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Acts 7

The Son of Man Standing — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Stephen, on trial for his life, shows from Israel's own story that God was never confined to a building and that His people always resisted the deliverers He sent — and now they have murdered the Righteous One. He dies seeing Jesus standing for him and praying for the men who kill him, and the man holding their coats is the next one God will save.

00 The Text

ACTS 7 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 The high priest said, "Are these things so?"

2 And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

3 and said to him, 'LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.'

4 "Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living.

5 "But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM.

6 "But God spoke to this effect, that his DESCENDANTS WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS.

7 " 'AND WHATEVER NATION TO WHICH THEY WILL BE IN BONDAGE I MYSELF WILL JUDGE,' said God, 'AND AFTER THAT THEY WILL COME OUT AND SERVE ME IN THIS PLACE.'

8 "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

9 "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him,

10 and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.

11 "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food.

12 "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time.

13 "On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh.

14 "Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all.

15 "And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and our fathers died.

16 "From there they were removed to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,

18 until THERE AROSE ANOTHER KING OVER EGYPT WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT JOSEPH.

19 "It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.

20 "It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home.

21 "And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son.

22 "Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.

23 "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel.

24 "And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian.

25 "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.

26 "On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?'

27 "But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US?

28 'YOU DO NOT MEAN TO KILL ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY, DO YOU?'

29 "At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons.

30 "After forty years had passed, AN ANGEL APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT Sinai, IN THE FLAME OF A BURNING THORN BUSH.

31 "When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord:

32 'I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB.' Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.

33 "BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, 'TAKE OFF THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND.

34 'I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.'

35 "This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?' is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush.

36 "This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.'

38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

39 "Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,

40 SAYING TO AARON, 'MAKE FOR US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US; FOR THIS MOSES WHO LED US OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT—WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.'

41 "At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

42 "But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the

prophets, ‘IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?

43 ‘YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON.’

44 “Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

45 “And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David.

46 “David found favor in God’s sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

47 “But it was Solomon who built a house for Him.

48 “However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says:

49 ‘HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET; WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?’ says the Lord, ‘OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE?

50 ‘WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?’

51 “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

52 “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

56 and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse.

58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep.

Marked in the text

- **v2** “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “not even a foot of ground” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “became jealous of Joseph” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “Yet God was with him” — God — His character & actions
- **v10** “rescued him from all his afflictions” — God — His character & actions
- **v17** “the time of the promise was approaching” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “but they did not understand” — Sin / warning
- **v33** “THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND” — God — His character & actions
- **v34** “I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM” — God — His character & actions
- **v35** “This Moses whom they disowned” — Sin / warning
- **v35** “God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME” — Promise / blessing
- **v38** “living oracles” — God — His character & actions
- **v39** “in their hearts turned back to Egypt” — Sin / warning
- **v41** “they made a calf” — Sin / warning
- **v48** “the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands” — God — His character & actions
- **v49** “HEAVEN IS MY THRONE” — God — His character & actions
- **v51** “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” — Sin / warning
- **v51** “always resisting the Holy Spirit” — Sin / warning
- **v52** “the Righteous One” — God — His character & actions

- **v55** “being full of the Holy Spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v55** “saw the glory of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v56** “the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v58** “a young man named Saul” — Time / place / contrast
- **v59** “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” — Promise / blessing
- **v59** “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v60** “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” — Command / instruction
- **v60** “he fell asleep” — Promise / blessing
- **v2** “fathers” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “Moses” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

