

6/10/07

Acts 7

The Church was growing and expanding in Jerusalem and men had been appointed over different tasks resulting in the spreading of God's word.

Stephen has preached to the Synagogue of the Freedman and they were unable to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

But the crowd was unreceptive and falsely accused Stephen of blasphemous words against Moses and God.

- 1) That Jesus would destroy the temple
- 2) That Jesus would change the customs of Moses.

As Stephen sat before the Sanhedrin, they saw his face as the face of an angel.

Rather than Stephen defending himself, he takes them through their history to reveal God's faithfulness and their unfaithfulness.

- 1) God has always called out man to establish a covenant.
- 2) God is always in control and faithful.
- 3) God's pattern is to replace what has become traditional and dead regarding God.

4) God's people have always rebelled and been unfaithful.

7:1-8 The Witness of Abraham.

7:1-3 *The call of Abraham.*

7:1 The High Priest asks Stephen to respond to the charges.

- 1) Affirming them to be true.
- 2) Contesting them to be false.

7:2-3 The initial call of Abraham.

1) He address the council with honor and respect and asked them to listen. vs. 2a-c

2) He took them back to the beginning of their history. vs. 2d-e

a) The God of Glory, identifying His Divine and awesome majesty, appeared to Abraham when he was Mesopotamia, as the initiator of the relationship.

* Mesopotamia means between two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

b) The time is clarified, before he dwelt in Haran. vs. 2f

3) He reminded them of the very specific call to Abraham. vs. 3

a) To come out of his country, modern day Irak. vs. 3a-b

- b) To come out from his relatives, family blood relatives. vs. 3b
* Abraham came from an idolatrous nation. Josh. 24:3
- c) To come out to a land God would show him. vs. 3c
* This call was the second recorded in Genesis. Gen. 12:1-3

7:4-5 *The obedience of Abraham.*

7:4 Abraham did not obey his first call completely.

- 1) He left with his father Terah from the land of the Chaldeans but remained living in Haran. vs. 4a
* This is the first call. Gen. 11:31
- 2) He remained there till the death of his father Terah, where he received his second call. Gen. 12:1-3
 - a) This would mean that the first call of Abram could have been up to 35-45 years before he left in full obedience to God.
 - b) This means Noah died two years before Abram was born as, if there are no gaps in the genealogies?

7:5 He said Abraham obey by faith.

- 1) He never possessed any inheritance in it. vs. 5a-b

- 2) He had no child but God promised his descendents would inherit the land by a covenant. vs. 5c-d
* The covenant was confirmed. Gen. 15:12-15

7:6-8 *The revelation to Abraham.*

- 1) God foretold to Abraham about the 400 years of bondage in Egypt. vs. 6
* “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the **Amorites** is not yet complete.” Gen. 15:16
- 2) God foretold that He would judge Egypt, bring them out and have them serve Yahweh in the land promised to them. vs. 7
- 3) God sealed the promise was the covenant of circumcision. vs. 8a-b
 - a) The promise of a the birth of Isaac was given at that time. Gen. 17:9-21
 - b) The rites represented the cutting off of flesh life. Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11
- 4) The outcome was the birth of Jacob and the patriarchs. vs. 8c

7:9-16 **The Witness of Joseph and Jacob.**

7:9-10 The ill treatment of Joseph by his brothers.

- 1) His brothers sold Joseph for envy and jealousy. vs. 9
* Gen. 37, 39
- 2) But God was in it for good make Joseph the instrument to interpret Pharaoh's dreams! vs. 10

7:11-13 The sending of Joseph before them was to preserve the patriarchs. Gen. 42-43

- 1) Famine devastated all the land of Egypt and Canaan. vs. 11
- 2) God having warned of the famine by the dream to Pharaoh, Joseph had made preparations by storing food, so Jacob hearing, sent his sons to Egypt for wheat. vs. 12
- 3) Joseph made himself known to his brothers the second time. vs. 13a
* It is a very interesting parallel, to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews at His First Coming and who will make Himself known to them at His Second Coming. en. 44-46
- 4) Joseph then made know his family to Pharaoh. vs. 13b

7:14-17 The pilgrimage of Jacob to Egypt.

- 1) Stephen say 75 people because he was referring to the LXX, which adds five of Joseph's grandsons. vs. 14
* Gen. 46:27
- 2) Jacob lived and died in Egypt. vs. 15

- 3) Jacob was carried back and buried at the cove of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. vs. 16
* Gen. 49:29-32; 50:13; 23:16-17

7:17-50 The Witness of Moses.

7:17-19 Replacing the Hyksos Dynasty using craft and deceit.

7:20-29 The first forty years of Moses.

