

Southside Baptist Church
Sunday Morning – 5-24-26
Christianity 103 – Message 7 Part 8
Stephen rebukes those who have been listening.

1. Introduction:

a. Taking a look back:

- 1) Do you have a clear conscience this morning as we gather to worship?
- 2) Stephen reminds those listening that day that Moses had spoken about Jesus.
- 3) Stephen described the generation of Israelites in Moses' time as:
 - a) "fathers would not obey" – Acts 7:39
 - b) "and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." Acts 7:39
 - c) Remember, anyone can go through religious motions.
- 4) They turned to idolatry. Acts 7:40
 - a) Idol – when something or someone becomes more important to us than God.
- 5) They made some terrible decisions according to Exodus 32. They –
- 6) Moses asked that day, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

b. Taking a look ahead:

- 1) What can happen when the "old" dies, but is not forgotten and turned from?
- 2) The danger of persisting in the flesh –

2. "God turned, and gave them up to..." Acts 7:42

a. Verse 42 –

- 1) "turned" – to turn the back to one.
- 2) "gave them up" – God let them go in this way to worship the idol of their heart.
- 3) "worship the host of heaven" – the sun, moon, and stars.
 - a) Romans 1:24, 26, and 28.
- 4) Would God give up on a believer?
 - a) The simple answer is "No."
 - b) The complicated side of this is the heart of man.
- 5) Application – Do not make the same mistake.

b. Verse 43 –

- 1) In their idolatry, they worshipped Moloch.
 - a) "Moloch" – personified ruler of shameful sacrifice.
 - b) "tabernacle of Moloch" – portable shrine or tent dedicated to this pagan god.
 - c) The worship of Moloch involved child sacrifice.
- 2) They worshipped "the star of your god Remphan."
 - a) Mesopotamian god, likely Saturn. Associated with a star symbol.
- 3) Syncretism – to blend or merge the worship of idols with the worship of God.
 - a) God is a jealous God and desires our complete and undivided worship and faithfulness.
 - b) Syncretism happens in churches today when –

3. Stephen reminds them of the development and role of the Tabernacle. Acts 7:44-47

a. Verse 44 –

- 1) "tabernacle of witness in the wilderness" – God's presence was with them.

b. Verse 45 –

- 1) Let me clarify the issue here.
- 2) The Hebrew name for Joshua, when translated into Greek, is the exact same word used for Jesus.
- 3) There is a parallel theologically here that is really cool.

- a) Joshua means the Lord saves and he led God's people to the promised land.
- b) Jesus means the Lord saves and He leads God's people into the spiritual promised land of eternity with Him having given them new life.
- c. Verse 46 –
 - 1) "Who found favor before God" – speaks of the kindness, the grace of God toward men.
- d. Verse 47 –
 - 1) Solomon built the Temple.
- e. Verse 48 –
 - 1) The "most High" – speaks of the rank of God. There is no one above Him.
 - a) Origin and meaning – highest, exalted one.
 - b) God is Sovereign – God is the absolute authority over all things.
 - c) Sets Him apart – He is distinct from all His creation.
 - d) New Testament – Jesus is the Son of the Most High.
 - 2) A key word here is "dwelleth."
 - a) It can mean to house permanently.
 - b) I love the contrast here.
- f. Verse 49 –
 - 1) "Heaven" – the highest heaven is the dwelling place of God.
 - 2) "footstool" – the earth, which is enormous to us, is the footstool of the Most High God.
- g. Verse 50 –
 - 1) God is the Creator God.
- h. Transition:
 - 1) This is a strong rebuke of the people's hearts toward God and His message.
- 4. A necessary rebuke. Acts 7:51-53.
 - a. Verse 51 –
 - 1) "stiffnecked" – stubborn, headstrong, obstinate.
 - 2) "uncircumcised in heart and ears" – heart and ears are covered, your senses closed to the work of the Spirit.
 - 3) "resist the Holy Ghost" – you oppose, strive against.
- 5. Today's Take Away:
 - a. Think about this today and throughout the coming week.
 - 1) Today, people can be "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" and "resist the Holy Ghost" when:
 - a) They refuse to acknowledge God's authority –
 - b) They reject the Gospel –
 - c) Disobedient to God's Word –
 - d) Pride and reliance on self –
 - e) Resisting the conviction of the Spirit -