

Jesus Is Our Prophet and God

2022.05.15 Morning Sermon in Acts 6:8–7:60

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Main idea: The proper way to honor Moses is to recognize Jesus as the promised Prophet. And the proper way to honor the temple is to recognize Jesus as the One True God.

⁸And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. ¹¹Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” ¹²And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. ¹³They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” ¹⁵And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?” ²And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³and said to him, ‘*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*’ ⁴Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. ⁵And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. ⁶But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. ⁷‘*And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,*’ said God, ‘*and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.*’ ⁸Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

⁹“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. ¹²But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. ¹³And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to the Pharaoh. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. ¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. ¹⁶And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.

¹⁷“But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸till another king arose who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. ²⁰At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father’s house for three months. ²¹But when he was set out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. ²²And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

²³“Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

²⁴And seeing one of them sorry wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. ²⁵For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and *tried* to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?’ ²⁷But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, ‘*Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?*’ ²⁸*Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?*’ ²⁹Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

³⁰“And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. ³¹When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, ³²saying, ‘I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and dared not look. ³³‘Then the Lord said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” ³⁴

have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.”’

³⁵ “This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. ³⁷ “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’

³⁸ “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, ³⁹ whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, ‘*Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.*’ ⁴¹ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴² Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?’

⁴³ *You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’*

⁴⁴ “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁵ which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But Solomon built Him a house. ⁴⁸ “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ *‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me?’ says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest?* ⁵⁰ *Has My hand not made all these things?’*

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”

⁵⁴ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; ⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Introduction: Apostolic sign, apostolic power, and apostolic message.

1. Jesus, the Last and Great Prophet

- a. Covenant administrations: Moses wasn’t the first (v2–16), and wouldn’t be the last (v37).
- b. Against Moses? “Israel” has always had that covered. And against Joseph, and against the prophets, and against Jesus! There has always been a true Israel within Israel, and it has always been comparatively small.
- c. Listening to Moses means listening to Jesus, v37

2. Jesus, God the Word, the Forgive, the Receiver of Spirits

- a. Against God?
 - i. Why—because against the temple and the (ceremonial) law? These were tiny and temporary ways of God’s communicating Himself (v48–50).
 - ii. The temple was actually pretty late to the party (v44–47)
 - iii. Truly, it has always been Israel that is against God, even stooping to the same murderousness as Pharaoh (cp. v19 with v43a). There’s no Israelite custom with a longer tradition than idolatry (v40–41)

- b. God the Word has been present throughout God's interaction with His people.
 - i. When Abraham had nothing, he still had God's Word (v5-6)
 - ii. The "Angel" in the bush (v30-34) is Yahweh
 - iii. The "Prophet" of v37 is the Son of God of the transfiguration
 - iv. The "Angel" who spoke from the mountain (v38) is Yahweh
 - v. But the people rejected the Word of God, both from God Himself and from Holy-Spirit-carried messengers, and now from the God-Man Himself (v51-53). This Just One, they betrayed and murdered.
- c. God the Word and the Incarnate Word now occupy the throne together (v55-56)
- d. God the Receiver of spirits received Stephen's spirit (v59)
- e. God the alone-Forgiver of sin received Stephen's prayer (v60)

Conclusion: Even as Scripture has replaced signs, the apostolic message remains the same: Jesus is both Lord and Christ! The living God, against Whom you have rebelled and sinned, as taken on our humanity in order to welcome sinners to Himself. Through different ages and covenant administrations, He made preparations and promises, but now He has come, and lived, and died, and risen again, and ascended, and sits enthroned. He is the Receiver of spirits and Forgiver of sins. Come to Him! Have your sins forgiven and know that when you pass from this world, He Who has loved your soul will receive you to Himself!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Act 6, verse 8 through seven verse 60. These are God's words and Stephen full of faith. And power Did great wonders and signs. Among the people, Then there arose some from what is called the synagogue of the Freedmen. So reunions, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia disputing with Stephen and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by what you spoke.

Then they secretly induced blood men to say. We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and God, and they stirred up, the people, the elders, and the scribes. And they came upon him seized him and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses. Who said this man?

Does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs, which Moses delivered to us. And all, who sat in the council looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Then the high priest said, Are these things. So and he said brethren and Fathers. Listen, the God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Huran and said to him, get out of your country and from your relatives and come to a land that I will show you.

Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Iran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land and which you now, dwell and God gave him. No inheritance in it. Not even enough to set his foot on, But even when Abraham had no child, he promised to give it to him for a possession and to his descendants after him.

