

ACTS 7:15-60

The Defense and Death of Stephen

March 23, 1976

Acts 7:15, 16

Genesis 50:2-5 - "I will come again" is a beautiful orientalism which means "I will hurry back." "Sychem" is spelled Sychem in Acts but it's really spelled Shechem in the Old Testament.

Acts 7:17

That is sort of interesting. There must have been a time when they did not grow and multiply as rapidly. I believe that there was a lot of knowledge among God's people that has been lost. How could they control growing or multiplying at one time, then at other times no growing or multiplying. See, when they grew and multiplied that simply means they got pregnant and had children. Why at one time did they have them and at other times they didn't? I'm real confident they knew a lot more about birth control than most of our modern people know, in an organic, natural way, not the pill.

Acts 7:18

"another" - *heteros*

Acts 7:19

"The same" - This one

"dealt subtly with" - to deal wisely, from a sharp, political point of view. See **Exodus 1:8-10**.

Acts 7:20

"exceeding fair" - fair to God. It is an idiom.

"nourished up in his father's house" - lived in his father's house.

"three months" - For him to have gone unnoticed for three months, must have taken a lot of believing on the part of father and mother. They must have practiced **Romans** where they kept their mouths shut. I doubt if there was a neighbor who knew there was a baby in that house. They just didn't tell.

Acts 7:21

"cast out" - means what they did with him in Genesis. I believe this whole thing was revelation, the whole operation. Why was he just there when Pharaoh's daughter came along? Why is it that Pharaoh's daughter had no children of her own? God knew all this and so He just had Moses' daddy and mommy put him out at the right place at the right time. Pharaoh's daughter came along and took him up out of the bulrushes and nourished him as her own son. Why didn't they hide him on the land? Why in the river? Because of what the Egyptians believed regarding the sacredness of that water. When you study this thing, it is real sharp.

Acts 7:22

In another place we read when God wanted him to go to. work later on, he had to have someone speak for him. (**Exodus 4:10&14-16**) It cannot be that he was not an orator. There must have been another reason. Here it tells you that he was "mighty in words." That means he could handle himself in any social situation, quite adept at speaking. Not only that, he was mighty in deeds; he was trained in all the chivalry, all the battle tactics, everything the Egyptians would be trained in because he was

the son of the Pharaoh's daughter, which would entitle him to ruler ship. He was officially adopted by her, which means he could have become the Pharaoh of Egypt. At this time Egypt was a "power house" in every way. Moses was exposed to fantastic knowledge. That boy had his PhD twice. He went through all the learning and schools. He was not stupid by a long shot.

Acts 7:23, 24

suffer wrong" - being wronged

"the Egyptian" - This Egyptian who was in that area was also a trained man. **Exodus 1:11-12** These task masters were tough cookies. They were educated in self-protection. When Moses smote him, Moses must have been more capable than this Egyptian.

Acts 7:25

"would have" - omitted - Moses supposed his brother understood that he was an Israelite even though he had been raised in the court of the king and queen. But they didn't understand. They figured that since he was raised by the Pharaoh and queen, he turned totally Egyptian.

"deliver them" - give them salvation. The Septuagint has the word *sozo*, which means complete wholeness, mental, physical, and spiritual. Because, if you're really going to be delivered, you're going to have to have all that.

Acts 7:26

"strove" - fought

"would have set them at one" - reconciling them to peace (between the brethren).

"again" - omitted

Acts 7:27, 28, 29

"stranger" - sojourner

"Madian" - Midian in the Old Testament. Moses ran, hid for cover. Was he doing the will of God? Yes, because his own brethren would have killed him. So he went out to Midian where he got married and begot two sons. Do you see how the preaching is Biblical? Stephen is not documenting this with ecological problems. He goes back to the history of things that occurred and sets things in order. That's why all teaching must be Biblical. Every time you teach it has to be inspirational, Biblical, and two others; I forget.

Acts 7:30

"forty years were expired" - Sometimes when we think that when we don't know it in one day, we're disgusted. A lot of knowledge comes with age. Some of the things in life you just cannot arrive at without a little age. Life always balances out when God is right at the center of a man's life. It took God forty years to bring Moses up. But there was no need to bring him up in 38, because the children of Israel wouldn't have been ready anyways. And so God in His foreknowledge works all that stuff; He knows.

"expired" - over with, full, fulfilled.

"of the Lord" - omitted.

Acts 7:31

“sight” – vision; revelation. This vision of an angel, a messenger, in a flame of fire in a bush must have been fantastic. I can understand this because even on T.V. they can do stuff like this. Certainly the true God would have no opportunity in doing it.

“behold” - consider. He walked up closer to get a good look at it.

“unto him” - omitted.

Acts 7:32

“the God” - that occurs before “Israel” and “Jacob” is omitted

“durst not behold” – literally means he closed his eyes.

Acts 7:33

“Lord” - Jehovah. It would have to be Jehovah because He is talking to Moses, God on a horizontal level to His creation.