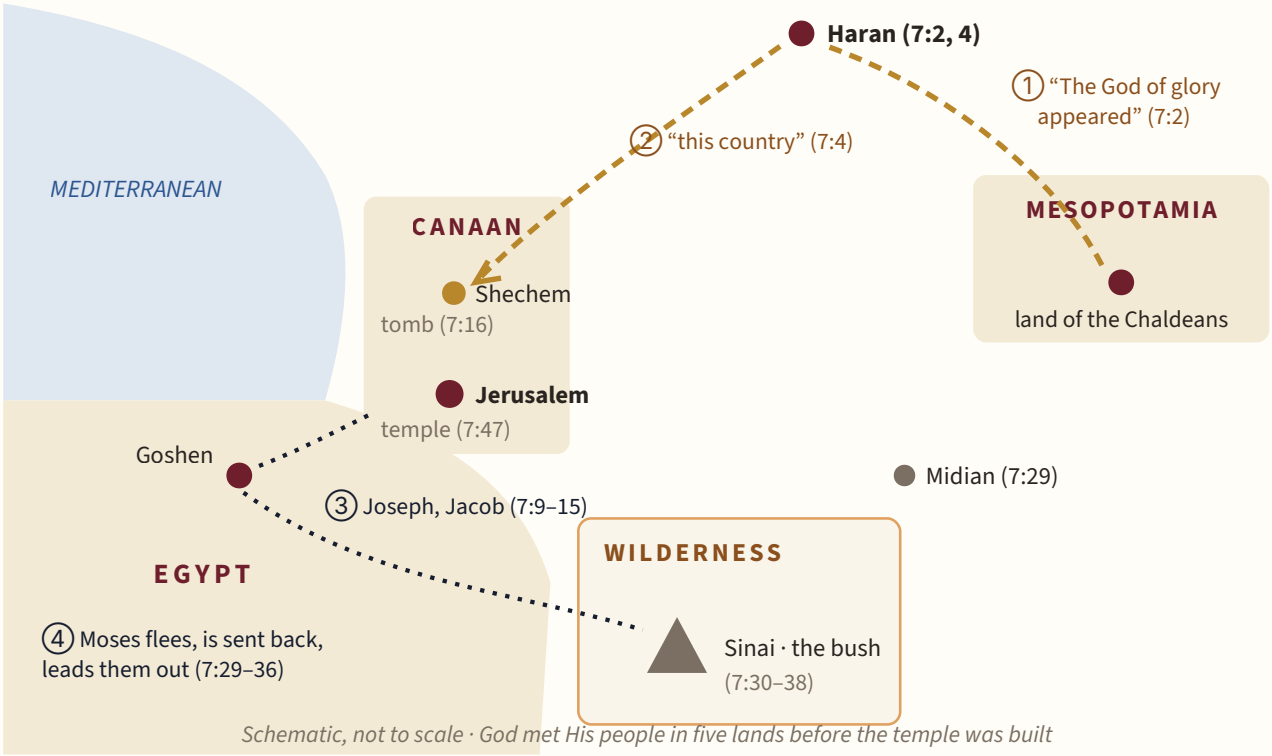
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 7:2

"And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! △The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,"

FIGURE · WHERE GOD MET HIS PEOPLE



Trace Stephen's story across the map: God appeared in Mesopotamia, Canaan, Egypt, Midian and Sinai — all of it before anyone built a house for Him in Jerusalem.

Setting. Jerusalem, before the Council (the Sanhedrin). The high priest asks Stephen, "Are these things so?" (v1) — the charges of 6:11–14: speaking against "this holy place and the Law," and saying Jesus would destroy the temple. Stephen answers with a sermon from Abraham to Solomon (vv2–50), turns it into an indictment (vv51–53), and is stoned outside the city (vv54–60) while a young man named Saul watches the coats (v58).

Structure:

- vv1–16 — **Abraham and Joseph:** the God of glory appears in Mesopotamia (v2); Haran, then "this country" (vv3–4); no inheritance, "not even a foot of ground," but a promise (v5); four hundred years foretold (vv6–7); the covenant of circumcision (v8); Joseph sold, "Yet God was with him" (vv9–10); famine, two visits, seventy-five persons (vv11–14); death and burial at Shechem (vv15–16).