But God spoke. In this way that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them for hundred years, and the nation to whom they will be in bondage. I will judge said God And after that they shall come out and serve me in this place and he gave him the covenant of circumcision And so Abraham we got Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day and Isaac begot.

Jacob. And Jacob begot the 12 patriarchs and the patriarchs becoming envious sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and made him, Governor over Egypt, and all his house.

Now, a famine and great trouble, came over the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first and the second

time Joseph was made known to his brothers and Joseph's family, became known to the Pharaoh and then Joseph sent and called his father, Jacob and all his relatives to him, 75 people.

So Jacob went down to Egypt and he died. He and our fathers and they were carried back to Shuckham and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for some of money from the sons of Hamor. The father of Shakhna But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt till another king arose.

Who did not know? Joseph. This man dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies. So that they might not live At this time. Moses was born and was well pleasing to God, and he was brought up in his father's house for three months, But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter, took him away and brought him up as her own son, and Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty In words and deeds.

Now when he was 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel and seeing one of them suffer wrong. He defended and avenged him. Who was oppressed and struck down the Egyptian for. He supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand.

But they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting and tried to reconcile them saying men, you are brethren. Why do you wrong when another, but he who did his neighbor wrong? Pushed him away saying who made you a ruler and a judge over us.

Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday? Then at this saying, Moses flat and became a dweller in the land of Midian where he had two sons and when 40 years had passed and angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.

When Moses saw it, he marveled at the site and as he drew near to observe the voice of the Lord, came to him saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God, of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, And Moses trembled. And dare not.

Look Then the Lord said to him, take your sandals, off your feet For the place where you stand is holy ground. I have surely seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt. I've heard, they're groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come I will send you to Egypt This Moses, whom they rejected saying, who made you?

A ruler and a judge is the one God sent to be a ruler. And the deliverer By the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt. And in the Red Sea and in the wilderness 40 years, this is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, the Lord, your God will raise up for you.

A prophet like me from your brethren him. You shall hear this. Is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai. And with our fathers the one who received the living oracles to give to us whom our fathers would not obey but rejected and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt saying to Aaron.

Make us gods to go before us As for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt? We do not know what has become of him and they made a calf and those days offered sacrifices to the idol and rejoice in the works of their own hands, Then God, turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven as it is written in the book of the prophets.

Did you offer me, slaughtered animals and sacrifices during 40 years, in the wilderness of House of Israel? You also took up the tabernacle of Molok and the star of your God Ranfan Images, which you made to worship, and I will carry you away. Beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witnesses in the wilderness as he appointed instructing Moses, to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers having received it in turn also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, until the days of David who found favor before God, and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob, but Solomon, built him a house.

However, The most high does not dwell in temples made with hands, As the prophet says, heaven is my throne and earth. Is my footstool. What house Will you build for me? Says the Lord or what is the place of my rest. Has my hand not made all these things.

You stiff necked and uncircumcised and heart and ears. You always resist the Holy Spirit As your father's did. So do you which of the prophets to your fathers, not persecute And they killed those who foretold the coming of the just one of whom. You now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they nashed at Him with their teeth. But he being full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven, and saw the glory of God. And Jesus standing at the right hand of God and said, look I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him with one accord and they cast him out of the city and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul and they stoned Stephen.

As he was calling on God and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit and he melt down and cried out with a loud voice. Lord Do not charge them with this sin. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Amen. The grass weathers and the flower fades. But these words of God which we have just read and hurt indoor forever, please be seated.

Stephen full of faith and power did great wonders. And signs among the people. This was a problem for Steven, and, for his home church, as it were the synagogue, in which he had grown up, the synagogue of the Freedmen Cyreneans. Alexandria, those from Cilicia and Asia. In other words, culturally Greek Hellenistic background.

And so if you have drawn the connection between that and the passage that we have heard preached the previous four weeks, you might have connected the dots already and said, oh, the widows for who's not being neglected for whom not to be neglected in the daily distribution in the church just a few weeks ago, they were members of this synagogue, as well.

This is their home church. It's also the home church of a young man named Saul because he is from a place called Tarsus, which is also a culturally Greek. And so there was this synagogue of of culturally, Greek, Jewish Jew. Sorry, Jewish Jews. Culturally Greek Jews in Jerusalem and Stephen was not just attending the public gatherings of the church under the apostles.

He was still going back to the church that he had grown up with and telling them about Christ, who is not only the descendant, the son of David according to the flesh, but who has been declared the Son of God with power? According to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, He comes with that.

