

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 24 | ACTS 7:44-60

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

ACTS 7:44-50 | EXHIBIT D: THE TABERNACLE

- Verse 44 - We now enter into the fourth piece of evidence in Stephen's indictment of the Jewish nation. This "exhibit" covers the Tabernacle/Temple. Moses was instructed to make the Tabernacle **according to the fashion that he had seen**. The word for **fashion** is τύπος [typos], a *type*, thus a perfect pattern/reflection of the *heavenly* tabernacle. The specifications had to be followed perfectly because the Tabernacle itself was a *type* of Heaven's throne room (see Hebrews 9:23-24).
- Verse 45 –
 - A note on **Jesus**: Only the KJV is consistent in its translation of Ἰησοῦς [Iasus].
 - All other translations *interpret* the name here, on behalf of the reader. The Greek word, translated to English, is **Jesus**. This is also done in Hebrews 4:8.
 - Would a teacher give a math book with the answers already printed to a math student, or make the student work it out for themselves?
 - The Greek word itself is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Yeshua*, and *Joshua* is the English translation of the Hebrew.
 - The Jewish forefathers, after the 40 years in the wilderness, **brought in** the Tabernacle when they took **possession of the Gentiles** (at the time of the conquest). While Moses and the original Exodus generation *didn't go in*, now Joshua and the new generation *did go in*, all by the word of God, who drove out the gentiles from Joshua **unto the days of David**.
- Verses 46-47 –
 - This verse fits the same theme as the previous evidence for indictment: David didn't accomplish what he set out to do (just like Abraham / Joseph / Moses...all stories of failure).
 - The point: don't let Jesus' "failure" be "proof" that He is not the Messiah.
 - See John 6:37-40 for more about the failure to secure Israel as His inheritance.
- Verses 48-50 –
 - Stephen shows the "failure" of the Tabernacle/Temple, because God doesn't dwell **in temples made with hands**. He then quotes Isaiah 66:1-2.

ACTS 7:51-54 | STEPHEN'S CHARGE AGAINST THE NATION

- Verse 51 –
 - Here (if not from the beginning) it is obvious that Stephen is not giving a *defense*, but is charging the national leaders with a crime of their own.
 - The charge could be summarized in the words **as your fathers did, so do ye**.
- Verses 52-53 –
 - The charge against the nation is clear and powerful: the fathers put to death the prophets of the Messiah (an undeniable charge), and now that **the Just One** has come,

the current leadership (before whom Stephen speaks) are **the betrayers and murderers**. Furthermore, they **received the law** but **have not kept it**.

- Two items must be mentioned:
 - If Stephen expected to live, he was delusional. It appeared that Stephen was going to be as clear and blunt as possible in his attempt to charge the leadership with the death of the Messiah. He accomplished what the leaders feared of Peter in Acts 5:28.
 - This is NOT evangelism as we would do it today. We do not say, “You are guilty of killing Jesus and need to repent.” In fact, evangelism as we know it has not been seen in the book of Acts to this point.
- Verse 54 –
 - The Jewish nation needed to repent of their worst sin to this date: killing their Messiah. However, they were not willing to do so.
 - Had they done so, the Kingdom would have come (because the prophecies of the Tribulation were conditional, not mandatory).
 - As far as the reader knows at this point, the results of not repenting would be the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” also known as the Tribulation. Rather than repent, they display disdain for the messenger.
- Verses 55-58 –
 - Their worst sin heretofore was killing the Messiah. That sin is here overshadowed by committing the **blasphemy against the Holy Ghost**, which Jesus warned against in Matthew 12:38-39. Note that the text is explicit that Stephen was **full of the Holy Ghost** when this occurred.
 - The statement that put the leaders over the edge was, **I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God**. They were not upset with this simply because Stephen claimed to see a vision, but because he claimed that **the heavens opened**, and the Son of man was **standing**.
 - In Ezekiel 1:1, Revelation 11:19 and 19:11 we see **the heavens opened**, and it is in relation to judgment.
 - In Psalm 7:6 and Psalm 9:19 we see the word **arise** used in connection with judgment.
- Verses 59-60 –
 - As Stephen was dying, he asked God to **receive my spirit**, words very similar to that of Jesus who says, **into thy hands I commend my spirit** (Lk. 23:46).
 - Stephen’s last words are monumental, as he says, **lay not this sin to their charge**.
 - What is most interesting (and important) is that the word translated **lay not** is ἵσθημι [histemi] which is the word for *stand*. Compare Acts 7:33, 55, 56, where it is translated **standest** (33) and **standing** (55, 56). For a similar context, see Acts 5:27, 6:6, and 6:13, where it is translated **set**.
 - In a real sense, Stephen is asking Jesus to “not stand” in judgment, but to give another opportunity.