eating *the deceitful meats* of rulers. Christ did the same with his stand on prayer or application, the benefits of Corban, making a man on earth our father and his bar against the taking of oaths of any kind repeated by James. Paul says if we can be free choose it rather and that he would not be bound under the authority of any. To follow the path and precepts laid down by God, Christ and the Apostles is key to seeking the kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus preached a kingdom to which he was servant king and told us to preach the same. He appointed¹⁶⁵ His Apostles a kingdom to serve as the Father had appointed unto him. What is the Church appointed by Christ?

In the King James Bible we see the word *Church* translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* defined 'an assembly called out'. It is composed of two words that individually mean 'called' and 'out' but together they take on a new sense of *oneness out of many*.

Some say the word means an *assembly* but an *ekklesia*, literally translated 'called out', is more specific. The words *agora*,¹⁶⁶ *paneguris*,¹⁶⁷ *trugao*,¹⁶⁸ *sustrepho*,¹⁶⁹ *sullego*,¹⁷⁰ *sunathroizo*,¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Lu 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

¹⁶⁶ 58 any assembly, especially of the people

¹⁶⁷ 3831 a festal gathering of the whole people to celebrate public games

¹⁶⁸ 5166 to gather in ripe fruits

¹⁶⁹ 4962 to twist together, roll together to collect, ... to assemble

ochlopoieo,¹⁷² *sumbibazo*,¹⁷³ *sunagoge*,¹⁷⁴ *episunagoge*,¹⁷⁵ *sunago*¹⁷⁶ *episunago*,¹⁷⁷ *heorte*, *koinon*, and *thiasos* all mean or include the concept of an *assembly* with a slightly or drastically different meaning or inference.

An *ekklesia* is not just any assembly but it is, “the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs”¹⁷⁸ *Ekklesia* was a political term, not a religious term. In classical Greek “ekklesia” meant “an assembly of citizens summoned by the crier, the legislative assembly.” The princes of Israel were originally composed of the elders of each family group. Their power or authority was not collective or democratic but individual and consensual. If they decided something it was done by accord and not by vote of the majority over the minority.

In Acts 7:38 there is reference to “the church in the wilderness”.¹⁷⁹ The people were *called out* of bondage of Egyptian government and the Levites were *called out* of the walled camp to be ministers of Israel, God’s kingdom. The Apostles were *called out* to be bondservants of Christ the king in service of his appointed kingdom. Peter was to maintain an entrance¹⁸⁰ to that Kingdom ministering to it under the *perfect law of liberty*¹⁸¹. Jesus came *to set at liberty them that are bruised*. His ministers have no less a task.

All this is no different than Abraham being called out of Ur and Haran or the distinction made between those who followed the ways of Cain and his city state and those who walked with God as free souls upon the earth.

**“Are men the property of the state? Or are they free souls under God?
This same battle continues throughout the world?”¹⁸²**

We were all called out of sin. What sins? Is it the sins of bowing down and serving other gods in the shape of men or their man made institutions? Is it the sins of coveting and even taking by force from our neighbor under the license of civil government? Is it the sin of ruling over our neighbor, even democratically? Is it the sins of oppression, injuring and even killing the innocent strangers under the excuse of self defense or the assumption of superiority or national self-righteousness?

The word *sin* is from the Greek *hamartia* and *hamartano* which can be defined in the Greek as “to be without a share in”. It does have to do with being off the path or mark but it specifically means without a share in the inheritance of kingdom of God.

Grace is from the Greek word *charis* which means *a given benefit*. If you sin you have no share in the benefit for you have left the path. Grace is never owed or earned but it is the granted gift. Sin has to do with usurping God. It is deciding what is good and evil, judging others, compelling charity and failing to forgive so that we may be forgiven.

¹⁷⁰ 4816 *sullego* to gather up. to collect in order to carry off

¹⁷¹ 4867 *sunathroizo* to gather together with others. to assemble. to be gathered...

¹⁷² 3792 to collect a crowd, gather the people together

¹⁷³ 4822 *sumbibazo* to cause to coalesce, to join together, .. knit together: in affection.

¹⁷⁴ 4864 *sunagoge* a bringing together... (as of fruits)... assembling together of men,

¹⁷⁵ 1997 a gathering together in one place

¹⁷⁶ 4863 to gather together, to gather

¹⁷⁷ 1996 ... to bring together to others already assembled. to gather... in one place.

¹⁷⁸ R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 7th ed., pp. 1-2

¹⁷⁹ Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and [with] our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

¹⁸⁰ 2Pe 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

¹⁸¹ Jas 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

¹⁸² Cecil B. DeMille in “The Ten Commandments.”

Jesus lived and died that we *might be saved*. He has done his part and has stood aside so that we may learn to do our part in salvation. We are not saved simply because he died but also because we repent.

Where we haven't forgiven, we must now forgive.¹⁸³ Where we did not obey, we must now seek to obey. Where we departed from the path we must now make straight the way of the LORD that we might receive the benefit of His grace. If we do not do these things that Jesus says then our faith in him is a lie.¹⁸⁴ Our relationship with men and their institutions is often a sign of where our hearts are at and who is writing upon our hearts and minds.

Order alone is not the purpose of godly government but a strengthening of the character of all, in bonds of love and charity. We must open our hearts and our hands to the ways of the Lord and not merely wave them in churches on Sundays. Sodom was destroyed because it *failed to strengthen the poor in the midst of its affluence*.

This is why God has called men out of the affluence of the world. In hopes that they will be strengthened and that they in turn will strengthen others in the ways of God. The Levites were called out to strengthen the people in a free nation and that nation was to be a priest to all nations. This is God's purpose for His kingdom and the Church that serves it.

