

Stephen's address Pt. 2.

"Moses."

Acts 7:17-43.

Sundfay morning, January 17, 2010.

I. Why did Stephen dwell on Moses so long?

- A. Stephen spent seven verses on Abraham, and eight on Joseph, but he devoted 24 verses on the life of Moses.
- B. There was good reason, for Stephen was charged with "speaking blasphemy against this holy place and the law" and with saying "that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered unto us."
- C. Stephen has nothing but good to say about Moses. He holds him in the highest regard. There is no hint of despising Moses.
- D. Four objectives seem to flow from Stephen's treatment of Moses.
 1. To establish Stephen's high regard for Moses and so to deflect the charges brought against him.
 2. To further enlarge upon the theme that God's presence was not so much tied to the city and the temple in Jerusalem.
 - So he shows that the Lord was with His people while they were oppressed in Egypt.
 - He shows that the Lord was with Moses while he tended the sheep in the wilderness. Especially in the burning bush at Mount Sinai. So much so that the Lord calls that place "Holy Ground."
 3. To further enlarge on the theme of Israel's poor treatment of God's servants throughout her history.
 - Stephen makes much of the time when Moses was 40 yrs old and when he first went to visit his brethren in the assumption that his brethren would understand that God would deliver them by his hand. Vs. 25.
 - First Moses kills an Egyptian taskmaster, and the next day he tries to reconcile two Israelites who are at odds. But they thrust him aside and said to him: "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?" Vs. 26, 27.
 - Some 40 yrs later the Lord Himself would answer that question as He sent Moses back with His own power and authority as ruler and judge. Not withstanding this Moses would still suffer much rejection at the hand of his people.
 4. Finally Stephen pauses at the words of Moses as he said to Israel: "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from your brethren; Him you shall hear." Vs. 37, see also Deut 18:15.

Stephen seems to be focused on Moses' words "like unto me."

 - Moses was sent by God as the deliverer of God's people.

The Lord Jesus Christ was sent by God to deliver His people.
 - Moses had been attested by wonders and miraculous signs before the people.

The Lord Jesus Christ was attested by signs and wonders before the people.
 - Moses mediated the "living oracles" of the Old Covenant to the people.

The Lord Jesus Christ mediated "all the words of this life" of the New Covenant to His people.

- Moses suffered shame and rejection at the hands of his people.
The Lord Jesus Christ suffered shame and rejection at the hands of His people.
- There was no deliverance apart from the mediation of Moses for Israel.
There is no deliverance apart from the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ for God's people today.

II. Some Lessons gleaned from Stephen's treatment of Moses.

- A. "When the time of the promise drew near, which God had sworn to Abraham..."
1. Do not be discouraged at the slowness of the coming of the promise.
God is with His people in the midst of hardship and persecution.
 2. While Israel remained in Canaan in the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob some 200 years passed by, and they grew to about 70 people.
 3. In Egypt 200 or 400 more years would pass by and the nation would grow to 600,000 men of war; counting the elderly, the children and the women that would easily be 2-3 million people.
 4. And there was not a feeble one among them (Psalm 105:37), for the Egyptians had them on a great physical fitness program.
 5. In times of hardship humble yourself under God's mighty hand; surrender to Him, and let Him have His way in your life, while keeping the faith.
- B. "When Moses was forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brethren..."
We might miss an important point here due to a shift in meaning of the word visit.
1. In our culture the word has come to mean "to spend time with someone."
 2. In Old and New Testament usage it means to intervene on someone's behalf, or to make a difference in someone's life.
 - So Joseph, on his deathbed, told his brothers that in the future God would visit them and bring them out of Egypt. Genesis 50:24.
 - At the burning bush God told Moses that He was visiting Israel; that He had seen their affliction, and would deliver them. Ex. 3:16,17.
 - In Luke 1:67 Zacharias praises God saying: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people."
 - In Matt. 25:36, 43 the righteous and the wicked are blessed and condemned for "visiting" or "not visiting" the sick and imprisoned.
 3. Moses went to his brothers to make a difference and to intervene. What is the purpose of your visiting?
- C. "And now, come, I will send you to Egypt. This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'who made you a ruler and a judge?'" Acts 7:34,35.
The difference between the first and second visits of Moses to his brethren was:
1. On his first visit Moses visited his brethren, and he was going to make a Difference, thinking his brethren would understand.
 2. On his second visit God visited Moses' brethren, and made all the difference.
 3. On his first visit Moses' confidence was in himself and the calling he knew he had. He was a man "mighty in word and in deed." Acts 7:22
 4. On his second visit Moses was anything but confident and would not go unless the Lord Himself would do the work. Where is your confidence?