

World Upside Down: The Book of Acts

Acts 7

1. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

2. Stephen's speech comes in response to accusations made (v. 1).

Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."

- Acts 6:11-14

- i) Blasphemy against Moses
- ii) Blasphemy against God
- iii) Defaming the temple
- iv) Defaming the law

3. Abraham is paradigm of faith and possessor of promise (vv. 2-8).

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

- Genesis 12.7

Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

- Gen 15.13-14

4. Joseph is paradigm of righteous victim & vindicated ruler (vv. 9-16).

Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

- Gen 37.26-28

But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- Genesis 50:19-21

5. Moses is paradigm of miracle-child turned rejected advocate (vv. 17-29).

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

- Hebrews 11:23

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

- John 1:9-11

6. He is also paradigm of the wonder-working prophet (vv. 30-43).

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as

you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

- Deuteronomy 18:15–18

7. The temple is monumental evidence of misguided worship (vv. 44-50).

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

- 1 Kings 8:27

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

- Psalm 51:16–17

8. The age-old story: God’s faithfulness, Israel’s faithlessness (vv. 51-53).

Both we and our fathers have sinned;
we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness.
Our fathers, when they were in Egypt,
did not consider your wondrous works;
they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love,
but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea.
Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
that he might make known his mighty power.
He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry,
and he led them through the deep as through a desert.
So he saved them from the hand of the foe

and redeemed them from the power of the enemy.

- Psalm 106:6-10

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

- Isaiah 63.7, 10

9. Jesus & His Body is the true heir to the promises of Israel.

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- Romans 10:1-4