

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

"Apologia Not Accepted"

Acts 7:1-16

In the previous chapter, the Sanhedrin accused Stephen of blasphemy toward God, Moses, the Mosaic law and the temple. In Chapter 7, Stephen gives an *apologia*, as he is asked to respond to these accusations. In his *apologia*, he includes the history of Abraham, Moses and Joseph and quotes from the Old Testament as he presents an overview of Jewish history. However, his defense is not a plea to be released, but for the truth to be released.

Acts 7:1-16

Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" ² And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' ⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. ⁵ And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. ⁶ But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. ⁷ 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.' ⁸ Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs. ⁹ "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰ and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹ Now a famine and great ¹² trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. ¹³ But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. ¹⁴ And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people. ¹⁶ So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. ¹⁶ And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

1. Why do you suppose Stephen begins his *apologia* with "Brethren and fathers" in v.1?
2. What do verses 2-8 describe?
3. If Stephen is addressing the Sanhedrin (religious priests), do you think they were already knowledgeable of Abraham and Moses? If so, why would he take the time to reiterate these things to them? How is this a benefit to us as well?
4. In verses 9-16 Stephen expounds on God's faithfulness through Joseph.
 - a. Why was it significant to mention, "God was with him"?
 - b. How is this story of Joseph an illustration on Jesus?
5. Stephen's *apologia* is truly not a defense for himself. What is he really defending in these verses?
6. If you were in Stephen's shoes, what are some things you may be thinking about in this situation? Do his actions show that he fears man or God? When are you faced with a situation or a command by God (the Great Commission) does your action show that you fear man or God?