

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 21ST–22ND, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

EVERYWHERE (ACTS 7:1–8)

“ARE THESE THINGS TRUE?”

Stephen has been accused of blaspheming the temple of God and the Law of Moses. The two pillars of worshiping God were His temple (where) and His law (how). Now, before the Sanhedrin, the high priest asks if the accusations are true.

- There are usually three responses to truth: **acceptance, rejection, or “tell us more.”**

NO LONGER A SECT OF JUDAISM

Up to this point, Christianity (“the way”) has been seen as a sect of Judaism, as most of the converts were Hebraic or Hellenistic Jews. But the truth of the New Covenant—that Jesus fulfilled the law and is the new temple—is becoming the main message in preparation for the gospel to go to the ends of the earth (Gentiles).

STEPHEN'S PROOF

Abraham, the father of the Jews, is the first proof that the temple and the law aren't required to worship God. God called Abraham before the law existed, while he lived in a Gentile land.

- **Christians can have a superstitious belief that God is more present in one place than another. He's everywhere.**

A HOMELESS PATRIARCH

Abraham was a wanderer in what would later become Israel. He owned nothing there. Before there were people of God, there was a person. Abraham had a relationship with God, without a people and without a place.

- The Jews had missed that the temple and law **were pointers, not permanent.**

A COVENANT PROMISING 400 YEARS OF SLAVERY

God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision as a promise that He would be the God of Abraham and his descendants. However, those descendants would spend 400 years in captivity in a foreign land before finding freedom.

- Why do we follow God? Is it **for who He is or for what He can do for us?**

PERSECUTED (ACTS 7:9–16)

GOD CONTINUES TO WORK IN A FOREIGN LAND

Joseph, the favored child of his father Jacob, was hated by his older brothers who sold him into slavery in Egypt. But God, not confined to one particular land, was with Joseph there.

- **Jesus often uses trials and persecution to shed His people of sinful desires and show them the joy of following Him.**

FROM PERSECUTION TO POWER

God rescued Joseph and imparted wisdom and favor to him. Pharaoh made Joseph his number two and the administrator over his kingdom in preparation for the coming famine.

- **Even secular people can be impressed by the wisdom and work ethic of Jesus followers as we work for our boss, Jesus.**

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAMINE

Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain so they wouldn't starve. God was at work in all the circumstances, from Joseph's enslavement to the famine to his brothers coming for food. God would preserve His people in a foreign land.

- **We are the sum of all that God is doing in our lives for His glory and our good.**

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Stephen ends this section with the death of the patriarchs in a foreign land, Egypt. Some of them were buried in the foreign land Shechem. God was at work in these places without need for a temple, land, or the law.

- Stephen is also preparing to point the people to Jesus as the better Joseph and Moses.

REJECTED (ACTS 7:17–28)

GOD'S BLESSINGS DON'T ALWAYS SEEM SO

The descendants of Abraham flourished in Egypt to the point of becoming a threat to the nation's security, so they were enslaved. Pharaoh tried infanticide as a means of curbing the population growth. But God was securing the coming of a savior for the people who would lead them out of captivity.

MOSES

Moses was a man of two worlds. He was a Jew but also the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Thus, he was taught both the promises of God and the wisdom and knowledge of the Egyptians.

- All truth is God's truth. Secular education isn't a bad thing **if it's grounded in and filtered through the Bible's absolute truth.**

A REJECTED SAVIOR

Moses believed he would deliver his people. At 40 years old, he was ready to take on that mantle. He even killed an Egyptian who was mistreating a Jew. Instead of embracing Moses, the people rejected him, asking who had made him a ruler over them.

- **Israel had a history of rejecting God, His leaders, and His prophets.**

DELIVERER (ACTS 7:29–36)

GOD DIDN'T LOSE MOSES

Moses became an exile in Midian, a foreign land. He lived there for 40 years. At the appointed time, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush that wasn't consumed by the fire.

- There were things God wanted Moses to learn in Midian. **God is teaching us, whether we're on the mountain or in the desert.**

GOD MAKES THINGS HOLY

As God spoke to Moses, who trembled, He told Moses to take off his sandals because he was on holy ground. This bush and this ground weren't the temple. Wherever God is, it becomes holy by His presence.

- *“Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20).

THE EXODUS

The 400 years of captivity were over; God was on the move. He used Moses as His leader to deliver His people from slavery to freedom. Moses, the man the Jews rejected, did wonders and signs demonstrating he was indeed God's savior.

- **God sent Jesus to be our deliverer from bondage to sin through the cross.**

SUBSTITUTING FOR JESUS

- We can elevate **almost anything** to a place that only Jesus deserves to be—a building, a place, an order of service, a pastor, a style of worship, a denomination.
- God's gifts to us are meant to be pointers to Jesus, not substitutes for Him.
- **Only Jesus deserves our heart's affection.**

ARE WE POINTING PEOPLE TO JESUS?

- The way we handle tough times can open up opportunities to tell people about the hope we have in Jesus.
- **Followers of Jesus should have the best attitudes at work, the best quality of work, and the best work ethic.**
- **If you call yourself a Christian, act like one.**

JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE

- Religion and rule-following only produce **legalism** or **lawlessness**, which lead to either **pride** or **despair**.
- God takes the sinfulness of our sin, covers it with the blood of Jesus, gives us new hearts, and calls us His sons and daughters.
- **How is our way working out for us?**