

## ***STUDYING THE BOOK OF ACTS*** ***IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS***

### **Lesson 16 – Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin - [Acts 7:1-53](#)**

Read the following verses in the Last Days Bible or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

#### ***Stephen Speaks to the Council***

**7** “Are these accusations true?” the High Priest demanded of Stephen.

**2** “Men, both brothers and fathers,” Stephen replied, “listen to me! Our God, who is glorious, appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was still in Mesopotamia, before he went to live in Haran.

**3** “God told him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives, and come away to a land to which I will direct you.’ (*Gen 12:1*)

**4** “So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God moved him to this land where you now live.

**5** “But He didn’t give him title to any of it, not even to one square foot of it. But He did promise to give it to him eventually as his possession, and to his descendants after him, even before Abraham had any children.

**6** “This is what God told him:

‘Your descendants will live in a foreign country where the people will enslave and mistreat them for 400 years.

**7** Then I will judge the nation that enslaved them. Following that they will leave that country and serve Me in this land.’ (*Gen. 15:13-14*)

**8** “Then God gave him the circumcision agreement.\* So when Abraham became the father of Isaac, he circumcised him on the eighth day after his birth. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of the twelve patriarchs.\*

\*Acts 7:8 – “God gave him the circumcision agreement.” ... a constant reminder of the promise God had made to Abraham and his descendants. Genesis 17:1-14.

“The father of the twelve patriarchs” that is, the founders of the 12 tribes of Israel.

**9** “And the sons of Jacob became very jealous of their brother Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt. But God was with him,

**10** And set him free from all his troubles. “He gave Joseph such wisdom that when he was brought before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, he gained the king’s favor. The

king then put him in charge of all the affairs of Egypt and of all his personal business.

11“Then famine struck, causing a serious crisis throughout all of Egypt and Canaan. Our ancestors were also unable to find any food.

12“But when Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons on their first visit there.

13“During their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was. That was when Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family.

14“Then Joseph sent a call for his father Jacob, and all his family, 75 people in all, to come to Egypt.

15“So Jacob moved down to Egypt, and later he and all of our ancestors died there.

16“Their bodies were carried back to Shechem, where they were placed in the tomb Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor in Shechem for a sum of money.

17“But as the time drew near for God to do what He had promised Abraham, our people grew more and more numerous in Egypt.

18“Then a king who knew nothing about Joseph came to power.

19“This man was treacherous. He mistreated our ancestors, even forcing them to abandon their babies to exposure outdoors so they would die.

20“It was during this time that Moses was born. In God’s eyes he was an exceptional child, and for three months, he was cared for in his father’s home.

21“When he was finally put outside, Pharaoh’s daughter rescued him and brought him up as her own son.

22“As a result, Moses was given an education that included all the knowledge of the Egyptians. He was a powerful speaker and a man of outstanding accomplishments.

23“When he was 40 years of age, he felt a strong urge to visit his own people, the Israelites.\*

**\*Acts 7:23 – There was great love in Moses’ heart for his people, and he longed to see them free from slavery.**

24“When he saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, he went to his defense. He avenged the tormented man by killing the Egyptian.

25“He thought his own people would realize that God would use him to rescue them. But that’s not the way they looked at it.

26“The next day he intervened as two Israelites were fighting. He urged them to be kind toward each other, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers, why are you trying to hurt each other?’

27“But the man who was at fault pushed him away, saying, ‘Who made you our ruler and judge?’

28‘Are you planning to kill me too, like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’  
*(Exodus 2:14)*

29“On hearing this, Moses fled from Egypt and lived as a foreigner in the country of Midian. He had two sons while there.

30“After 40 long years, an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. Exodus 3:1-10

31“When Moses saw the burning bush *that didn’t burn up*, he was amazed at the sight. When he went over to have a closer look, he heard God speaking to him!

32‘I am the God of your ancestors,’ God said, ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’ (Exodus 3:6) Moses was so terrified that he didn’t dare to look at the bush any longer.

33‘Take off your sandals,’ the Lord said, ‘because the place where you are standing is holy ground.

34‘I have indeed seen the cruel treatment of My people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to rescue them. So now I am sending you back to Egypt.’ Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10

35“‘This is the same Moses whom they had rejected, saying, ‘Who made you our ruler and judge?’ He was the very one God did send as their ruler and liberator, giving him the order through the angel who spoke to him from the burning bush.

36“‘It was Moses who led them out after performing miracles and signs in Egypt, and also in the Red Sea. And he led them in the desert for 40 years.

37“‘It was he who later told the people of Israel,

‘The Lord your God will raise up for you from among your own people a Prophet, just as He did me. You must listen carefully to what He tells you, and obey Him.’ *(Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19)*

38“‘He is also the one who was in the large crowd of our ancestors in the desert, and with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai. It was he who received the living words from God to pass on to us.

39“‘But our ancestors wouldn’t obey him. Instead they pushed him aside, and in their hearts they longed to be back in Egypt.

40“When Moses was on Mount Sinai they talked to Aaron and demanded, ‘Make us some gods who can give us some leadership! Because we don’t know what’s happened to this fellow Moses who brought us out of Egypt.’ (Exodus 32:1)

41“That was the time they made an idol in the shape of a calf. Then they had a celebration in honor of what they had been able to make with their hands, and brought sacrifices to it. Exodus 32:1-6

42“So God left them and let them worship the stars and planets. As it is written in the book of the prophets:

‘O people of Israel, it wasn’t for Me that you killed and sacrificed animals for 40 years in the desert, was it?’

