**Acts 7:1**

\*Deacon Stephen began showing why he was an excellent choice for the office by the congregation! He not only took care of widows and preached biblical truth, but he was also a bold Baptist that was ready spiritually for the hard stare down and brutal consequences of the sinful Sanhedrin!

 \*Filled with the Spirit and ready for potential martyrdom, he answered the priest in the affirmative.

\*Recognizing that he was in a pre-determined set-up and under duress by the hardened council, he rehearsed the *Tanak*, affirmed the majesty of the Law, the sanctity of the Temple, and then condemned the council (vv. 2-53).

\*He organized his impromptu but informed apologetical answer around Abraham (vv. 2-8), Joseph (vv. 9-16), Moses (vv. 17-43), the Tabernacle (vv. 44-50), and the complicity of the Sanhedrin (vv. 51-53). This mighty man was ready to preach, to pray, to die!

**Acts 7:2**

\*Stephen started at the beginning with the beloved Abraham of the Jews (Gen. 11:27-12:7). The expression *“the glory of God”* would have brought thoughts of the glory of the Lord on his four Tabernacles/Temples (cf. Ex. 40:34; I Ki. 8:10-11; Zech. 1:16; 2:5).

**Acts 7:3**

 \*The LORD called Abraham from Babylon and his kindred to a choice piece of geographical real estate

 named *Canaan* (Gen. 11:31) which the Lord shewed him (Gen. 12:1). > See Heb. 11:8-10.

**Acts 7:4**

\*Obedient Abraham left Babylon and dwelt in Charran (Haran) in the area of Babylon. Upon his father’s death, he moved to Canaan (Gen. 12:5-7). Abraham was 75 when he left Haran, being born when his father was 130 years old (Gen. 11:32; 12:4 [205-130 = 75]). You are never too old to obey the Lord!

**Acts 7:5**

\*Abraham was a pilgrim (Heb. 11:9, 13). The Lord did not promise him an inheritance in the Land of Canaan. He promised the land to the seed of Abraham which seed he did not have at that time since Sarah was barren (Gen. 11:30; 25:21; 29:31).

**Acts 7:6**

\*To further challenge the life of faith about the promise of the Land, Abraham’s seed would be in bondage in a strange land (Egypt) for four hundred years.

\*Moses stated that the children of Israel sojourned for 430 years (Ex. 12:40-41), which sojourning included the 30 years that Abraham was in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20).

**Acts 7:7**

\*The LORD promised Abraham that He would judge the nation (Egypt) and then deliver the Jews and put them in the Promised Land to serve the Lord. Judgment came upon the Egyptians through the 10 plagues (Ex. 7-14; 19:1 ff.).

Acts 7:8

\*Stephan gave the background on the controversial practice of circumcision (Gen. 17:7 ff.) when the Lord covenanted with Abraham about his seed. He circumcised Isaac on the 8th day and Isaac begat Jacob who begat the twelve patriarchs of the 12 tribes (Gen. 29:31 ff.).

\*Circumcision was a perpetual problem since the Jews perverted the meaning and attempted to foist it on Gentiles for their salvation (Acts 15:1 ff.). The Baptist church disannulled the rite for salvation?

**Acts 7:9**

\*The *“holy place”* and “the law” were the focal points of apostasy leveled toward the Baptists (6:13-14). Jehovah was *“with him”* even though Joseph was out of the Land, before the Law and the Temple.

\*The patriarchs sold Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 37:1-36).

\*Joseph pre-figured Jesus: both began ministry at 30, were loved by their father, were hated, conspired against, and stripped by brethren. They were tempted without sin, unrecognized by brethren, sold for silver, falsely charged, condemned with 2 miscreants, and suffered for the salvation of others.

**Acts 7:10**

\*Being with Joseph, God delivered him, gave him favor, and made him governor over Egypt (Gen. 39:21 ff.; 41:40; Heb. 11:21-22).

**Acts 7:11**

\*Stephen continued with the blessing of faith in the LORD and not pride in the Land, he focused on the famine (Gen. 41:37 ff.).

\**“Our fathers”* found no blessing in the Promise Land of Canaan but in Egypt (Gen. 41:54 ff.)!

**Acts 7:12-13**

\*The deacon mentioned reference to the *“first”* of two visits before the patriarchs received Joseph as their “deliverer” (Gen. 45:5; 50:20).

\*Paul revealed that since the Jews rejected Jesus at His first coming, He would come again for believing Jews: *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”* (Heb. 9:28).

\*Joseph revealed himself to his brethren and revealed his brethren to Pharaoh (Gen. 45:1, 16-17).

