

**“Resistance Is Futile”**  
**Acts 7:1-54**

**Introduction:**

1. Please Turn Back With Me In Your Bibles:
  - To Acts 7 - Where - If You Remember From Last Week:
    - Stephen - One Of The First Deacons Of The Church:
      - Was Standing Before The Great Jewish Sanhedrin:
        - On Trial For The False Accusations That Were Mentioned Back In 6:13-14!
    - Where - “False Witnesses” Were “Set Up” And “Said” - “This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: / For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us!”
2. And As We Come To:
  - 7:1 - After The High Priest Asks Stephen:
    - “Are These Things So?”
      - Stephen Now Has The Same Opportunity:
        - As The Apostles Had Before Him:
          - To Share The Gospel!
          - And So - From:
    - 7:2 - 7:53 - We Have The Message Of Stephen:
      - Or - What Has Been Described As:
        - The “Defense” Or “Apology” Of Stephen:
          - Recorded For Us!
  - 3. But - As We Read His Words:
    - I Think You Will Find It To Be:
      - A Message Unlike Any Other!
        - Because - In Spite What He Says:
          - There Is Still So Much That He Leaves **Unsaid** - And In The Words Of One Writer:
            - He Leaves His Audience “To Their Own Deductions!”
      - But All Throughout:
        - There Are Certain Themes That Stephen Wants Them To Know!
          - That By Resisting & Rejecting Jesus Christ - Who Is Not Even Named In His Message - Except, Perhaps, In Type Form:
            - They Are Resisting & Rejecting The Purposes Of The God They Claim To Know & To Serve!
      - So - Stephen Begins His Message:
        - By Reminding Them Of:

**1. The Purposes Of God!**

- Who Is - The “God Of Glory” - In 7:2-8 - “And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, / 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. / 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. / 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. / 6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. / 7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. / 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs!”
  - So - Stephen Begins His Message With A History Lesson:
    - Which The Members Of Sanhedrin **Would** Have & **Should** Have Been Familiar With!
      - And He Describes:
  - The Initiation Of God’s Purpose:
    - Through Their “Father Abraham!”
      - And How God - Out Of Nothing But His Goodness & Grace:
    - Chose Abraham:
      - In 7:2 - Even When He Was “In Mesopotamia!”
        - And Even When He, Along With His Fathers, According To Joshua 24:2 - “Served

Other Gods!" - He Also Describes How God:

- Called Abraham:
  - In 7:3 - "And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee!"
  - Later - God Also:
- Covenanted With Abraham:
  - By Making Promises To Him:
    - About A Special Home & A Special Family - Even Though He Would Not Live To See Those Promises Fulfilled!
    - But No Matter What - Abraham Believed That The Lord Was:
  - Committed To Him!
    - And This Was The Beginning Of The History Of The People Of God:
      - And The Beginning Of God Using His People To Fulfill His Purpose:
        - According To Genesis 12:3 - That - "In Thee Shall All The Families Of The Earth Be Blessed!"
    - And The Unsaid But Overriding Question Is:
      - How Would Abraham's Family Respond:
        - To The Purposes Of God?
          - Well - To - Show God's Ongoing Commitment - Stephen Next Uses The Story Of Joseph As:
- The Illustration Of God's Purpose!
  - In 7:9-16 - "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, / 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. / 11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. / 12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. / 13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. / 14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. / 15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, / 16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem!"
  - It Is Clear From History - That God Was Going To Use Joseph:
    - To Keep His Commitment To & Covenant With Abraham!
    - But How Did His Brothers Respond?
      - They Rejected Him! They - 7:9 - "Sold Joseph Into Egypt" - Thinking They Would Never Have To Think About Him Again!
  - But Was That The End Of The Story?
    - No! In Spite Of His Treatment By His Brothers:
      - And Even By The World In Egypt:
        - 7:9-10 - "God Was With Him & Delivered Him Out Of All His Afflictions!"
  - As Joseph Said In Genesis 50:20:
    - "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive!"
- And So - The Purposes Of God:
  - Continued!
    - Even Jacob Was Able To Be Buried:
      - In The Land Of Promise!
  - And The Point Stephen Is Making:
    - To His Fellow Jews Is:
      - Resistance To The Purposes Of God:
        - Is Futile! Nothing Can Get In His Way!
  - They Charged Stephen:
    - With Dishonoring God:
      - When - In Fact - It Was They Who Had Dishonored Him - Just Like Their Fore-Father!
  - Stephen Then Turns His Attention To:

## 2. ***The Preservation Of God!***

- His Gracious Preservation Of His People:
  - Especially Through The Ministry Of Moses!
    - And He Divides The Life Of Moses:

- Into Three Periods Of 40 Years Each!

- The First Period Is - The Time In Egypt:

- 7:17-22 - "But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, / 18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. / 19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. / 20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: / 21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. / 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds!"

- As God Preserved Joseph - God Preserved Moses:

- And Moses Enjoyed A Life Of Ease & Education In Egypt! But He Still Knew Who He Was & Who He Belonged To! And So:

- 7:23-28 - "And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. / 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: / 25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. / 26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? / 27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? / 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?"

- In The Process Of Time, God Moved Moses:

- To Identify Himself With His People!

- We Are Told In Hebrews 11:24-26 - That - "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; / Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; / Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward!"

- It Was God's Purpose To Deliver His People:

- Through Moses - But How Did The People Respond?