- vv17–36 — **Moses rejected and sent:** the time of the promise; another king (vv17–19); Moses born, nurtured, educated (vv20–22); at forty he defends a brother — "they did not understand" (vv23–25); "Who made you a ruler and judge over us?" (vv26–28); flight to Midian (v29); the bush, holy ground, "I will send you" (vv30–34); "This Moses whom they disowned" God sent as ruler and deliverer (vv35–36).
- vv37–50 — **the Prophet and the temple:** "a prophet like me" (v37); the living oracles (v38); the fathers turned back to Egypt — the calf (vv39–41); God gave them up — Amos quoted (vv42–43); the tabernacle of testimony (v44); Joshua to David (vv45–46); Solomon built a house — but the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands (vv47–50; Isa 66:1–2).
- vv51–53 — **the indictment:** stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Spirit; the prophets persecuted, the Righteous One betrayed and murdered; the Law received but not kept.
- vv54–60 — **the first martyr:** cut to the quick (v54); full of the Holy Spirit, he sees the glory of God and Jesus standing (vv55–56); they cover their ears and rush at him (v57); stoned outside the city; the witnesses' robes at Saul's feet (v58); "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (v59); "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" — he fell asleep (v60).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "God" ×20 — vv2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 17, 20, 25, 32 (×2), 35, 37, 42, 43, 45, 46 (×2), 55 (×2), 56.
- "father(s)" ×20 — "fathers" ×13 (vv2, 11, 12, 15, 19, 32, 38, 39, 44, 45 ×2, 51, 52), "father" ×7 (vv2, 4, 8 ×2, 14, 20, 29); "our fathers" alone ×9.
- "Egypt / Egyptian(s)" ×16 — vv9, 10 (×2), 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 34 (×2), 36, 39, 40.
- "said / saying / spoke / speaking" ×16 — God and Moses keep speaking; Israel keeps refusing to listen.
- "Moses" ×9 — vv20, 22, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 40, 44.
- "land" ×6 — vv3, 4, 6, 29, 36, 40; "wilderness" ×5 — vv30, 36, 38, 42, 44.
- "Abraham" ×5 — vv2, 8, 16, 17, 32; "Joseph" ×5 — vv9, 13 (×2), 14, 18; "brethren" ×5 — vv2, 23, 25, 26, 37.
- "house(s)" ×4 — vv42, 47, 48, 49; "place" ×4 — vv7, 33, 46, 49; "heaven(s)" ×4 — vv42, 49, 55, 56.
- "forty" ×4 — vv23, 30, 36, 42; "deliverance / deliverer / rescue(d)" ×4 — vv10, 25, 34, 35.
- rejection words — "pushed him away" (v27), "disowned" (v35), "unwilling … repudiated" (v39).
- "standing" ×3 — v33 (Moses on holy ground), vv55, 56 (Jesus at God's right hand).
- "glory" ×2 — vv2, 55, framing the chapter.

Contrasts: God of glory ⟷ a people in bondage (vv2, 6). No foot of ground ⟷ the promise (v5). Brothers who sold Joseph ⟷ God who was with him (v9). "Who made you a ruler?" ⟷ "God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer" (vv27, 35). Living oracles ⟷ a calf made with hands (vv38, 41). The tabernacle God designed ⟷ the house Solomon built ⟷ heaven, His throne (vv44–49). Received the Law ⟷ did not keep it (v53). Cut to the quick, gnashing teeth ⟷ full of the Holy Spirit, gazing into heaven (vv54–55). Covered ears ⟷ heavens opened (vv56–57). Stones ⟷ a prayer for the throwers (vv59–60). Stephen falls asleep ⟷ Saul is wide awake (vv58–60).

Shape of the chapter: fifty verses of history, three verses of verdict, seven verses of martyrdom. The history is not a detour; it is the argument. The last scene turns the trial around: the Council condemns Stephen, but heaven opens and the Son of Man stands.

Chapter theme (my words): God has always met His people wherever He chose, and His people have always resisted the men He sent — Joseph, Moses, the prophets and finally Jesus. Stephen tells the truth, sees Jesus standing for him, and dies forgiving, and the grace that held him is already reaching for Saul.

