

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 29TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

REBELLION (ACTS 7:37-43)

MOSES

After telling of Moses's first rejection by the Hebrews in Egypt and how God had sent him back to deliver them from bondage, Stephen reminds them that Moses said there would be another prophet like him from among their brothers.

- Then, Stephen helps us understand that Moses was talking about Jesus.

LIKE MOSES

Moses was in the assembly; Jesus was among God's people.

- Moses received the law; Jesus obeyed, explained, and fulfilled the law.
- The people were unwilling to obey Moses and the law; Jesus' words were rejected, and the people rose up against Him.
- **How rebellious are we?**

PUSHED HIM ASIDE

Ironically, while Moses was receiving the law for God's people, they rebelled against him, and in their hearts, they desired to return to the place of bondage.

- Stephen clearly sees the law as the living Word of God and is not guilty of blasphemy.
- The ones rejecting the truth were his accusers, and they desired to live in a place of bondage with pride and power as their chains.

THEY EVEN MADE A CALF

After rejecting and ignoring Moses, the people made a god for themselves: a "golden calf."

- Stephen points to the truth—rejecting God's prophet is rejecting God's Word, and they had rejected Jesus.
- In their hearts, they were unwilling to obey God in every circumstance, so they created a god and decided to determine their own future.

"GOD TURNED AWAY"

God allowed the people to become captives of their own choices and suffer the consequences of their own decisions.

- Because they chose one false god, they continued to seek other false gods to satisfy their desires and ended up in exile.
- **This is the slippery slope of rebelling against God. He will allow it, and we will continue to fall deeper into our own sin.**

DEFIANCE (ACTS 7:44-53)

GOD MADE A WAY

As God directed Moses, the tabernacle was created with no idol inside. It did contain the tablets of the law, but they were not there to be worshiped.

- The tabernacle was a meeting place for God's people to pray and worship while remembering His presence and protection.
- **Some places are intentional for meeting, but God is not bound to a place.**

TEMPLE BUILDING

The portable tabernacle was moved into each area where God had given His people victory, but eventually there came a time to build the temple.

- David wanted to build it, but it was Solomon, his son, who built the first temple.
- **David sought a dwelling place for God, but Solomon set the record straight.**

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

Stephen makes it clear that God does not exclusively dwell in sanctuaries made with hands.

- He quotes Isaiah and insists that no earthly building can contain the maker of all things.
- **God is not dependent on buildings or even people. He is available to all, with or without some "holy" place. Do we worship people, places, or God?**

CALLED OUT

Stephen has been giving a clear biblical history lesson to his accusers, and they have had more than enough opportunity to accept the truth revealed in the Scripture they claim to hold dear.

- Now, he defies their claim to superiority.
- **We should always speak the truth in love, but we cannot stop calling sin what it is.**

STIFF-NECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED

Just like the Israelites in the wilderness, these religious leaders refused to be humble in God's presence.

- They had been marked with a physical reminder of God's covenant, but their hearts were never changed, and they still wouldn't listen to the truth.
- **We say we believe. Are we willing to change, grow, and go? Where are our hearts?**

ALWAYS RESISTING

Stephen was calling out these leaders, and all of Israel, for their history of persecuting God's prophets and even killing ones who foretold of the coming of the Righteous One (Jesus).

- Now, Stephen accuses his accusers of being the very ones who betrayed and murdered Jesus.
- **When confronted with our own resistance to God's plan, how do we respond?**

RESPONSE (ACTS 7:54-60)

ENRAGED AND GNASHING TEETH

Stephen's accusers are actually the ones who dishonored and disobeyed God's law.

- They were exposed and condemned by the truth of God's Word, and their response revealed hearts fighting against God.
- **Some will respond to the truth with indifference and some with rage. Which one is closer to knowing their own sin? How will we respond to them?**

FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As they began to act on the chaos in their hearts, Stephen remained calm and looked into Heaven, where he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at His right hand.

- Stephen declared that Jesus is alive and ready to receive faithful followers.
- **As followers, we have the Holy Spirit. As ones who love and obey, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Are we ready for what's next?**

THEY COVERED THEIR EARS

They could have listened, admitted they were wrong, repented, and followed Christ. Instead, they attempted to drown out the truth.

- With no formal verdict, they dragged Stephen outside, removed their cloaks, and began throwing stones to silence him forever.
- **Sharing our faith will not make us victims of stones, but words can leave wounds too. Is it worth the effort? Is anyone really listening?**

A YOUNG MAN NAMED SAUL

In Chapter 6, we read that a large group of priests became obedient to the faith. Now, we are introduced to a young student of the law.

- With a simple name drop, Luke gives us hope in the middle of tragedy.
- **God is always at work. We don't always see the details. Our changed hearts should be overflowing into our communities, where God is working to reveal Himself. Resistance doesn't mean failure; it means opportunity.**

A FINAL PRAYER

Stephen didn't know about Saul, but he prayed for him just as he did for each person throwing stones.

- In the middle of the greatest physical pain he had ever endured, he knelt down and cried out for his murderers to be given another chance.
- **What do our prayers sound like?**

ANGER

- We live in an angry world.
- **There is even a way to be angry without sin.**
- **The problem comes when we don't process anger through prayer, forgiveness, and grace. Bitterness, malicious words, and hurtful actions are sure signs of sinful anger.**

PERSPECTIVE

- We change when our perspective changes.
- **It's hard to change our perspective when we only listen to ourselves.**
- **When we stop acting like we're the center of the universe and listen to the One who created it, we start to see what He sees: someone worth saving. It may be us, or it may be someone we will see this week. How will we look at them when we are listening to Him?**

TRUTH

- Everyone needs the truth.
- **Even the person in the mirror.**
- **The truth we should tell others is the same truth we need to hear every day. We aren't perfect, but our perfect Savior loves us and has a desire to change us into someone new every day. As we learn more, we see more, serve more, give more, and receive more understanding. Are we ready for the truth? Will we share it with others? Do we believe enough to listen?**