- 1) Moses was a beautiful child hidden for three months. vs. 20
* Ex. 2:2; Heb.11:23
- 2) Moses was placed in a little ark on the Nile and Pharaoh's daughter drew him from the water, that is the meaning of the name Moses. vs. 21
- 3) Moses was learned in science, math, astronomy, medicine, etc., for he was to be the next Pharaoh without doubt. vs. 22
- 4) Moses thought he was God's deliverer and that the people would understand this but after he killed an Egyptian and was found out, he fled to Median. vs. 23-29

7:30-34 The second forty years of Moses.

- 1) Moses' next 40 years were in the desert as God prepared him to be a shepherd of people.

- 2) The account is found in the book of Exodus. vs. 31-34
 * Ex. 3
 a) The appearance a holy reverent one. vs. 21-33
 b) God sees, hears and comes down to deliver His people. vs. 34

7:35-36 The man Moses was rejected by the nation.

- 1) Moses was not acknowledged the first time. vs. 35
 2) Moses was acknowledge the second time as Christ will! vs. 36

7:37 The man Moses had prophesied about the Messiah.

- 1) The Messiah would be a man like Moses. Deut. 18:15
 2) The Messiah would require complete obedience.

7:38-41 The nation of Israel rebelled, turning to idolatry. Ex. 32

- 1) The magnitude of their sin is marked by the high privilege of Moses, the Angel and the Law received was in Egypt, the world. vs. 38
 2) The problem was their hearts. vs. 39
 3) The people asked Aaron to make them gods to lead them back to Egypt. vs. 40

- 4) The people and Aaron worshiped the idol, the Egyptian Bull worship of Apis. vs. 41

7:42:43 The Lord God gave the people over to their desires.

- 1) This was their practice in the wilderness, quoting the prophet Amos. vs. 42
 * Amos 5:25-27
 2) They worshipped the creation, a prohibition throughout the Scriptures. vs. 43
 * Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2Kings 17:16; 21:3; Jer. 8:12; 19:13; Is. 1:11-13; Rom. 1:18-28

7:44-46 The people had the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

- 1) God appointed a Tabernacle of meeting according to a pattern. vs. 44
 * Ex. 25-40
 2) Joshua brought it to the promise land, giving them the land. vs. 45
 3) David desired to build a house for God. vs. 46

7:47-50 The son of David, Solomon built the house of God.

- 1) Solomon's Temple was David's planning. vs. 47
 * "Is. 66:1-2"; 1Kings 8
 2) God is not confined to a building. vs. 48

- 3) God is greater than His creation. vs. 49
- 4) God created all things. vs. 50

7:51-60 The Witness of Stephen.

7:51-53 The accusation of Stephen to the Sanhedrin.

- 1) Stephen charged them with their rebellion. vs. 51
 - a) He declared them to be stiff-necked, implying stubborn, carnal and meaning rebellious. Ex. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deut. 9:6, 13
 - * This is the only time it appears in the New Testament.
 - b) He declared them to be uncircumcised in heart and ears, disobedient and unfaithful to God's word. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 6:10; Ezk. 44:7; Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11
 - c) He declared they always resisted the Holy Spirit, they were self-willed. Is. 63:10
- 2) Stephen pointed out the rebellious history of the nation. vs. 52
 - a) Their fathers were like them stoning the prophets who foretold of Jesus, the Just One.
 - b) They killed the Just One, Jesus.
 - c) They were now the betrayers and murderers of God.

- 3) Stephen told them their high privilege of having the Law given by angels accused them. vs. 53
 - a) Paul says the same. Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2
 - b) The reference LXX. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:8 angels.

7:54 The response of the people.

- 1) They were cut to heart by their guilt.
- 2) They gnashed their teeth, out of anger not conviction as those at Pentecost. Acts 2:37-38

7:55-56 The vision of Stephen.

- 1) God gave Stephen the grace for such a time being full of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Jesus stood at the right hand of God, the place of authority and honor.
- 3) Stephen saw "the Son of Man" glorified. Dan. 7:13-15
 - * The title is found 88 times in the gospels, here and one time in Revelation. Rev. 1:13

7:57-58 The murder of Stephen.

- 1) They refused to hear any longer. vs. 57
- 2) They stoned Stephen. vs. 58
 - a) Stoning was the penalty under the law. Lev. 24:14-16; Deut. 17:7; 13:9-10

- b) The witnesses were the first to cast stones.
- c) Saul was there all along, consented to his death. Acts 20:22

7:59-60

- 1) Stephen shows that the Lord can enable us to suffer and die after this manner, receive my Spirit. vs. 59
* Lk. 23:46
- 2) Stephen shows that we can love as the Lord in the worst of circumstances, “Lord do not charge them with this sin.”
vs. 60
* Lk. 23:34