43No, instead you carried with you the tent in which you worshiped the god Moloch and the star of your god Remphan. You made these idols yourselves and worshiped them. For this, I will send you into exile to Babylon and beyond!’ (*Amos 5:25-27*)

44“Our ancestors had the tent in which God spoke to them in the desert. Moses made it exactly as God had told him to, according to the pattern that had been shown him.

45“Our forefathers, who later became custodians of this tent, brought it with them when Joshua led them in taking the land from the nations that God drove out as they advanced. It stayed here until the time of David.

46“David gained God’s favor, and then asked that he might build a place for the God of Jacob to live.

47“But it was Solomon who finally built the house for God.

48“But the Most High God does not live in houses made by human hands. As the Lord said through His prophet:

49 ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is merely My footstool. What kind of a house could you build for Me? Where is the place that I would choose to rest?’

50Am I not the maker of everything?’ (Isaiah 66:1-2)

51“‘You unbending, stubborn people! Your hearts and ears are always unresponsive! You are always resisting what the Holy Spirit is telling you! That’s what your ancestors did, and now you’re doing the same!’

52“Which of the prophets did your ancestors fail to persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the One who is altogether righteous. And now you’ve become His betrayers and murderers!

53“‘You received God’s Law through the ministry of angels, but you haven’t obeyed it!’”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Lesson 16 – Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin - [Acts 7:1-53](#)

202. What did the high priest ask Stephen? ([7:1](#))
203. Why did Stephen make this speech? ([7:1-2](#))
204. What was Stephen's initial response to the leaders? ([7:2](#))
205. In his speech to the court, Stephen showed that there was progress and change in God's plan for His people; how was Abraham an example of this change? ([7:2-8](#))
206. As he wove the history of the Jews, how did Stephen show a pattern of opposition to God and His plan for them? ([7:2-4](#), [9](#), [23-29](#))
207. How did God bless His people outside the land of Israel? ([7:2-5](#), [7-10](#), [29-34](#))
208. How was the move to Egypt a great change for Jacob's descendants? ([7:9-16](#))
209. How did deliverance under Moses mark progress for God's people? ([7:17-43](#))
210. Where was the law of Moses given to God's people? ([7:38](#))
211. From the tabernacle to the temple, the place of God's presence changed and progressed; how did Stephen show this? ([7:44-50](#))
212. How did Stephen show that the temple is not God's true dwelling place? ([7:47-50](#))
213. What did Stephen say in direct attack on his audience? ([7:51-53](#))
214. How did Stephen compare the attitude of those in the Sanhedrin with that of God's people down through the centuries? ([7:51-53](#))
215. Of what did Stephen accuse his hearers? ([7:51-53](#))
216. According to Stephen, in what ways did the people resist the Holy Spirit? ([7:52-53](#))
217. What kind of opposition to God's message is there today?

### Lesson 17 - The Stoning of Stephen - [Acts 7:54-7:60](#)

#### *Stephen Is Stoned to Death*

<sup>54</sup>As the Council members continued to listen to these accusations, they became more and more furious and began to gnash their teeth at him in rage.

55But Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked right into Heaven. There he saw our God in His glory, and Jesus standing at His right hand.

56“Look!” he cried out, “I see Heaven opened up, and Jesus, the Son of Man, standing at God’s right hand!”\*

**\*Acts 7:56 – “Standing at God’s right hand.” ... evidently standing to honor and welcome His faithful servant to his home and rewards in Heaven.**

57At this the men yelled their loudest, and, covering their ears, they all rushed at him.

58After dragging him out of the city, the witnesses left their coats with a young man named Saul. Then they\* threw a hail of stones at Stephen in a constant barrage.\*

**\*Acts 7:58 – “Then they” the false witnesses. Under Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 17:7) all witnesses against the one pronounced guilty had to throw the first stones.**

**“In a constant barrage,” that is, like a heavy artillery fire. Indicated by imperfect active tense.**

59As they continued stoning him, Stephen cried out, “Lord Jesus, take me home to be with You!”

60Then he fell to his knees and prayed with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge these men with this sin!” After saying this, he died.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Lesson 17 - The Stoning of Stephen - [Acts 7:54-7:60](#)

218. How did the hearers react to Stephen’s accusations? Why? ([7:54](#))
219. Why did the Jewish leaders respond to Stephen as they did? ([7:54](#))
220. Faced with the fury of his persecutors, why wasn’t Stephen afraid? ([7:55](#))
221. How did Stephen’s heavenly vision prepare him for what was to follow? ([7:55](#))
222. How did God prepare Stephen for his death? ([7:55](#))
223. What did Stephen say that enraged his adversaries? ([7:56](#))
224. Why was Stephen put to death? ([7:56-60](#))
225. Why did Stephen’s enemies yell and cover their ears? ([7:57](#))

226. How was Stephen taken out of town? ([7:57-58](#))
227. Where was Stephen stoned to death? ([7:58](#))
228. Why did people lay their clothing at Saul's feet? ([7:58](#))
229. What were Stephen's two last requests before he died? ([7:59-60](#))
230. How did Stephen die? ([7:60](#))