

Full of Grace & Power: Exalting Christ in Stephen's Sermon

God reveals. People resist. God redeems.

Text: Acts 7:30-43.

Main point: The sin in man's will separates humanity from seeing God clearly and correctly.

The speaker: Stephen, a deacon of the early church

Notes:

The audience: The Sanhedrin; the Supreme Jewish legislative and judicial council in Israel composed of 71 leading elders and scribes. Located in Jerusalem, it managed religious, civil and criminal law until its dissolution in the 4th century.

Notes:

In Acts 7:30-43, Stephen speaks of Moses' last third of his life.

—The first 40 years involved education and mental preparedness (Verses 20-28)

Hebrews 11:23, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid by his parents..."

—The second 40 years involved heart and spiritual preparedness (Verse 29)

Hebrews 11:24-26, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh..."

—The third 40 years involved active ministry (Verses 30-44)

Hebrews 11:27-29, "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the rage of the king..."

The threats to the Sanhedrin:

Acts 6:7 - disciples multiplying and 'many priests (Sadducee)' converting

The opposition: - 3 synagogues (Pharisee):

1. Freedman (former Jewish slaves carried to Rome and freed to form a Jewish community there)
2. Cyrenians and Alexandria's (from North Africa near the mouth of the Nile)
3. Cilicia and Asia (Roman provinces in Asia Minor or modern Turkey) - Paul was from Tarsus located in Cilicia and so this was likely the synagogue he attended.

These were set up in the intertestamental period for meeting places of Hellenistic Jews, who did not have temple access, but could meet for worship and the reading of the OT. They started the line of opposition saying he was blaspheming the words of Moses and God; so dragged him to the Sanhedrin.

Verses 17-29 (God reveals and People resist)- as explained last week by Stephen Johnson

A. The burning bush: verses 30-34

Verse 30 (God redeems)

“And after 40 years had passed, an Angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush.” —> A recitation of Exodus 3:2

—God demonstrates His

Verse 31 (God redeems)

“When Moses saw it, he was marveling at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord.” —> see Exodus 3:3-4 describe these same events

—God reveals

Verse 32 (God redeems)

“I am the God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Moses trembled with fear and would not dare to look.” —> Quoted from Exodus 3:6 and 15

—God shows Himself through time

Verse 33 (God redeems)

“But the Lord said to Him, remove the sandals from your feet for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” —> Quoted from Exodus 3:5

—God's presence man's attention

Verse 34 (God redeems)

“I have surely seen the oppression of my people in Egypt and have heard their groans, and I have come down to deliver them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.” —> Quoted from Exodus 3:7-8

—God shows that He His people

B. The paradox of rejection and deliverance: verses 35-38 (Israel's pattern of rejection)

Verse 35 (God reveals)

“This Moses whom they disowned, saying, who made you a ruler and a judge? Is the one whose God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer, with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.” —> Quoted from Exodus 2:14

—God's is rejected

Verse 36 (God reveals)

“This man led them out doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for 40 years.”

God's have been given for those desiring to see

Verse 37 (God reveals)

“This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, God will raise up for a prophet like me from your brothers.” —> Quoted from Deuteronomy 18:15

—God's , Messiah

Verse 38 (God reveals)

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

—The angel of the Lord, same as verse 30 and 35 Yahweh Himself with a whole host of angels

—‘Oracles’ in Greek is ‘logion’, a form of the word Logos normally translated Word. The oracles given include the Law (Torah) and the Covenants

—‘Living oracles’ = zonta logia or the lively Word (living Word or God)

Acts 7:38

“This is the one who, in the congregation of the wilderness, was with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai and with our fathers; the one who received living **oracles (logia)** to pass on to you.”

John 1:1

"In the beginning was the **Word (logos)**; and the **Word (logos)** was with God and the **Word (logos)** was God."

John 1:14

"And the **Word (logos)** became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Hebrews 4:12

"For the **word (logos)** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

I John 1:1

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and touched with our hands, concerning the **Word (logou)** of Life."

—God's plan through time, the _____ of His Word

So, the Word is Jesus, God. Jesus was given to the fathers in the beginning in oracles and passed down through the Israelites of old, as well as the Jews and Gentiles of the Earth during Christ's ministry. Jesus is alive in the Bible that we carry each day and is the author of life to us and all who believe—> think about this for just a minute!