Apostolic message that, that we hear, especially from Peter in chapter 2, as he preaches from Joel chapter two, which proclaimed that Yahweh would pour out His Spirit in those days. And that everyone who would call upon the name, of Yahweh would be saved and Peter had preached. Of course, not only that Jesus is the Christ.

The promised one, the deliverer, the great prophet that Moses had said, would come after him. The great high priest, whose priesthood would put an end to the stood of Aaron and usher in new laws for worship new regulations for the, the consecration of the people of God and the offering of the worship of God and the king, the son of David not only is Jesus the Christ, but no, for certain that this Jesus whom you crucified and God raised up that God has made him both Lord and Christ Jehovah.

Yahweh himself from George chapter 2, and the promised prophet priest. And king And the apostles who preached that message, God attested to the truthfulness of their message and the reality of their apostleship by giving them to perform signs and wonders and miracles And now Stephen comes and he's in his home church giving answer for the hope that is within him.

And the apostolic message is matched by Apostolic signs, that's going to be important not just for Steven in the synagogue of the Friedman in Jerusalem. But when upon the the murdering of Stephen which occurs in our passage today, the church is scattered into old Judea and Samaria. The apostles do not scatter with them.

The apostles remain in Jerusalem. And yet the apostolic message continues to be attested by apostolic signs so that Philip, for instance, when he goes up into the city of Samaria in in the center of the region of Samaria and he preaches, the gospel. God grants that many demons are cast out and many who are paralyzed are enabled to walk.

In fact, wherever the apostolic message went, the apostolic signs followed so long as the scriptures were continuing to be written. And so, in Hebrews chapter 1, which as a whole, the whole book of Hebrews has very close connection with what Stephen does here, as he inserts for his faith, when the high priest says these things.

So it's a very close connection between the whole book of Hebrews. And what Stephen says here, the apostolic message was accompanied by apostolic signs. And that apostolic message was that, although there were many ways and many times in which God had spoken to his people. And there was Moses who was the great prophet perhaps together with Elijah. Also a great prophet, the two who appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet in these last days, God has spoken by his son that Jesus is prophet capital P.

And that the apostles and prophets of the New Testament church who bring the apostolic message are under and from the Lord Jesus Christ. So, you don't speak against Moses when you proclaim, that Jesus is the Christ. That Jesus is the prophet that Jesus is the one who gives us a new way of coming to God, new regulations for how God's people on earth are consecrated, set apart from the world and are to gather in the public worship of God.

You're not speaking against Moses. You're speaking with Moses about Jesus as the Christ, the prophet, and the priest, and the king over a people in a kingdom that spans, not just Palestine. But the whole earth including Chaldea, including Horeb, including Egypt, including the wilderness of Sinai and all these places where God has declared himself and which God is claiming in the Christ, the Prophet, priest and king.

But also, when you say not to gather in the temple on earth and that God's glory is not displayed and contained or the display of it contained in the temple on earth, you're not speaking against the temple, or against God, or against his glory, because God's glory could not be contained.

In an appearance in Chaldea and God's glory could not be contained, in an appearance in Horeb and God's glory could not be contained in an appearance in a bush and God's glory could not even be contained. And that great appearance on Sinai of which we have recently heard in the evening sermons.

When the mountain shook and burned and smoke and the trumpet. And the thundering made the people terrified. Neither was the glory of God contained in the tabernacle. Neither was it contained in the temple? Neither could it be contained in the heavens and the earth, but it would be fully displayed in a man when the Word became flesh.

And that God. Now when he displays His glory in, what is called? The third heaven displays. It also in the resurrected, ascended and throned word incarnate. So that Stephen looks into heaven and he sees the glory of Jesus twice, once in the display of the glory of the divine nature, in the majesty on high.

And again, in the glory of the display of the in-fleshed word, who stands at the right hand of the majesty on high. So, is Stephen guilty of speaking against blaspheming against Moses, and against God, because he speaks against the ceremonial law and says, there is a new law because he speaks of a new prophet who has given that new law and who is the one way by whom to be gathered unto God for worship.

And who is the ruler? Under whose feet is placed, not just the people of Israel but all the peoples of the earth. Of course not. He's not blaspheming against Moses and as he, blaspheming against God, when he says, the temple is done, and the glory of God in particular, places on earth is done, because the fullness of the Godhead, now, dwells bodily in the Lord.