“shoes” – sandals - Moses didn’t have shoes. He had sandals. Today in Eastern temples, whenever you go into worship, you leave your shoes outside. It’s an unforgivable sin to steal your shoes. I have no idea why God would have Moses take off his sandals, except to indicate that you stand barefooted before God without anything on your feet except what God is going to give you. Any place God speaks to you is holy ground. Any time you hear from Father, that location is always holy ground. That’s why places like your Twig fellowship where the Word of God is really held forth, whenever God speaks to His people through His Word as well as the manifestations has to be holy ground. Why was it holy ground? Because God is speaking. Whenever God is declared, where God is made known, that is always holy ground.

Acts 7:34

“I have seen” – repeated in King James but text-wise it reads “seeing I saw”.

“affliction” - the wrong

“deliver” - redeem. Why didn’t He deliver them earlier? Because God cannot deliver until He sees all the way through and that means He has to have a man of God with that ability to lead. Then the people must also be capable of following. It will take that man of God a lot of courage to keep those people lined up at times. It still does. But if that man of God doesn’t keep those people lined up, there would be no hope. How many years were they in Egypt? About 215 years. Israel had been in slavery longer than America has been in existence. All that time was it God’s will to deliver? People all those years lived and died and never did get delivered. But God’s promises are faithful; sure, and amen. Therefore they will have to be delivered. All redemption is deliverance and all true deliverance is redemption. I believe God spoke to Moses long before this, but the record of God speaking to Moses here is recorded because this is for our learning, specifically regarding the deliverance of Israel. Otherwise if this had been the first time God spoke to Moses, Moses might have had to go to Jethro and ask, “Did you call me? The inference has always been that God is far away and never talked to Moses until he came to the burning bush. Why isn’t it possible for God to have walked and talked with Moses as He was preparing him for 40 years? That seems more logical to me than God dropping out of a cloud one day into a burning bush. I believe that’s the truth.

Acts 7:35

“Moses whom they refused” - They refused Moses. That’s why God didn’t deliver them 40 years

sooner. They would have been delivered by Moses 40 years earlier had they believed in Moses and that Moses was God's man. But instead they thought Moses was tied to Egypt and the Pharaoh. Forty more years of severe persecution tenderized them a little more. A generation had grown up that had sort of forgotten a lot of the negative things.

“deliverer” - redeemer In **verse 34** God is going to redeem them. How does He then redeem them? Through a man, Moses; Moses is the redeemer because he speaks for God. That's what makes the man of God the redeemer.

Acts 7:36

“he” – this one

“shewed” – done

Acts 7:37

“Lord your God“ – Lord, God

“like unto me” - as myself.

Moses represented God. If God is going to raise someone up then that one cannot be God. It has to be His son. Jesus Christ was a prophet like unto Moses. Moses led the children of Israel out of captivity. Jesus Christ came to lead the children of Israel out of captivity. That's the Church of the Bride.

Acts 7:38

“church” – congregation - *ekklesia*

In that vision of the angel in the burning bush not only did Moses see the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, but he saw Christ's day. **Hebrews 11:23, 39**. The hope of the first coming was the dynamic that kept Moses going. The hope of the second coming is our dynamic. I have never seen in any commentary anyplace the greatness of this **38th verse**. Mt. Sinai is where he saw the revelation. He not only saw the deliverance of Israel, he saw the deliverance of Israel even at the time of the coming of Christ. Look at the picture, the vista, of the whole thing.

“lively oracles” – living utterance – revelation – the Word of God The Word of God addressed to the body of believers today is just as living today as it was the first time it was addressed to the body. It's a living Word. It becomes living in people when they believe it, but it's a living Word, so the moment people believe it, it becomes living in them.

“received” - in the Septuagint is *dechomai*

Acts 7:39, 40, 41

When God led them out under the leadership of Moses, as long as they followed Moses and Moses spoke what God had given him, it was always accomplished. Then Moses is gone a little while and the people immediately begin to dig Aaron, Moses' brother. Aaron was Moses' right-hand man and the people talked him into making an idol out of gold. God is going to get real mad. The reason they did this is that they wanted to rejoice in the works of their own hand. Because God is spirit and they couldn't see God and they didn't like the looks of Moses. Moses was God's man speaking God's Word and they didn't like it so they started to get at Aaron.

Acts 7:42

“God turned” - Literally whenever God turns, you’ve got His back and He no longer is able to speak to you face to face. Now what turned God’s face from the children of Israel? It was idolatry, serving another God besides the true God and then He gave them up. There was nothing else He could do because **verse 39** says their hearts had been turned.

“worship the host of heaven” – they got to be good astrologists.

Acts 7:43

“tabernacle” - stands for worship.

“Moloch” - was the god of fire and they burned children, sacrificed children to him.

“star” – this brings my recollection to the bright and morning star; the star, Christ Jesus. Instead of Christ Jesus being their star, it was Remphan.

“yea ye” - ye even.

“tabernacle” – literally is tent - stands for worship.

“figures” - types

“beyond Babylon” - to Damascus

Acts 7:44

“tabernacle” - tent

“witness” – testimony – it was an indication of God’s perpetual presence had they believed and when believed.

“speaking unto Moses” - Moses who spoke

“fashion” – type

“he had seen” - Moses had seen by revelation. Some of the men made things to worship. The true God had His thing going, which indicated His presence so they could worship the true God.