**Acts 7:14**

\*Stephen revealed in this discourse that the Jacob, the seed of Abraham and inheritor of the Promised Land, left the Promised Land and went Egypt with his household.

\*Supposedly Stephen made an error by quoting the *LXX*. Moses recorded, saying, *“All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins,* ***besides Jacob's sons' wives****, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were* ***threescore and ten****”* (Gen 46:26-27) = **70 souls!**

\*Stephen said, *“Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred****, threescore and fifteen*** *souls”*= **75 souls!** **Was it 70 or 75 or does it matter?**

\*Moses recorded that **sixty-six** came from Jacob’s loins to enter into Egypt. Jacob, Joseph and Joseph’s two sons were not included. With nine daughters-in-laws, excluding those of Judah, Simeon, and Joseph, Stephen counted the sixty-six offspring and nine outsiders to total seventy-five kindred. \*Conservative critics nevertheless argue that this is an error in the Bible. The daughter-in-laws did not come out of Jacob’s **loins** but were part of the **kindred** of Jacob.

**Acts 7:15-16**

\*Jacob and the patriarchs died in the will of God but outside of the Promised Land! Joseph buried Jacob in Machpelah in Canaan (Gen. 50:5, 13). Likewise, the Jews buried Joseph in Shechem (Gen. 50:25).

\*By faith the patriarchs wanted to be buried in the Promise Land. The issue is faith and not objects!

\*They were ultimately buried in the Promised Land that was not Abraham’s since he had to purchase the cave for 400 shekels of silver (Gen. 23:16).

**Acts 7:17**

\*Deacon Stephen continued to refute the Sanhedrin members, dealing with the faith of Abraham, Joseph, and now Moses, as men who trusted in Jehovah and received blessings outside of the Promised Land for 400 years (Gen. 15:6, 16)!

 \*Abraham’s seed continued to expand even in the midst of affliction (Ex. 1:12). The size of the Jewish wanderers included 600,000 men, along with wives and children (Ex.12:37). No doubt their population coming out of Egypt was 2-3 million!

**Acts 7:18-19**

\*Stephen recalled the political change with another pharaoh. When Joseph and the pharaoh died, another king came along who did not know Joseph and did not appreciate the growing outsiders (Gen. 50:26; Ex. 1:6-8).

 \*The deacon elaborated on the wicked pharaoh who *“dealt subtilly”* (trickery) and *“evil entreated”* the Jews (Ex. 1:11-14; Dt. 5:14-15). **Egypt was bad; Sanhedrin worse! Kill the growing movement!**

 \*The Egyptians attempted to murder the infants of Israel to stem the growth of the nation (Ex. 1:16, 22). Stephen’s point in rehearsing this fact was that the Sanhedrin was no better than the ruthless pagan Egyptians who wanted to stop the growth of the people of God (i.e., the Jerusalem Baptist Church).

**Acts 7:20**

\*Preacher Stephen recorded a brief synopsis of the early life of Moses, the lawgiver. Charged with speaking against the law and customs of Moses (Acts 6:13-14), Stephen actually mentioned favorably the name ***“Moses”*** nine times (7:20, 22, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 40, and 44).

 \*Amram and Jochebed recognized that their son was a fair gift from the Lord and improvised a plan to protect his life and future (Ex. 2:3-9).

**Acts 7:21**

\*Stephen compressed some details and did not name the daughter of pharaoh. Later, Paul revealed, saying about Moses who, *“refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter”* (Heb. 11:24).

 \*Incredible as it seems, the account in Exodus revealed the tiny event that set in motion the privilege that Moses had to become the great leader and lawgiver for Israel. Scripture states, *“And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold,* ***the babe wept****. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children”* (Ex. 2:6).

\*If baby Moses had not wept, there would be no compassion on him, no privilege in pharaoh’s house, no pre-figurement of the Prophet Jesus (Dt. 18:15), no deliverance from Egypt, no Law, no journey in the wilderness, no preparation for the Promised Land, no securing the Promised Land, no future for Israel, etc.

 \*The sovereign Jehovah used the **tiny whimper of a Jewish infant** to secure the theological, soteriological, and eschatological history of His chosen people.

**Acts 7:22**

 \*Nevertheless, the LORD orchestrated the training of the lawmaker outside of the Promised Land but in pagan Egypt to be a great spiritual benefit for the Jewish people (Ex. 3:2 ff.). He *“was mighty in words”* but *“not eloquent”* in speech (Ex. 4:10).

