

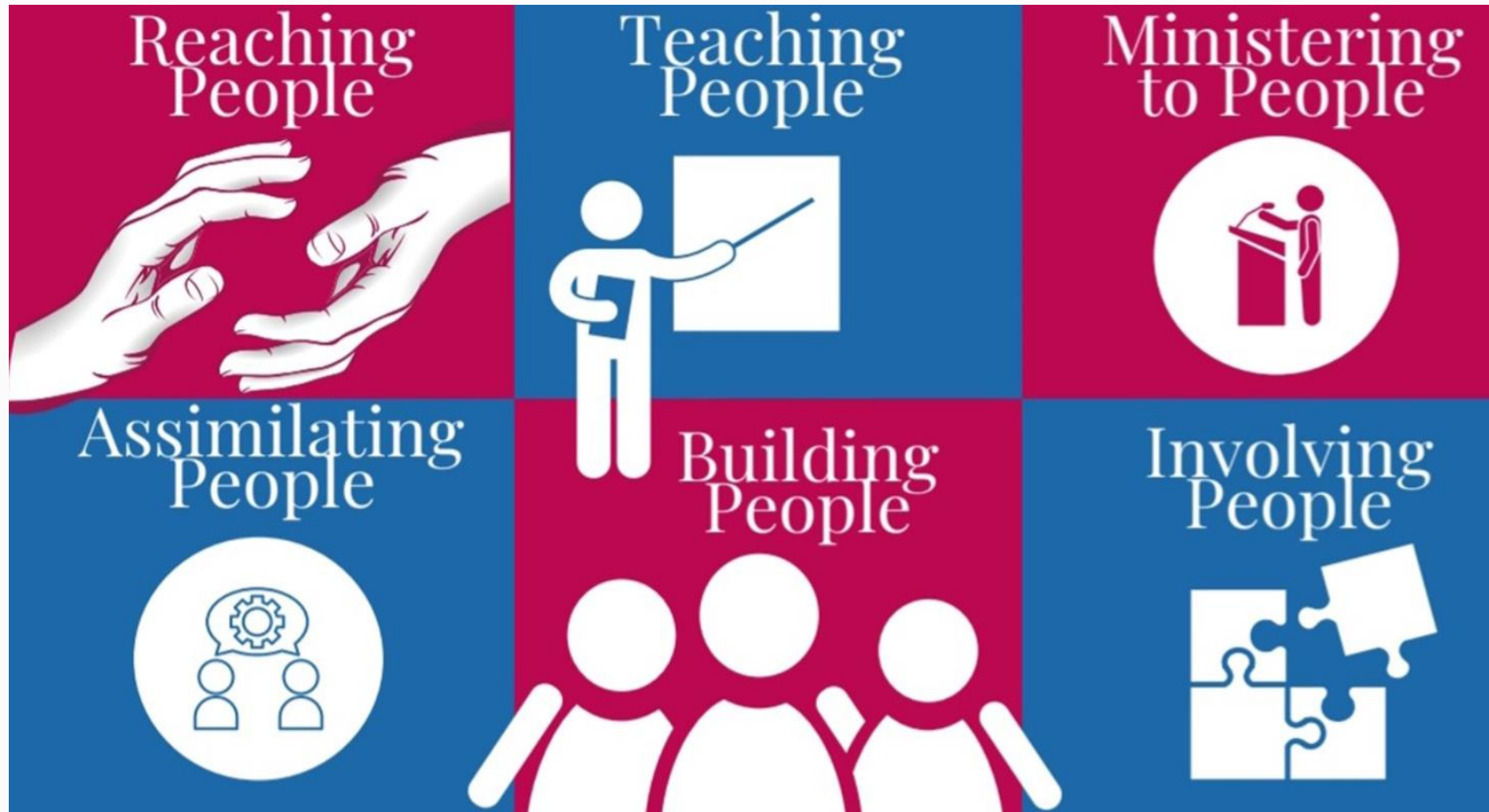


Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 4 September 28, 2025

REMEMBERING GOD'S
FAITHFULNESS

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalms 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalms 119:105**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

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SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

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- Bible Basis: Acts 7:2-4, 8-10, 17, 33-34, 45-47, 53
- Bible Truth: Stephen spoke to the council on the history of God's faithfulness.
- Memory Verse: VERSE: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: STUDY Stephen's proclamation before the council in which he reminded the Jews of God's faithfulness through the ages and their disregard of God's Law; REFLECT on the meaning of beliefs and a willingness to stand firm in life-threatening circumstances; and COMMIT to stand for beliefs about God in all circumstances.
- Background Scriptures: Acts 7:1-53 & 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 - Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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Acts 7:2-4, 8-10, 17, 33-34, 45-47, 53 KJV

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3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

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Acts 7:2-4, 8-10, 17, 33-34, 45-47, 53 KJV

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

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Acts 7:2-4, 8-10, 17, 33-34, 45-47, 53 KJV

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Stephen. Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to serve the church as the first deacons. Because the Scriptures he uses in his defense are from the Septuagint (i.e., from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, rather than the original Hebrew), Stephen was most likely a Hellenist Jew. He preached Christ with wisdom and power, which angered the religious establishment. As a result, Stephen became the church's first martyr.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: Students will learn that people will defend
against all criticism of their beliefs, even if their life is
in danger.