Acts 7:45

“that came” - having received

“Jesus” - Joshua.

“Gentiles” – foreigners. God had given this territory, land, to Israel. Who created the heavens and earth? Who does it belong to? God. If it belongs to you, what can you do with it? Give it away. That’s exactly what God did. Now some squatters came and settled in. They were not believers; they were unbelievers, Gentiles. So God drove them out. And every time you hear these liberalists who want one church and want to overthrow the whole government in the denomination, they always talk about God killing people. Well, so what? God didn’t kill them. People killed them. They had it coming to them because they stole property that didn’t belong to them. So God just sent the children

of Israel in there and whopped up on them. A dog has body and soul. A man without Christ or God has body and soul.

“unto the days of David” – until the days of David. And by that time, they had possession of the land and believing was moving.

Acts 7:46

“favour” - grace

“find a tabernacle” - to build a building, a temple

“Jacob” - Israel.

Acts 7:47, 48

David found grace. Solomon built it and all through those years God still met the people of Israel at the temple. Yet God turns right around and says, “dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” Why did God then meet His people, Israel, in the temple? Because He cannot go beyond people’s believing. And yet the truth is that God does not dwell in temples made with human hands.

Acts 7:49, 50, 51

“ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” – Somebody’s going to get real mad, because you just don’t tell the religious leaders this, including a man by the name of Saul. After all he was educated at the feet of Gamaliel and graduated from the parasitical university of Jerusalem.

“resist” - fall against, block. Believers tried everything to win the nation of Israel to God.

Acts 7:52

“shewed before of the coming of the Just One” – Ever since Abraham saw his day, so Abraham declared it. Moses we know had revelation. All through the years they were given the privilege to see the Messiah.

“betrayers and murderers” - They not only betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ but they also murdered him.

Acts 7:53

“have received” – *lambano*-ed - received

“deposition” - precepts

“by the disposition of angels” – given by angels – messengers; given by revelation, vision etc.

“not kept” – not guarded – didn’t guard it then it slips away. Remember the record that we who have the holy spirit are to keep it, guard it? (**II Timothy 1:14?**) To guard something is to practice it; to use the manifestations.

Acts 7:54

“they” – the rulers, the Sanhedrin

“cut to the heart” - the innermost part of their being was really shook

“gnashed on them with *their* teeth” – doesn’t mean they chewed on them but they were adamant.

Acts 7:55

“the glory of God” – is like the *shekinah* glory. Like on the road to Damascus hit Saul; the light shined. Through my mind runs all this glory of God stuff, in the church epistles. We’ve got it in written form in detail what the glory is and all the glory that belongs to the body. Stephen saw that glory.

“Jesus standing” – The son of God standing for people who stand for him; the Son of God standing when Stephen dared to take a stand right into the face and the mouth of the religious leaders of his day and time who had the power to execute him.

Acts 7:56

“behold” - see

“opened” - thrown wide open.

“Son of man” - **Mark** is the gospel where Jesus Christ is referred to as the Son of man. This Son of man is his name from the point of view that he was born of Mary.

Acts 7:57

“cried out with a loud voice” – i.e. - in a frenzy

“stopped their ears” - refused to listen

“one accord” - unity of purpose. This is the sixth usage in **Acts**

Acts 7:58

“cast *him*” – they didn’t walk him - they picked him up and threw him out.

“witnesses” - people of the Sanhedrin, church leaders and their cohorts.

“laid down their clothes” - they threw their clothes down at Saul’s feet who happened to be standing there.

Acts 7:59

“*God*” - not God; the next phrase says Jesus, but in their minds Jesus is God. This addition is devilish. I would have put “the lord” here because lord means “master” and Jesus Christ is that master.

“receive” - *dechomai*

“spirit” - not soul life because the soul is breath life. When you have taken your last breath, your soul life is gone. But the one thing that goes back to the Father is the one thing that Stephen had been given when he got born again and that is spirit. Stephen had his theology right.

Acts 7:60

“kneeled down” – not that he did this to pray but he fell over due to the beating.

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” – this is the last thing he did; he prayed for Israel. Sounds like Moses.

“fell asleep” - died.

The charge against Stephen was blasphemy. He declared Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that’s what the Sanhedrin called blasphemy. We today are taught Jesus Christ is God and nobody calls that blasphemy. He didn’t even say that. He said he was the messiah, the son of God and they said it was blasphemy. They set up false witnesses in **Acts 6:13-15** which said, “This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words,” because he taught that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. And when he talked about the temple being destroyed and God raising it up in three days, they couldn’t understand because their eyes were blind, their ears were stopped. So it is today. They just cannot hear the truth.

That’s one of the great, great, great sermons in the book of Acts. There are others. Look at the great homiletic beauty of it. He brings them all the way through logically, systematically showing to them from God’s Word exactly what God did for them and they still wouldn’t believe. They eat and drink damnation unto themselves like **I Corinthians 11:29** talks about. Once people have had right teaching made available to them and then they close their eyes and they plug up their ears, there is nothing more anybody can do for them. Well, that’s it.