**Acts 7:23**

\*Moses’ life revolved around 3 stages of 40 years: Acts 7:30, Acts 7:36, and Dt. 31:2 > Heb. 11:24-29.

**Acts 7:24**

\*Stephen began to focus on the “misunderstood” Moses who was the called one to deliver Israel. The Jews’ saviour was misunderstood and rejected (Jn. 1:13-14). Forty-year old Moses had developed a burden for his own people.

 \*Moses prefigured Jesus of Nazareth in several ways (cf. Dt. 18:18): both were hidden at birth, called out of Egypt, adopted, called and sent by God, became deliverers of Israel, rejected by Jews, called prophets, priests, kings, shepherds, fasted forty days, were mediators of covenants, performed miracles, fed multitudes, condemned by siblings, sent out 12 men, anointed 70 men, angered at men, provided institutions for worship, finished their work, sacrificed outside of the camp, received disputes about their death and burial, encouraged faith in reality of serpent lifted up/cross, and were associated with the Second Coming. Stephen embraced the ministry of Moses (Acts 6:11-14) and Whom he typified!

\*Alluding back to **Ex. 2:11-14**, Stephen gave the account of Moses saving a Jew by killing an Egyptian. Nevertheless, Moses was rejected as prince and judge!

**Acts 7:25**

 \*The Jews no doubt prayed to the Lord for deliverance (see Acts 7:34) and ultimate entrance in the Land of Canaan, expecting deliverance (i.e., Moses’ parents). They would have known oral tradition about the Abrahamic Covenant! Moses identified with the Jews and was their willing deliverer in this microcosm event.

 \*The Jews as unbelievers were consistently ignorant (Acts 3:17; 13:27). The Lord excoriated their leaders (Jn. 5:46-47).

**Acts 7:26-28**

 \*Stephen continued the account, reviewing the rejection of Moses when he challenged two Jews about fighting (Ex. 2:12).

 \*Moses was rebuffed as their deliverer having killed the Egyptian previously (Ex. 2:13-14). Stephen did not mention that Moses knew his act was known. The account prefigures the historical attitude of Israel in rejecting the Lord’s representatives, such as Moses and the prophets (Lk. 16:29, 31).

\*Moses’ killing of the Egyptian was a microcosm of war, since Egypt was a national enemy of Israel. Similarly, David killed 200 Philistines (I Sam. 18:27) who were the enemy of Israel as part of an ongoing war, but his killing of Uriah (I Ki. 15:5) was indeed murder not connected with warfare (cf. **Gen. 9:5-6**)

**Acts 7:29**

 \*Stephen noted that the event caused Moses to flee (Ex. 2:15), and became a stranger in Madian (Midian [a territory north of Arabian Peninsula in southern Canaan which territory was obtained by Abraham and Keturah’s son]). He kept the flock of Jethro/Reuel whose daughter he married named Zipporah and had the two sons Gershom (“foreigner”) and Eliezer (“God is my help” [[Ex. 18:3-4](http://biblehub.com/exodus/18-3.htm)]).

**Acts 7:30-34**

 \*The upshot of these events when Moses was eighty prepared for the call of Moses by the angel of the Lord through the voice from the burning bush (vv. 30-31), announcing that the same God of the patriarchs (v. 32) beckoned him to put off his shoes on the holy ground (v. 33) for the sober message of the affliction of the Jews and the remedy through the “sent” Moses (v. 34)! **Cf. Ex. 3:1-22**.

 \*Deacon Stephen didn’t mention details of Moses’ reluctance (Ex. 4:10) or near death (Ex. 4:24).

**Acts 7:35-36**

 \*Stephen’s clever apologetic under deadly duress testified to the call of Moses and the presence of Jehovah outside of the Promised Land and from Jerusalem and the Temple. The Jews refused Moses as ruler and judge whom *“the angel of God”* called *“a ruler and a deliverer”* (cf. II Sam. 22:2; Ex. 6:3-8).

 \*The deacon compressed the ministry of Moses as he delivered Israel with *“wonders and signs”* (10 plagues [Ex. 4:21; 11:9-10; 12:12]), and led them through the *“Red sea”* (Ex. 15:22; Dt. 11:4) and into *“the wilderness forty years”* (Num. 14:33; Dt. 1:2-3).

**Acts 7:37**

 \*The preacher cited the key prophecy that Moses gave about the coming Prophet that they should hear (Dt. 18:15, 18).

 \*The Jews expected that the Christ should come in their lifetime of the first century (Dan. 9:24-27). Simeon, Anna, and Andrew expected the Messiah (Lk. 2:25, 36; Jn. 1:41). In fact, the religionists thought John the Baptist was the Christ (Jn. 1:21, 25).

