

**that we should
leave the
word
of god**

Acts 6:1 – 7:3

~ If communal living didn't work amongst genuine Christians in the early church, when the apostles themselves dwelled alongside believers, then it is a reasonable conclusion to expect that type of society won't work today, either. Frankly, when communal living is attempted in contemporary culture, the only possible end-result is atheistic communism and a socialist type power structure, where personal choice is denied, legislation is decided by one person, and worthwhile standards are not attainable in ones life. In fact, devastation and wholesale slaughter inevitably occurs whenever the teaching of Carl Marx is applied to a nation – such as Russia exhibits as I write this report; or when a nation develops an Orwellian mode of total suspicion of each other through a culture of fear, such as the United States is currently in – as undeniably evidenced in recent modern history. First, it originated in Russia, then China followed, Cuba, Viet Nam, Cambodia – and many other countries suffer tremendously in the wake of iron-fisted governments. It is coming to America. It's only a matter of time.

Even so, the opportunity for the Word of God to be received in those countries has been tremendous in this Spiritual Safari. I see many of you teaching by using these reports; and that's awesome. I thank God for those of you who inbox me every day while out there preaching the Bible. All over Africa, Pakistan, China, the Philippines, the Caribbean – all over the world; some in lands of upheaval and others simply in hopeless situations. May God richly bless all who continue preaching the Gospel of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Interestingly, it seems only Americans truly despise these safari reports. Well, if my Jesus just lost the war in Afghanistan to Allah, then I would probably resent reading about the True and Living Christ, too. Turn that over in your minds a few times and see what you come up with, friends. Anyways, I have continued writing to you regularly, by the grace of God. Pray for this ministry as the Lord takes us to the next level soon.

In our last report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we examined the account of the first defection in the early church. That betrayal and defection was made manifest in lying. As it turns out, Ananias and Sapphira were liars – just like you and me. I believe they were saved; however, they committed the sin unto death – for them that sin was lying to the Holy Spirit. That leads to the election of deacons in the following passage. In this report, we will see one deacon, Steven, as he is framed, arrested and executed senselessly and needlessly. We're entering a crisis in the early church....

VI

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 ministration.

~ This is how communal living worked out for the early church – not well. The widows were the ones who were neglected. Carnality has entered the church at this time in which we are studying, and the lies and misrepresentations have now progressed to murmurings. This is not a racial clash; and this isn't anti-Semitism, either. The Grecians, or Hellenists, were Greek speaking Jews. They had a different cultural background from Jerusalem Hebrews - and that was the entire problem. So, the early church was never really perfect. The troubles we experience today began for the church absolutely immediately following its formation. I have heard people say 'we need to get back to the ways of the early church' – well, the early church was power conscience, and today we are problem conscience. The difference is: they handled it very differently and in a wonderful way by asking God for strength to endure the persecution. Today, that's not taught. Period....

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

~ The apostles believed the Word of God. They didn't believe giving up teaching it was the right thing to do. They felt if they involved themselves

with secular matters, it would be the undoing of the church – and it would have been – and it will be for any modern church, too. Your teacher should have time to study the Bible. He should have time for prayer.

Unfortunately, the man who is teaching the Word of God properly, correctly and completely is not supported to have that free time. If you have to be an organizer, promoter, counselor, therapist and vice-president of the church – while working a secular job – the Bible teaching will suffer every time. Please pray for our Spiritual Safari, my beloved. Of course, many people say I need to study more as they enjoy their free safari – and they're hypocrites; but, I digress....

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

~ Satanic division and interruption has led to confusion in the early church as we read on. So, they begin looking for honest men to help them. The sharing of community substance that had initially characterized the church has now been replaced by selfishness and greed found in our old nature. Naturally, one group arose and demanded equal consideration with the others. Sound familiar?

Well, the apostles do not feel they should be carrying this burden in any form. They want to dedicate their time to prayer and ministerial work. These who were chosen as deacons were chosen to handle the burden of material substance; and read their qualifications carefully in verse five: they were full of faith and full of the Spirit of God. Their honesty cannot be questioned; they were of honest report and full of wisdom. A church with untrustworthy deacons is an absolutely tragic organization to be associated with....

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

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

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

~ We're talking about service to the cause of Christ by faithful men of conviction appointed by apostles as deacons. The object of their faith was the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't know anything about the last five who were named in verse five, but the first two were certainly outstanding men.

Also, we see so much hocus pocus today with this matter of 'laying on of hands.' Many people seem to think it has some sort of power connected to it. If you place your hands on someone else, the only thing you can communicate are disease germs. You have no power to give another person anything spiritual; let's get real, shall we? We saw the laying on of hands back in Leviticus in the offerings, you may recall from our study through that book. It meant that the offering was now taking the man's place in being offered as the sacrifice.

In THIS case, laying on of hands only signifies they are made partners and have become of one accord in the service of God through furthering the Gospel. It is simply a partnership designation identifying a body of believers. Also, it is a social service being engaged when 'laying on hands' – the church should take care of its own congregation, missionaries, members and friends. You may disagree, and that's okay; you have an absolute right to be wrong. The early church stuck to God's poverty program. The modern-day church is very far away from any Biblical correctness as believers; having perverted Scripture in literally every single area of doctrine....

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

~ Remember, the priests were serving in the temple when the veil was rent and twain at the death of Christ. Many of those Levite priests turned to the Lord after that! The Word of God increasing is my only desire and purpose

for this so-called safari. Seeing the Word of God go out to the entire world properly, correctly and completely is much more interesting than any wonders and miracles. At least, to me it is. Of course, we're talking about sign gifts again....

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

~ Stephen is a strong witness for the Gospel; and anytime a man is strong in the Word of God, then certain sects will naturally hate that man. False sects are brought to accuse Steven now. Interestingly, this man was closer to being an angel than anyone who has ever lived since. Well, they bring him before the Sanhedrin and tell a bunch of outright lies about him. Does any of this sound strangely familiar? They tell half truths, of course – probably quarter truths is more accurate. The Lord Jesus DID say He would

destroy the temple; but Jesus wasn't speaking of the temple building being occupied. As we know, Jesus was speaking of His Own body; they just didn't have spiritual revelation or truth. The little they did understand, they misinterpreted and twisted. All in an ignorant pursuit of accusing Steven....

VII

1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

~ **In our next report**, Steven is going to recount and recite the entire history of the nation Israel. He is going to spell out their resistance and rebellion towards God. He will charge the council of being betrayers and hypocrites – murderers, actually – of the Lord Jesus Christ and, naturally, that will trigger the vilest hatred we have seen yet on safari; and it will end with Steven being executed by stoning. The inspired survey in chapter seven is a clear declaration there has never yet been a time the entire nation Israel worshipped God. It has always – and only been a remnant – even back to the Book of Exodus. Only a remnant of the people truly loved the True and Living God....

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran (Haran),

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

~ Steven and Paul both played a tremendous part in shaping the early church. Both were divinely gifted by the Holy Spirit. The one time they met, they were arch enemies. When Steven met Paul, they stood on opposite sides of the cross; much like the two thieves crucified with Jesus. Saul of Tarsus was the one who said the 'preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.' That's what Saul thought about Steven at this time – and this is where Steven perishes! Steven's message coming up is a masterpiece ordinarily passed over by most Bible readers. If you are going to begin with the history of the nation Israel, you MUST go back to Abraham and consider Israel wholly. Well, that's exactly what we're going

to do in the next leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire
Word of God ~
