

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

ACTS 7:17-43 | EXHIBIT C: MOSES

- Verses 17-18
 - Thus far two exhibits have been given in the case that Stephen presents.
 - Abraham received none of the promises, yet you honor him and have full expectation that every promise *will be* fulfilled.
 - Joseph was rejected by his brothers but accepted the *second time*, and the full promises to all of Jacob's sons are yet to be fulfilled.
 - Now Stephen brings up Moses, who also did not fulfill his role until his *return*.
 - The time of promise had a prophetic time-period attached to it, and thus Stephen alludes to Genesis 15:13.
 - Before the time of promise God did a miraculous work to prepare the people for a national status by causing them to be multiplied in Egypt.
 - This multiplication took place **till another king arose**. This king was brutal to the Hebrew people and wanted to erase them from the face of the earth.
 - In the same way, Jesus says that if he is rejected, the Jewish people will accept another, who will be the Antichrist (John 5:43).
- Verse 19 –
 - Just like **another king arose** that **dealt subtly with** the Jewish people, so will the Antichrist rise, use “the full extent of wisdom” (the Greek word being *katasophos*) to work **evil** with the goal that **they might not live**.
 - Not only does “history repeat itself” but Biblical history is rich in typology. Stephen is a master at using this typology.
- Verses 20-24 –
 - This historical note speaks of Moses in his “first coming.” During this time, he lived as “an outsider who was one of them.”
 - In verse 23 we are told that **he was a full forty years old** (for some reason the NASB says *approaching forty*, which is nowhere found by accurate translation). The number 40 is a number of *earthly judgment*. At 40 years of age, **it came into his heart** (not mind, as in NASB) **to visit his brethren**.
- Verse 25 –
 - The word **supposed** is a *law-based word*, νομιζω [nomizo]. It is a word that says, “according to their laws (and customs), the corresponding result should have been....” Instead, **they understood not**.
 - This is a clear reference to the Jewish people in the manner in which they rejected Jesus Christ, and by now the Jewish officials surely understood where this defense was headed.

- Verses 26-29 –
 - The response of the Hebrews to Moses was mirrored in Jesus - see Matthew 21:23.
 - The Hebrew slave felt threatened by Moses, the Hebrew nation felt threatened by Christ.
 - Following the brutal rejection of Moses, he left the nation and lived among gentiles. Christ has “fled” to the right hand of the Father and is dealing with gentiles today.
- Verses 30-36 –
 - This recitation of the historical account reminds the religious leaders that God used the one they rejected to bring the freedom they desired (and absolutely required).
- Verse 37 –
 - Stephen quotes Deuteronomy 18:15, They were instructed to **hear** this prophet, and Moses warned that **whosoever will not hearken** to the words of the One whom the Lord will raise up, **I will require it of him** (Deut. 18:18-19). Stephen was going to make it very difficult for the nation to reject Jesus.
- Verse 38 –
 - This verse speaks of Moses as being **in the church in the wilderness**.
 - There is a two-fold mistake often made by the use of the word **church** in this verse.
 - Covenant theology uses this word to “prove” that “the church” has always existed, and thus mixes Israel with the church.
 - Dispensational theology of the “normative” variety ignores this verse when they argue that Matthew 16:18 is prophecy about the church as we know it, or that Acts 2:47 or Acts 5:11 speaks of the church as we know it. Dispensationalism consistently declares that **the church in the wilderness** is not “the church” but “the assembly,” but then inconsistently insists that Acts 2 and 5 (as well as 8:3, 9:31, etc), are “the church” and not “the assembly.”
- Verses 39-40 –
 - The basic message of these verses is, “don’t make the same mistake again.”
- Verse 41 –
 - Again making a connection to the Jewish leadership of his own day, Stephen says that their forefathers **rejoiced in the works of their own hands** though those works were deadly to them and a rejection of God.
- Verses 42-43 –
 - The **host of heaven** is not the *Lord God of hosts*, but rather the fake-gods **Molech, and the star of your god Remphan**, astrological guides and deities of Egypt.
 - Stephen quotes Amos 5:25-27 as the basis for his history.