

Stephen had been charged with saying the Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple and do away with the laws of Moses. These were serious charges and Stephen is refuting them. His defense: Jesus of Nazareth was the Just and Righteous One that all the prophets had spoken of, including Moses. These prophets also had been persecuted and murdered by Israel, because they did not believe. Their whole history testified to this, from the very beginning. The fleshly seed of Abraham, represented by Ishmael, persecuted Isaac, the one born of the promise. Esau had hated Jacob. The ten brothers sold Joseph to Egypt. Moses had been raised up by God to save and deliver Israel, but they rejected him, too, as we will see today.

I will not read the Scripture beforehand, because it is a long one; I will read each portion as I come to it.

I. Moses and Jesus Christ. Vs. 29-37 II. Moses and the Church in the Wilderness vs. 38-46
III. Moses and Solomon's Temple. Vs. 47-60.

I. Moses and Jesus Christ. Vs. 29-37: read.

- A. Vs. 29. Moses fled. 40 years would pass before he would return. That generation would die off.
- B. Vs. 35. The angel appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush. This same one that they rejected was their appointed savior. There would be no other to save them from Egypt.
- C. Vs. 37: Moses predicted that God would raise up One LIKE UNTO HIM. Moses was not the end: He came to point us to Christ. Christ did not come to point us to Moses. Him shall you hear.

II. Moses and the Church in the Wilderness. Vs. 38-46 Read

- A. God gave them "lively" oracles. They had sufficient light and life in them; if they had been obeyed. The Church in the wilderness would not obey. Vs. 38 Rom. 3:2: To them were committed the oracles of God.
- B. Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Fed them with manna to teach them this.
- C. Make us gods and let us go back to Egypt. Leeks, onions, garlic, rather than the oracles of God.
- D. Made a golden calf.
- E. Vs. 42: rejoiced in the works of their own hands. The heart of idolatry.
- F. Amos 5:25. They continued to worship the host of heaven etc. Were you offering them to ME, Read Amos 5:21-27. Race, face, place God had not forgotten their awful transgression of the golden calf; they did not repent, but carried their gods with them even into Canaan. Years later they would raise up golden calves and Dan and Bethel.
- G. 40 years that generation fell away in the wilderness; and centuries later their children would go captive into Babylon.

III. Moses and Solomon's Temple vs. 47-60 READ

- A. It became a house for the worship of their own gods. Even at the time of Christ, He had to cleanse it two times.

- B. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Those houses we build are for our benefit, not for God's. This is what Isaiah 66 says, that Stephen quotes. Do you think you can put God in your temple?
- C. God must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth: from the inner man; not by ceremonies of the body; but in the affections and thoughts of the inner man.

Application. Stephen's application is mine.

- A. Their problems were in their souls; not in their bodies or circumstances.
- B. Stephen speaks of spiritual wickedness.
 - 1. Stiff-necked: stubbornness. When the jaw gets set, then the neck gets stiff.
 - 2. Stubbornness is as the sin of witchcraft: 1Sa 15:23 "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Their first king was the result of their rebellion and rejection of God as their King.
 - 3. Uncircumcised: this means unclean.
 - a. In ears. They heard unclean things but not the pure word of God. Teachers that would satisfy their itching ears, and not the pure word of God.
 - b. In heart. In their love and affection: they LOVED the world; and got bored with the things of God.
 - 4. They were of their father, the devil: who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. They were like their fathers, loving their lies, slandering Jesus and Stephen and murdering both of them.
 - 5. Receive my spirit. Amen and Amen.
- D. But there was one. Saul of Tarsus. Amen and Amen. What magnificent fruit came from the sacrifice of Stephen. The Apostle Paul.