Jesus Christ that even Moses when he saw a type and of a passing display of the glory of God, literally hidden between the cleft and the rock. That no one had seen God at any time, not even Moses then but that if you want to see God, you see him.

Now, by faith and you will one day, see him by sight when you see the glorified incarnate word, of course not he wasn't. Blaspheming God, who is proclaiming God. And that's the message of the book of Hebrews isn't it? And these last days he spoken to us by his son and then what does he spend the rest of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter two?

Doing in the book of Hebrews Jesus is greater than Moses. And what does he spend the rest of the book doing and Jesus, this one who is greater than Moses, because he is the image of the invisible God and the brightness of the glory of God, and the one whom the Lord Himself calls Yahweh.

And he quotes from multiple Old Testament passages to show that that since we come through Him, we come to the glory of God itself and that everything in the tabernacle and everything in the priesthood of Aaron that it was all just copies and shadows of that, ultimate reality. That would come in Jesus Christ.

And that he now is the one who leads worship from heaven, that the glory is infinitely greater. But it's perceived by faith because there's no longer copies on earth that you can set your eyes upon and so that's the message by which Stephen answers here as the the people in his home, in his previous church, the church that he grows up in are unable to answer, Not just because of the content of his answer, But the wisdom and skill in which he keeps coming back to the identity and glory and finished work.

And coming final fulfillment of the glory of Jesus Christ. And they can't resist either the wisdom or the spirit, with which he speaks. He speaks as one conformed to Christ, and we'll see that. At the end of the passage was he also speaks as one whose ministry, the Holy Spirit is attending.

And so you got guys arguing with him after church, He's not convincing, then they, they give up and finally do what was done to Jesus and what was done to many of the prophets beforehand. And they stir up witnesses against him and and get him executed. But the spirit is convincing others.

And don't forget that when you are telling people of Jesus, as the one whom the Lord has promised all along. And then, finally whom the Lord revealed, not only as the Christ, but both Lord and Christ. That when you you speak to others, there is hope that a the Holy Spirit would attend you in his power and not all who are cut to the heart or cut to the heart unsavily.

Like these men are because in chapter two, there were cut to the heart too and they were cut to the heart savily, weren't they? But also for those who over here, you never know, because the spirit, attends the witness about Jesus in his power and he saves. So that's the summary in detail.

Then we'll see right in the remainder of the message. Jesus as the last and great prophet. And then in the second place, Jesus, who is God, the Word and who is the forgiver of sins and the receiver of spirits, first, Jesus, the last and great prophet. One of the reasons why Acts chapter 7 and the book of Hebrews generally are two of the great places to look for about covenant theology.

In the scripture is because the Jews were making the same mistake in opposing Christ that those who view the administrations of the Covenant of grace, with a great amount of disunity make, they thought that everything was about Moses and the temple and they were even forgetting that Moses. Never visited the temple because Moses was the one through whom they received the tabernacle.

He was long gone by the time, the temple came. In fact, Moses never even visited the promised land and all the patriarchs died outside of the promised Land. And so by by tying themselves, to one face of God's accomplishing has plan of salvation, for all the nations, They emphasized a disunity of the saving work of in the saving work of God, throughout all the angel, a throughout all the ages that would culminate in Jesus, the prophet Jesus, the priest Jesus.

The king was salvation for all of the nations and especially as Jesus in Jesus, the ultimate display of the glory of God and the one who gathers and in whom we are gathered to God Himself. And so the first big part of Stevens answer, when the High Priest says are these things, so is basically, you don't start early enough.

You think Moses Moses? Moses Moses was a means to an end to a people who had already been gathered a family that had already been chosen. In order to bring about promises, that had already been made God's gathering people to himself on earth. Didn't begin with Moses. In fact, it didn't begin ultimately with Abraham but the first time we have God set apart, a people of God, according to a particular lineage.

And we know that it wasn't just the lineage. Because we've been through Exodus chapter 12 recently and we know that when the 12 tribes came out, there was a mixed multitude of people who had to get themselves circumcised and and be joined into one of the 12 tribes if they were going to get to celebrate the Passover.

But even before that, there was a church of 75 and it is, in fact, from Stephen that we learn to call the people of God gathered throughout the different phases of of the different administrations, or phases of of God's saving his people and gathering. His people is from Stephen that we learned to call it the church for, it is in this sermon that Stephen preaches and and our passage translates at the congregation in the wilderness, but it's the word.

