

ACTS 7:2-50

Introduction:

1. The **importance** of Acts 7 is not just as a history of Israel, but to get the feel of what Stephen is trying to get across to Israel's religious-political leaders. These leaders will determine the whole direction concerning Israel toward **God**.
2. In Acts 7, Stephen gives the highlights from the call of Abraham to the building of the temple by Solomon (vs. 2-50).

A. Abram Called By God -

Acts 7:2 - And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

1. Stephen's opening remarks should have gotten their attention. It seemed **unbelievable** that Abraham should **ever** be the father of any great nation, but God's promises **always** are fulfilled. These leaders should examine the Scriptures and then ask themselves, in light of the Word of God, whether or not **Jesus** was the Christ-Messiah.
2. Stephen points out here that God had "appeared" unto Abraham back in Genesis 12. So not only did God **speak** to him, but also God **appeared** in **human** form (a theophany).
3. Stephen, by saying [Men, brethren, and fathers,] is definitely speaking **only** to Israel. He is reaching out as one of them...a Jew in **covenant** with God - [our father Abraham].

B. Abram's Journey -

Acts 7:3-5 - And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Acts 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. Acts 7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

1. Stephen explains God's calling of Abraham out of his own land, in order to take him to the promised land of Canaan.

* Israel is a **God**-given land to the **Jewish** people. Abraham had left home, family, and country to follow God's call.

2. Though Abraham did not inherit any land himself, the promise of Canaan was/is to his **seed**. He would possess it through his children. Weren't he and Sarah too old?

C. Abram's Seed Becoming A Nation -

Acts 7:6-7 - And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years. Acts 7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

1. Abraham is told his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land and be **enslaved** for **400** years!

Genesis 15:13-14 - And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is not theirs*, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; Gen. 15:14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Genesis 46:1-4 - And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. Gen. 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am I*. Gen. 46:3 And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: Gen. 46:4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

2. Up until this time, Israel only consisted of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*It was only when Jacob went to Egypt, with his 11 sons (Joseph is there) and their families, that they began to really multiply. Jacob went into Egypt with about **75** (that was all of the people of Israel). But when Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt, there were several **million** (over 400 years).

D. Abram And Israel's Covenant With God -

Acts 7:8 - And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

1. Stephen reminds these leaders that God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision long **before** the Mosaic Law Covenant.

Genesis 17:8, 10-11 - And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. Gen. 17:10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. Gen. 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

2. Stephen's challenge is for them to consider Abraham in order to consider Christ. It did not seem at **first** that God's promise to Abraham could be true. It did not seem that Christ at **first** was Messiah - but couldn't it be true, as Abraham's promise from God was hard to believe at first and then became true?

3. Stephen wanted them to at least consider the truth of Christ. At first it seemed **un**believable that Abraham should ever be the father of **any** nation. That his seed would possess the land seemed impossible as Israel stayed enslaved in Egypt for **400** years.

* But in each case God's Word proved to be absolutely **true**. Likewise, it would be good for them to
* not just out-and-out reject Jesus Christ. They should **ex**amine God's Word about the Messiah to
* see if He is Messiah or not.

Don't forget, we are still on Israel's Prophetic Program - **Kingdom ground, because Paul has not yet come on the scene to introduce the Mystery Body of Christ Program (Acts 9; Eph. 3:1-8).

E. The Leaders Are Given Examples of Israel's Heroes As Types Of Christ -

Acts 7:9-16 - And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, Acts 7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Acts 7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. Acts 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. Acts 7:13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Acts 7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. Acts 7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, Acts 7:16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

1. Joseph is present here as a **type** of Christ. He, too, was hated by his brethren and given over to death, but later became the savior of his brethren. By God's intervention, Joseph became the **2nd** highest in Egypt, putting him in position to save Jacob and his 11 brethren.
2. It says in vs. 13 [the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren].
 - a. The 11 brothers asked for forgiveness and then received Joseph **back**.
 - b. This is as Christ was rejected at His first coming (John 1:11). The apostles were now offering Christ's 2nd coming-**return** to bring in the Kingdom right **after** the Tribulation, if Israel would **repent**.