Jesus called and appointed men to follow him in service of His kingdom. These were the men he called out and appointed to the kingdom. These were the men he prayed could live in the world but not be a part of it as they ministered and taught his ways of freedom and love.¹⁸⁵ These servants belonged to Jesus but were as brothers. The Levites before them also belonged to God and were servants of the congregations of the people.¹⁸⁶

When Jesus *called out* his disciples to teach them to serve the kingdom,¹⁸⁷ He also applied restrictions upon them, limiting their office. This was done under remarkably similar conditions as Moses had done centuries before.

Investing in Diana

The word *ekklēsia* is not always translated into *Church*. One source of confusion is because *ekklēsia* is not a proper name but a descriptive noun. Wycliffe calls all *ekklēsias* 'churche'. While, Tyndale always calls them *congregation*.

Wycliffe took "churche" from the old English "kirke" which is often attributed to a pagan temple in earlier times. He always translated *ekklēsia* "churche" even in context where the Bible was speaking of a governmental assembly in Ephesus not the religious body of Christ. In 1526 William Tyndale and in 1535 Myles Coverdale translated *ekklēsia* as "congregation". Tyndale only used the word *church* in Acts 19:37 in reference to that pagan temple of Diana when he was translating the word *hierosulos* [robbers of churches].

For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Acts 19:37

In Acts we see ministers of Christ being accused in Ephesus of being *church robbers, guilty of sacrilege*. *Sacrilege* is from the Latin *sacrilegus* meaning *one who steals sacred things*. The word includes *legus*¹⁸⁸ which is the Latin word that has to do with "*binding together*" from which we get

¹⁸³ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 18:35 See: Appendix 2 "forgiveness"

¹⁸⁴ Appendix 2 The things He says.

¹⁸⁵ Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are].

¹⁸⁶ Nu 3:12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;

¹⁸⁷ Lu 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

¹⁸⁸ lex, legis, See "Law vs Legal" or "The Covenants of the gods"

words like *legal* and *legislate*. *Sacred* is defined “Dedicated to or set apart for the worship...” And worship¹⁸⁹ has to do with *allegiance* and *homage*. Our understanding of such terms is different than their meaning at the time the Bible was written.

What was this “church” that claimed to have been robbed by these ‘Christians’? The *assembly* at Ephesus was fashioned according to the *doctrines of Diana*, e.g. Artemus in the Asiatic traditions. Its center was a massive temple similar in design to the front of the US treasury. It could seat over 24,000 people. Each of its 127 columns had been contributed by a different king as it was strategically located on major trade routes. The most interesting thing was its purpose. It contained a great vault which was considered one of the safest depositories in Asia Minor. This temple actually functioned as a bank more than a religious institution. The “high priest” was also a credit officer making loans and collecting interest, managing valuable property and in charge of security for those who deposited valuables in the temple in the course of commerce and trade.

It also provided social insurance through a system of *Qurban* or as an underwriter. There were regular and sizable contributions by members in the hopes of a secure return, profit or gain. There was coinage of money and the issuing of script. It was not only a bank but a treasury on a national and international basis. It was not unlike the World Bank or IMF.

This reference to a temple as a bank is not uncommon. The temples in Egypt acted much like a bank, issuing script, coining forms of usurious money, making loans and collecting interest. These temples of ancient times also acted as investment houses for mining, trade and even military ventures. Great returns could be had with such investments in temples like Janus and Diana. Governments like any other business had a need for banks.

Temples also acted as welfare systems for the poor in order to gain popularity among the common man. The contributions guaranteed a social security in case of disability or even old age relieving the family of that responsibility. The patrons of the temples were the assembly of its members who would often meet to decide terms and matters of the business of the temple. The Temple of Diana could seat over *24,000 investors* or their representatives at one time, which included smaller member banks or *kirke*.

No one suspected these Christians of breaking into the vault of Diana’s treasury but it was clear that they were considered a threat. This idea becomes less strange to our thinking when we realize the *tables* that Jesus turned over in the golden Temple of Herod were also “banks”¹⁹⁰ and the money changers were part of the national bankers or *royal treasury*.

Those ministers did not steal the money from Diana’s bank vault but they stole the hearts and souls of the people in that centralized and usurious pagan system. This was effecting revenue which required a steady increase of investors to thrive.

Judea had also adopted the Roman system of *Qurban*, called in the Bible *Corban*. This required funds to be *contributed* to care for the people. These funds did not sit idle but were invested to create a profitable return. Like any tontine system of entitlements new funds were always coming in to pay for any entitlement demands made on the temple while invested funds were still at work. Great profits could be had, vast sums crossed the temple’s tables, administrative fees were collected. Public buildings including temples were built in other parts of the world with surplus. With guaranteed revenue soon borrowing against the future was possible. If investment money dried up an economic depression or even a panic was likely.

The need for a social systems of *welfare and security* have always been a part of society. It is the left hand of governance. The Levites were vested with this office and the *Porters* or

¹⁸⁹ See Appendix 3 What is worship

¹⁹⁰ The word for “table” of the moneychangers which Jesus overthrew is the same word for “bank” in Luke 19:23 In the Greek today the word *trapezia* still means bank. Bank is from the Italian *banca* meaning *bench*.

Gatekeepers of the Old Testament managed the funds of that different kind of system. It was not based on centralized wealth or power but a network of charity and service.

For centuries this left hand of government had been chosen by the people in pattern of tens. Ten families choose one minister, ten ministers choose one minister, so on and so fourth. Most charity was handled locally. The greatest servants of servants worked at more national needs calling for grander contributions. This network of tens, hundreds and thousands were not restricted to centralized temples and mountains for their daily worship and offerings. They could attend local needs or national problems quickly and efficiently. Investment was in the people themselves which was the treasure of the nation.

