

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

From last week's study, it is clear that one is not right in God's sight just because he is religious. In Acts 2, we read of 3,000 religious Jews converted from Judaism to Christianity. This week, we continue a study of religious people who were religiously wrong. In every example in which there were two differing doctrines, one of the doctrines was wrong.

Acts 6:7: *"And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."* Who were these people who became disciples? Being from Jerusalem, they were Jews. The priests were Jews serving in the Jewish religion. In Acts 4:4 we find that 5,000 men believed the gospel which the apostles were teaching. The numbers - 3,000 on Pentecost, 5,000 here, and those who were being saved daily (Acts 2:47) - tell us a great number of Jews were leaving the Jewish religion. Let us remember that the Jewish religion had previously been the correct one, the one accepted by God. In Acts 5:14, we find that multitudes, both of men and women, were added to the Lord. These, and the 8,000+ noted above, make a large number. In Acts 6:7, notice this highlighted word: *"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples **multiplied** in Jerusalem greatly."* We understand the principle of multiplication, don't we? Again, who were these people? They were Jews at Jerusalem. They had been subject to a law, but **they** left it and obeyed the teaching of the apostles - the gospel of Christ. Only a short time before, Jesus had commanded the 11 to teach His gospel (Mark 16:15). Sadly, there are some today who want to be subject to the Old Law, the one these multitudes of Jews left.

Today, we will zero in on one of these Jews. Acts 7 records the murder of Stephen by the Jews. In verse 58, we find a young man present named Saul. Who was he? Was he just a trouble-maker, going from place to place to stir up trouble? Acts 8:1-3 tells us *"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."* Between now and next week, learn more about this man, Saul. Was he a Jew? Did he believe he was pleasing God by pursuing and murdering those who had embraced Christianity? In the next article we'll find the Bible answers to these questions.

As always, we invite you to the services of the Lord's church.