

"The Trial of Stephen"

Part 4

Acts 6:8-7:60

**Introduction:** Last week in our study we began to look at Stephen's sermon that is recorded in Acts 7. Stephen is talking to the Sanhedrin which is made up of Jewish men who are deep into Judaism. They are people who believe God must be worshipped in a certain geographical location and that salvation is by the Law. Last week we looked at the words of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well and we see how she was influenced by the Jews of her day.

**John 4:19-24**

<sup>19</sup> *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

<sup>20</sup> *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

<sup>21</sup> *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.*

<sup>23</sup> *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

<sup>24</sup> *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Her words reveal what the Jews believed and that was that God MUST be worshipped in a certain place and to the Jews that would be the temple in Jerusalem. But Jesus revealed that God is to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth and not in a certain geographical location. Stephen preached the same thing, and his listeners did not like his message in Acts 6. The Jews believed that God must be worshipped in the temple, and they had also made Moses and idol because the Law came through Moses.

So Stephen is a transitional man who is telling the Jews that the old economy is now obsolete because Jesus Christ has come and there is no longer a need for the temple nor is there a need for animal sacrifices and no man is saved by keeping the Law. This is what angered his listeners and so they dragged him before the Sanhedrin. His words to the Sanhedrin are what we find recorded in Acts 7.

➤ **Stephen's Sermon**  
**Part 2**

In this sermon Stephen reaches back to the Old Testament and he lifts up 3 men. They are Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Then at the end he will point them to the Savior, Jesus Christ so he uses 4 men in this message to make his point.

➤ **Abraham**

**Notice Acts 7:1-8**

Why does Stephen lift up Abraham to the Sanhedrin?

Abraham was a man who worshipped God without a temple, and he was a man who was saved without the Law.

**Genesis 15:6**

*<sup>6</sup> And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

**Romans 4:2-3**

*<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.*

*<sup>3</sup> For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

Stephen's listeners were deep into their belief that God had to be worshipped in the temple and that salvation was by keeping the Law. But by pointing to Abraham, Stephen made it clear that God's ways have changed over the years and that man is NOT saved by keeping the Law (and never was) but by grace through faith. Abraham did not understand the cross as we do today, but he believed what God had revealed to him and it was his faith that God counted to him as righteousness. Stephen was also reminding his listeners that Abraham worshipped God without a temple.

Notice the words of John Phillips:

*"The revelation of God to Abram was quite independent of Moses or the temple. God, restricted to neither a special person nor a special place, can reveal Himself when and where He wills, as He did to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees."*

One of Stephen's main points in this sermon is that God cannot be locked into a certain locality.

**Acts 7:48-49**

*<sup>48</sup> Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,*

*<sup>49</sup> 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?*

**Notice Acts 7:5-8 again**

Here was a reminder that Israel would go outside their land and spend some 400 years in Egypt but even in Egypt God would still appear unto them and they would worship Him.

➤ **Joseph**

**Notice Acts 7:8-12**

Now Stephen refreshes their minds about the life of Joseph. He was raised up by God to be their deliverer, but they rejected him when he revealed his dream.

**Genesis 37:5-8, 11, 19, 20, 27-28**

*<sup>5</sup> And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

*<sup>6</sup> And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:*

*<sup>7</sup> For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*

*<sup>8</sup> And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*

*<sup>11</sup> And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.*

*<sup>19</sup> And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.*

*<sup>20</sup> Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

*<sup>27</sup> Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.*

*<sup>28</sup> Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

This is a picture of how the Jews also rejected Jesus Christ as their Deliverer.

**John 1:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

<sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

<sup>11</sup> *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

**Isaiah 53:2-6**

<sup>2</sup> *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*

<sup>3</sup> *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

<sup>4</sup> *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

<sup>5</sup> *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

<sup>6</sup> *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Joseph would go through many trials for some 13 years and then he would interpret Pharaoh's dream and then promoted to the position of Prime Minister of Egypt which put him in the position as second in command. There would be 7 years of famine and Joseph had stored corn in Egypt as preparation for the famine. His father and brothers who were in Canaan heard of the corn in Egypt and Jacob sent his sons to buy food. They had no idea they were buying from the brother who they had sold into slavery. It would after the second visit by his brothers to Egypt that Joseph would reveal himself to them.

**Genesis 42:1-3**

*Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?*

<sup>2</sup> And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

<sup>3</sup> And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

**Notice Acts 7:13-16**

Then Joseph's brothers came back for more corn.

**Genesis 45:1-7**

Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

<sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

<sup>3</sup> And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

<sup>6</sup> For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

<sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

The first time Jesus came He was rejected and crucified but when He comes the second time, He will reveal Himself to His people Israel.

**Zechariah 12:9-14**

<sup>9</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,

*and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

*<sup>11</sup> In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.*

*<sup>12</sup> And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;*

*<sup>13</sup> The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;*

*<sup>14</sup> All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.*

**Conclusion:**

What was the message from the life of Joseph for Stephen's accusers?

Just as Joseph/the deliverer had been rejected by his brothers so too the Jews had rejected their Deliverer who was Jesus Christ. Jesus had come to set them free from the Law, from the power of sin, and from the penalty of sin. He had come to deliver them from the bondage they were in as servants of sin. But they rejected and crucified Him. But there will be a day when every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

**Philippians 2:9-11**

*<sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

*<sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

*<sup>11</sup> And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

What have you done with Jesus?