Simply by withdrawing support a minister could be terminated by his immediate constituency who maintained that right. There was no top down authority or entrenched appointees. There was no going *up by steps* nor centralization of any national common purse.

The right hand of government was to protect all from law breakers, both domestic and foreign. In the days when there was *no king in Israel* every man did according to his own God given conscience.¹⁹¹ Israel was a nation of freemen *God was their king*.¹⁹² Every household was a part of the neighborhood watch, the jural courts and the national militia.

One Father

The right of the Father, or as the Romans called him the *Pater Famillias*, was absolute and beyond the government's jurisdiction. The Greeks had brought in different ideas which were now filtering into Judea with the introduction of a Hellenistic philosophy.

In Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* it was preached that the children were not the property of their parents but rather the *property of the State*.¹⁹³ It also called for the collection of all gold and silver so that *iron could be used as money*. It also preached a common system of welfare and food distribution financed by compulsory taxes collected into a common government controlled treasury. Land was to belong to the State¹⁹⁴ and everyone was required to pay a use or property tax on the land or that property would be taken from them and given to another. Was this the way of God's righteousness which we were to seek?

Youngsters were removed from the family at an early age and trained up to follow directions and teachings of the State. *Pietas* was the "Sense of Duty" that each child owed his Father. When he was born the child was traditionally laid at the feet of his Father. If the Father picked him up it was an act of acknowledgment. Birth registration was the official laying of a child at the feet or footstool of the Patronus of the State, the *Pater Patriae*.

In the original government of Israel the authority to govern remained in the hands of the People through the family unit represented by the eldest member. The Elders or Patriarchs held the power of government called by the Romans, *Patria Potestas*. Men like Cain, Nimrod, Pharaoh and Caesar assumed the office of Father.¹⁹⁵ It is from this jurisdiction that the State derives much of its power and authority.

Persecution of Christians was more often the result of provincial regulations, *called mandata*, rather than Empirical decrees, *decreta*. But it is clear that public policy and the structure of the Roman system came into conflict with Christian practices and beliefs. Persecution of

¹⁹¹ Jud 17:6 In those days [there was] no king in Israel, [but] every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.

¹⁹² 1 Samuel 12:12 ... ye said ... a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God [was] your king.

¹⁹³ "Each child belongs to the state." William H. Seawell, U. of Virginia.

"The primary control and custody of infants is with the government" Tillman V. Roberts. 108 So. 62

¹⁹⁴ "The ultimate ownership of all property is in the State: individual so-called 'ownership' is only by virtue of Government, i.e. law amounting to mere user; and use must be in accordance with law and subordinate to the necessities of the State." Senate Document No. 43 73rd Congress 1st Session. (Brown v. Welch supra)

¹⁹⁵ "And call no [man] your father upon the earth" :Mt 23:9 published by His Church

Christians under Emperors like Antoninus Pius was uncommon and advised against under Trajan and Hadrian.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus had been a priest at the sacrificial altars of Roman service and was an *eager patriot*. He had a logical mind but his stoic philosophy was tempered with gentleness and benevolence, by making it *subordinate to a love of mankind*.

His *'Meditations'* was still revered as a literary monument to a government of service and duty. It has been praised for its "exquisite accent and its infinite tenderness" and "saintliness" being called the "gospel of his life". They have been compared by J. S. Mill in his *Utility of Religion* to the Sermon on the Mount. Like many of the emperors of Rome he was loved by the people. Yet, with all his benevolence, administered justice and reforms he often mistrusted the Christians who he subjected to systematic persecution.

What was wrong with Christians? Religious freedom was guaranteed in the Roman constitution. No Christian was persecuted for singing in Church, praising the Lord or believing in Jesus. It is what that belief changed in the Christian outlook and activities that brought them under suspicion, if not outright conflict with Roman policy.

Their independence and success could make Emperors nervous if not ashamed or jealous. When Christians appeared to question Marcus' desire to be the benevolent Father of the people, conflict was sure to follow. The record of persecution of Christians under this loving, tender and dutiful public servant was greater than any other period of Roman history.

Christians were bound together in a system of unity, strength and efficiency that often frightened those governing a central power bound by pride, pomp and pricey beneficence. Focus in the Christian community was not upon the benefits of the State. Independent responsibility, a duty to love their neighbor and a trust in God took all their service.

When Christians had needs they went to Christians and their living stone altars like Stephen, Philip and Prochorus and the men who contributed to them.¹⁹⁶ They did not pray at the altars of Rome or Herod. They knew the Lord hated the Nicolaitians¹⁹⁷ and would not apply to the Father of Rome and Jerusalem nor their systems of Qurban and Corban.

And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.
Matthew 23:9

It has always been an option for the people to apply to a State for an enfranchised citizenship. Fathers registered their children in a threefold process of abdication and manumission through Novation, Tutor and Korban¹⁹⁸ releasing their custodial rights but gaining the State first as a Patron and eventually the Benefactor of the citizen invested with his Toga.¹⁹⁹ This had always been a voluntary process but eventually some form of membership in the Roman Family became required.

Marcus Aurelius required everyone to register the birth of their children with the Secretary of Treasury or Provincial Registrars within 30 days or suffer the *penalty of law*. The Roman system was in debt and decline and it needed more collateral and contributing investors to the corporation of the State. Human resources were in demand.

Christians could not apply to the Father of the Roman state without denying Christ's command. The gratuities and benefits of that gentile government were the result of the peoples

¹⁹⁶ Acts 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

¹⁹⁷ See Appendix 4

¹⁹⁸ Bringing closer to the originator or father, a substitute father honored.

