

Acts 7 Great Sermon by Stephen

- Non-apostle sermon; longest in book
- 3 parts to defense: a. defended himself, b. emphasized accusers were guilty of the same charges they brought against him, c. lesson was Christ-centered.
- Allen: interrupted before finished, no resurrection mentioned.

1. Sermon – v. 1-50

- 3-point sermon: 1. Abraham, v. 1-8; 2. Egypt, v. 9-43; 3. Temple, v. 44-50

I. Abraham, v. 1-8

- 1: either Annas or Caiaphas
- 2,3: not required by law to answer; showed respect for council; begins and ends on the glory of God; 'experts' find 7 errors in sermon, scribes hearing it did not object
- 4: Southern Babylon; Canaan in days of Abraham, Palestine to Greeks/Romans
- 5: every Jewish mind recalled the land promise of Gen. 12:7, etc.
- 6: Egyptian bondage: there for 430yrs (Ex. 12:40,41), but the Jews often rounded off numbers
- 7,8: Gen. 15:14, Ex. 3:12; Patriarch theme

II. Egypt, v. 9-43

- 9,10: jealous because of favoritism shown to Joseph from Jacob
- 11-13: in accordance with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream: 1. rejected Joseph, 2. God gave them to Egypt, a 2nd chance, 3. 2nd time had to accept Joseph as their redeemer or die (of starvation)
- 14-15: Heb. Bible mentions 70 (Gen. 46:27), LXX has 75 and gives add'l names,
- 16: land purchases & 2 burial places
- 17-19: background of Moses
- 20-21: expose (19) and set outside (21) same family. "Instead of being exposed to the elements, Moses was exposed to Pharaoh's daughter." Roper
- 22: info not in Exodus, respect for Moses
- 23: also not in Exodus
- 24,25: Moses had a sense of divine message before the burning bush
- 26,27: Moses' 1st attempt to deliver Israel, rejected by His brethren

- 28,29: Midian: NW Arabia, E shore of Gulf of Aqaba; 2 sons: Gershom, Eliezer (Ex. 2:21-22)
- 30-34: God gave His people another opportunity; angel not in Ex.; Sad., Sanhedrin controllers, did not believe in angels.
- 35: bluntly stated Moses was God's deliverer
- 36: sins and wonders: 10 plagues
- 37,38: congregation: not a church but assembly; spoken words: living words.
- Moses was a ruler (35), deliverer (35), miracle-worker (36), prophet (37), had a congregation *or church* (38), relayed God's message to the people (38).
- 39-41: didn't press the parallel, reminded listeners about rejecting God.
- Instead of living words, the Israelites accepted dead idols.
- 42: 2nd rejection brought God's wrath; Qt Amos 5:25-27 LXX; victims: innocent animals had to suffer for guilty
- 43: Molech: Ammonite god, 1 Ki. 11:5,7,33; Rompha: GK god Saturn

III. Temple, v. 44-50

- 44-45: reminds fathers worshipped God long before temple built in Jerusalem
- 46,47: David had desire to build permanent house of worship; Solomon built
- 48: most scandalous statement; Paul would make the same, 17:24
- 49,50: Isa. emphasized the same truth, 66:1; ideal time to teach God dwells in church

2. Rebellion – v. 51-53

- Could sense the audience's hatred
- 51: OT terminology for stubborn, prejudiced, disobedient: Ex. 33:3,5; Lv. 26:14, Jer. 6:10, Ezek. 44:7; stiff-necked: ox refuse to allow yoke on neck; uncircumcised in heart & ears: yielded to God only in flesh, not spirit
- 52: doing what fathers had done; Jewish people responsible for prophet's deaths
- 53: accused of not keeping the Law

3. Stephen's Death – v. 54-60

- No Gamaliel to stand up and cool the flames of hatred
- 54: cut to the quick: furious & ready to kill; grinding teeth: rage, Job 16:9, Ps. 35:16 or despair: Lk. 13:28
- 55: ugly faced faded; all 3 Godhead present; Jesus returned to sit, Mk. 16:19, here standing out of respect

- 56: Son of Man: only ref. out of Gospels
- 57: equivalent to Supreme Court justices leaping over table, pulling guns from their robes, and gunning defendant down before them.
- 58: illegal acc. to Roman Law: Luke does not record the Roman gov't reaction to crime; illegal acc. to Jewish Law: no vote, discussion
- Punishment for blaspheming was stoning, Lv. 24:10-23; Dt. 13:6-11; a terrible way to die: (Josh. 7:24-26) 1. taken to place of stoning; 2. pushed off cliff; 3. boulders rolled down to crush; 4. pelted with stones until breath gone
- Stephen knelt, stoning probably wasn't as bad
- 59: prayer directed to Jesus, few in Scripture
- 60: died with w prayer on his lips for his murderers, like Jesus (Lk. 12:34,46)
- Saul could never erase this scene from his mind.
- Augustine: "the church owes the preaching of Paul to the prayer of Stephen."

Lessons:

- We must be willing to always preach the truth, even if the audience gets mad. If we truly care about others, we will try to save their souls, Eph. 4:15, Js. 5:19-20.
- Stephen accused his audience of rebelling against God. Today, we rebel against God every time we decide to follow after worldly things.
- Even in his death, Stephen was forgiving of those who wronged him. We would do well to not hold anything against anyone.
- Stephen died prepared to meet God, Amos 4:12. Are you?

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