

## Outline

1. Stephen's speech
  1. Begins at Abraham
    1. Indicates that Abraham requested the move recorded in Gen. 11:31-32.
    2. The language is exactly the same as the command given in Gen. 12:1
  2. Egyptian captivity
  3. Deliverance by Moses
    1. Moses leaves Egypt because the people wouldn't listen
    2. Instead, Moses is the one to lead them out
  4. Rejecting Moses
    1. Moses spoke with God and delivered the "living oracles" to the people
    2. But, "in their hearts they turned back to Egypt" (Acts 7:39)
    3. God "turned and gave them up" (Acts 7:42)
  5. Continued rejection of God
    1. Their fathers rejected God and persecuted those whom God sent
    2. They have rejected Jesus and killed him
2. The furious response
  1. They "gnashed at him with their teeth"
  2. Stoned him to death
3. Stephen's calm response
  1. "I see the heavens opened" (Acts 7:56)
  2. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59)
  3. "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (Acts 7:60)

## Commentary

Stephen places the command to Abraham to leave his father's house during his time in Ur. The language is the same used in Genesis 12. It is possible that God gave the command

twice, thus prompting the first move (with his father) as well as the second move (after his father's death).

We can see the start of opposition to God's ways by the way that the Patriarchs sell Joseph into slavery.

Israel's relationship with Moses is almost uniformly described as antagonistic. It revolves around their rejection of him (Acts 7:27, 35, 38-39). This ends in God's rejection of them (Acts 7:42).

Finally, the fathers' rejection is completed in the rejection of God's Son by those people. The importance of things is emphasized in that the fathers killed those who merely foretold the coming of Jesus.

While the phrasing is not identical in the Greek, consider the different reactions that the people have in Acts 2:37; 5:33, and 7:54. In both passages, we read that the hearers were "cut to the heart." In Acts 2, the people respond positively to the what they hear. In this passage and in Acts 5:33, they are pushed to the point of violence. Stephen's statement in Acts 7:56 appears to be the thing that pushes them over the edge to actually committing violence against him.

### **Thought Questions**

Consider the following thought questions.

1. Why does Stephen begin his defense with Abraham?
2. Give at least three examples of Moses' rejection by the children of Israel.
3. Where does Stephen first foreshadow the coming of Jesus in his narrative?
4. How did the Jews "resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51)?
5. What lessons can we draw from this incident to help us in reaching the lost?