Ecclesia, Stephen calls, Israel in the wilderness, the church. And so his first answer with, are you speaking against Moses's? Well, the only reason you guys think I'm speaking against Moses, instead of four Moses. And in fulfillment, of Moses is because you are not covenant. Theologians is he covenant theology wasn't invented by the reformed in the 16th century.

Covenant theology. Just describes how God has dealt with his people, in different phases of the bringing of his salvation, to all the nations and yet in the phase of Abraham and the phase of Moses and the phase of David. If you're going to divide those two, although you have the same ceremonial law for the tabernacle as you do for the temple because you still have the same priesthood, right?

Hebrews tells us that it's when the priesthood has changed, when the sons of Aaron are no longer priests but the one whose priesthood is according to Melchizedek, that's when you get the new ceremonial law. But Stephen even here teaches the council, the Sanhedrin, all these whose theological education was from people like Gamaliel but Stephen's theological education is from people like Jesus.

And Peter, He says there's even two phases of the gathering of the people of God on earth, within what you think. I'm speaking against and you can hear it when you say against Moses and against the temple. So the the administration or the phase of God's gathering, a people to himself on earth, it didn't Moses wasn't the first and he wouldn't be, He wouldn't be the last.

In fact, he promised that, there'd be another one who taught a new ceremonial law verse 37. This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, the Lord, your God will raise up for you. A prophet like me from your brethren Him. You shall hear. So when he comes and he announces himself as the temple and himself as the sacrifice and the gathering of the people of God on earth as the church, that he will build, and against which the gates of hell or the gates of Hades will not prevail.

You know, longer follow the ceremonial law of Moses because Moses said, not to, He said to listen to Jesus When Jesus comes Now. Not only does Steven say I'm not against Moses at all. He says, as for the idea of being against Moses, Israel has had that covered for about 1500 years.

They were always against those through whom God was going to save them. Moses wasn't. Even the first one who received this treatment, and he reminds them, that when God sent Joseph ahead of Jacob, and his brothers in order that, that they might be preserved in the famine that came upon Egypt.

One of the ways Joseph ended up doing that was by the persecution of his brothers. In fact, he goes back further than that. He doesn't emphasize the way that I, that Ishmael persecuted, Isaac, but he did. And he reminds them that God is the God of Abraham. And God is the God of Isaac who is persecuted, by Ishmael, and God is the God of Jacob who is persecuted by Esau.

And so, Israel has always had being against Moses covered. In fact, the first time that Moses thought Stephen says, that Israel would have recognized. Hey, God said he was going to deliver his people from out of the bondage of Egypt and hear God had done all of these miraculous things to preserve the life of Moses and to educate Moses so that he had all earthly advantages possible and that he was mighty in word and indeed and not only was he mighty in word and deed but he sympathized with the people of God.

And you see what a rare combination that is someone who has the education of the world, someone who is powerful and skillful in all earthly things. And yet still is given the humility to identify with the people of God. You remember that and Hebrews chapter 11 and Moses seeing all that God had done in his life even from saving him and his babyhood to the education that he received to making him one whom God himself would testify, is the meekest man on earth.

So that instead of identifying with Egypt and valuing its treasures, he identified with the church and valued its redemption. And he thought, of course, if I can see it, they'll be able to see it and he starts trying to deliver them and what's the first response to them? Trying to deliver them to reject Him.

And that's how we end up spending 40 years as the son-in-law of a descendant of Abraham. Probably getting a good Bible education. As a shepherd in midian against Moses, Israel has always had that covered in fact. What? What's Stephen saying here? He's staying, there's always been a true Israel within earthly Israel.

There's always been an invisible Israel within visible church. Israel, you think I speak against circumcision? It's as if he's saying saying no you have uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised ears and got himself tells us in Deuteronomy. That circumcision is a matter of the heart, more than a matter of the flesh.

And when the Apostle Paul does the same thing. And the book of Romans which are hearing preached in the midweek sermons, now, He's going to say the same things, isn't? He circumcision is a matter of the heart membership in that church nor membership. In this church can save you because he's talking to Jews and to Greeks.

Isn't he? At that time in Romans chapter 2. And when he comes to are the people of God rejected, they know, actually a bunch of them are being saved. I'm one of them where the people of God always rejected because it's always been a minority among Israel. And so you don't reject Israel because a majority of them haven't been saved You, marvel at that election of God, that is preserved for the sake of the fathers.

And that is irrevocable and you rejoice over the fact that the election of God applies not just to Israelites, but also to Greeks and that not one of those whom God has chosen to save from either will ever be lost. That salvation is first for the Jew, but also for the Greek and it's not a rejection that most of the Jews are being unsaved anymore.