¹⁹⁹ Tog[ae]. L., akin to tegere to cover. Toga virilis ... assumed by Roman boys at fourteen.

sacrifice to the god of the Roman State, the Apo Theos. You had to accept Caesar as your Father to pray for and receive his beneficence.

In Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, he praised "the union and discipline of the Christian republic." He also pointed out that "it gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman Empire."²⁰⁰ The early Christian community was a republic that was recognized by Rome through the proclamation nailed to the cross by order of the Proconsul of Rome, Pontius Pilate.

Fear, duty and respect for the State became more important than love of family. The 'ruling elite' worked their influence unknown to the distracted general public. This philosophy required entertainment, distraction and a system of education, social welfare and old age pensions which was ministered by the corporate temples of the state.

Augustus Caesar had incorporated many such temples as a part of government services and Judea was no different establishing its own system of Corban. All this was diametrically opposed to what Moses had taught and Jesus did not fail to point it out.²⁰¹

"Tyranny is not a matter of minor theft and violence, but of wholesale plunder, sacred and profane, private or public. If you are caught committing such crimes in detail you are punished and disgraced; sacrilege, kidnapping, burglary, fraud, theft are the names we give to such petty forms of wrongdoing. But when a man succeeds in robbing the whole body of citizens and reducing them to slavery, they forget these ugly names and call him happy and fortunate, as do all others who hear of his unmitigated wrongdoing."²⁰²

Arts of the Temples

In the Gospels we see the mother of Zebedee's children²⁰³ requesting two offices for her sons in the Kingdom preached by Christ. She desired the left and the right hand seats on either side of the King for her sons. She knew Jesus was high priest²⁰⁴ and King.

Jesus knew he had come to be the King who *returned every man to his family and every man to his possessions*.²⁰⁵ The right hand of government was to return to the people according to God's plan. This would make the people stronger. Taking their God given responsibility back would return their God given rights, making men whole again.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: Mt 6:3

The right hand of government was called the *imperium* by the Romans. It was divided into the *merum* which dealt with foreign aggression the *mixtum* which dealt with the "wicked" within the jurisdiction of the civil state. These powers were granted by the people to the province of the Patronus (Our Father) of Rome. Under his *patronage* and *tutorship*, as the people registered their children, the power of the state grew.

²⁰⁰ Rousseau and Revolution, Will et Ariel Durant p.801. fn 83 Heiseler, 85.

²⁰¹ And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. Mr 7:9-13

²⁰² Plato's Republic 344a-c. Lee translation, Penguin Books, 1955, p.73.

²⁰³ Mt 20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

²⁰⁴ John 3:30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.

²⁰⁵ Le 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

The temples were a part of the left hand of government and originally depended upon the freewill and sin offerings of the people. The ancient *altars of clay* were formed of, by and for the people to the benefit of their neighbor in charity and love. The wealth of the system was stored in brotherhood and love through charity.

He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Luke 3:11

The national treasure of the kingdom of Heaven is in the hearts of the people. Charity and hope beyond the family into the community and nation will maintain freedom under God at home and abroad. As the right hand of man is freely given in the service of justice to our fellow man so also the left hand serves their same need. Both elements of society gain God's grace and are virtuously strengthened by such brotherhood.

Matthew 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

Jesus also knew the king was not to appoint these offices from the top down. God would determine who would hold those offices and he would reveal it through the people in the pattern of tens and hundreds choosing servants of servants, unto the highest servant.

But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *[it shall be given to them]* for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. Mark 10:40-45, Matthew 20:21-26.

If God was in the hearts of the people they would make the right choices. Even the highest servant was not allowed to rule over the people, or return them to Egypt or make treaties. Each man would choose who would be their *leading minister*. There could be no voter fraud, no special interest take over. Each leader was known intimately by ten men already chosen by ten men because of the trust and virtue and service found in them. Any corruption found at any level was directly accessible. Any coveting or taking from your neighbor was fundamentally forbidden. Protection and love of neighbor was as important as protection and love of self. There was no tax but charity only.

There was no central treasury to rob, no high office of power to make deals or be corrupted. Each individual had to accept responsibility for themselves, their family and their neighbors. This was Christianity. As people sought righteousness and did the will of the Father in Heaven, the kingdom was edified in them and about them. Men of virtue flock to such a system and men of sloth and avarice, greedy for power and control have no place in it.

This ancient of systems, preached anew by Christ and his disciples divided the sheep from the goats and turned the world right side up.

During times of grave trials and great tribulation, it is not distant dictators, hypothetical philosophies or detached doctrines that cultivate loyalty, courage and sacrifice in men but it is the personal sacrifice of brotherhood that nurtures man's virtuous nature. It is the shared bread in hunger, the donated cover against cold and the sweat, blood and life given freely that teaches love and patience, virtue and fortitude and binds souls together as one body, one nation, a peculiar people, in the name of God, in this world and the next. It is the daily sacrifice of self for the rights of others that brings man to the willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice to live or die in service to the Lord of Lords.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Joh 15:13

A nation bound together in such brotherhood cannot be broken. Jesus knew that a nation built on force, control and compliance will falter and fail as it fosters power and pride, fear and anger. When love fades in men, men fail. When charity is not exercised virtue grows weak. When faith does not accrue, allegiance is abated. Use it or lose it.

