

A acts. 7

when.

- We don't have exact dates for the events in chapter 7.
- Most historians suggest the approximate dates of 33-35 AD.
- The end of Acts 6 sets up the events we read about in chapter 7.

characters.

- **Stephen** – A man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He was 1 of the 7 men chosen to care for the Hellenist widows at the beginning of chapter 6. At the end of chapter 6, he was arrested and falsely accused of disrespecting God's Law.
- **The High Priest and Council** – Jewish leaders who hated Jesus and His message.

where.

- Stephen's trial for blasphemy occurred in Jerusalem.

Notes

Reflection & Application

outline.

- STEPHEN'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL (7:1-53):

- + The high priest asked Stephen to respond to the accusations made against him (see chapter 6).
- + Stephen began his defense by recounting the history of the Jewish nation (Israel), beginning with Abraham.
- + Abraham left the land of the Chaldaeans for a new land promised to him by God.
- + Abraham's son was Isaac, Isaac's son was Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- + The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt until God led them out by the hand of Moses.
- + God sent 10 plagues on Egypt, He led Israel through the Red Sea, and was with them for 40 years in the wilderness.
- + Moses foretold God would send a prophet like himself to the Jews in the future. He instructed his people to listen that prophet when he arrived.
- + But the Israelites turned their hearts away from God and would not listen.
- + In the wilderness, God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was later replaced when Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem.
- + Stephen said the Temple served its purpose, but ultimately it was only ever meant to be the symbolic dwelling place of God.
- + God didn't dwell in temples made by the hands of men.
- + Stephen said this because he had been accused of speaking blasphemous words against the Temple (6:13).
- + The Temple was never meant to be a permanent fixture in the worship of the LORD.
- + Stephen accused the council of being rebels against God, just like their ancestors.
- + Their actions validated Stephen's accusation. Just like their fathers, who killed God's prophets, the Council members murdered the "Just One" (Jesus).
- + They claimed to worship the God who gave them their religious law, but in actuality they were fighting against Him and serving Satan.

STEPHEN IS MURDERED FOR HIS FAITH (7:54-60):

- + The council members were enraged by Stephen's words.
- + Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit and declared he could see "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.
- + The Council ran at Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and killed him with stones.
- + Just before dying, Stephen asked God not to hold his murderers accountable for their crimes.
- + Luke tells us Saul (Paul) was present for Stephen's murder and consented to the actions of the Council (7:58).

application.

- The truth stirs up anger, offense, and outrage in the hearts of people who hate hearing it.
- Just because a person is angry with you, "offended" by your words, or outraged by your arguments, doesn't necessarily mean you've done or said anything wrong.