Then it's a rejection of the whole world that most of the Gentiles, a remaining unsaved. And yet, there is hope that all Israel. All Israel from the Jews, all Israel from among the nations. They will be saved Romans 9 through 11. Stephen here on his trial, answering the same thing.

I'm not speaking against Moses and I'm not speaking against God and His temple, but I am speaking against the rejectors of God and the rejectors of his word and the rejectors of Christ of which the visible church has always been full until the day of Stephen and all your congregation.

I say, with great sorrow of which the visible church has largely been full in many places. And at most times even these past 2,000 years and may God have mercy on that visible church listening to Moses, then means listening to Jesus and it's a great transition in verse 37.

Because what Steven says is something that dovetails with with what God himself, announces on the Mount of Transfiguration. You remember when There's Moses and there's Elijah and there's Jesus and Peter opens his big mouth and he says, let's build three tents or even you translate it, three tabernacles and he's made a great mistake because he has three prophets in front of him, but two of them are prophet lowercase P.

And one of them is profit. Capital P. Two of them are mere men, but one of them is the god, man. Two of them are prophets who foretold, but one of them, is the one who was for told, two of them, testified to glory and bowed and cowed before glory, but one is him in whom the Word was made flesh.

And we beheld His glory. And when Peter says, let's make three tents, God basically answers. I've already made one and it was the physical body, the ears that were dug for the Lord. Jesus Christ, You don't need tents anymore, You don't need tabernacles. You don't need temples. You don't need mountains, because as the Samaritan woman asked in Jesus, answered the time for earthly locational, concentrated displays of glory is done.

And God says this is my beloved son here him and there on the Mount of Transfiguration. He intentionally uses language. That reminds us of what Moses had said. You always will raise up a prophet, like, me from among your brethren here, him. And then, God says, not just from among your brethren.

Because the one who would be of the line of David, according to the flesh, is the Son of God, according to his eternal divine person, and His eternal divine nature. And who would have added to himself a human nature? And this is what the eye couldn't see, or the ear here or the heart of man.

Conceive of 1st Corinthians, chapter 2, that it would be the Lord of glory that God had prepared for his people. The heart, the eye can see. The ear could hear the heart could conceive that the Christ would be prepared for his people, that a man would be prepared for his people, but it was the Lord of glory.

Who would be prepared and that's why not being able to perceive that they crucified the Lord of glory. And then he goes on in the rest of the chapter 1st. Corinthians chapter 2 to give us an explanation for why people like this council. Can't accept that truth about Jesus because these are spiritual words for spiritual people.

And the natural man is morally unable to accept that that is what was necessary for the atoning of our sins and for the gathering of sinners to a. Holy God and being morally unable. He has mentally unable to accept it, And so it's spiritual things for spiritual people. And it requires that, regenerating that spiritual life giving work of the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus is God, that's the message. That's the what we're transitioning to using verse 37. So has has Steven spoken against God. Why? Because he's spoken against the temple and the ceremonial law. Isaiah the great prophet of God's final and forever Israel. You remember the the book of Isaiah his is that wonderful old testament.

Covenant theologian. This is what Israel was supposed to be and this is what Israel has not been. Why? Because God would gather to himself from all nations, those whom he was saving and Israel could not even be gathered into itself as a nation that was saved. But it was a wild vine, it produced, wild grapes, but God would raise up for himself, another servant in the place of national Israel.

And in him, spiritual Israel would be saved. And even people from places, as wicked and hopeless as a Syria and Egypt and praise God, He's saved a Syrians. And praise God. He's saved Egyptians and like Paul who says has God rejected the Jews. He says, not at all. I'm a Jew.

God saved me. You can say has God rejected Egyptians and I tell you not at all I'm an Egyptian God saved me and every one of you can speak of the family of the earth from which you have come and you can say, God is not rejected, my family So long.

As you are a believer in Jesus, Lord and Christ. Lord of glory and yet crucified for sinners risen again and ascended and seated at the right hand of God. And if you have come to this Christ to His welcomed you through the preaching of his gospel, God has not rejected your people because he's saving them all whom he has chosen.

And so Isaiah says, at the end of his book is interesting when looked at versus 49 and 50. And he just said, and in verse 47, Solomon built him a house. And you think that prayer at the dedication of the temple, which we've not too long ago, gone through in first kings, where Solomon, the dedication of the temple praise and says heaven, and the highest heavens cannot continue much less, this house that I have built.

