

THE FALSE CHARGES LAID AGAINST STEPHEN & HOW THEY RELATE TO A COMMON CHRISTIAN TEACHING OF OUR DAY: -

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NOTE: - All Bible Texts are taken from the King James Bible; and the compilers have supplied all emphasis.

It is commonly taught by most of the Christian churches today: -

1. That the apostolic Christians taught that Jesus had abolished the Moral Law of God;
2. Or that Jesus had made changes to that Law after his resurrection from the dead.

These Christians set forth this message to the world, as being the true teachings of the New Testament writings.

But these teachings are **not** new. The Christian churches of our day did **not** originate these teachings concerning Christ. We can trace back these teachings directly to the people at the time of the first disciples of Christ in the book of Acts. And when we turn to this passage where this teaching is plainly stated, we shall see that these doctrines did **not** originate from a good source. In fact, the origin of these teachings establishes beyond any doubt, that these **beliefs are false**.

THE FALSE CHARGES LAID AGAINST THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR – STEPHEN: -

Before we turn to these charges, what do we find concerning Stephen's character? He was one of the seven deacons chosen in the church at Jerusalem, who was full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

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."

Stephen, being filled with the Holy Spirit, was a mighty preacher of Christ to the Jews. So mighty that the unbelieving Jews, could not overthrow the power and truthfulness of his witness of Christ.

Acts 6:8-10: - "**And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people**. 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. **And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.**"

The only way that the unbelieving Jews could oppose Stephen was to bring **false charges** against him, concerning what he was preaching concerning Christ. This they did, and they had **false witnesses** come forward and accuse him of these **lies**.

Acts 6:11-14: - "**Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and [against] God**. 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, **and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.**"

*** These false charges brought against Stephen by the unbelieving Jews concerning what he had preached about Jesus, were construed into a charge of blasphemy against him. They accused Stephen of

speaking “blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law.” “This holy place” is referring to the Temple at Jerusalem. And in VS. 14 they falsely accused him of preaching that Jesus “**shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.**” This is exactly what most of the Christian churches of our day are teaching concerning Christ and the Law of God. But these were false charges in the days of Stephen, and they are false teachings today. ***

What was Stephen’s teaching concerning the Law of God?

It is given us in Stephen’s defence before the Jewish Sanhedrin in Acts 7. And we must remember, that he was a man full of the Holy Spirit (See Acts 6:5 & 7:55), as he spoke in his own defence.

Referring to Moses being with the “church in the wilderness, Stephen said,

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.**”

NOTE: - The “angel” being referred to in this passage is mentioned in VS. 30 & 31, as being the angel of the Lord at the burning bush (See Exodus 3:2); this angel spoke with Moses **and with** the Hebrew fathers at Mount Sinai; and Moses received “*the lively oracles*” to give to the Hebrew people.

The only time that the “angel of the Lord” spoke to **both** Moses and the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai, is when the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20:1-17. Everything else God communicated to the Hebrews through Moses the Lord spoke privately.

Deuteronomy 4:11-13: - “And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. **And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only [ye heard] a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, [even] ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.**”

Deuteronomy 4:35 & 36: - “Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that **the LORD he [is] God;** [there is] none else beside him. **Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.**”

See also: - Exodus 20:18-22; Deuteronomy 5:22-31.

Stephen being full of the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:38, when referring to the Lord’s speaking the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai to Moses and the Hebrew people, called them “*the lively oracles*”(this is the old English expression); or in modern English we would translate this phrase as “**the living oracles**”, or “**the living sayings**”. If the Law of Ten Commandments spoken by God at Mount Sinai had become a dead or abolished Law after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Stephen being full of the Holy Spirit, would **NOT** have described them as being “**living oracles**”. The adjective “living” indicates “life” and “existence”. This plainly indicates that Stephen taught under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the Ten Commandments spoken from Mount Sinai were “**living oracles**” years after the death and resurrection of Christ.

Acts 7:51-55: - “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers [did], so [do] ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: **Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept [it]**. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with [their] teeth. But **he, being full of the Holy Ghost**, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.”

NOTE: - In VS. 54 Stephen accuses the Sanhedrin members of **not keeping the Law of God**, which the Hebrew forefathers had “*received*” “*by the disposition of angels*”. This infuriated his listeners, who would

hear no more of his powerful words of rebuke. For Stephen to be rebuking the Jews for their breaking God's Law, he must have believed that it should have been **obeyed!** That he is referring to the 10 Commandment Law in this passage is established by two facts: -

1. In VS. 52, he accuses the Jews of being the **murderers** of Christ – “the Just One”. They violated the 6th Commandment – See Exodus 20:13.
2. And in VS. 53 Stephen informs us that this law was “received” by the Hebrew forefathers “by the disposition of angels”. When God spoke the 10 Commandment Law from Mt. Sinai, the angels were present. Then Moses brought this Law down the mountain to the people below.

Deuteronomy 33:2: - “And he said, **The LORD came from Sinai**, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, **and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand [went] a fiery law for them.**”

Psalm 68:17: - “The chariots of God [are] twenty thousand, [even] **thousands of angels: the Lord [is] among them, [as in] Sinai, in the holy [place].**”

Far from the early disciples of Christ teaching that Jesus had abolished or changed God's Law, which **the unbelieving Jews falsely accused Stephen of teaching**, they were obedient to the Law of God. The apostle Paul towards the end of his life testified plainly, that he had **not** violated the customs or Law that God delivered to the Hebrew fathers.

Acts 25:7, 8: - “And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against **Paul**, which they could not prove. **While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple**, nor yet against Caesar, **have I offended any thing at all.**”

Acts 28:17: - “And it came to pass, that after three days **Paul** called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, **Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers**, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. “

NOTE: - This of course would definitely include the 10 Commandment Law and the seventh day Saturday Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, which God **entrusted or committed** to the Hebrew people. Paul could not truthfully make these two statements if he was not obedient to the **all** 10 of God's Moral Commandments.

It is quite obvious that most of the Christian churches of today, are merely echoing the **false accusations** levelled against Stephen by the **unbelieving Jews**, concerning Christ **supposedly** abolishing or changing the Law of God. It was **not** truth in the days of the first Christians in the book of Acts; and it is **not** true today! Let Jesus testify himself concerning his teaching about God's Law of 10 Commandments.

Matthew 5:17-19: - “**Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**”