 \*The charge against Stephen about being anti-Moses was hollow and hypocritical.

**Acts 7:38**

 \*Deacon Stephen reminded the Sanhedrin members that Moses *“was in the church in the wilderness”* along with the angel of the Lord who instructed him at Mount Sinai. The aforementioned expression confounds the dimly-illuminated Protestants about biblical ecclesiology.

 \*This is the 3rd of 24 references to *ekklesia* in Acts (cf. Acts 2:47; 5:11). In the NT, the noun *ekklesia* (115x) refers to an “assembly” (literally called out to assemble), and the context defines the nature of the assembly. The *ekklesia* may be a civil assembly (Acts 19:32, 39, 41), a Baptist church (Mt. 16:18; I Cor. 1:1, *et al*), or the OT congregation of about 3,000,000 Jews, as in this case.

 \*The noun *“church”* (78x) comes from the Greek *kuriakos* (k-r-k > ch-r-ch) which means “belonging to the Lord (I Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10). Whereas the 1534 *Tyndale* rendered *ekklesia* as “congregation,” the 1560 *Geneva* as “Church,” and the 1595 *Bishops’* NT rendered the Greek as “Churche.” The *KJV* translators wanted to convey that the OT assembly was religious in nature rather than civil, and retained the religious name “church.”

 \*Stephen emphasized that the angel of the Lord gave the *“lively oracles”* (*logia zonta* > living words) to Moses as the authoritative one to give the *Torah.* Furthermore, angels were involved as secondary agents (see also Dt. 33:2; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; and Heb. 2:2). His mention of angels no doubt piqued and provoked the Sadducees in the Sanhedrin!

 \*The *Decalogue* was alive and live-giving as an extension of God (I Pet. 1:23)!

**Acts 7:39**

 \*The soon-to-be martyr reminded the Sanhedrin that the Jews rejected Moses and wanted to go back to Egypt (cf. Num. 14:1-4).

 \*Who was anti-Moses? The audience had no more heart for Moses (or Jehovah) as did not the first generation of Jews!

**Acts 7:40-41**

\*The Lord got Israel out of Egypt but could not get Egypt out of them! Their deity was a calf (Ex. 32:1-4)!

\*The OT Jews had idols of gold objects. The Sanhedrin had idols of the Law, the land, the temple!

**Acts 7:42-43**

\*Idolatry runs rampant through Adam’s race, starting with the untouchable idol of the *“tree”* in the Garden (Gen. 3:3)! Moses was rejected by Israel which wanted to return to idolatrous Egypt (Num. 14:1-4). When Moses did not return from the top of mountain for forty days, the Jews made a golden idol (Ex. 32:1-4). Moses interceded for the people (Ex. 32:31-35) and for Aaron (Dt. 9:17-21).

\*Israel had a history of idolatry (see Ezk. 20:6-8) culminating with the divine judgment on the NK (722 BC) and the SK (586 BC), coming down to the first century and the Sanhedrin’s propensity for the idols of the man Moses, the Law, the Temple, and the man-made customs of the Law (Acts 6:11-14). Ultimately, remnant Jews in the Tribulation will reject the Antichrist and his image in 3rd Temple and flee (Rev. 13:14-15; 12:13-17). Finally, Israel will be done with the worship of idols and then will worship of Jehovah during Millennium.

\*The Lord turned and gave Israel over to idolatry to run its disastrous course (cf. Rom. 1:21-23). He warned the Jews about idolatrous astrology (Dt. 4:19; 5:7-8).

\*Stephen used as a proof-text the preserved inspired words of Amos 5:25-27 which condemned their forty year practice. They worshiped the sky deity Moloch (perverted form of *melec* for “king’) which involved the murder of children (Jer. 32:35; I Ki. 11:5).

\*Associated with idolatry was astrology or the worship of Remphan (Egyptian star-deity for Saturn). Remphan was the newer name for ancient name Chiun. Israel’s idolatrous affinity would bring destruction and captivity in Babylon (see II Ki. 24-25; Jer. 39; Lam. 1-5).

\*As a side note, supposedly Stephan cited the “pre-first century *LXX*” which obviously could not predict Remphan would be the future name for the deity Chiun. Instead, he targummed the Hebrew of Amos.

**Acts 7:44**

\*Was Jehovah bound to a building? He wasn’t bound to the Garden, to the Noachic Ark, nor to the Tabernacle, nor to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, nor 4th Temple! Stephen responded to *“that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place”* (6:14; Jn. 2:19-21). The Tabernacle in the wilderness pointed to the heavenly pattern or fashion (Ex. 25:40; 26:30; Heb. 8:2), which truth the religionists missed!

