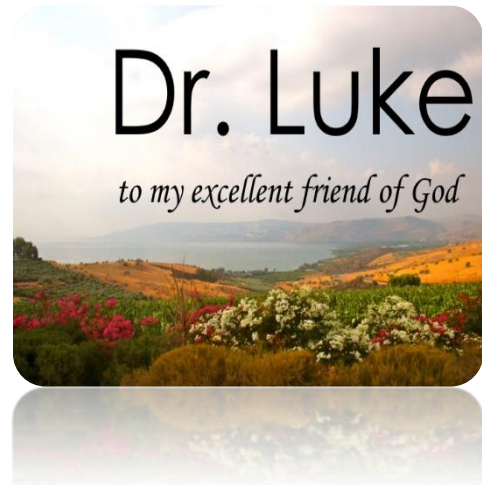


ACTS 7 vs 1

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We know Luke, the physician was a disciple of Paul, and we know these events are written in detail shortly after they occurred. Luke begins this book he made... by addressing Theophilus. From history, we know Theophilus was the third son of Annas, Caiaphas was the husband of the daughter of Annas; we also know papa Annas, exhibiting his finest nepotism, appointed all his sons to serve as high priest... until around 42AD, when king Agrippa and Bernice came to power... and replaced the household of Annas with suitors of their own. Sometime after, Luke wrote these stunning, arresting words which ended in the sudden martyrdom of Stephen...



¹ Then the high priest Theophilus said, Are these things so?

² And he said / Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit... in the confusion of the moment of his sudden arrest is promised by the Lord, the words to say, as he answers the probing question. Obviously, Stephen heard their fake accusations; and prompted by the Holy Spirit... point by point, Stephen boldly speaks,

Men, brothers, and fathers, listen;

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham / Stephen is inspired to speak first about the father of faith,

when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran / **Xappav**, **Haran** is an important crossroads, commercial city of northern Syria, about 20 miles south of Edessa, on the Balikh river, a tributary of the Euphrates; it is there, Abraham's father died,

³ And said to him, Leave your country, and your relatives and come to the land I show you.

⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and settled in Charran: and from there, when his father was dead, God moved him to this land / notice the demonstrative pronoun used 7 times by Stephen to answer the false charges of his accusers. It seems Stephen could still hear the rabid ranting of his fraudulent indicters ringing in his ears: this man... this holy place... this Jesus... this place... screamed in disdain... not only based on their erroneous assumptions, but also on their faulty understanding of their own traditions -- something even the faithful in Christ Jesus... must guard against,

where you now dwell / Stephen was a Hellenist, whose family history, whether or not it was connected to the history of the house of Judah, certainly his faith was, while his upbringing came from the Grecian cultural frame; so consider, I bet Stephen had an accent... only adding to the irritation of his already inflamed religious critics!

⁵ And He the Glory of God did not give him an inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on / it seems, not one square foot of property... was put in a box with a ribbon on it:

yet **He promised** / the Glory of God gave His word and His pledge,

that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child / and hurried along in the Spirit, Stephen fast-forwards those gathered, with a compressed version of familiar histories, told and retold weekly in the synagogues.

⁶ And God spoke in this way, That his seed would be strangers in a foreign land; and that they would enslave them, and treat them badly for four hundred years.

⁷ And the nation to whom they will be enslaved I will judge, said God:

and after that they will come forth,

and serve me in this place / the word is: **topos**... it simply means: place... nothing mystical about it. **Point #1:** Stephen full of the Spirit, begins to correct their inaccurate, sloppy charges. If anyone in the 21st century wants to try and identify the location: this place... mentioned; all we know from biblical history is that Abraham spent his days mainly near 3 centers: **1.** Bethel, in the Samarian highlands; **2.** Hebron, south of Bethlehem; and **3.** Beer-sheba, further south. After going to Egypt... Abraham returned to Bethel.

Where was Abraham when God spoke to him? The location is unknown; any attempt at an answer is purely speculative. But I am sure, as Stephen was sure, while addressing his accusers... they all knew Abraham was not standing in the halls of the Sanhedrin there in Jerusalem; and I am also confident, as Stephen was confident to speak... all of them knew more clearly, where Abraham was... more clearly than any of us... separated by 8,000 miles... and 2,000 years: all these men and brethren... understood Stephen's point!

they will come forth, and serve me in this place.

⁸ And He also 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 / : **zeloo**; the 11 brothers had jealous zeal, but no knowledge of what the LORD God was doing; next Stephen is inspired to focus on squabbling brothers; and Joseph who lived the promises of God on the streets of life where God led him -- not as a priest, not a monastic; not an institutional cleric. Of Joseph they sang **Psalm 105: whose feet they hurt with fetters; until iron entered his soul.** He needed shoes fit for the journey God was taking him on **to Egypt:**

but God was with him,

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¹⁰ And rescued him from all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; who made him governor over Egypt and over his whole **house** / **oikos**. **Point #2:** 5 times Stephen uses this word. And if we pay attention to Stephen, we also have opportunity to change our thinking... about some traditional beliefs we might hold.

¹¹ Now there came a famine over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan / a massive food crisis, and great suffering: and our ancestors found no food supplies.