And you think wow that would have been a perfect text for Stephen to pick and for the Holy Spirit to pick for why the temple was temporary and he picked Isaiah. Why? Because Isaiah was foretelling, especially if Christ. He just spent 65 chapters announcing that it would be Jesus in whom the Lord God would gather to himself.

His everlasting church. Both the church from Israel and the church from the nation And that's Isaiah 66. That he quotes here. He says heaven is my throne and earth, is my footstool. What house will you build for me? Says y'all. They are. What is the place of my rest?

Has my hand not made all these things. And of course, it comes at the end of a book in which he says that this son of the Virgin would have names like, mighty God and everlasting father that it would be God Himself, who was the Christ? Not a new thing in the preaching of Stephen.

It's just that everyone who preached it before, got himself executed by the Jews. The temples actually pretty late to the party. We've mentioned that already. That's the point he makes and verses 44 through 47. Why aren't you mad? That David got rid of the tabernacle or really Solomon, got rid of the tabernacle God gave His people, the tabernacle.

Well, it's because God's working in the among the, his people that he's gathering on earth. That's always gone through these phases until it comes to Christ. And one of the reasons is that, we will see that it was Christ who was promised in the garden to, to Adam and to even it was Christ to His promise to Abraham and it was Christ who has promised through Moses and it was Christ to his promise through David, and it was Christ to his promise to the prophets So that you don't reject all testament, theology.

When you say, God is triune and you don't reject Old Testament, theology. When you say Jesus is God, because that is the theology of the Old Testament and the New Testament together and those who reject him. Reject Old Testament, theology. In fact, God, the Word has been present throughout God's interaction with His people.

God appeared to Abraham even while he was in Caldea in Mesopotamia. Verse 2, the God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia. Yes, God in and of himself is invisible, But he's been making appearances of himself. And so God has a way of displaying himself communicating himself.

And he describes himself in multiple places as angel. Not only does he appear to Abraham in Mesopotamia and then he appears to him in Iran and then he appears to him and Canaan or Canaan as a lot of

Americans say or can say as it doesn't matter what you call it got appeared to Abraham there and then he speaks of the one who appears to him in the bush as an angel as a messenger and yet the presence of the messenger in the bush meant you had to take your shoes off.

Why? Because there's a there's a tiny little you know 16 square foot. I don't know how big the bush was let's say yeah yeah 80 square foot. Yeah, plot of land on Sinai that is holy, no, because although God appeared as a messenger, God and the messenger are both Yahweh.

At the same time You have angel capital A And then you have him refer to the angel at Sinai. What Stephen doing as he keeps using this word. They know that it was God at Sinai, But that God has always communicated himself by means of his word. And that when God communicates by means of his word, His training us to see that God, the Word is God, but is also from God.

Just as John will tell us in John chapter 1. God the Word is from, before the beginning. In the beginning he already was and God the Word was toward God facing God and a Most English translation. Say with and God, the word was God. And so, all of these times when God makes display of himself in communicating the word, not always, with a being who is an angel, who is an angel, but many times a display of God himself, who refers to himself as Yahweh.

We saw it even with the display of three at once. Didn't we when God came and told Abraham, what he was about to do to Sodom and there was the one and the two who were sent and we can't preach that, that whole sermon. But you see that? Stephen was not making up something new is just following what they should have known from their own Bibles.

Just like Jesus says, to the Sadducees who don't believe in the resurrection and he says, is this not why you are mistaken? Because you don't understand your Bibles and you don't understand the power of God.

God the Word and God the incarnate word. Now occupy the throne together, The people had rejected God and they had rejected the Word and they had rejected. The Holy Spirit, verses 51 through 53, you stiff necked and uncircumcised and heartened ears. You always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did so do you which of the prophets did your father's?

Not persecute. And so not only have they rejected God, the Word, which was how Moses had the word to begin with, Jesus, to speak anachronistically before his incarnation delivered, it to him. But they also rejected, resisted God, the Spirit who spoke by the prophets which are the prophets. Did your fathers not persecute?

They killed those who foretold the coming of the just one of whom. You now have become betrayers and murderers, and even the phrase, the just one reminds us. That Jesus is God the righteous. That's why Second Corinthians. 5:21, God made him. Who knew? No sin? Who is that? He's the just one to be sin for us.

Why? So that in him, we might become the righteousness of whom the righteousness of the greatest of the creatures. No, the righteousness of a perfect man, even then, no, and righteousness, that is infinitely, greater a righteousness. That is a righteousness that will stand, not just for one, man, but for a multitude of men, and you could not exhaust.

