

Stephen's Masterful Defense of the Gospel

Acts 7

PART THREE

Introduction

Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

1. Full of the Spirit
2. Full of wisdom
3. Full of faith
4. Full of grace
5. Full of power

- I. Laying the groundwork: Establishing Identity and Orthodoxy (vv. 2-8)
- II. Make a compelling case from Scripture: Joseph as an OT type of Christ (vv. 9-16)
- III. Make a compelling case from Scripture: Moses as an OT type of Christ (vv. 17-37)

IV. Use Scripture accurately to correct wrong views of God and His law vv. 38-60

Stephen addresses the charge of speaking against the Law: vv. 38-43

"living oracles" Exodus chapter 19f

God's Word is *alive* (Hebrews 4:12).

"this Moses"

This exposed their idolatry. They lived in a nation that worshiped gods whose depictions they could *see*.

Exodus 32:1-6 They wanted gods they could see, gods of their own making, who's laws they could write!

Israel's penchant for idolatry goes all the way back to the wilderness and the golden calf.

"the host of heaven"

But the tragic fact is, God does reveal Himself to all people, all the time.

Romans 1:19-26

Hosea 4:17-19

Ezekiel 20:23-25

Stephen accurately states then corrects their wrong view of the temple: vv. 44-50

“the tent of witness/testimony”

This was to be the “sanctuary,” or, temporary dwelling place of God among them.

The manmade structures God instructed them to build were to be two things: *symbolic* and *temporary*.

“They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things...” Hebrews 8:5; cp. Exodus 25:8-9

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” 1 Kings 8:27

Ezekiel 8-11

The point: It is not the temple that is sacred, but the God of the temple.

God ordained a tent and later, a temple. But they’ve made it into something that has become idolatrous.

Our salvation, our worship, is not about any particular structure or parcel of land.

“the congregation in the wilderness” (v38); Gk *ekklesia*; ‘assembly’; “church” in the NT.

Hebrews 11:8-10

Hebrews 11:13-16

Nowhere on the earth is permanent home for God’s people – everywhere is hardship and persecution.

“Those who are obedient to the heavenly vision, Stephen seems to suggest, will always live loose to any particular earthly spot, will always be ready to get out and go wherever God may guide” (F.F. Bruce).

Even Jesus had no home of his own.

Christians are a transient people, sojourners in this foreign land that is not our home.

Hebrews 13:13-15

2 Corinthians 5:1-2; 5-8

This is not our home.

We, the *ekklesia* of Christ, are sojourners here. This is our *wilderness* experience.

John 14:1-3

“In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.” Exodus 20:24