

Acts Chapter 7 Continued

In the last lesson, the leaders of the temple were questioning Stephen, and in answer, Stephen started relating the history of the Hebrew family as far back as Abraham. We closed out the last lesson where Moses had killed the Egyptian and had been found out.

Acts 7:29 "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons."

“Fled ... Midian”: Because he feared Pharaoh would learn of his killing of the Egyptian (verse 28), and view him as the leader of a Jewish rebellion.

“Two sons”: Gershom (Exodus 2:22), and Eliezer (Exodus 18:4).

In this lesson, Stephen relates how Moses went to the desert, and walked across it. He met Zipporah, Jethro's daughter. Soon after, they were married. Moses spent forty years in Midian near Mt. Sinai. During his stay, he and Zipporah had two sons.

Acts 7:30 "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush."

“Angel” (see note on Exodus 3:2).

“Mount Sinai”: (see notes on Exodus 19:3-10).

This occurred when Moses was eighty years old. This is the burning bush that did not burn up.

Acts 7:31-32 "When Moses saw [it], he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold [it], the voice of the Lord came unto him," "[Saying], I [am] the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold."

(Quoted from Exodus 3:6, 15).

Stephen is giving to these Jewish leaders an even better detailed happening than perhaps, even they could have given. He explained to Moses that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Stephen explains here that Moses was frightened at the sight of God.

Acts 7:33 "Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou STANDEST IS HOLY GROUND."

(Quoted from Exodus 3:5).

This to me is one of the most important things for us to remember in our churches today. We take God far too casually. If we want the Lord to be with us in our services, we must keep it a holy place. Wherever God is, is holy ground.

Acts 7:34 "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt."

(Quoted from Exodus 3:7-8).

Here, Stephen is reminding these Hebrews that once before God had heard their cries and sent them a deliverer to take them out of Egypt (type of the world). Jesus was a deliverer also. Jesus delivers all who will follow Him from a life of sin unto their own Promised Land (eternal life with Him).

Acts 7:35 "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send [to be] a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."

“This Moses ... send to be a ruler and a deliverer”: Thus, began Israel’s long history of rejecting her God-sent deliverers (Matt. 21:33-46; 23:37).

“Who made thee” (quoted from Exodus 2:14.)

“Angel”: The Angel of the Lord (verse 30; see note on Exodus 3:2).

We see that Moses was not only to deliver the Hebrews, but was also to rule over them as well. Moses' power was not his own. He was a very meek man. His power was that of God in him. God empowered Moses to do the things necessary to deliver the Hebrews.

Acts 7:36 "He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years."

“Wonders and signs”: The 10 plagues in Egypt, and the miracles during the wilderness wandering (e.g., the parting of the Red Sea, Exodus 14:1-31); the miraculous provision of water at Rephidim (Exodus 17:1-7); and the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-40; see note on 2:19).

We remember from our Exodus teaching that God brought them out with a mighty hand. God brought ten plagues on the Egyptians (demoting their worldly gods). Each plague showed the helplessness of an Egyptian god when facing the true God.

Three million (approximately), Hebrews walked through the Red sea on dry ground and all of the Egyptians chasing them were drowned. The miracle of the forty years was that God miraculously provided for them. Their shoes did not wear out in forty years.

Acts 7:37 "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."

“Prophet ... like unto me” (quoted from Deut. 18:15), this refers to the Messiah (John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40).

Up until now, these leaders in the temple could not find anything wrong with what Stephen had said, because this is what they had been taught from their youth. Everything Stephen had said so far, was leading up to the next few verses. This, they will not accept.

This one, spoken of that would come from their brethren that they were to hear, is Jesus Christ the Messiah who they have rejected.

Acts 7:38 "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and [with] our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:"

“Church in the wilderness”: Israel (Exodus 12:3, 6, 19, 47; 16:1-2, 9-10; 17:1, 35:1; Lev. 4:13; 16:5; Num. 1:2; 8:9; 13:26; 14:2; Jos. 18:1).

“The angel ... in the mount Sinai”: Most likely this is the Angel of the Lord (verses 30, 35), who was assisted by a multitude of angels (Deut. 33:3; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2; see note on verse 53).

“Lively oracles”: The law given to Moses by God through the Angel of the Lord and a whole host of angels (Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23).

The reference to the gathering of the Israelites in the wilderness as a “church” is unfortunate. In Acts the Greek term (ekklesia), sometimes possesses its general sense of congregation or assembly. Here it is used for the gathering of the nation of Israel when it received the Law.