¹² **But when Jacob** / who, for most of his life -- 100 years of his life, knew how to be a cheat, and work deals... to deceive and grab what belonged to others... like folks now days, until he met his match wrestling with an emissary sent by God, who forced Jacob to limp... the rest of his life; though he walked with a new name: **Israel**, **Isra = ruled + El = God; ruled by God**; Jacob was Israel, and Jacob was Hebrew, but Jacob was not Jewish.

when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors first.

¹³ And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers; and the relatives of Joseph were made known to Pharaoh.

¹⁴ Then Joseph sent for his father Jacob calling for him, and all his relatives, 75 souls.

¹⁵ So Jacob went down to Egypt, and he, and our ancestors died there,

¹⁶ and were carried back to Shechem, and were laid in the tomb Abraham bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor of Shechem.

¹⁷ But when the time of the promise drew near, that God had promised to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

¹⁸ till another king arose / most likely, ruling the upper Nile of Egypt, who did not know Joseph.

¹⁹ He dealt deceitfully with our relatives, and oppressed our ancestors, making them abandon their young children, so they would not live.

²⁰ At that time Moses was born, and he was handsome in God's sight, and was fed in the **house** of his father three months / the 4th patriarch of faith that Stephen mentions to refute his accusers, while he educates men and women of faith; the 2nd time **oikos** is used in this chapter:

²¹ And when he was put outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him, and nourished him as her own son; / after he was set afloat on the Nile in a little reed basket,

²² **And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians** / some in the church have a difficult time with this verse; preferring to think, God just thwacks people who magically become spiritual.

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Dr. Dallas Willard said, it is tragic that a world that knows things like: one geometry, and one chemistry -- gifts created by God to learn which benefit all people every day; yet, they haven't learned convincingly from the church... that there is one Lord,

and was mighty in words and in deeds / this verse is always interesting, since we have the impression Moses stammered like crazy; evidently, if he did... those deficits did not inhibit his influence to reach the world, even to our generation; the perceived inabilities of Moses... did not matter to the Lord.

Charlotte Elliot was an invalid most of her life; late in life, she lamented God had wonderfully used so many and in frustration someone always took care of her, so she asked: what can I do? That night the words of that great hymn poured to her mind... and for 200 years **Just As I Am**, has been sung around the world.

Nick Vujcic from Thousand Oaks, California... reaching the world in our days... featured on Russian TV; Nick who was born with no arms nor legs, says – I don't need to know God's plan for my life; I just need to know He has one... **also mighty in words and in deeds**. God can use anyone with a heart who wants to take the journey with Him! He already said Go! I send you... not terribly complicated, is it?

Joni and Friends in our generation, powerful in word and deed. Though we never met, I remember the day a group of us put together her first office in Woodland Hills, California. 1979

23 And when he was forty years old, he knew in his heart to visit his brothers and sisters - the children of Israel / so Moses knew he had a heart...

24 And seeing one of them mistreated, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and struck the Egyptian:

25 for he supposed his brothers would understand how God by his hand would deliver them: but they did not understand.

26 And the next day he showed himself to them as they fought, and would have set them at one again, saying, Men, you are brothers, why do you wrong one another? / Moses saw the need for unity; sort of like the church now days, supposed to be brothers, yet scrapping for superiority;

27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away saying, Who made you a ruler and a referee over us? / resentment and rejection, resulting from injured egos, always critical... always incapable of seeing any familial resemblance...

28 Will you kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday?

29 Hearing this, Moses fled, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he became father of two sons.



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³⁰ And when forty years ended, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai... an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush / for 40 years, Moses was on the run; and one day, this place is uncertain; but check out Mount Sinai in Arabia.

³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight: and as he approached to look at it, the voice of the LORD came to him / whatever he saw was attractive, and caused him to pay attention,

³² Saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and dared not behold / he dared not to look further.

³³ Then the LORD said to him, Put off your sandals from your feet: for **the place** / the topos... where you stand is **holy ground** What? That pile of rocks... absent even any polished brass to dazzle? What? There, on the dusty mountainside in a desert in Arabia? without discordant choristers singing off key? Yes! **Point #3**: Stephen reminds his accusers: that place was holy – only that place in the Bible is given that description.



The LORD said...

³⁴ I saw the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and I heard their groaning, and am come to deliver them. And now, come, I will send you to Egypt.

Stephen says... using their word: probably repeating with the same intensity... **Point #4**:

³⁵ **This Moses** **whom they refused**, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge, a referee? this same one God sent to be a ruler and **deliverer** / this word is only used once in the NT, here, meaning: **to release**, to liberate; and that is what Moses did, but not in his own strength or ingenuity,

by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush / God is not bothered by his children not fully knowing who is who... especially if they observe a bush in the desert that is burning, but not being consumed; if this is an angel, or the Lord, or the Spirit of the Lord; God is not bothered. THEY know who THEY are! Notice, Moses did not say he saw a pink elephant or a chartreus spotted monkey.

³⁶ He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the **Red sea**, and in the wilderness forty years / in the region **Esau** – **the Red relocated**; so Moses was no one-night stand... no flash in the pan, miracle-working side show.

JESUS it is YOU The Mountain of Moses – Sinai in Arabia The Love of God