

Acts 7 – Exposing The True Blasphemy of God (Stephen’s Sermon)

This is a long section and it is easy to get lost in it. We won’t be reviewing the intricate details of the history Stephen relates. Instead, we want to see why Stephen is recounting all these details. So I am giving you a short outline of Stephen’s point and then the longer verse by verse outline.

Stephen is making three main points throughout this section. He is responding to the accusation that he has blasphemed against Moses, the Law, and the “Holy Place.”

- 1) God’s Activity Has Never Been Confined to A Geographical Area
 - a. He spoke to Abraham in Mesopotamia (2-3) and Haran (4)
 - b. He blessed Joseph in Egypt (9-16)
 - c. He spoke to Moses in the Desert (30-34)
 - d. He did miracles in Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Desert
 - e. He gave the people the law at Mount Sinai (38)
 - 2) God’s Worship Is Not Only Located In The Temple
 - a. The Burning Bush was Holy Ground in the Desert (33)
 - b. Mount Sinai was Holy Ground where Moses received the law (38)
 - c. The Tabernacle was Holy Ground wherever it went (44-46)
 - d. God does not dwell in houses made by man (48-50)
 - 3) God’s Messengers Have Always Been Rejected By The Israelites
 - a. Joseph is rejected by his brothers, the patriarchs (9)
 - b. Moses was rejected trying to deliver an Israelite (26-29; 35)
 - c. Moses’ message and God’s Law rejected for a golden calf (39-43)
 - d. Stephen concludes by showing the Jews are now rejecting God’s savior just like they rejected all of God’s messengers (51-53)
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- I. God’s Presence Was With Abraham Through His Travels (1-8)
 - A. God Guided Abraham to The Promised Land (1-4)
 1. God Appeared To Abraham in Mesopotamia (1-2)
 2. God Commanded Abraham to Leave His Land (3)
 3. God Brought Abraham To the Promised Land (4)
 - B. God Gave Abraham Only A Promise (5-8)
 1. God Promised the land but Never Gave Abraham Any of It (5)
 - a. The Jews coveted the land
 - b. They thought it was the only Holy place
 - c. Abraham never inhabited it as his own
 2. God Said Abraham’s Descendents would be slaves for 400 years (6)
 - a. God told Abraham that he would not actually inherit the land
 - b. Instead, God told him his descendents would go into slavery
 3. God promised Judgment and deliverance would come (7)

4. God gave Abraham and His descendents the Covenant Promise (8)
 - a. God gave Abraham only a promise
 - b. Abraham didn't have anything other than God's Word to hold on to.
 - c. He didn't have a Temple, A Law, or A Land
 - d. He only had a sign – the covenant sign of circumcision
- II. God's Presence Was With Joseph In Egypt (9-16)
 - A. God Raised Joseph Up Through Rejection (9-11)
 1. Joseph Was Rejected By His Brothers (9a)
 - a. Stephen is comparing the brothers of Joseph with the Jews rejection of Jesus
 - b. Stephen is showing that God's chosen has always been rejected by Israel
 2. God was with Joseph Through Affliction (9b-10)
 - a. Even though he was rejected and suffered, God was with Him
 - b. God was present even in Egypt with Joseph
 - c. God's presence doesn't just reside in the promised land
 3. God brought a Famine upon the Land (11)
 - a. God didn't bless Israel in the land, instead he brought a famine so that they would move to Egypt
 - B. God Used Joseph To Save Israel (12-16)
 1. Joseph Was Revealed as Abraham's Descendent (12-13)
 - a. Joseph wasn't recognized on their first encounter but he was recognized on the second
 - b. Stephen is implying that these men also didn't recognize Jesus the first time, but they will the second time
 2. Joseph Brought His Family to Egypt to Save Them (14)
 3. Joseph and His Brothers Died and Were Buried at Shechem (15-16)
 - a. The only plots of the Holy Land that the Patriarchs received were their burial plots
 - b. The Land and the Temple were never the center of God's activity in Israel's early history
- III. God's Presence Was With Moses in Egypt and The Desert (17-43)
 - A. God Delivered His People From Egypt Through Moses (17-36)
 1. God Brought Moses Forth in Egypt (17-28)
 - a. God's Word To Abraham Begins to Be Fulfilled (17-19)
 - i. Abraham was promised that his descendents would increase as the sands of the seashore
 - ii. Israel multiplied and Increased while they were in Egypt. They started as 75 people coming to escape a famine, and they grew into a great multitude.