Acts 2:20, 30, 36 - The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: Acts 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Acts 3:19-21 - Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

3. Stephen has powerfully presented his case by using familiar Jewish history. Up to this point, he hasn't mentioned Christ's **name**.
 - * Stephen's lesson thus far? Don't think you have done away with Christ by nailing Him to a cross.
 - * Joseph's brothers also believed they had disposed of Joseph. They were **wrong**! They now were
 - * facing **again** the truth of the One they had rejected.

F. Moses And The Children Of Israel - Acts 7:17-43

1. In these verses, Stephen summarizes Israel's **history** with Moses - from Egypt to Babylon, from Pharaoh to Nebuchadnezzar.
 - a. Who would have ever thought Moses, starting out so little, would become Israel's great deliverer? - a Hebrew child in the **bul**rushes!

- b. God does have a providential sense of humor. God raised up Moses from a baby to a **high** position in Pharaoh's court. As Moses presented himself (a Jew) to his own people, after he had killed the Egyptian, they **rejected** Moses. They said: [Who made thee a judge over us?] Moses then fled to Midian. He was **40** years of age.
 - c. But after 40 years, Moses' **returned** to his brethren in **God's** power to deliver his people. *Once again, one of Israel's heroes was at first rejected; but, in his return to the people the 2nd time, they accepted Moses. Moses was **80** at that time.
2. In vs. 39, even after being delivered, Israel would **not** obey nor believe. They only wanted to go **back** to Egypt. While Moses was on the mount (Sinai), the people made a golden **idol** calf and danced naked.

*The problem was this idolatry continued always throughout Israel's history. This was one of the reasons why God allowed Israel to be taken **captive** by Babylon.

Acts 7:43 - Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Note: Stephen was saying that his nation Israel was known for her unbelief, idolatry, and for murdering her God-sent prophets - Word.

- a. Stephen's question was: "Were these religious rulers doing the same thing again by rejecting Jesus as the Christ-Messiah? That would be a **big** mistake!"
- b. If they were again making the same mistake, they were in danger of being given **up** to a more horrific ending than those unbelieving Jews of the past. They would have no hope **ever**!

Acts 7:42 - Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

G.

The Tabernacle (Moses-David) & The Temple (Solomon) -

Acts 7:44-50 - Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Acts 7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Acts 7:46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. Acts 7:47 But Solomon built him an house. Acts 7:48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Acts 7:49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest? Acts 7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

1. In Stephen's concluding remarks, he addresses their false accusation that he had spoken blasphemous words about/against the Temple.

*Truthfully, it was **these** religious leaders-rulers who had spoken blasphemous words against Christ. He is the One of whom the Temple was but a type!

2. As the tabernacle was replaced by the **Temple**, that loving gesture did not do God justice.

Note: Acts 7:49 - [Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?]

3. Even the Temple was a type of Christ, Who was **rejected** by these religious rulers. The Temple only allowed **one** person (high priest) to be in the holy of holies (where the presence of God was) for a limited period of time (and always **stood**).

*Stephen is saying that only in **Christ** is where the presence of God exists. If they reject Christ, they reject **God**.

Matthew 1:23 - Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Colossians 2:9 - For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

John the Baptist, Christ & the Twelve

The Apostle Paul

ACTS 9

Prophecy

Matt. 1:21-23

Rom. 15:8

MT/NK/JK/N

Christ
as King of
Israel

Gospel
of the
Kingdom

Matt. 9:35

Matt. 10:5-7

Gospel
of the
Circum-
cision

Acts 3:25,26

Gal. 2:7

ACTS 17

The Mystery

Eph. 1:22,23

Col. 1:15-27

ROMANS - PHILEMON

Gospel
of the
Uncircum-
cision

Rom. 4:9,10

Gal. 2:1

Gospel
of
Recon-
ciliation

II Cor. 5:19

Eph. 2:16

Christ
as Head of
Body

From the

Particular to the General

From the

General to the Particular