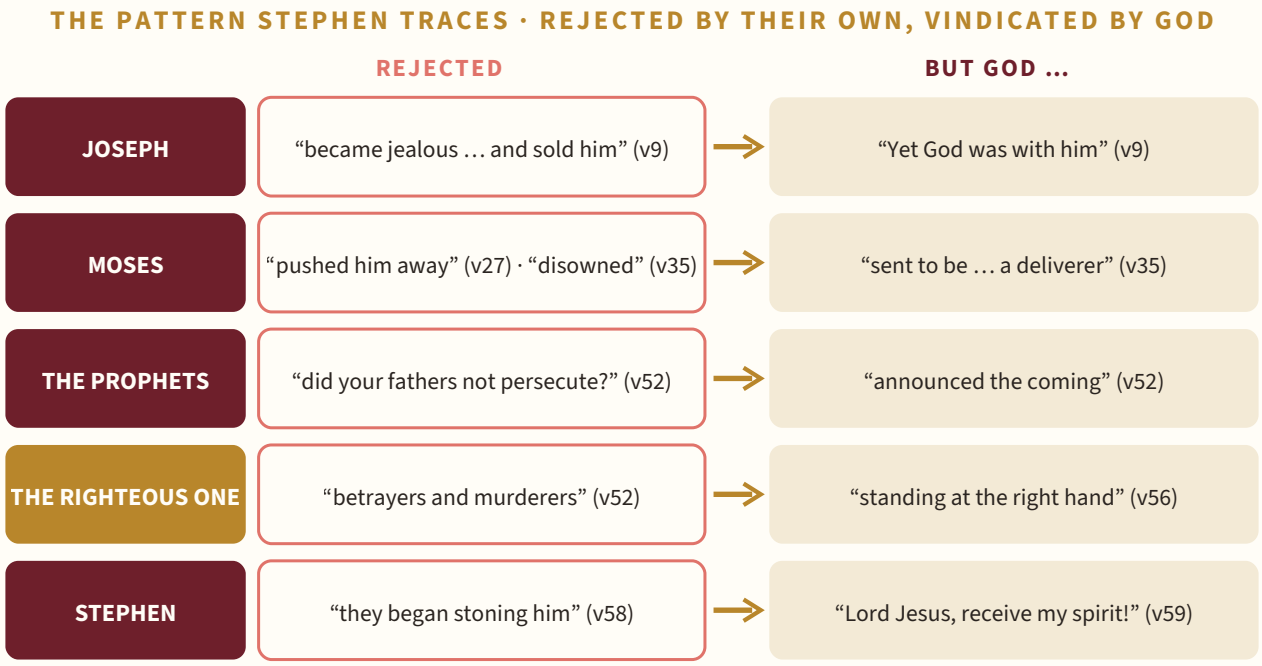
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 7:51

"You men who are ⚠stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are ⚠always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

FIGURE · REJECTED BY THEIR OWN, VINDICATED BY GOD



"You are doing just as your fathers did" (v51) — and God is doing just as He always did.

Read each row left to right: every deliverer God sent was first refused by his own people, and every time God had the last word.

Is Stephen attacking the temple and the Law? No. Guzik: the speech is "not so much a legal defense" as an explanation. Henry: God "had a church in the world many ages before that holy place was founded and the ceremonial law given." Stephen calls the Law "living oracles" (v38) and indicts the Council for not keeping it (v53). His target is a heart that trusts a building and resists the Spirit.

Why tell the whole history? Because the history makes two points at once. God appears outside the land — Mesopotamia, Egypt, Midian, Sinai — and Israel resists the deliverers He sends. Sproul: "He began to give them a lesson in redemptive history" — the Emmaus-road lesson of Luke 24:27 again.

What about the details in verses 4, 14 and 16? Stephen quotes the Greek Old Testament (hence seventy-five persons, v14; Gen 46:27 Hebrew has seventy). Guzik: the Septuagint is "not wrong, just arrived at in a different way." Verse 16 compresses two purchases (Gen 23; 33:19) and two burials (Gen 50:13; Josh 24:32), as a preacher telling a familiar story might. Verse 4 (Abraham left Haran "after his father died") has also been discussed since

ancient times; Guzik does not press it. Luke accurately records what Stephen said; the point of the speech does not hang on any of these.

Joseph and Moses as types of Christ. Guzik: "Stephen mentioned the story of Joseph because he is a picture of Jesus," and Moses was "favored by God from birth and preserved in childhood." Spurgeon: "Now you see that Moses was thus a type of Christ." Each was rejected by his brothers first, and each became their deliverer (v35; Ps 118:22).

