

Comments About Acts 7

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 7.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Facing resistance

As you recall in Acts 6:8-15, Stephen received some resistance from religious people.

- The Synagogue of Freedmen (verse 9) spread lies about him (verse 11).
- It stirred up the people, elders and scribes to seize him and to take him before the council (verse 12).
- They set up false witnesses against him (verses 13-14).

Stephen responded

In the beginning verse of chapter 7, the high priest asked Stephen: "Are these things so?"

In verses 2-53, Stephen answered. In verses 2-50, he highlighted some history. In verses 51-53, he corrected them.

Historical references

Through most of this chapter, Stephen provided some historical highlights.

- He described aspects about Abraham (verses 2-8).
- He mentioned Joseph ending up in Egypt (verses 9-16).
- He told about events surrounding the birth of Moses (verses 17-21).
- He mentioned that Moses became powerful in Egypt (verse 22).
- He explained a few details about Moses fleeing to the land of Midian (verses 23-29).
- He described Moses' encounter with the burning bush (verses 30-34).
- He mentioned about Moses becoming the person to lead Israel out of Egypt (verses 35-36).

- He mentioned other aspects about Moses' life (verses 37-43).
- He mentioned the lesson of the tabernacle eventually becoming a house (verses 44-47).
- He proceeded to state the fact the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands (verse 48)—paraphrasing Isaiah 66:1-2.

They killed him

At this point in his discourse, Stephen corrected the religious leaders in (verses 51-53).

Acts 7:51-53—"You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

- The religious leaders were angry (verse 54).
- Stephen saw the glory of the Father and the Son (verses 55-56).
- The people killed Stephen by stoning him (verses 57-58).
- The accusers of Stephen laid down their coats at the feet of Saul (verse 58).

Stephen's approach

Notice two actions that Stephen did just prior to his death.

- Stephen called upon God to receive his spirit (verse 59).
- Stephen asked God not to charge the people with their sinful actions towards him (verse 60).

Acts 7:60—"Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."