- They Rejected Him - And In 7:27 - "Thrust Him Away!" Then Stephen Comes To:

- The Second Period - Which Was - The Time Of Exile:

- 7:29-34 - "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. / 30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. / 31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, / 32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. / 33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. / 34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt!"

- Once Again - It Was God's Purpose To Deliver His People:

- Through Moses - But How Did They Respond This Time?

- They Rejected Him Again!

- 7:35 - "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush!"

- Then - Stephen Continues With:

- The Third Period - Which Was - The Time Of Exodus:

- 7:36-38 - "He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. / 37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. / 38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us!"

- And Yet - In Spite Of How God Used Moses - How Did The People Respond This Time?

- Once Again - They Rejected Him & They Rejected The Lord!

- 7:39-43 - "To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, / 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. / 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. / 42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? / 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures

- which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon!”
- And Yet - Even Though The Covenant People Of God:
  - Treated His Servant Moses In This Way:
    - And Turned Against The Lord, By Worshiping & Serving Idols:
      - The Purposes Of God Continued!
        - He Was Still Committed To His Promises To Abraham!
- And The Implication Stephen Was Making:
  - Was Clear To Them! They Charged Stephen:
    - With Dishonoring Moses:
      - When - In Fact - It Was They Who Had Dishonored Him - By Ignoring His Word - Just Like Their Fore-Fathers!
    - Especially His Word About Another Prophet Who Was To Come - 7:37 - “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear!”
      - But They **Did Not** Hear Him, Did They?
        - Because They **Would** Not Hear!
          - Then - Stephen Addresses:

### 3. **The Presence Of God!**

- They Also Charged Stephen:
  - With Dishonoring The Temple:
    - And The Special Presence Of God With His People!
      - But - Instead - It Was They Who Dishonored & Rejected The Presence Of God!
        - Because In:
          - 7:44-50 - Stephen Recounts How - “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. / 45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; / 46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. / 47 But Solomon built him an house. / 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, / 49 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? / 50 Hath not my hand made all these things?”
            - The Question Stephen Addresses Is:
              - Where Does God Dwell? Where Is The Place Of His Rest?
            - When God’s People Were In Egypt:
              - Where Was God?
            - When God’s People Were In The Wilderness:
              - Where Was God?
            - When God’s People Made It To The Promised Land:
              - Where Was God?
            - God Was Always With His People:
              - No Matter Where They Were:
                - And No Matter Where They Would Go!
            - And So - Even The Temple Was Meant Only As A Temporary Place:
              - For The Special Presence Of God!
                - 7:48 - “Howbeit The Most High Dwelleth Not In Temples Made With Hands!”
    - And So - The Presence Of God:
      - Remains With His People!
        - Which Is Now His Church - The Body Of Christ!

### **Conclusion:**

1. And After Showing Them:
  - The History Of Their Own Rejection:
    - Of God’s Purposes - Stephen Brings His Message:
      - To Its Strong Conclusion!
    - 7:51-53 - “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. / 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: / 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it!”
      - They Had The Same Problem:
        - As Their Fore-Fathers!

- 7:51 - “Ye Do Always Resist The Holy Ghost!”
2. But They Went One Step Further!
    - They Betrayed & Murdered:
      - “The Just One!” (7:52)
      - The One Who *Was* Their Messiah!
      - The Lord Jesus Christ!
    - So - In Spite Of:
      - God’s Great Favor Toward Them & In Spite Of:
      - God’s Great Faithfulness To Them:
      - They Continued To Resist!
  3. The Point Stephen Is Making:
    - Is - Once Again - Clear - Though Unsaid!
      - They Needed To Repent:
        - And Turn To The One Whom They Killed!
        - But - How Would They Respond This Time?
    - 7:54 Begins - “When they heard these things!”
      - So - They Did Hear What Stephen Had To Say!
      - But - Did They Understand?
    - 7:54 Continues - “They were cut to the heart!”
      - So, They *Did* Understand! All That Stephen Implied In His Words! They Got It!
      - But - How Would They Respond?
    - 7:54 Ends - “And they gnashed on him with their teeth!”
      - There Was No Remorse!
      - There Was No Repentance!
      - And - For Stephen - There Was No Chance!
  4. And Then - This Great Jewish Council:
    - Ignored The Advice Of Gamaliel - From Back In 5:38-39:
      - To - “Let Them Alone!”
        - Remember Why He Gave This Advice? “For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God!”
    - Once Again:
      - They Were Fighting Against God:
        - By Rejecting The Message Of Stephen!
  5. But - Just As The History Of:
    - Abraham & Joseph & Moses Had Proven:
      - The Purposes Of God:
        - Would Carry On - Even With The Death Of Stephen!
        - Because - Nothing Can Hinder The Work Of God!
    - Resistance To God Is Futile!
      - It Always Has Been!
      - And It Always Will Be!
  6. And So - What Should They Have Done?
    - The Same Thing That We Must Do!
      - Day In & Day Out!
        - And That Is - Surrender Yourself Completely To The Lord!
        - Because - Resistance To Him:
          - His Will, His Work, And Even His Word:
          - Is Completely Futile!

**Grace Baptist Church**  
**Stephen Elmer, Pastor**  
**4245 North 200 West**  
**Greenfield, Indiana 46140**  
**317-326-2362**  
**[www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace](http://www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace)**  
**[www.growatgrace.org](http://www.growatgrace.org)**  
**[pastor-elmer@hotmail.com](mailto:pastor-elmer@hotmail.com)**