In (Acts 19), it is used of the town meeting of the unbelieving mob of Ephesus (verses 32, 39, 41). The 111 other occurrences of the word refer to the church of Jesus Christ.

You see, Jesus Christ the Lord was actually the doer part of the Godhead. I use the Scripture in John so much, but it tells it just like it is.

John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

In the verse above, we see that it was actually Jesus Christ (Word), who put the Ten Commandments on the stone. JESUS IS THE WORD. He is the written Word and the spoken Word.

Acts 7:39 "To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust [him] from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,"

“Would not obey”: Israel rejected Moses’ leadership and longed to return to slavery in Egypt (Num. 11:5).

They soon forgot the mighty works of God in bringing them out of Egypt. As we have said so many times, Egypt is a type of the world. Stephen said here that they had turned back to the world (Egypt), in their hearts.

Jesus says your heart will be judged. They are guilty of turning from the true God back to a sinful world life style. So many people are like this today. They walk with God, but when He delays His coming, many go back into a worldly life.

Acts 7:40 "Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for [as for] this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

“Make us gods”: A man-made representation of a false god (Exodus 32:1-5), which was forbidden (Exodus 20:4; quoted from Exodus 32:1, 23).

Acts 7:41 "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands."

“A calf” (see note on Exodus 32:4).

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?"

“God ... gave them up” (quoted from Amos 5:25-27). Judicially abandoning the people to their sin and idolatry (Hosea 4:17; see notes on Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

“The host of heaven’: Israel’s idolatrous worship of the sun, moon, and stars began in the wilderness and lasted through the Babylonian captivity (Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3-5; 23:4; 2 Chron. 33:3, 5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; Zeph. 1:5).

This has to do with the Scriptures in Amos, which say, because of their unfaithfulness to God while Moses was on the mountain, God would not accept their burnt offerings to Him (read Amos 5:25-27). This star in Amos mentioned, is perhaps Saturn.

This speaks of God's great displeasure with the Israelites worshipping false gods. It also teaches against astrology. God allowed them to wander forty years in the wilderness, until the old ones died off and a new generation came on.

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."

“Babylon”: Amos wrote Damascus (Amos 5:27), while Stephen said Babylon. Amos was prophesying the captivity of the northern kingdom in Assyria, a deportation beyond Damascus.

Later the southern kingdom was taken captive to Babylon. Stephen, inspired to do so, extended the prophecy to embrace the judgment on the whole nation summarizing their idolatrous history and its results.

“Moloch” or Molech is a Canaanite title for deities to whom human fiery sacrifices were offered (Lev. 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35).

“Remphan” or Rephan probably comes from the Egyptian name for the god associated with the planet Saturn.

The children of Israel would not get out of one mess until they were worshipping some other god. Moloch was just one of the false gods they worshipped. This Moloch here, is the same as Molech in the Old Testament. In (Leviticus 18:21), we read a direct quote where God told them not to worship Moloch,

"And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Moloch, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord."

You see, God is a jealous God. He will not allow His people to worship other gods. We see (in verse 43), that the very reason they were captured and sent to Babylon was because they worshipped other gods.

All that we can find about Remphan is that it was an idol. We may not call our false gods by these names, but there are plenty of them around today, as well. God is still jealous and will not allow us to hold anything or anyone (even ourselves), ahead of Him.

Acts Chapter 7 Continued Questions

1. What land did Moses flee to?
2. How many sons were born to him there?
3. What was the name of Moses' wife?
4. Who was her father?
5. What mount was nearby?
6. How many years did Moses live here?
7. Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush?
8. Who did the voice in the bush say He was?
9. Who were the three Old Testament Patriarchs named?

10. Why was Moses to take off his shoes?
11. What had God heard that caused Him to send a deliverer to His people?
12. What is Egypt symbolic of?
13. In what way was Moses like Jesus?
14. Where did Moses' strength come from?
15. How did Moses bring them out?
16. What did the ten plagues do, besides free the Israelites?
17. What miraculous thing happened at the Red sea?
18. What miraculous thing occurred with what they were wearing the forty years??
19. Who had prophesied and called Jesus a Prophet?
20. Who received the lively oracles?
21. Who put the Ten Commandments on the stone?
22. Jesus is the _____ Word and _____ Word.
23. What evil thing did the people talk Aaron into doing?
24. In what Old Testament prophetic Book do we find that God refuses to accept their sacrifices because of their false gods?
25. Which does God teach against; astronomy or astrology?
26. Who was the false god in verse 43?
27. Remphan was what?
28. God is a _____ God.