

Power to Witness in Word and Deed

The Book of Acts

Acts 7:1–19

Read Acts 6:8-15.

1. Summarize the charges that are brought against Stephen. (6:11, 13, 14)
2. Define blasphemy. Why do you think the Sanhedrin accuses Stephen of blasphemy?

Read Acts 7:1-19.

This is the first part of a very long speech that Stephen gives before the Sanhedrin: the Jewish ruling council. It may be helpful for context to go ahead and read the whole speech (7:1–53). As you do, notice how Stephen highlights the way Israel has rejected the deliverers and prophets God has sent to them.

3. Because of the way Stephen retells the story, by the end of the speech his listeners are furious (7:54, 57-60). What is his demeanor as he begins to speak? (6:15; 7:1–2a)
4. Stephen begins his history with a seldom used description of God. What is it and how does this immediately show the charge of blasphemy to be false? (v. 2;  * Ps. 29:1–3)
5. What promise of God to Abraham does Stephen highlight? (v. 5b;  Gen. 12:7; 17:8)
6. What obstacles prevent this promise from being fulfilled quickly? (vv. 5–6;  Gen. 15:1–8; 13–15)

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

7. Circumcision (v. 8) was an outward physical sign of the special covenantal relationship between God and Abraham and his descendants (📖 Gen. 17:1–14). It reminded them of God’s promises and their relationship with him. What else is it to remind them of? (Gen. 17:1, 9; Deut. 6:4–6)
8. After reviewing God’s covenant with Abraham, Stephen continues with the story of Joseph, who is the first in a long line of rejected rescuers.
 - a. Why was he rejected? (v. 9a)
 - b. How did this also happen to Jesus? (Jn. 11:45–48, 53; 12:9–11, 17–19)
9. How did Joseph rescue his people? (vv. 9b–15)

How does Jesus rescue his people? (Col. 1:13–14)
10. The descendants of Abraham were enslaved in Egypt for 400 years. What did God promise them? (v. 7)
11. In this first section (vv. 1–19), how is Stephen reminding his listeners that their God is not restricted to just one place?
12. What do we learn about God’s character throughout this portion of history, from the calling of Abraham up to the birth of Moses?
13. Think back over your own personal history. How does having a relationship with God, through Jesus, change the way you retell your personal history?