

FULL OF GRACE & POWER: Exalting Christ in Stephen's Sermon *God Reveals. People Resist. God Redeems.*

ACTS 7:1-7

“Stephen stands alone before the powerful Sanhedrin ... rather than presenting a defense, he uses their shared history and turns the tables on his accusers...” *Dr. John MacArthur*

“...this opening section illustrates how the Jews fundamentally misunderstood their own spiritual roots. By showing God called Abraham in Mesopotamia, Stephen proves that God's grace was active long before the Temple” ... *Dr. Warren Wiersbe*

I. GOD REVEALS - When the _____ Grows Dim (7:2) *The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham...* When the Light Was Fading, God Appeared. Stephen begins with God's initiative in his reply to the question in 7:1, not man's pursuit... beginning with Abraham's story - God revealing Himself to a man who was not seeking after God.

A. Two Critical 10 - Generation Windows; The genealogies of Genesis reveal two remarkable periods in early history.

1. Adam → _____ (Genesis 5)

- 10 generations
- The knowledge of God preserved through one family line
- Noah became the last righteous witness before the Flood

Genesis 6:5 - *the wickedness of man was great in the earth*, **Genesis 6:8** - *But Noah found grace...* The world was one generation away from losing its last faithful witness. Yet God never leaves Himself without a testimony.

- **Psalm 145:4** - *One generation will praise Your works to another And will declare Your mighty acts.*
- **Acts 14:17** - *Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness*

2. Noah → _____ (Genesis 11)

- Again, 10 generations
- Babel scattered truth instead of strengthening it

B. God's _____ : Revelation at the Edge of Darkness; Before the Flood, humanity was sinking into corruption. After Babel, humanity was united in rebellion. In both cases, God stepped in.

- **Before the Flood** - God _____ Noah.
- **After Babel** - Even Abraham's family is influenced by _____

Joshua 24:2 - *Your fathers... served other gods.* Abraham was not called out of spiritual strength but out of spiritual _____. God chose a man living in an idolatrous culture and by grace revealed Himself to him.

Proverbs 29:18 - *Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.* Throughout Scripture, when truth is nearly extinguished, God reveals Himself and preserves a remnant. When God's revelation is absent, ignored, or rejected, people lose their spiritual and moral _____.

The actions of the _____ follow a pattern repeated by organized religious systems. Sin is judged and HE makes a way where there was no way.

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II. PEOPLE RESISTS - Despite Clear Revelation of _____ .

Humanity's consistent response to God's revelation is resistance.

A. The Days of Noah

- Noah was a *preacher of righteousness* ... (2 Peter 2:5)
- God's patience extended for many years, *not willing that any perish...* (2 Peter 3:9)
- No widespread _____ occurred; Revelation was rejected. Judgment followed.

B. The Tower of Babel; (Genesis 11:4) *Let us make a name for ourselves.*

- _____ became organized
- God's command was openly rejected
- Human "unity" was used in defiance of God's purposes

C. The result;

- Confusion of languages
- Dispersion from the plain of Shinar
- _____ among the nations (east, Shemites / south, Hamites / Japhethites, north)

III. GOD REDEEMS - Through Promise, Not _____ . (Acts 7:3-7)

God's answer to human rebellion is not abandonment but redemption.

A. Called Out of Darkness (7: 3) "Get out of your country..." God called Abraham out of an idolatrous world into a relationship with Himself. This was pure grace.

B. Promise Before Possession (7:5) "He gave him no inheritance in it..." Abraham received the promise long before he possessed the land. He chose to live by faith rather than sight. God's redemption always begins with His _____ not our performance.

C. Future Already Known (7:6-7). *They will bring them into bondage...* God revealed Israel's future before it unfolded.

- God knew the suffering.
- God knew the resistance.
- God already planned the deliverance.

Gen 15:13-14 - The same God who prophesied bondage also promised _____. "...After that they shall come out and serve Me."

IV. THE MESSAGE OF ACTS 7:1-7 IN ONE SENTENCE - **Although humanity drifts toward spiritual darkness, God reveals His glory and despite man's continual resistance, God initiated His redemptive plan that continues today, compare Isa. 48:11 - *For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.***

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Stephen begins with Israel's history?
2. What promises of God are you presently being called to trust?
3. What question would you ask regarding this passage?