INTRODUCTION

Stephen's Irritating Speech

Following the release of the apostles in Acts 5, the message of Christ continued to spread with power. The apostles chose seven men to serve, including Stephen, who were filled with the Spirit and wisdom. Today's lesson highlights some of Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin after his arrest. He was charged with speaking blasphemy against God, His temple, and Moses. Stephen's response does not directly answer the Sanhedrin's charges; rather, he turns their charges against them and explains how they have rejected God. In addition to being full of the Spirit, Stephen was well acquainted with the Scriptures and the history of Israel. This made a powerful combination as he spoke before the Sanhedrin.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will learn how Stephen spoke critically and directly to his accusers, the Sanhedrin council.

I. THE LORD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Acts 7:2-4, 8

While Stephen is accused of being a blasphemer and an apostate from the Jewish faith, he refers to Abraham as "our father Abraham," counting himself among the faithful. Stephen begins his discourse with the call of Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith. God calls Abraham out of Mesopotamia, which was filled with idol worship. Abraham's initial move was to Haran, where he remained until his father died five years later. From there, he moved to Canaan. He was promised a son and given a covenant which was sealed with circumcision. When Isaac was born, he was circumcised on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, who was the father of the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. God was faithful to the promise he made to Abraham that he would have a multitude of descendants.

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I. THE LORD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Acts 7:2-4, 8

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

Stephen has been falsely accused of blasphemy (6:13). The high priest, acting as the leader of the Sanhedrin, demanded to know whether the accusations were true or not (7:1). What follows in the rest of Chapter 7 is Stephen's response. Although Stephen's speech in Acts 7 has often been referred to as his speech before the Sanhedrin, it is more than that - it is his restatement of the teachings that have caused much irritation and resentment. It is notable that although Stephen would disagree with his audience, he began his speech with great deference to his hearers. He started by reminding them that they were his Jewish "brothers" and showed respect to the members of the Sanhedrin by referring to them as "fathers." The elders of Israel were thought of as fathers who ruled the nation.

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The opening words, "the God of glory" (Gk. theos tes doxes, the-AHS tays DOKsays), or the God who revealed Himself, are an implied answer to the accusation of blaspheming God. It is no accident that Stephen describes God as such, for His glory is seen in His self-manifestation, which was usually connected to the temple. Alexander gives an excellent explanation of the phrase as: "The God of glory, not merely the glorious [wonderful] God, or the God worthy to be glorified (Psalm 29:1; Revelation 4:11), but more specifically, that God who sensibly revealed himself of old, which is a standing sense of glory ... in the Old Testament." It is the God of Glory who appeared (Gk. optanomai, op-TAHno-my) or caused Himself to be seen. Thus Stephen identifies himself with the religious faith of his audience.

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He then quickly moves into his survey of patriarchal history by quoting Genesis 12:1, God's call to Abraham to leave land and relatives and travel to a land to which He would direct him. God revealed Himself to Abraham in His full glory, even in a pagan land. Although Genesis 12:1 is set in the context of Abraham's residency in Haran, Stephen placed the call in an earlier context when Abraham lived in Ur before ever leaving for Haran (Genesis 11:31), a conclusion one could draw from Genesis 15:7. By thus stressing that the call came to Abraham at the very beginning, Stephen implicitly made the point that God was in control of Abraham's entire movement. Stephen must have understood that the words of God to Terah in Genesis 11:31 were similar to those in Genesis 12:1.

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I. THE LORD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

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In obedience to God, Abraham with his father Terah left the land of Chaldea (the same as Mesopotamia) and resided in Haran. Abraham promptly and cheerfully obeyed God. He did not know where he was going (Hebrews 11:8), but at the call of God he set forth promptly and willingly. We ought to learn a lesson from Abraham. When God distinctly speaks to us, whatever He may bid us do, at whatever cost we may be required to obey, it is only fitting for us to comply instantly and cheerfully. From Haran, God called Abraham into "this land where you are now living" (v. 4).

