

## 019 - Acts 7:1-60 Stephen's Preaching

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:8-19

Confession of Sin: from Daniel 9

O Lord, the great and awesome God,  
We have sinned and done wrong, and acted wickedly and rebelled,  
Turning aside from Your commandments  
Not listening to your servants the prophets.  
To You, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame  
Now, therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant  
And to his pleas for mercy  
And for Your own sake, O Lord, make Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary  
O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive.

Sermon: Stephen's Preaching Acts 7:1-60

Benediction: Hebrews 12:1-2

### Plan for these sermons on Stephen

Last week: the conflict that arose with Stephen, and how the Spirit of Christ helped him

This week: first point

Next week: second point

Fourth week: Stephen's preaching in general

Fifth week: Stephen's martyrdom

Source: Matthew Henry

First main point of contention: Stephen saying that Jesus will destroy this place amounts to blasphemy against God

Acts 6:11; 13-14 "this holy place" meaning primarily the temple, but more broadly the city of Jerusalem and the whole land of Canaan

### I. As to the land

A. God has shown His grace to men not in Canaan only, but in foreign lands; therefore God's favor does not rest exclusively on Canaan or Jerusalem or the temple

1. Mesopotamia v. 2
2. Haran v. 4
3. Egypt v. 9, 17
4. Wilderness of Sinai v. 30

B. God showed His grace to the patriarchs, who did not even possess the land; therefore, God's grace is not essentially connected to the land of Canaan

1. Abraham lived in it, but did not possess it v. 5
2. God saved Jacob and the 12 patriarchs from death in the famine by moving them out of it to live and die in Egypt v. 15
3. For 400 years the Israelites lived and died in Egypt, never seeing the land of Canaan, yet God blessed them and multiplied them v. 6, 17b

C. God has shown Himself to His people through miracles in places outside of Canaan; therefore God's revelation of Himself is not tied to Canaan or Jerusalem or the temple v. 36

## II. As to the temple

A. A place is made holy not by the presence of a temple, but by the presence of God, so there is no intrinsic holiness in Canaan or Jerusalem or the temple v. 33

B. The original place of worship was not even a building, but a tent v. 44

C. The tabernacle was not build in Jerusalem or even in Canaan, but in the wilderness v. 44-45, so there cannot be any essential connection of God's place of worship and the city of Jerusalem

D. The tabernacle was superceded by the temple v. 47, so it cannot be blasphemouse to say that one place of worship can be destroyed and replaced by another

E. God does not really reside in any physical place v. 48-50 (Isaiah 66:1-2)

Stephen's Preaching was that Jesus Christ would destroy the temple and change the customs handed down from Moses.

Stephen's accusers said that when he talked about Jesus destroying the temple and changing the customs given by Moses, that amounted to blasphemy against God and Moses. But Stephen shows that

1. God has not always dealt with His people through the temple in Jerusalem, so to say that God is now dealing with people without reference to the temple is not blasphemy against Him.
2. The men who accuse Stephen of blasphemy against Moses have themselves blasphemed Moses and every deliverer God has sent them.

Mike Renihan:

-This is actually a speech by Hellenized Stephen, recorded by Greek Luke for the benefit of Greek Theophilus

Henry:

The slow steps by which the promise made to Abraham advanced towards the performance, and the many seeming contradictions here taken notice of, plainly show that it had a spiritual meaning, and that the land principally intended to be conveyed and secured by it was the better country, that is, the heavenly; as the apostle shows from this very argument that the patriarchs sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, thence inferring that they looked for a city that had foundations, Heb\_11:9, Heb\_11:10. It was therefore no blasphemy to say, Jesus shall destroy this place, when at the same time we say, "He shall lead us to the heavenly Canaan, and put us in possession of that, of which the earthly Canaan was but a type and figure."

those whom God designs to make special use of he will take special care of

The generation that thrust Moses away was left to die in their slavery. (not a quote)

The holy place was at first but a tabernacle, mean and movable, showing itself to be short-lived, and not designed to continue always. Why might not this holy place, though built of stones, be decently brought to its end, and give place to its betters, as well as that though framed of curtains? As it was no dishonour, but an honour to God, that the tabernacle gave way to the temple, so it is now that the material temple gives way to the spiritual one, and so it will be when, at last, the spiritual temple shall give way to the eternal one.

verse 45

The church built the tabernacle in the wilderness and with Joshua/Jesus brought it into a land controlled by gentiles. Why not again? (not a quote)

- I. Stephen preached largely from the OT scriptures
- II. Stephen preached against his listeners' sin

- III. Stephen preached of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- IV. Stephen preached in the face of deadly opposition
- V. Stephen preached with prayer for forgiveness of sin