Those who studied the histories of Israel understood the bloody sacrifice and burnt offerings of the Pharisees were nothing more than a travesty if not heresy. Those who had sought to learn the ancient mysteries of the Kingdom knew that the altars of Abraham and Moses were built of men, not of dead stone. These unregulated individuals of noble conscience were men of grace to whom contributions of charity were granted by the freewill of the people. Their purpose was to care for the needy and needs of the community and to feed the sheep of the kingdom. They realized that these altars were a form of unregulated social insurance that strengthened the receiver as much as those who gave. It was this system that brought the whole nation together in a living network of brotherhood and love.

No man could take from or injure an Israelite without injuring the whole nation. No one could conquer such a nation unless they conquered every man and woman in it. The more you fought them the stronger and more resolved they became. There seems a great power in hate and fear but faith and love, like a rock, endures.

These ancient systems were designed to keep the nation strong and free in the face of what was often great adversity. The feasts were ceremonial rituals. Their purpose was to keep the nation together as one people in practical ways. They were designed to strengthen community by bringing families and congregations of families together into a national community of marriage and brotherhood of charity and choice.

The people knew the family was the foundation of all society and there was no wisdom in weakening it unless your hope was tyranny. Sons and Daughters look to their Father and Mother to teach them the lessons of life. The family was an extended family and the community intertwined under the perfect law of liberty. Each successive generation knew that they had to care for their own parents as well as the needy. Those who were without family support were cared for as a matter of custom and a common assurance of hope. In a system of godly charity there is no entitlement but only grace and the hope of it.

Moses established an assembly of Levites to minister to the congregations of the people. The Levites had been *called out* by him in the wilderness when the people tried to set up a central bank like the temples in Egypt.

Again this seems a foreign idea to most modern Christians. It is historical naivety to imagine that this calf of gold was anything more than a depository of wealth designed to bind the people together into a loyal community of contributors and investors. By depositing all their wealth in the Golden Calf they were assured that no one would desert without departing destitute. Gates were set up and men and wealth were kept in as well as out.

This practice was used in city states in order to protect them against trade deficits and guarantee loyalty. It also secured the power of the *ruling elite*. The walls served the purpose of keeping the people in as well as intruders out. The king of Sodom had put more value on the human resources than the treasure of his city. They had a system of accounting for the contributions and deposits of the enfranchised citizenry and some form of exchange amongst the *persons* of the city was provided but regulated in value.

Aaron knowing the “arts of the temple” accommodated the people in this alternative monetary system. He became the trustee of the temple, high priest and benefactor of the people in a *cestui que charitable trust*. Moses was outraged and called the people to turn from their sinful ways of entrusting their family wealth in this unrighteous mammon. The Levites as

a people answered the call to maintain an entrance and exit to the camp.²⁰⁶ The people were free again and the Golden Calf was dismantled and consumed.

Still, some system was needed to teach and aid the people in the ways of the Lord. The Levites were the first born of the Kingdom as were the Apostles, the 120 families and men like Stephen. Moses and Jesus knew where corruption would come from. *Lovers of soft things* and power were not the ones to put in charge. The Levites had proved their faith and courage but Moses still forbid them to own land in their own name. Jesus had done the same for his called out and required that his ministers were to sell all their *property* and give to the poor, so that they had *no inheritance*.²⁰⁷

Some will tell you that Jesus only told the rich man to sell his things but we see clearly in Luke 12:33 He states, "Sell that ye have, and give alms" He states this to his called disciples in relation to, Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He had already insisted they do this same thing in Luke 14:33 with, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he **hath**, he cannot be my disciple." Again the word *hath* is from *huparchonta* meaning *property*.

The Apostles required new *appointees* to do the same as we have seen with the two ministers Josas, a Levite, and Ananias. These ministers of Christ's Kingdom were dependent upon the contributions of the people who only shared a portion of their wealth according to the service given by the ministers. These ministers did many things to make their constituents successful. They aided with education, business, agriculture, marriage counseling. Every aspect of their life was important to the minister of God's kingdom.

Such arrangements and requirements by Moses and Jesus did much to keep the ministers of that kingdom honest and dedicated. Men desiring power and riches did not seek such offices of service. This guaranteed responsive ministers in God's government.

This was not the case in centralized, top down governments, whether they were indirect democracies or a ruling king. Those who had power were tempted to seduce more from the people by offering them guaranteed benefits, entitlements.

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat. Pr 23:1-4

Christians did not apply for government benefits, social security and welfare in Rome. Such benefits were readily available but they operated much different than the plan of Christ, Moses and Abraham. The first century Church bypassed the Roman and Hellenistic system of Herod and developed their own system according to the teachings of Christ and the prophets. We see in Acts 6:1²⁰⁸ the *daily ministrations to the widows and orphans* was being neglected.

The Church established by Jesus Christ did not say go down to the Roman welfare office. It did not say join the system of Corban offered by what John later calls the *synagogue of Satan*.²⁰⁹ It told the people to look out amongst itself and find men they trusted and bring them to us and we will appoint them over this business. This common welfare was the business of the Church because the Church was the left hand of the Kingdom of God.

²⁰⁶ Ex 32:27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, [and] go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

²⁰⁷ Numbers 18:23-24, Deuteronomy 14:27-29, Joshua 18:7.

²⁰⁸ Ac 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

²⁰⁹ Re 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The Apostles did not appoint these ministers from the top down but were simply overseers of what the people decided for themselves. Like Jesus if they saw these men acting in a corrupt way they would fire them as he did in the temple. The people could go back and reelect them if they chose, rejecting Jesus or choose new men to serve.

Jesus did not mix the left hand of government with the right hand and therefore all contributions were voluntary. There were no taxes only freewill offerings. This had not been the case with the ministers in Judea. Passover messengers, once called *singers*,²¹⁰ were sent from Jerusalem with an *issued proclamation* demanding the temple tribute which could only be paid with the temple coin, the half-shekel. The money exchanging porters, bankers a.k.a. money-changers, would have their 'tables' set up across the country to make exchanges for those coins which for a short time would be in high demand and exchanged at a premium.