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**I. THE LORD'S PROMISES TO
ABRAHAM**

Acts 7:2-4, 8

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

Verse 8 is a transition verse, showing the beginnings of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and leading into the history of the patriarchs. The covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14) implies the begetting (Gk. gennao, geh-NAH-oh) or fathering of children, and the circumcision of Isaac confirms that God kept His promise to give descendants to Abraham (Genesis 21:4). Stephen moved quickly through the patriarchal history using the motif of circumcision, from Isaac to Jacob to the twelve patriarchs. The stage was now set for the next step in Stephen's promise-fulfillment pattern: the story of Joseph.

II. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH JOSEPH

Act 7:9-10

As he continues the history of God's work in Israel, Stephen then describes the story of Joseph. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt. However, God accomplishes His purposes in spite of them.

II. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH JOSEPH

Act 7:9-10

God was with Joseph and delivered him from his troubles. He found favor in the Pharaoh's sight and was placed in a position of authority. In turn, God used Joseph's position to deliver the patriarchs in a time of famine. The patriarchs sojourned in Egypt, which was a fulfillment of God's proclamation that they would be sojourners in a land that was not their own (vv. 6-7), God was faithful to every word He had spoken.

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II. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH JOSEPH

Act 7:9-10

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Stephen recounts the story of Joseph-Joseph's being sold into Egypt out of envy (Gk. zeloo, zay-LOH-oh) or boiling hatred and anger by his brothers, his deliverance from affliction and rise to power in Egypt, the two visits of his brothers in the time of famine, and finally the descent of Jacob's whole clan into Egypt (vv. 9-15). Although Joseph suffered much in Egypt, God was with him (v. 9) even in his afflictions (Gk. thlipsis, TH-LEEP-sees). The word for "afflictions" means pressure or being pressed together, and metaphorically oppression, distress, and anything which causes one to feel pressured. Stephen's story of Joseph shows that God could not be limited to the temple. He was rejected and cast aside by his brothers, but God revealed himself to Joseph, even in Egypt. Although the Genesis narrative has much to say about Joseph's suffering, Stephen chooses not to dwell on this, instead stressing God's presence with Joseph.

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God fulfilled His promises through Joseph, delivering Israel from famine by his hand and granting him "favour and wisdom." This word "favour" (Gk. *charis*, KHA-rees) is also translated "grace" in other places in the New Testament (Luke 2:40; Ephesians 2:8). It is God's unmerited favor, which was given to Joseph in the court of Pharaoh. Though Joseph was characterized by wisdom and favor, his brothers were marked by jealousy, which led them to sell Joseph into Egypt (v. 9). Significantly, Stephen did not identify them as Joseph's "brothers" but rather as "the patriarchs," the fathers of Israel.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

God's Favor

Wisdom is a particular sign of God's favor to His faithful disciples and would characterize Moses as well later in Stephen's speech (7:22). God gave Joseph favor with people, which allowed him to rise in the eyes of Pharaoh, who established him as ruler over Egypt and the royal household (v. 10).

III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

Act 7:17, 33-34, 45-47

Stephen then touches on the story of Moses, who fulfilled God's promise to deliver Israel. The Exodus and the establishment of the tabernacle were major points in Jewish history. Stephen describes the way that Moses was commissioned and that his coming was the fulfillment of promise. Again, God intervened in Israel's history to show His kindness and faithfulness. The Israelites were delivered from bondage in Egypt, sustained in the wilderness, and given the Law; yet they rejected God by rejecting Moses (e.g., Numbers 14:12, Exodus 16:3).

III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

Act 7:17, 33-34, 45-47

After the Exodus, the Lord established the tabernacle with Israel. The Jews accused Stephen of speaking against the temple because they equated the temple with the presence of God. However, Stephen demonstrates that the presence of God was with His people long before the temple was built.

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III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

Act 7:17, 33-34, 45-47

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt. 33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

God never fails to act on time. The descendants of Jacob continued to live in Egypt and multiply until the time was near for the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. It was not the divine plan that Israel remain in Egypt surrounded by paganism, so God permitted the Israelites to be enslaved and maltreated until they would be ready and glad to leave Egypt. Eighty years before their departure, their deliverer Moses was born. Preserved from death in infancy, God later prepared him for the momentous and monumental task with forty years of royal training in leadership in Pharaoh's palace. It was followed by forty years of learning patience and submission in the wilderness. As the time of promise was drawing near, God was at work. This was the promise of Abraham that Stephen already quoted.