"Houses made by human hands" (v48). The word *cheiropoiētos* echoes "the works of their hands" — the calf (v41). God commanded the tabernacle and accepted Solomon's house, so this is not a rejection of the temple but of treating it as God's container. Isaiah 66:1–2 says it first. Henry: "The whole world is his temple, in which he is every where present."

Is Stephen writing Israel off? No. He calls them "brethren and fathers" (v2) and speaks as a Jew inside Israel's story, indicting the leaders of his generation the way Moses and the prophets indicted theirs. The same chapter ends with God reaching for Saul, a Pharisee. I believe God is not finished with Israel (Rom 11:1–2, 25–26); Acts 7 is a prophet's rebuke, not a divorce.

Why is Jesus standing (vv55–56)? Everywhere else He is seated (Luke 22:69; Heb 1:3). Guzik lists possibilities — solidarity, "a standing ovation," pleading Stephen's case. Sproul: the Judge rises as defense attorney. Henry: Christ rises to plead for His servant. Spurgeon wonders whether it was a vision of faith rather than physical sight. They differ on the reason, and all agree He is not indifferent: "He sees Christ is for him, and then no matter who is against him" (Henry).

"He fell asleep" (v60). Guzik: "Instead of saying simply that he died, it says that he merely fell asleep." The body sleeps until the resurrection (1 Thess 4:13–17); the believer is "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8).

Saul at the coats. Sproul: "But here was the first introduction of the Apostle Paul in biblical history." Henry: Paul later "reflected upon with regret" his part (Acts 22:20; 26:10). Guzik passes on Augustine: without Stephen's prayer "the church would not have had Paul."

Word study (Greek):

- **glory — *doxa* (G1391):** frames the chapter, vv2 and 55.
- **alien — *paroikos* (G3941):** a resident foreigner; vv6, 29; 1 Pet 2:11.
- **affliction — *thlipsis* (G2347):** crushing pressure; vv10, 11.
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592):** Moses' signs (v36) and Stephen's (6:8).
- **oracles — *logion* (G3051):** the Law as "living oracles" (v38; Rom 3:2).
- **made by hands — *cheiropoiētos* (G5499):** v48; cf. "works of their hands" (v41); Acts 17:24.
- **stiff-necked — *sklērotrachēlos* (G4644):** only here in the NT; Israel at the calf (Exod 33:3).
- **uncircumcised — *aperitmētos* (G564):** "in heart and ears" (v51).
- **resist — *antipiptō* (G496):** to fall against; only here in the NT.
- **Righteous One — *dikaios* (G1342):** Messiah's title (Acts 3:14; 22:14).
- **standing — *histēmi* (G2476):** vv55, 56; contrast Luke 22:69.
- **witnesses — *martys* (G3144):** v58; 1:8; 22:20; the root of "martyr."
- **fell asleep — *koimaō* (G2837):** v60; 1 Thess 4:13–14.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The speech is an answer, not an apology** — God met His people before the temple.
2. **Glory at both ends** — v2 and v55.
3. **Holy ground was in the desert** (v33; Henry).
4. **Every deliverer was refused first** — "As Israel was in its history, so you are today" (Guzik).
5. **Hand-made religion** — vv41, 48.
6. **Outward signs, uncircumcised hearts** — "It never reached your heart" (Sproul).
7. **The Judge stood up** (Sproul).
8. **He died the way his Lord died** (Luke 23:34, 46).
9. **Calm is a gift of the Spirit** (Spurgeon).
10. **The man holding the coats** — no Stephen, no Paul (Augustine via Guzik).

Cross-references: Gen 12:1–3; 15:13–14; 23; 33:19; 37; 46:27; 50:13; Exod 1–3; 32:9; 33:3; Deut 17:7; 18:15; Josh 24:32; 2 Sam 7; 1 Kings 8:27; Ps 118:22; Isa 53:11; 66:1–2; Jer 9:26; Amos 5:25–27; Matt 23:37; Luke 22:69; 23:34, 46; 24:27; Acts 3:14; 6:8–15; 17:24; 22:20; 26:10; Rom 3:2; 11:1–2, 25–26; 2 Cor 5:8; 1 Thess 4:13–17; Heb 11:8–10; 13:12–14; 1 Pet 2:11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 7:60

"Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep."

