

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 22ND, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

PROMISE (ACTS 7:1-8)

"ARE THESE THINGS TRUE?"

Stephen has been accused of blasphemy because he spoke of Jesus' fulfillment of the law, His sacrifice for sin, and His resurrection.

- The truth didn't match their understanding or traditions, so they sought to silence him.
- **We should always be ready to give an account of what we believe.**

"BROTHERS AND FATHERS"

Stephen shows respect for his accusers as he reminds them that they have the same heritage, specifically Father Abraham.

- As he gives a brief history of Judaism, Stephen immediately exposes their narrow interpretation of God's presence.
- They believed God was exclusively tied to the temple, but God met Abraham in a pagan land.

ABRAHAM'S TRAVELS

Stephen reminds them that God's call to leave the familiar and secure was matched by the promise of an inheritance.

- In faith, Abraham began a journey that would be for his descendants—and the accusing council was there because of his faith.
- **What journey are we willing to take for the leaders who will come after us? What if we only get a promise of results beyond our lives?**

MOVEMENT

Not only did Abraham physically move, but he and his descendants were flexible and ready to leave some of the traditions of their ancestors.

- God spoke and let him know that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed for 400 years but would be delivered to a new place of worship.
- **What changes are we willing to make? What traditions are we holding so dear that we are missing an encounter with God? Do our lives look like worship?**

COVENANT

As God promised to judge their oppressors and deliver them to a new land, He established a covenant that would be known to every descendant of Abraham.

- To some, it just seems radical—but it was a radical reminder of God's promise.
- **This covenant was fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The new radical reminder is a changed heart.**

SURVIVAL (ACTS 7:9-16)

"THE PATRIARCHS BECAME JEALOUS"

Stephen reminds the council of Jacob's sons and how they rejected Joseph as their leader.

- Jacob was the father of 12 sons whose descendants would become the 12 tribes of Israel.
- **As God calls and changes people, we must not become jealous of what God is doing in their lives.**

JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

After he was sold into slavery and imprisoned for something he didn't do, God rescued Joseph and placed him in a position of power in Egypt.

- Again, Stephen reminds the council that God is not limited to a particular place. He chose someone who was rejected by men.
- **When all we see is what we want to see, we will miss what God wants us to see.**

"FAMINE AND GREAT SUFFERING"

The famine came to Egypt and Canaan. Everyone suffered, but some were prepared because of Joseph.

- Jacob sent his sons to Egypt. They went without knowing that the one they rejected had been empowered to save them.
- **People are starving spiritually. Where can they go? Who will they find if they come to us?**

THEY WENT DOWN TO EGYPT

Stephen makes it very clear that God used Joseph, in Egypt, to preserve His promise to Abraham (outside of the Promised Land).

- They survived, flourished, and died there. Then, their bones were returned home.
- **We must be willing to journey with God! He moves beyond standard social and cultural boundaries to reach people. Will we go with Him?**

SALVATION (ACTS 7:17-36)

A DIFFERENT KING

Stephen jumps forward about 400 years as he continues his biblical history lesson.

- The Hebrews had multiplied as God had promised, and they found themselves enslaved to a Pharaoh who sought to weaken their faith and decrease their numbers by killing their children.

MOSES

At possibly the worst time, Moses was born. But God protected him from the beginning and sent him into Pharaoh's home.

- He was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians.
- He was gifted in speech and action by God.

MOSES' LEADERSHIP

After 40 years, Moses decided to return to his people and fight for justice.

- He thought his decision to strike down the Egyptian would show the Hebrews that he could help deliver them from bondage.
- **Our method of leadership matters. Following God will always be better than following our feelings.**

REJECTING MOSES

Moses tried to settle an argument between two "brothers" but was exposed as a murderer instead.

- Rejected and in fear, he fled. And for the next 40 years, he lived another life.
- **If our methods don't match God's plan, He won't abandon us—but He will take us where we need to go to get restored.**

GOD'S LEADERSHIP

Moses saw the burning bush and approached it. Then, he heard God.

- Stephen reminds the council again that God spoke to Moses in a foreign land to send him as a leader to deliver the Hebrews from bondage.
- **We are never so far away that God can't hear us or send us. Are we willing to take a step toward Him?**

THIS MOSES!

As Stephen reminds the council of Moses's rejection, he is boldly revealing the council's rejection of Jesus.

- They rejected Jesus as ruler and deliverer. They ignored His power over life and death. They didn't believe in His resurrection.
- **When given the opportunity, do we believe or reject the truth?**

REJECTION

- We don't like rejection.
- **Rejection is our way of protecting ourselves.**
- **The problem is that we may be rejecting the very thing that will save us. It can be difficult to know what decision to make, but we should at least investigate.**

BELIEVE

- Not everything is believable.
- **It's hard to believe things that don't match up with what we already believe.**
- **When we are honest with ourselves, we know that as God changes us, we learn new things about Him and how we should serve Him. Why are we so committed to old, earthly things that we aren't willing to believe eternal things?**

FOLLOW

- Some people are leaders.
- **ALL people are followers.**
- **We have all followed someone or something. The longer we resist following Christ, the longer we live in bondage and suffering. As Believers, we will follow Him every day. Where we go will depend on how closely we follow Him. Are we satisfied seeing Him from a distance? How long before we take some big steps and follow Him wherever He takes us?**