

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

"Historical Evidence Proves Stephen's Innocence"

Acts 7:17-50

This week's study is a continuation of Stephen's apologia of his faith and the truth as he responds to the Sanhedrin. He continues with the historical account of Moses and Israel's rebellion towards God, and their ignorance of God's tabernacle.

Historical Events of Moses and Israel's Rebellion

¹⁷ "But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ till another king arose who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹ This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. ²⁰ At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. ²¹ But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. ²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. ²³ "Now when he was 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 and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. ²⁵ For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And the next day he appeared to *two* of them as they were fighting, and *tried* to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' ²⁷ But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. ³⁰ "And when forty years had passed, an Angel ³¹ of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. ³² When Moses saw *it*, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, ³³ saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. ³⁴ Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. ³⁵ I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'" ³⁶ "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁷ He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. ³⁸ "This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' ³⁹ "This is he who was in the ⁴⁰ congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, ⁴¹ whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴² saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; *as for* this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' ⁴³ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴⁴ Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices *during* forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? ⁴⁵ You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

God's Tabernacle

⁴⁶ "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁷ which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁸ who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁹ But Solomon built Him a house. ⁵⁰ "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ⁵¹ 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? ⁵² Has My hand not made all these things?'

1. Discuss the parallelism between Moses and Jesus:
 - As a baby in verses 17-22? In relation to Israel in v. 23-29? In v. 35-41?
2. Where did God speak to Moses (v. 30-34)? What's point is Stephen making here?
3. What was Israel's response to Moses? What was God's response to them?
4. How does v. 42 compare to Romans 1:24-32?
5. How did Stephen address the Sanhedrin's accusation of blasphemy of Moses and the Mosaic law?
6. The Sanhedrin idolized the tabernacle as their place of worship. In a subtle way, Christians today continue to do this, not necessarily in worshipping the church they attend (although some do), but they "worship in a building". However, once they leave, their lives are unchanged. Reflect on your life, are you refreshed with God's Word only in church and only on a Sunday? More specifically for members of CBF, do you need a building to worship God? Where is your tabernacle?