“On the 25th of Adar business was only transacted within the precincts of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and after that date those who had refused to pay the impost could be proceeded against at law, and their goods distrained, the only exception being in favour of priests, and that ‘for the sake of peace, lest their office should come in disrepute.’”²¹¹

The offerings of the people in support of the government was always voluntary in the Kingdom of God. God meant men to be free. This is why He called them out of Haran and took them out of Egypt and told them never to return nor should their leaders do anything to return them to that condition. Such freedom of choice left the responsibility of governance in the hands *of the people, by the people and for the people*. The people knew from common sense and hard learned lessons that if they did not take responsibility to secure their neighbors rights then they would soon suffer the consequences. Virtue rewarded righteousness, while sloth and avarice were their own companions. The people learned to give generously and discretely in freedom or faltered into folly and failure.

The Temple of Satan

The Hasmonians had already mixed the left and right hands of government a century before. They had the power to do so because the *voice of the people* had already chosen a central government, that had grown powerful and arbitrary, while the people became more subject and impotent. Some were discovering the ancient paths and some remained rooted in their Jewish religious fables, national pride and decadent affluence.

About 78 BC, the Pharisees, which were a political party, thought they had a better idea. They decided to exercise authority over the people. They managed to enact a law upon the people to enforce the collection of temple tribute.²¹² The right hand of government used its power on the left side of God's Kingdom thereby increasing both sides while at the same time reducing the position of the people. Not only were the people drained of funds but they also lost the maturing benefit of exercising the responsibility and right to choose.

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. Pr 12:24

At first wealth was plentiful and the money flowed in the fluid halls of commerce, but again with the taxation, corruption and the moral dissipation of the people new sources of revenue for government were introduced. The practice in Rome of selling tax-collection

²¹⁰ Singers were like the heralds of the king who announced his will but in God's kingdom the people were originally the *princes of Israel for there was no king*. The heralds or *singers* carried the message from public servants but the decision was carried back from the people to those servants. There was no authority for proclamations to the people. Ezr 7:7 And there went up [some] of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, ...

²¹¹ Alfred Edersheim's book *The Temple*, p. 71.

²¹² Salome- Alexandra (about 78 BC), that the Pharisaical party, being then in power, had carried an enactment by which the Temple tribute was to be enforced at law Alfred Edersheim's book *The Temple*.

contracts to companies and their joint stock holders was common but in the last years of the millennium Augustus put the tax collectors on the public payroll which evolved into something very similar to modern tax agencies which continued during the rest of the New Testament period and beyond. These lucrative positions often went to the person who could extract the most funds, not content with their wages and often taking by force.

Administrating these complex programs in Judea was done by many officers of government. There were now a need for professional lawyers to interpret the law. These became officers of the Jewish court, giving their opinion as law, regulating the accounting and payment of taxes. More power meant more laws. The more people became dependent on the lawyers the less they understood the law.

“The more corrupt the state, the more laws.” Tacitus

Scribes filled a number of positions. The Greek word for “scribe” was ‘grammateus’ meaning “a clerk, scribe, esp. a public servant, secretary, recorder, whose office and influence differed in different states.” They were the clerks or clerics in a complex system of accountants and lawyers.²¹³ In the Talmud there is a distinction between two classes of the tax-collectors, the Gabbai and the Mokhes or Mokhsa.

“The Gabbai, or tax-gatherer, collected the regular dues, which consisted of ground [property tax], income [income tax], and poll tax... If this offered many opportunities for vexatious exactions and rapacious injustice, the Mokhes might inflict much greater hardship upon the poor people. There was a tax and duty upon all imports and exports; on all that was bought and sold [sales tax]; bridge money, road money, harbor dues, town dues, etc. The classical reader knows the ingenuity which could invent a tax and find a name for every kind of exaction, such as on axles, wheels, pack animals, pedestrians, roads, highways; on admission to markets; on carriers, bridges, ships, and quays; on crossing rivers, on dams, on licenses-- in short, on such a variety of objects that even the research of modern scholars has not been able to identify all the names. But even this was as nothing compared to the vexation of being constantly stopped on the journey, having to unload all one’s pack animals, when every bale and package was opened, and the contents tumbled about, private letters opened, and the Mokhes ruled supreme in his insolence and rapacity.”²¹⁴

The Royal Treasury

These taxes and tax collectors did not exist in Moses’ Israel yet that nation had thrived. That kingdom’s godly government, with no king, operated in a much different fashion and the people were allowed to live by the perfect law of liberty. The people could not force their neighbor to pay for the assumed needs of the community or nation, nor could they elect men to extract such blood and sweat from the people. Needs were often true enough and needed to be attended to in some manner. One could have and exercise all their God given rights but they also needed to fulfill the responsibility of that righteousness in faith, hope and charity.

²¹³ Matthew 22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Luke 11:46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

²¹⁴ Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus.

“The real destroyers of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and Benefits.”²¹⁵

The Singers had gone from being the messengers of the people to being the Heralds of the *ruling elite*. They were able to do this because the people became slothful and centralized the right hand of government. That strong right arm of an aberrant kingdom became the enforcing arm of the uncharitable left, to the oppression and corruption of all.

John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

The reference to '*sold doves*' gives an impression that these were just merchandisers of small offerings. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The word *dove* is 'peristera' and some have suggested that it was to read '*ep aristera*', which would mean "on the left hand side". Was Jesus talking about selling doves or selling the lucrative seats on the left side? Those who sat in those seats made a considerable amount in commissions on receiving the compelled offering of the people.