C. Idolatry and God's judgement: verses 39-43

Verse 39 (People resist)

"Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt." —> see Numbers 14:3

—God's way is _____ man's way

Verse 40 (People resist)

"Say 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 has become of Him." —> Quoted from Exodus 32:1, 23.

—Trusting God requires _____

Verse 41 (People resist)

"That time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the work of their hands." —> Verse 39 above shows they rejected them in their hearts, and now is manifested in their actions.

—God warned of worshiping the _____ instead of the Creator

Verse 42 (People resist)

"But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, did you present me with slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, o house of Israel?" —> Quoted from Amos 5:25. Israel's worship of the sun, moon and stars began in the wilderness and lasted until the captivity in Babylon. God eventually "gave them up" to judgement and exile

—God's _____ was given

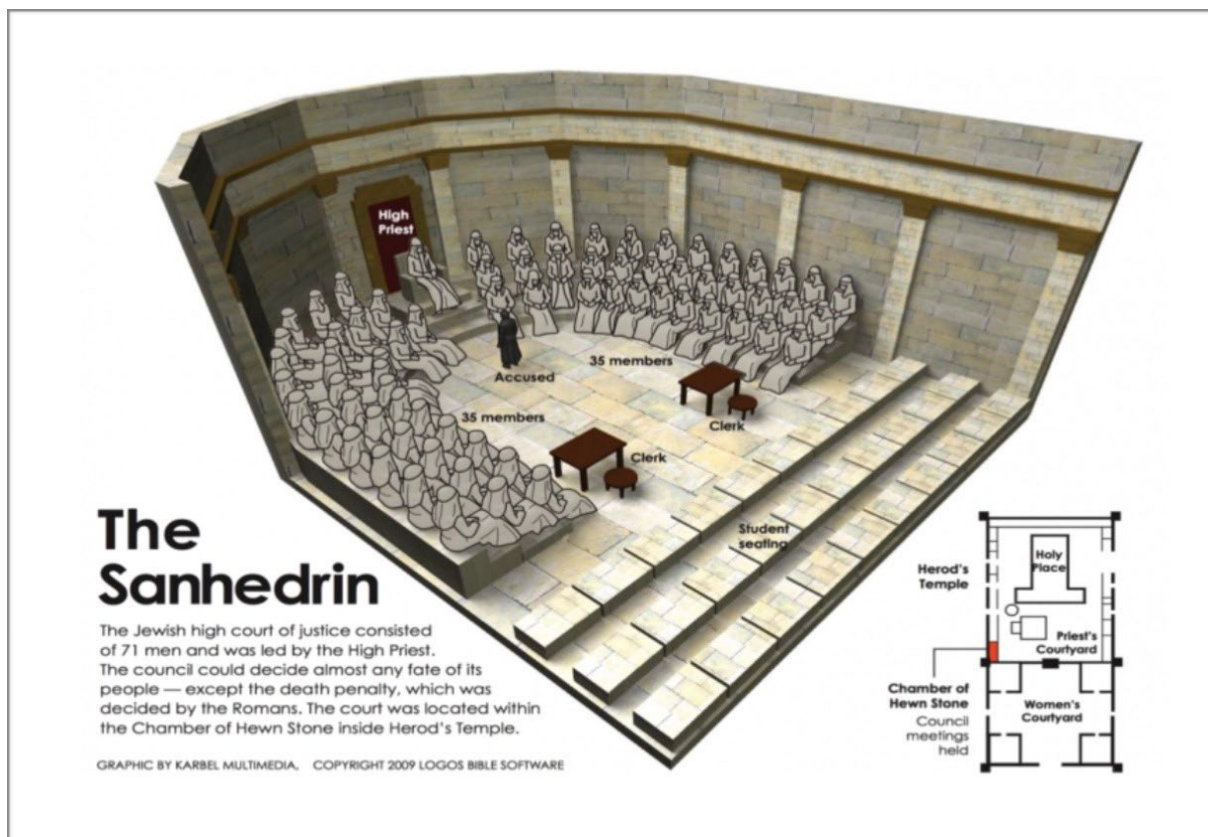
Verse 43 (People resist)

"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." —> Quoted from Amos 5:26-27

—God's _____ does not allow for idolatrous sin

Post-teaching questions for discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Sadducees****Pharisees**

House of Worship

Location of Worship

Belief in
Torah only

Belief in Torah, the
Prophets and the
oral traditions

Wealth

Function in
Their roll

Belief in Afterlife

Desire from their roll

Still around today
