

How does Moses's brothers fit within Stephen's historical summary?

Why is Moses's commissioning at burning bush mentioned?

What is Stephen's historical summary emphasizing?

How they (should) view(ed)...

...God

and his plan
and his promise
and his people
and his prophet(s)

...this place

Mesopotamia, Egypt, wilderness
glory, worship, holy

...his servants

Joseph: he was sold by his brothers, who were driven by jealousy (they rejected him as their brother); God spared him from death, and through him delivered all of Jacob's family

Moses: he was rebuked by his brothers, who were driven by not understanding (they rejected him as their leader); God spared him from death, and through him delivered all of God's people

...his word

What is Stephen's historical summary demonstrating?

He...

knew God's word
understood his audience
corrected their misunderstanding of God's word
drew out the appropriate personal implications

God's word, rightly known and understood, is the best context for understanding God and his plan; God's word, rightly known and understood, is the best context for understanding myself and my place in his plan.

Do you... know the Bible?
understand it on its own terms, not yours?
recognize what God has done and is doing?
submit an evaluation of your life to God and his ways?

Sunday, September 20, 2026
Danny Capon, *Pastor*

ACTS—The Confident Witness of Jesus Christ
No. 17 | Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 9

Acts 7:2-53 (vv. 2-34)

Review

Acts depicts the *continuing* ministry of Jesus Christ. Though he has ascended, the witness of Jesus continues by the power of the Spirit through the spread of the gospel for the growth of the church. Those who hear and believe the witness of Jesus Christ can and should be confident following his way.

(1:1-26) Waiting for the Spirit—Confirming the Twelve Apostles

(2:1-47) Receiving of the Spirit—Birthing the Church

What then do we see in Acts 3 and following?

The witness of Jesus Christ goes from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth

How does the witness of Jesus Christ *go*?

What did the witness (and witnesses) of Jesus Christ encounter?

How did the witness (and witnesses) of Jesus Christ prevail?

Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 9

7:2-53 (vv. 2-34)

Overview

(3:1-8:3) Witnessing in Jerusalem

(3:1-4:31) Boldness in Opposition

(4:32-5:16) Esteem in Community

(5:17-42) Obedience in Suffering – What will you do when your resolve for speaking the word of God with boldness is tested? See 3:1-4:31

(6:1-7) Wisdom in Decision-making – What will you do when your resolve for being together as a local church in unity is tested? See 4:32-5:16

(6:8-8:3) Faithfulness in Death

Stephen demonstrates that a believer who isn't an apostle can faithfully minister among the disciples and speak the word of God with boldness.

Summary

(6:8-7:1) Stephen faithfully proclaimed Jesus and was opposed.

(7:2-53) Stephen faithfully defended Scripture and challenged his opposition.

(7:54-8:3) Stephen faithfully endured death and motivated the spread of the word.

ESV **Acts 7:2** And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me...."

Stephen faithfully defended Scripture and challenged his opposition (7:2-53)

What is happening?

- Stephen had been faithfully ministering, helping to manage the distribution to the church's widows (6:3) while giving testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ (6:8).
- Some other Hellenistic Jews "rose up" and "disputed" with him (6:9), but they were not able to "withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking" (6:10).
- They "instigated" men (6:11) and brought in "false witnesses" (6:13) to testify against him before the Jewish religious council:

ESV **Acts 6:11** "We have heard him **speak** blasphemous **words against Moses and God.**"

ESV **Acts 6:13** "This man never ceases to **speak words against this holy place and the law,** ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."

- The high priest then asked Stephen: "Are these things so?" (7:1).

How does Stephen respond?

- Stephen sets up his response to their charges by reminding them of their history (vv. 2b-34).
- Stephen responds to their charges and charges them with their own unfaithfulness (vv. 35-53).

"The main intention of this prophetic-type utterance is to 'turn the tables' on his opponents by presenting an extensive indictment against them. Stephen develops a scriptural argument which charges Israel with consistently rejecting God and those sent to fulfill his purpose for his people. A terrible pattern of resisting God's prophets and disobeying his law has culminated in the betrayal and murder of the Righteous One....Stephen's ultimate aim is to glorify the exalted Lord Jesus and to convict those who have denied him." (David G. Peterson, p. 244)

"Most of the speech is a *summary review of Israel's history*, similar to historical summaries in the Old Testament and in later Jewish texts that demonstrate the relevance of the narrated history for the presence of the speaker and hearers/readers....We find direct quotations from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Amos, and Isaiah, and allusions to these and other Old Testament books, including Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, 1 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Nehemiah, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Hosea." (Eckhard J. Schnabel, p. 32)

(7:2b-34) Stephen sets up his response to their charges by reminding them of their history.

God was the one who initiated his relationship with Abraham and promised to give him a land and make him a people. (vv. 2b-8)

ESV **Acts 7:2** "...The God of glory appeared to our father **Abraham** when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.'

How does Stephen describe God?

Who was Abraham and where was he when God appeared to him?

What did God say to Abraham and what did he do in his life?

How does circumcision fit within Stephen's historical summary?

God was with Joseph and through his care for him provided care for Jacob and his family. (vv. 9-16)

ESV **Acts 7:9** "And the patriarchs, jealous of **Joseph**, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him ¹⁰ and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.

How does Stephen describe the patriarchs?

What did God do with Joseph and what did he do through him?

How does Egypt fit within Stephen's historical summary?

Why is the tomb in Shechem mentioned?

God was committed to fulfilling his promise to Abraham and gave the children of Israel salvation by the hand of Moses. (vv. 17-34)

ESV **Acts 7:17** "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt... ²⁰ At this time **Moses** was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, ²¹ and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son.

How does Stephen describe the events surrounding Moses's birth?

What did God do for him and what did he do through him?