The money-changers were not involved in nickel and dime purchases where you could tip over a table and send change rolling on the floor. The Greek word for moneychangers was *kollubistes*²¹⁶ which was a word for a small coin or "clipped amount". *Kollubistes* had to do with the *commission* charged by the holders of these lucrative offices on the left hand side of the Judean government.

These commissioned moneychangers took a portion of the collected contributions of the people in the form of a commission. This commission had grown to become what we would call a large share or *porterhouse cut*.

The tribute could exceed 7,600,000 denarii in that one month. The money-changers were allowed to charge a silver *meah*, or about one-fourth of a denar. Their cut on this one event could be 950,000 denarii worth more than \$9,000,000 today. "Thus the immense offerings ... to the Temple passed through the hands of the moneychangers."²¹⁷

Understanding who the money-changers were as government officials and what it meant to be fired from their lucrative commissioned position in the national treasury brings the motivation to crucify Jesus into a new and revealing light.

All these [which were] chosen to be porters in the gates [were] two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office. 1 Chronicles 9:22

The king had appointed these offices from the elected choices of the people. They were not elected as we often think of it today but were *reckoned by their genealogy* which had to do with their family units or "generations" not their lineage. The word *villages* is normally translated *court* and is based on their positions as servants of the tens and hundreds. Even though David and Samuel *ordained them to their set offices* they had no authority to elect them. The king and high priest, as overseers, could reject those holding those positions but they could not appoint their own cohorts, crowd and cronies.

Without perfect people it could not be a perfect system but it was a godly balance. There was separation of Church and State meaning the giving of charity and the enforcement of law did not mix. There was a balance of power in the hands of the people.

²¹⁵ Plutarch, 2000 years ago.

²¹⁶ "kollubistes, (i.q. a. a small coin, cf. Clipped; b. rate of exchange, premium), a money-changer, banker: Mt.xxi. 12; Mk. Xi. 15; Jn.ii. 15." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page 353.

²¹⁷ New Unger's Bible Dictionary

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. Mark 12:41

Jesus was the king and had been observing the practices in the *public treasury*²¹⁸ for some time. The words 'over against' were from *katenanti* which was a metaphor meaning "before one i.e. he being judge". He had already begun to instruct men within the royal treasury in John 8. There are a number of misconceptions concerning what is taking place and where it all took place within that text.

Jesus ... came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. John 8:2

There are numerous words translated into *set* in the New Testament including *kathemai*, *epitithemi*, *paratithemi*, *histemi*, *duno*, *anakeimai*, *anapipto* among others but the words *sat down* in John 8:2 is *kathizo* which is defined, "to set, appoint, to confer a kingdom on one."²¹⁹

Jesus was already on the throne and king of His kingdom. Thousands of people had already called him king. He was the most popular king in centuries. During the time when he was sitting at the public Treasury instructing men some Pharisees brought a woman to be judged. Jesus did not judge her but released her. Jesus then speaks to Pharisees telling them that they *judge after the flesh* because they do not know the Father.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. John 8:20

The first impression from films and story tellers is that Jesus was seated somewhere in the *commons* teaching the people when he spoke to the Pharisees. This all took place in the *gazophulakion*. The word *treasury* is from two words meaning "the royal treasury" and "guarded vault or chamber".

Jesus was in the *repository of the public treasury* which was *the Royal vault*. Very few people were allowed in there. It contained millions of dollars in silver deposited in large chests which held the *collected* contributions of the citizenry for the running of government and the support of the poor. There were also some luxurious apartments in this high security area used by the priest who held the office of trust to guard these great sums of money.

Jesus fired many of these tax collectors of the national bank by laying a string whip across their shoulder according to tradition of His office. As King he was able to *turn over* their lucrative appointments to more worthy officers elected by the people who now supported him by the thousands. The people had been taught the ancient ways for years and John had been setting them straight on the path of the Lord.

The Hasmonean Kings had gotten to the point where they could arbitrarily put men into these positions. If the people were to function as free souls under God, then they had to choose their own ministers according to God's leading in their hearts and minds.

Jesus had thousands of followers that understood this system and it would only be a matter of time before the old guard was forgotten and the new was in place to handle the business of the temple. Except people do not always choose God the Father. Some hated this king who was setting the people free. The professional judges, soldiers, tax accountants and lawyers would soon be out of a job and their profit would dissipate. They wanted their benefits and *filthy lucre*. They were desperate. Jesus had to go.

When Jesus *appointed* His disciples to serve the kingdom he warned them not to be like this governmental system found in nations opposing the gospel. "And he said unto them, The

²¹⁸ Gazophulakion a repository of treasure, especially of public treasure.

²¹⁹ 2523 kathizo another (active) form for 2516; AV-sit 26, sit down 14, set 2, be set 2, be set down 2, continue 1, tarry 1; 48 1) to make to sit down 1a) to set, appoint, to confer a kingdom on one 2) intransitively

kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”²²⁰

Herod’s idea of the kingdom was much different. He entertained and cultivated his relationship to Essene prophets, like Menahem, who had predicted his rise to power when Herod was a boy. There are reports that Herod had even agreed to divide his dominion with the Messiah whose arrival was also expected and prophesied. Herod’s popularity, though great, was not universal and as economies stumbled the people looked for scapegoats real or imagined. This magical system of prosperity and social welfare was sweet in the mouth but sour in the belly. All things that are too good to be true eventually come to an end and Herod’s Great Society and Social Experiment was no exception to the rule or history.