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III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

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Stephen recounts Moses' encounter with God in Exodus 3:1-10. God commanded Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground (v. 33, Exodus 3:5). Stephen's inclusion of this detail may have been a subtle reminder to his hearers that there was holy ground elsewhere, far from the temple in Jerusalem. God's self-revelation was and is not confined to Jewish soil in particular or anywhere in general. In other words, no place on earth is innately holy. The message Moses received was that of God's faithfulness to His promise to the patriarchs and His awareness of the distress of their descendants in Egypt. God was about to deliver them through the hand of Moses.

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III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

Act 7:17, 33-34, 45-47

45 Which also our father that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; 46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him an house.

Stephen replies to the charges of blasphemy against the temple by showing that the Israelites worshiped God in the wilderness in the tabernacle, which was God's pattern for the temple (a later construction of Solomon's). God gave the guidelines and pattern to Moses. It remained the place of worship after the conquest under Jesus (Gk. Iesous, ee-ye-SOOS). This name means "God is salvation." While in the New Testament it is used most often for Christ, it is also a Greek transliteration of Joshua, the captain of the Israelites who brought the nation into the Promised Land.

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III. THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES

Act 7:17, 33-34, 45-47

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From his time onwards, the tabernacle remained in the land, passed down from generation to generation until the time of David. The word for tabernacle is skenoma (Gk. SKAY-no-mah), which is a pitched tent or booth. By highlighting its mobile nature, Stephen clearly implies that the true spiritual worship of God is not confined to allocation or material buildings, and that in the same way that God was worshiped in the wilderness before there was a temple, so He may be worshiped now without a temple.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

House of Worship

David desired to build a temple, but God was perfectly satisfied with the tabernacle; He did not want David to build Him a house. Instead, He would raise up a successor to David who would build such a house (Gk. oikos, OY-kose), which is a fixed residence or permanent dwelling. Solomon was that successor who built "a house" for God (v. 47).

IV. ISRAEL'S REJECTION

Act 7:53

In his discourse, Stephen shows the Sanhedrin that they have been resisting God from the beginning. The Jews were quick to identify themselves as children of Abraham, but they failed to demonstrate the faith of Abraham. They felt that their biological ties to Abraham took precedence over their personal faith in his God.

IV. ISRAEL'S REJECTION

Act 7:53

The Jewish council was guilty of the same sin theirfore fathers committed: rejecting those sent by God. Stephen turns the council's own charges against them. They were the sons of the murderers of the prophets and they were following in their father's footsteps by killing Jesus.

IV. ISRAEL'S REJECTION

Act 7:53

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

The whole purpose of Stephen's speech now becomes clear. He ends with a declaration of Israel's rebellion. By rejecting Christ, the Jewish leaders had filled up the measure of their fathers. Stephen's historical narrative had illustrated Israel's constant rejection of God's chosen leaders that climaxed in their treatment of Jesus. In its earliest days as a nation, Israel disobeyed the law of God, although it had received the law by the disposition (Gk. *diatage*, dee-ah-tah-GAY) or ordinance of angels. This is nowhere mentioned in the biblical text but is found in rabbinical sources. Moses, Joseph, and the prophets are all types of and pointers to Christ in that they were sent by God and rejected by their own people. Stephen pointed out to his hearers that they had already rejected and killed Christ and they needed to repent.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Resisting God

Though the Jewish council had received the Law and had the presence of God with them, they continued to resist God and those He sent. This was the ultimate example of the nation's unfaithfulness in spite of God's faithfulness to them.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will experience the faithfulness of God and share their experiences with others.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

The people of Israel had been rejecting God throughout the years despite His faithfulness to them. Rather than seeing the Law as a beginning, the Jews refused to accept anything new. They had become so entrenched in religious traditions that the Jews did not recognize the Truth when He came to them.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

As Christians filled with the Holy Spirit, we recognize that God does not reside in buildings. His Spirit is boundless. We have received the truth of God's Word in Jesus Christ. Like Stephen, we are to proclaim the truth of Christ in all circumstances. Stephen became the Church's first martyr because he witnessed to the truth. Like Stephen, let us remember God's faithfulness to His people throughout history, embrace the truth of Christ, and proclaim the truth boldly.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: Students will discover that Christians should commitment and live out their commitment for Christ at all times.

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STUDENT RESPONSES

Like Stephen, we should study the Scriptures and learn about the faithfulness of God. We should respect customs and traditions but not idolize them, nor should we become so fixated on them that we miss what God is doing today. Compare and contrast what it would mean to insist on traditions or being stubborn versus taking a legitimate stand for what is right because of a biblical principle.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

We pray for those who stand up for their beliefs in You. Thank You for
Your protection and care for believers who are able to share the
"Good News" of Christ.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

Next Sunday
October 5, 2025
Lesson 4
The Spirit is not For Sale
Acts 8:9-24