

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 22 | ACTS 7:1-16

ACTS 7:1-60 | STEPHEN'S SERMON, ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THE MESSAGE

ACTS 7:1-8 | EXHIBIT A: ABRAHAM

- Verse 1 -
 - The question is whether **these things** are true.
 - The **things** are:
 - Did Stephen **speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God** (Acts 6:11)?
 - Did Stephen say that **Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us** (Acts 6:14)?
- Verses 2-4 –
 - Stephen begins by stating something they would all agree with, basic facts of Jewish history. These verses describe in brief that which is shown in Genesis 11:27-32. The audience would have no objection to this recitation of history.
- Verse 5 –
 - In this verse, Stephen begins to build his case. The fact is that God had a promise of land and yet received **none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on**. There was no inheritance gained, **ye he promised**.
 - The *modus operandi* of Stephen is to get Israel to accept Jesus as the Messiah by addressing their major point of rejection, that Messiah was to *set up His Kingdom*, which He had not done.
 - Stephen nowhere tries to redefine the Kingdom (as per evangelicalism), but rather seeks to show that their very founding father Abraham lived and died without the *completion* of the promise, yet he was *not rejected* by the nation as a fraud.
- Verse 6 -
 - Notice that Abraham's **seed** would **sojourn in a strange land for four hundred years**. From this many people make the false assumption (based on lack of detailed Biblical study) that the Hebrew nation was in Egypt 400 years.
 - In actuality, there were 400 years between Isaac's birth through the giving of the Law (which was the birth of the nation).
 - Exodus 12:40-41 and Galatians 3:17 speak of 430 years, counting from the time of Abraham's reception of the original promise.
- Verse 7 –
 - There is likely a double meaning here. Primarily it is of the Egyptians whom God will **judge** and the Hebrews who would serve God **in this place** (the land of promise).
 - Secondly, it is the current *generation* who will be judged, and **after that** the Hebrew people will **come forth, and serve me in this place** when His Kingdom is established.
- Verse 8 –
 - God **gave him the covenant of circumcision**, which was a *land* covenant. This covenant has never been revoked nor replaced, and is still in effect today.

- The unbiblical infant-baptism theory is based on flawed covenant theology which says that baptism has replaced the **covenant of circumcision**. This baptism-theory is replacement theology at its core.
- Notice that circumcision took place on **the eighth day**. Eight is a number of beginning again and resurrection throughout the Scripture.

ACTS 7:9-16 | EXHIBIT B: JOSEPH

- Verses 9-10 –
 - Was Stephen guilty of speaking against Moses and against God? He brings his second piece of evidence in Joseph, sold by his *brothers*, yet **God was with him, And delivered him...and gave him favour...and he made him governor**.
 - The speech is thick with typology and double meaning. Stephen is clearly working to implicate his generation for treating Jesus their Messiah the same way their forefathers treated Joseph (their physical “savior.”)
- Verse 11 –
 - The famine came **over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan**.
 - The King James uses the Hebrew spelling here, likely because a Hebrew is speaking. However, in the Hebrew Scriptures (as well as Matthew 15:22) the KJB always uses “Canaan.”
 - One should not build a “perfect” argument on their translation based on various spelling preferences. Insisting on certain spelling and orthographic matters has birthed unnecessary (and untrue) defenses of the King James Bible by some KJVO advocates.
 - Nobody calls the land “Canaan” today because the Canaanites were defeated and thus Canaan no longer exists. In the same light, the country of Israel should not be called “Palestine” today (a name given by Roman enemies that has stuck long after the fall of Rome - which has not ruled in that region since 330 AD).
- Verses 12-13 –
 - Again using skilled argumentation that the religious leaders should accept Jesus as their Messiah, Stephen argues that the very ones who sold Joseph were then sent to Joseph for sustenance. There is a not-so-subtle message to Israel: *if you will go to Jesus, whom you rejected, He will receive you and save you*.
 - Note that Stephen mentioned that it was **the second time** in which Joseph **was made known to his brethren**, once again using typology to show that on the first visit they killed Jesus, on the second visit He will save them.
- Verse 14 –
 - Stephen has used a lot of significant numbers in his speech, including 400 (v. 6), 8 (v. 8), 2 (v. 13), and now 75 (a number emphasizing grace (5 squared) and depth (3)).
 - Were their 75? [Genesis 46:27](#) mentions only 70, but this does not include Jacob, Joseph, Joseph’s wife, and his two sons.
- Verses 15-16 –
 - This looks like a total failure: the promises to Jacob have not been fulfilled. Stephen uses this to argue that Jesus should not be rejected because He has not fulfilled *all* the Messianic promises.
 - Again note the typology as Jacob **died, he and our fathers** in the land of Egypt just as this current generation would flee to the nations for help and their die, but another generation would return to the promise.
 - For more information on the purchase of the burial plot, see Appendix 187 of *The Companion Bible*.