That's why it'd be careful with the name. Limited atonement Say, particular because there's unlimited worth. So that in him we could become the righteousness of God. He's the just one and now he's the glorified one. Is the one who sits and Majesty on high. They hear Stephen saying you are the rejecters of God, You are rejecters of God, the word you are, rejecters of God, the Spirit and your murderers of the incarnate.

God, When they hear these things are cut to the heart but he being full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And so, he sees the glory of God, the Son in both ways, the glory of that display of his divine nature, whatever that is that he's able to see by the Spirit and the glory of the resurrected ascended and throned and now standing to receive his servant.

What does he see in heaven? He sees what ASAP saw. He sees the glory of the one who never the less is continually with him, who guides him by the count, by his counsel and afterward. He will receive him into glory and he quotes. Jesus, Jesus says, Father into thy hands.

I commit my spirit, but Steven says, Lord, Jesus receive my spirit. Why? Because the God of Psalm 73, the God to whom Jesus in his humanity committed. His spirit is God, the Son every bit. As much as He's got the Father and God, the Spirit. Stephen isn't saying someone less than he whom Asap was looking forward.

To being received into heaven. Someone less than he whom of whom Asap said, whom have I in heaven, but you, and there is no one else on earth, besides you that I nothing else. I on earth that I desire besides you was Steven full of the Holy Spirit at the point of his death disagreeing with ASAP.

Of course, not Jesus. Who is God the Word Jesus who is God in the bush? Jesus who is God on the mountain is God of Psalm 73 who receives our spirits, their Christian, When you believe in Jesus Christ as God who died for you, you believe that there will be resurrected glorified arms extended to you and eyes to look into because God has become a man.

Not only to die for you but to receive you, I don't know what souls can do. Without bodies. They can see and they can speak and they can sing. There's a lot of stuff. They're doing, They're not inactive the body rests in the grave. The soul is very active, But one day, even your glorified body will be received by him too.

Jesus is God. The Word Jesus is God. The receiver of spirits. And Jesus as God, the forgiver of sins, Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice. Lord do not charge them with the sin on another occasion. Many of these say men would say, who can forgive sin?

But God alone that was the point, wasn't it? Jesus's science. Testified that he was God, Steven signs testified that Jesus was God. And so, when Stephen is praying, even for those Jews who were murdering him, as Jesus did, as Paul did he prays to Jesus, praise to the Lord, the forgiver of sins.

So even as Scripture now has replaced the signs, You don't test the apostolicity of my preaching. Based on whether I've cast out demons or gotten people up out of wheelchairs, you have a completed Bible and you test the apostolicity of my preaching, by its conformity, to the scripture. But even as Scripture has replaced, the signs has not the apostolic message.

Remained. The same Jesus is both Lord and Christ, The living God against whom you had sinned and rebelled took on our humanity in order to welcome sinners just like you to himself, whatever you have done until this point receive the welcome of Jesus Christ. Now rest upon him and receive him alone as your Savior.

And you will be received by him in glory, on the basis of his, having atone for your sin, and his righteousness. Being your worthiness through a different ages and covenant administrations. He made preparations for himself to come and promises that he himself would come. And now he, the incarnate Word has come and lived and died and risen again.

And there is His glory. In the third heaven, now twice in his divinity and in his humanity and everyone who calls upon his name will be saved because that's what he's poured out. His spirit to do to use his word to convince those, whom his spirit is making a life that he is the forgiver of sins.

And the receiver of souls, come to him. Have your sins forgiven and know that when you pass from this world he who has loved your soul from eternity will receive you to himself for eternity. Amen. Let's pray.

Oh, Lord Jesus. You who made all things, you who even by your spirit sustained, the brand new creation that you spoken to existence and have. Now, poured out your spirit that those who are from the new creation would be in you by faith and looking for the new heavens and the new earth, O, Lord, Jesus our Creator, our Redeemer, our King and our God grant the ongoing work of your spirit to continue that part of your saving, which you have appointed to our age.

In this church that you gather from glory, have mercy on us. And grant that this congregation of your visible, church would be full of those who do not reject the truth about you from your work. But that we would have circumcised heart and ears. As it were not just baptized bodies but baptized hearts and ears as it were so that everything that we do would not be done.

Merely humanly, but by your spirit. And with your power unto, your glory for unending ages, which we ask in your name. Lord Jesus. Amen.