

ACTS 7

Sadly, Saul Sees Stephen's Speech and Stoning

1 And the high priest said,

Are these things so?

2 And Stephen said:

Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him,

Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.¹

4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. 5 Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his seed (σπέρμα) after him, though he had no child. 6 And God spoke to this effect—that his seed would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years.²

7 But I will judge the nation that they serve, said God, and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, jealous³ of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. But God was with him, 10 rescued him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before

¹ Did Terah also receive this command? **Ge 11:31** 31 Terah took Abram his son, Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

² **Ge 15:16** 16 [Your seed] will come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

³ **Ge 37:5-11** 5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, Hear this dream that I have dreamed: 7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf. 8 His brothers said to him, Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. 9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me. 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you? 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. **Mt 27:18** 18 [Jesus] knew that it was out of envy that [the Jewish leaders] had delivered him up.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.⁴
11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food.⁵ 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. 13 And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. 15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, 16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 But as the time of the promise drew near,⁶ which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt 18 until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. 19 He dealt shrewdly with our people (γένος) and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. 20 At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful (ἄσπεῖος) in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, 21 and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son.⁷ 22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.⁸

23 When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand (συνήμι, pres.) that God was giving them salvation (σωτηρία) by his hand, but they did not understand (συνήμι, aor.).⁹ 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them saying,

Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?¹⁰

27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor¹¹ thrust him aside saying,

⁴ Mt 28:18 18 Jesus came and said to the [eleven disciples], All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

⁵ This foreshadows 586 bc, 70 ad, and the Great Tribulation.

⁶ Moses and Jesus both came when the time of the promise drew near.

⁷ Moses' circumcision told Pharaoh's daughter right away that he was a Hebrew.

⁸ Like Jesus.

⁹ Israel was blind toward Moses, just as she was later blind toward Jesus (Hodges).

¹⁰ Moses and Jesus both tried to reconcile the Jewish people toward one another.

¹¹ In Jesus' day, it was the Jewish leaders who were wronging the Jewish poor.

Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?¹² 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.¹³

30 Now when forty years had passed,¹⁴ an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord (κύριος):

32 I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. 33 Then the Lord said to him,

Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to set them free (ἐξαιρέω).¹⁵ And now come, I will send you to Egypt.

35 This Moses, whom they rejected saying,

Who made you a ruler and a judge?

—this man God sent as both ruler (ἄρχων) and redeemer (λυτρωτής) by the hand of the angel¹⁶ who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites,

God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.

38 This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel [preincarnate Jesus] who spoke to him at Mount Sinai and with our fathers. He received living oracles¹⁷ to give to us. 39 Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron,

¹² Where do you get your authority? What are your credentials? Moses connects not only to Jesus but also back to Joseph.

¹³ Moses' two Gentile sons typify Gentile believers of the Church age, the children God has given Jesus during the period of Israel's rejection (Z. Hodges).

¹⁴ Israel's rejection of Moses cost her 40 more years of slavery. Delayed faith results in delayed salvation.

¹⁵ "[T]o deliver someone from peril or confining circumstance, *set free, deliver, rescue*" (BDAG, 344).

¹⁶ Probably the preincarnate Jesus.

¹⁷ See *Special Revelation*.

Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned away and handed them over (παραδίδωμι, aor.)¹⁸ to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship. And I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. 45 Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, 46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him. 48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands.¹⁹ As the prophet says,

49 Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? 50 Did not my hand make all these things?²⁰

51 Stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you (ὕμεῖς)²¹ always resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute (διώκω, aor.)? And they killed (ἀποκτείνω, aor.) those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One (τοῦ δικαίου),²² whose betrayer (προδότης) and murderer (φονεὺς) you have now become, 53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep (φυλάσσω)²³ it.

¹⁸ **Ro 1:24** 24 God handed [people] over (παραδίδωμι, aor.) in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. **Ro 1:26** 26 God handed [people] over (παραδίδωμι) to dishonorable passions. **Ro 1:28** 28 Because [people] did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over (παραδίδωμι) to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

¹⁹ “Your God is too small.”

²⁰ The Creator is eternal; the creation is not.

²¹ Stephen finally addresses the Jewish leaders directly.

²² Stephen never says “Jesus” or “Messiah,” but he is all the time preaching Jesus, especially through Old Testament types (R. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 93).

²³ One keeps the law only by believing in Jesus as the Messiah.

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.
55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing²⁴ at the right hand of God. 56 And he said,

Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the [false] witnesses (μάρτυρες) laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.²⁵ 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out,

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (πνεῦμα).

60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice,

Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep.²⁶

²⁴ In all of Scripture, this is the only time Jesus is said to stand at the right hand of God. Stephen receives his reward.

²⁵ Saul, the main human character of *Acts*, finally shows up. He is an accomplice to murder.

²⁶ In general, while unbelievers are said to “die,” believers are said to “fall asleep.” This indicates believers’ participation in the first resurrection. **Re 20:6** Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Biblical Worldview

1. The Christian faith is an historical faith. If biblical history isn't true, our faith isn't true.
2. Joseph is a type of Jesus.
3. Moses is a type of Jesus.
4. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem have heard the gospel three times. They are officially rejecting it. "Three strikes and your out."

Notes