“Herod was forced to tax the Palestinians beyond their abilities to pay, eventually in many cases seizing others’ wealth for himself and reducing many Jewish landlords to tenant farmers (Ant 17.304-9). Property (chrema and ousia are the Greek words employed) was seized; in addition to the taxes. ‘tribute’ was imposed ‘on everyone each year,’ and these entailed ‘lavish extra contributions’ (Ant 16.308).”²²¹

The substance (ousia) of a once free nation became the breath and blood (chrema) of a new civil society with the ruling elite and rich and powerful skimming the cream.

[It shall be] a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood. Leviticus 3:17

Raising taxes, increasing fines and forfeiture laws became prominent in the scheme of government but it would not be enough. Before the end of the century a series of devastating recessions had spread across the Roman Empire. Popularity diminished as the power of Rome and its subject and client states would relinquish their comforts and privilege only after the people were expended, exhausted and oppressed.

Plutarch’s idea of taking all the funds of the nation into a common treasury and issuing iron coins was clearly not Biblical.²²² Such schemes have historically been disastrous, besides contributing to the bondage of Egypt. The rule has been the same from ancient time till today. Jesus did not come to let us return to an unjust system of weights and measures.

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. De 25:13

Anthony and Cleopatra had lowered the purity of their coins. Nero reduced the weight of the denarius from 3.5 grams to 3.36 and reduced the fineness from 98% to 93.5% silver setting a precedent for future changes. Before the middle of the third century AD coins had become only 40% silver and by its end was just .02% silver.²²³ The prices of a modius of wheat went from 8 drachmas to 120,000.²²⁴

²²⁰ Luke 22:25-26

²²¹ *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1992), p. 170 James H. Charlesworth

²²² Leviticus 19:36 Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I [am] the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. [Deuteronomy 25:13]

Proverbs 16:11 A just weight and balance are the LORD’S: all the weights of the bag are his work.

Pr 20:10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.

Pr 20:23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.

Micah 6:11 Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?

²²³ In 1965 the silver content of coins was reduced from 90% to 40% and eliminated altogether in 1971.

²²⁴ “By the reign of Claudius II Gothicus (268-270 A.D.) the silver content of the denarius was down to (Michell 1947: 2). As a consequence, prices skyrocketed. A measure of Egyptian wheat, for example, which sold for seven to eight drachmas in the second century now cost 120,000 drachmas. This suggests an inflation of 15,000 percent during the third century.” Bartlett, citing Rostovtzeff 1957: 471

In the first year of the fourth century Diocletian attempted to enforce price controls, but even under the threat of capital punishment they were an utter failure. Inflation continued from 600% to over 40,000%. Society was crushed under a series of economic depressions for centuries. A pound of gold came to cost 2.1 billion denarii.

Central banking, usury and debasing of coins were evidence of a problem that originated in the people. The governing powers created by the people were simply a manifestation of that same failing. They had strayed from the path that God provided.

The Temple was a national bank for the Kingdom. The coin in Judea was minted in the temple. The temple was the center of the legal, monetary and welfare system of the government. Coinage should be in the hands of the people but it is part of the job of the Church to preach a system of honest weights and measure and through its system of singers or heralds the Church should notify the people when unlawful money is put into circulation.

The Church is not like the banks of the world or the treasuries of the gentiles. They do not demand deposits or store wealth or charge usury. They are to assist in the circulation and distribution of the love and freewill charity of the people. As the ministers of the Kingdom, they provide a system where by the people may aid one another so that they do not have to turn to centralized systems of usury and subjection. They are not a central depository but a net work. They must warn the people when dangerous practices creep into society.

The governments of the gentiles continued to oppress the people and the people continued to turn to those benefactors who plunged them into hopeless depressions. But some trusted in the Gospel of Jesus and understood His kingdom and sought it.

And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth [economic depression] throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Ac 11:28

The Church had been trained and prepared for the inevitable decay and collapse of the Roman world system. The unrighteous mammon would fail.

Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Ac 11:29-30

With millions of dollars in money, land and benefits at stake and thousands lining up to the fruitful *tables* of the Christians, is there any wonder that Stephen was the first recorded martyr of the Church. The Churches system was causing a shifting of trust, faith and wealth.

Those ministers of the Kingdom could not exercise authority over the people. People could choose men from amongst themselves to settle civil matters and disputes. We see examples of this voluntary process in Ruth 4:2 when Boaz called the 'elders' of the families to judge his case.²²⁵ These men were comparable to a 12 man juries in American jurisprudence who once decided "fact and law".

Many today who claim to be the Church established by Jesus do not attend to the daily ministration that was so much a part of the first century Church, as well as the *Church in the wilderness*. When widows and orphans are in need and cry for help these churches send them to the governments of the world. Those governments collect the tribute from the people contrary to the ways of the Kingdom and compel the people under the force of law to pay "contributions". The governments of the world have this power because the people have sought those kingdoms and not sought the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

The Kingdom of God is a government based on faith, hope and charity not like the Hellenized, Romanized²²⁶ and Babylonian governments of the world. In the "world" the charity

²²⁵ Ru 4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down..

²²⁶ See Rome vs US

system had become entitlement programs giving the governments an entitlement to the patrimonial right of tribute. This systems had their own lawmakers and appointed gods²²⁷ who judged the people and by force compelled their compliance to the will of the ruling elite.

Those Churches who fail to preach the Kingdom disregard Christ. Those who take the tithe and send the children of God to the Qurban of Roman systems to be bound under tribute, as they once were in Egypt, betray their holy office. They are bound in these systems because the ministers of what is often called the Church have failed to preach the simple Gospel of the Kingdom and serve the people and tend to the *daily ministrations*.

***From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say,
Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Mt 4:17***

²²⁷ See There are gods many, or Appendix 5