FIGURE · LIKE MASTER, LIKE SERVANT

LIKE MASTER, LIKE SERVANT · HOW LUKE TELLS TWO DEATHS

	JESUS (LUKE)	STEPHEN (ACTS)
THE CHARGE	false witnesses: "this temple"	false witnesses: "this place" (6:13–14)
THE VISION	Son of Man "SEATED" (Lk 22:69)	Son of Man "standing" (7:56)
THE PLACE	"outside the gate" (Heb 13:12)	"driven him out of the city" (7:58)
HIS SPIRIT	"INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT"	"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (7:59)
HIS KILLERS	"Father, forgive them" (Lk 23:34)	"do not hold this sin against them!"
THE CRY	"crying out with a loud voice" (23:46)	"cried out with a loud voice" (7:60)

The first martyr dies the way his Lord died — and sees his Lord risen to receive him.

Luke wrote both books; set the two columns side by side and see how closely the first martyr's death follows his Lord's.

Promise to trust — no foot of ground, but a promise. Abraham got "not even a foot of ground" — only God's word (v5). Some of the men I serve are sitting in a cell or a halfway house with nothing in their hands but a promise. So am I, more often than I admit. God's promises "though they are slow, are sure" (Henry). I will name one promise and live on it this week.

Sin to confess — resisting the Holy Spirit behind good religion. The Council had the temple, the Law and the right ancestors, and still "always resisting the Holy Spirit" (v51). I can hide behind my Bible studies, my ministry, my years in church. Sproul's line cuts me: "It never reached your heart." I confess the places where I know what God is saying and I cover my ears (v57).

Example to follow — Stephen's two prayers. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" and "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (vv59–60). He trusted Jesus with his death and his enemies. I want to die like that, so I have to learn to live like that — praying for the man who hurt me, by name, before I feel like it.

Truth to hold — Jesus stands for His people. Whatever court I stand in — a judge, a parole board, a doctor's office, my own accusing conscience — the Son of Man is at the right hand of God, and He is for me. Sproul: "It does not get any better in a trial than to have the judge be your defense attorney."

Hope to carry — the man holding the coats. Saul approved of Stephen's death (8:1), and God saved him anyway. No man in my group, and no man on the other side of the glass, is too far gone. I will keep praying for the Sauls in my life.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Abraham received "not even a foot of ground," only a promise (7:5). What promise of God am I being asked to live on without outward proof yet? (7:2–8; Heb 11:8–10) *He could only trust God for the fulfillment of these things (Guzik).*
2. Joseph and Moses were both rejected by their own brothers before God used them. Where have I been rejected — or where have I rejected someone God sent? (7:9–10, 23–35) *Suffering times have often been growing times (Henry).*
3. Stephen's hearers had the temple, the Law and the right family tree, but resisted the Holy Spirit. What religious "good things" could I be hiding behind? (7:48–53) *It never reached your heart (Sproul).*
4. What do I treat as if God lived there — a building, a ministry, a routine, a past experience — instead of meeting Him wherever He speaks? (7:44–50; Isa 66:1–2) *God is too big to fit in any temple man could make (Guzik).*
5. Jesus stood for Stephen. How does knowing Christ is "for me" change the way I face hostility, a parole board, a diagnosis or my own death? (7:55–56; Rom 8:31) *He sees Christ is for him, and then no matter who is against him (Henry).*
6. Who is the person I would least like to forgive — and what would it take for me to pray Stephen's prayer for him this week? (7:59–60; Luke 23:34) *Without Stephen's prayer, the church would not have had Paul (Guzik).*

Worship. The God of glory who appeared to Abraham in a pagan land, who was with Joseph in a pit and with Moses in a desert, who will not be housed by human hands — this God raised the Righteous One the Council murdered, seated Him at His right hand, and had Him rise to receive His first martyr. Heaven is His throne, and He looks to the man who is humble and contrite and trembles at His word.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You stood for Stephen, and You stand for me. Forgive me for resisting Your Spirit behind good religion. Give me Abraham's faith to live on a promise, Stephen's courage to tell the truth, and Stephen's heart to pray for the men who hurt me. When my time comes, receive my spirit. And reach the Sauls I know, the way You reached the man holding the coats. Amen.

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