- iii. God's promise of Slavery comes to pass – remember God told Abraham that before they received the promised land, they would go into a foreign country and be oppressed for 400 years
 - b. God Raises Up Moses To Deliver Israel (20-24)
 - i. Moses Only Lives 3 Months in Hebrew Home (20)
 - Exceedingly fair – doesn't mean just a good looking baby. It means he was chosen to be a deliverer for God's people.
 - He was raised in a Hebrew home for only 3 months
 - Stephen shows that Moses didn't receive the benefit of being raised "Jewish"
 - ii. Moses was Powerful being Educated by Egyptians (21-22)
 - Moses was raised and educated in the pagan system of Egypt
 - He was a man of great power in the Egyptian society
 - You couldn't get more pagan than this man's raising
 - iii. Moses Attempts to Deliver an Israelite (23-24)
 - Moses murdered an Egyptian accidentally trying to help an Israelite
 - The next day He tried to stop a quarrel between two Israelites and was rebuked by them
 - c. Moses is Rejected As A Deliverer (25-28)
 - i. Israel Refused to Recognize Moses as Deliverer (25)
 - Moses thought they would see him as a deliverer from God
 - ii. Moses is Rejected and Scorned (26-28)
 - Instead of a deliverer, Moses is scorned and threatened
 - Moses has to flee so that his murder of the Egyptian won't be discovered
- 2. God Appoints Moses As Deliverer in the Desert (29-36)
 - a. God Appeared to Moses in the Desert (29-30)
 - i. In a Burning bush, God appeared to Moses
 - ii. God calls the burning bush "holy ground"
 - iii. This "holy ground" was in the land of Midian
 - b. God's Presence Spoke to Moses in the Desert (31-33)
 - i. God doesn't only speak in Temples
 - ii. God spoke to Moses in the desert

- c. God Appoints Moses As Israel's Deliverer (34-36)
 - B. God's Word Through Moses Is Rejected By Israel (37-43)
 - 1. Moses Gives the Law to God's People (37-38)
 - a. Moses Himself Said A True Prophet Was Coming (37)
 - i. Moses foretold that Jesus was coming In Deuteronomy
 - ii. Now the Jews were rejecting the word Moses had spoken about the prophet who would come
 - b. Moses Received the Law For Israel (38)
 - 2. God's Law Is Rejected By the People (39-43)
 - a. Moses Himself is Rejected By the People of Israel (39-41)
 - i. Moses as a man of God is rejected as he receives the law and a golden calf is built
 - ii. The people turned their hearts back to Egypt rather than following God's deliverer
 - b. God Turned Away From Them and Allowed Idolatry (42-43)
- IV. God's Presence Transcends The Temple (44-50)
 - A. God Gave Israel the Tabernacle (44-45)
 - 1. The Tabernacle was God's holy place in the wilderness
 - 2. Wherever they went, the holy place went with them
 - 3. The holy place is wherever God's presence is
 - B. The Temple is Built in Jerusalem (46-47)
 - 1. David desires to build a Temple for God
 - 2. God allows Solomon to build it
 - C. God Does Not Exclusively Dwell in Earthly Houses (48-50)
 - 1. God tells the people specifically that he is not confined to earthly buildings
- V. The Real Blasphemers of God Are Exposed (51-60)
 - A. The Jewish Leaders are Accused of Blaspheming God (51-53)
 - 1. Israel is Rejecting God As Their Fathers Did (51-52)
 - a. Stephen brings his speech to a close by comparing these Jewish leaders to all the Israelites who came before
 - b. They have always rejected God and His messengers
 - c. Israel has never been faithful to God or His deliverers
 - 2. Israel is Rejecting the Law They Claim to Follow (53)
 - a. By rejecting Jesus, they are rejecting the very law they claim to follow
 - b. They have become betrayers and murderers because of their blind devotion to their tradition
 - B. The Jewish Leaders Reject God's Revelation (54-58)
 - 1. The Jews Are Outraged At Stephen's Vision (54-56)
 - a. They are enraged at Stephen's accusation (54)
 - b. Stephen sees Jesus at the Father's Right hand (55)

- i. Even as they deny and rebuke, God shows Stephen a vision of the truth
 - ii. Stephen sees The Father and The Son together on the throne
 - c. Stephen Interprets his vision by Scripture (56)
 - i. Stephen references Daniel 7:13-14 which the Jews would be well acquainted with
 - ii. He sees Jesus standing at the Father's right hand
 - iii. He says this is the fulfillment of the Son of Man ascending to the Ancient of Days
- 2. The Jews Stone Stephen (57-58)
 - a. The Jews frantically seek to silence him (57)
 - i. They cover their ears and rush him
 - ii. This is a comical but scary scene. Their hearts were so hard they could not oppose Stephen but they refused to accept the truth
 - b. The Jews begin to execute him (58)
- C. Stephen is At Peace Surrounded By Enemies (59-60)
 - 1. Stephen Offers His Spirit To Jesus (59)
 - 2. Stephen prays for the Leaders' forgiveness (60)