**Acts 7:45**

\*The Baptist deacon reviewed the history of the transient and transitory Tabernacle from Kadesh Barnea (“holy journey”) through Jesus-Joshua into Canaan and unto King David.

**Acts 7:46-47**

\*Even as great as was King David who found divine favour, he could not build the Temple, even though he desired (II Sam. 7:1-16).

\*The wise Solomon built the first Temple, saying, *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?”* (I Ki. 8:27). The Lord said, *“But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple”* (Mt. 12:6). The members of the Sanhedrin were akin to the wicked priests concerning Jeremiah (Jer. 7:4).

**Acts 7:48-50**

\*The LORD is greater than any place made by man. Stephen cited Isaiah (Isa. 66:1-2a) in condemning his audience’s lack of spirituality by obsessing over physical objects.

\*Stephen’s apologetic was complete. Instead of blaspheming, he honored Moses and his customs, the Law, and the Temple with Tanakian truth that the Sanhedrin knew. He convicted their wicked hearts.

**Acts 7:51**

 \*Deacon Stephen with *“great boldness in the faith”* (I Tim. 3:13) recognized that the religionists were growing hostile and clinched his historical diatribe with reproof and rebuke, and did *“exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (cf. II Tim. 4:2).

 \*As did Moses (Dt. 9:6, 13; 10:16), the preacher used the *hapax* expression *“stiffnecked”* (literally *skleros-trachea*) and *hapax* expression *“uncircumcised”* (*aperitmetos*) to denote that just as Israel worshipped the inanimate golden calf so the current rebels worshipped the inanimate Temple!

 \*With righteous indignation under the control of the Spirit, Stephen was direct and clear in his forceful rebuke! The religionists had a history of vexing (Isa. 63:10) or resisting (Mt. 12.31-32) the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 7:52-53**

 \*With his powerful rhetorical question Stephen interrogated his examiners (*“Which…*)! Who was on trial? He identified the Sanhedrin members with *“your fathers”* (not our fathers) who persecuted and murdered the prophets (cf. Mt. 23:33-35).

 \*Their historical pattern of unbelief, hatred, and murder culminated in the slaughter of *“the coming of the Just One”* who had been revealed in the Law (i.e., Dt. 18:15).

 \*The Law which the Sanhedrin accused Stephen of diminishing they had not obeyed, but merely worshipped! The sanctity of the giving of the Law (cf. Dt. 33:2; Gal. 3:19; and Heb 2:2) was rejected by the Jewish Supreme Court even though Moses commanded obedience (Dt. 30:10).

**Acts 7:54**

 \*How would the august audience respond to the Spirit-filled preaching of truth? Luke alternated the reactions of the Sanhedrin and Stephen.

 \*Their reaction could have been delightful reception, meditative procrastination, or angry rejection, resistance, and rage!

\*Their hatred for Jehovah and the Law revealed that they were *“cut to the heart”* (cf. Acts 5:33; the dividing of knowing truth and rejecting truth) and *“gnashed on him with their teeth”* (cf. Ps. 35:16; the medical phenomenon of grinding teeth [*bruxism*]). Both verbs are imperfects, indicating that they had been doing this practice during his sermon. The religionists’ anger led to murder (Mt. 5:21-22).

Acts 7:55-56

 \*In contrast to the Sanhedrin full of murderous anger, Stephen enjoyed peace and blessing as he was full of the Holy Ghost. With great intensity, Luke recorded the intensity, direction, object, and Person of the deacon’s gaze. In seeing the glory of God, Stephen saw the resurrected Jesus at the right hand of God (the Father). How did Luke know?

 \*He heard what Stephen said presumably from the converted Sanhedrin member Saul of Tarsus (cf. Lk. 1:2)! This was not merely a vision but the reality of seeing into *“the third heaven”* (cf. Rev. 6:14-16).

**Acts 7:57-59**

 \*With four *aorist* action verbs the wild religionists of the Sanhedrin *cried out*, *stopped* their ears, *ran*, and *cast him out* of the city (“the holy city of peace”). Repeating the imperfect verb *“stoned”* (continued action—they stoned and stoned him). Saul was the chief henchman (cf. Acts 14:19)!

**Acts 7:60**

 \*Stephen emulated the Lord: Jesus commended His Spirit (Lk. 23:46), asked for forgiveness for the murderers (Lk. 23:34), and fell asleep (Jn. 19:30)! He became the second Christian martyr!