

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 10: CHAPTER 7

31 July 2015

- Vss. 27-37** Moses is set forth as a type of Christ, the great deliverer. They rejected Moses as ruler and judge (vs. 27). Notice God said He came DOWN to deliver His people (vs. 34, Exod. 3:8). He sent Moses to be “ruler and deliverer” (vs. 35). Moses proved he was sent by God through “**wonders and signs**” (vs. 36) and promised that God would raise up a prophet “**like unto me**” (vs. 37, Deut. 18:15). The council members are faced with the fact that Jesus Christ meets all the criteria to be that prophet.
- Vss. 38-39** Moses was “**in the church in the wilderness**” when he received the “**lively oracles**” (word of God), but the fathers (Jews) “**would not obey.**” “**They thrust him from them**” (see Acts 8:1). In their hearts they turned back to Egypt (the place of bondage).
- Jesus is in the church composed of believers (Mt. 18:20). The believers are proclaiming the word of God to the Jews, but they refuse to obey. Jesus is “thrust from them” when the believers are scattered abroad (Acts 8:1). The Jews rejected the Deliverer and remain in bondage until this very day (John 8:32-34, Gal. 4:3, 4:24).
- Vss. 40-41** Just as the Israelites said “We don’t know where Moses is” (Exod. 32:1), likewise they are saying, “we don’t know what happened to Jesus” (Mt. 28:13). Just as they turned to idolatry in Moses’ day, similarly they chose to worship Caesar in Jesus’ day. They worshipped their own power and authority in the apostolic days, and today they worship their religion.
- Vss. 42-45** “**God turned, and gave them up...**” This is a warning that if they reject God, He’ll “turn” from them and leave them in darkness. (See Rom. 1:21-32). He did it before, He’ll do it again. “You had the tabernacle (vs. 44) (which included the Law and the sacrifices), but you didn’t have the land (along with peace and victory)—until JESUS (Joshua)—brought you into the possession.”
- Note:** new Bible versions replace “Jesus” with “Joshua,” but there isn’t a single Greek manuscript to validate that change in God’s word. The Holy Spirit CHOSE to have Stephen say “Jesus” because he’s trying to point these men to JESUS. Jesus drove out the enemies (Col. 2:14-15) and only Jesus can give you peace (John 14:27).
- Vss. 46-50** They had the tabernacle (Moses, Joshua), they had the temple (Solomon), but God doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands (Mt. 27:51 exposed this fact). God dwells in MEN (1 Cor. 3:17, 2 Cor. 6:16) in the person of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:15). He walked among them until they crucified Him.
- Vs. 51** They are “**stiffnecked.**” They won’t humble themselves and bow before the Lord. They are “**uncircumcised in heart.**” They have the outward show of being separated from the flesh; in fact they glory in it (Gal. 6:13), but inside they are trusting their flesh and not God. (See, Philippians 3:3). They always resist the Holy Ghost just like their fathers did.

- Vss. 52-53** Their fathers persecuted and killed the prophets who talked about “the Just One,” but these men actually betrayed and murdered Him. The charge has been changed from manslaughter to murder. They now know who Jesus is and they choose to reject Him. They heard God’s word by an angel at the burning bush (vs. 30), in the disposition of the law (vs. 53), and now through Stephen whose face was like an angel (Acts 6:15). They have the Law, but they don’t keep it.
- Vs. 54** Stephens words were sharp because he spoke the word of God (Heb. 4:12). **“They were cut to the heart,”** but they didn’t repent. They were filled with rage (great anger).
- Vss. 55-56** Stephen did not react to their rage and answer in the flesh. He’s full of the Holy Spirit. He wants these men to repent and come to the truth. He keeps his eyes on the Lord at all times. He looks up, sees the heavens opened, sees the glory of God, and Jesus at His right hand standing. He sees it and reports it out loud, but nobody else can see what he sees.
- Vss. 57-59** The men plug their ears and cry out with a loud voice so they don’t have to hear the word of God. Notice that these unbelievers are in **“one accord”** in their hatred for the Lord and the Lord’s people. They took Stephen, cast him out of Jerusalem, and stoned him. Saul of Tarsus was a witness (vs. 58). Stephen called upon God. What did he say to God? **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”** Jesus is God!
- Vs. 60** While being stoned, Stephen kneeled down—willingly accepting his fate. Before he died, he asked the Lord not to charge these men with this sin.

Final notes

Verse 49 is a quotation of Isaiah 66:1, **“Heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool.”**—That passage in Isaiah speaks of how the Jews would not humble themselves and how God said He wouldn’t look upon them or listen to them if they wouldn’t humble themselves. He would no longer accept their sacrifices because they didn’t care for His ways, but chose their own ways.

Comparing Stephen with Jesus:

1. Both were charged with blasphemy (Matthew 26:65, Mark 14:64, Acts 6:11).
2. Both had false witnesses testify against them (Matthew 26:60, Mark 14:56, Acts 6:13).
3. Both spoke of the Son of man in glory (Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62, Acts 7:56).
4. Their enemies could not answer their arguments (Matthew 22:46, Acts 6:10).
5. Both were accused of not reverencing the law (Matthew 12:2, Acts 6:13).
6. Both had the people stirred up against them (Matthew 27:20, Acts 6:12).
7. Both were accused of foretelling the destruction of the temple (Matthew 26:61, Acts 6:14).
8. Caiaphas was high priest (Matthew 26:65, Acts 4:6).
9. Both died outside the city (Hebrews 13:13, Acts 7:58).
10. Both prayed for their foes (Luke 23:34, Acts 7:60).
11. Both cried with a loud voice (Matthew 27:50, Acts 7:60).
12. Both gave themselves to the Father—at death (Luke 23:46, Acts 7:59).
13. Both were buried by godly men (John 19:38, Acts 8:2).
14. Both deaths had far reaching results (Acts 7:58, Acts 22:20).