

## ACTS#5CHAPTER 7 STEPHENS MESSAGE

Acts 7:35-53

Last week we saw Stephen stand up for Christ  
And then be taken out and stoned.  
Today were looking at the words  
That Stephen shared which cost him his life.

We hear a lot about the Human DNA.  
Giant companies like *Celoron* are mapping and decoding it,  
That our DNA is simply a long string of four different molecules —  
Guanine, Adenine, Cytosine, and Thymine.  
Which work in combination to form all of life, as we know it.  
What is interesting is that I have discovered my human genetic is not so unique.  
That crazy mouse that running around the basement of my house  
That I'm trying to catch,  
Share 82% of my DNA structure - excluding the squeak.  
98% of my genetic structure is shared with a chimpanzee- excluding the tail.  
And the genetic difference between me and you and  
the person sitting next to you is only .0003%.

Stephen was showing these Jewish leaders that their DNA  
Was no different than their for- father in the history of Israel  
Their fore-fathers had been killing the prophets and  
And stoning the ones who brought the good news.  
And now they had done the same,

Jesus came to show us that our importance,  
Is not our DNA which we share with worms, plants, and bacteria that makes us special,  
But the fact that we are made in the image of God.  
And because of ADAM and Eve's DNA  
we share a fallen nature.  
These Jewish leaders were worse then their fore-fathers  
Who killed the prophet, because they had killed the very son of God.

Lets look at Stephens message and its application for us today.

### I. THEY MISUNDERSTOOD THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL ROOTS

This is relevant because Israel was the only nation privileged  
to have the Glory of God as a part of its inheritance.

He opens speaking of the God of Glory

**"Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father  
Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. Acts 7:2**

God gave Israel his glory, that means his presence, his person.

Paul writes of it to

**The people of Israel, theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the  
covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Romans  
9:4**

But they misused and mislaid it.  
But alas the glory of God had departed  
First form the Tabernacle I Samuel 4:19-22

And then from the Temple Ezek 10:4,18

But, Now God's glory had come to his son John 1:14

**The Word become flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**John 1:14**

Stephen was telling them that

When they rejected Christ ,

They had rejected his God's glory.

I wondered today as we look at the massive decline in worship

The loss of membership across the denominations.

The empty pews in our churches.

Have we lost the glory of God?

America was founded with the belief that we were under the

Authority and glory of a supernatural power

Which enable us to decipher what is good and evil,

What laws should be put into place

Which govern our modern society.

The founders of the first permanent settlement in Virginia,  
the pioneers who established the Massachusetts Bay Colony

Our General in the war for independence

And our first Centennial congress moved to organize their government and lives  
around the principles of a Holy God,

and some form of religious freedom based on God's word

But where is that wonder of a Holy God today?

Where is the personal belief in this one true God who can save us?

Where is the belief in the Glory of God's justice that holds us accountable

Personally for our sins and socially for the sins against our brothers?

Abraham believed the promise of God

Of a messiah to come,

and it was this faith that saved him.

The Jews prided themselves in being his Children.

But they confused physical lineage with spiritual experience

They depended on their national DNA rather

than their personal faith to save them.

They cared more about physical circumcision,

Than about spiritual commitment and

an inner relationship with God.

They had cluttered Abraham's faith with man-made traditions

That made salvation a matter of good works,

**“Watch out for these dogs those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh. Philippians 3:2-3**

Physical ritual had taken the place of the spiritual reality.

Have we substituted coming into the church

With coming into Christ?

## II. THEY REJECTED THEIR GOD- SENT DELIVERERS 9-36

Both Joseph and Moses were rejected as deliverers the first time  
But were accepted the second time.

Joseph's brothers hated him and sold him into slavery

Later he became their deliverer.

**<sup>13</sup>On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. Acts 7:13**

Israel rejected Moses when he first tried to deliver them

from Egyptian bondage and he had to flee for his life. Exodus 2:11-22

But the second time they accepted him as deliverer.

**<sup>35</sup>"This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. Acts 7:35**

They did the same with Jesus

They rejected him as a false leader

Crucified him the first time,

But when he comes again,

They will recognize and receive him,

**Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the people of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. Revelation. 1:7**

In spite of what they did to His son,

God has not cast away his people.

In spite of all you may have done,

God has not cast you away,

But he comes again today,

To knock at your heart's door

And seek entrance to be your king

To be your savior

Will you believe with Abraham

In this precious Son of God?

**The Sanhedrin third sins was**

## III. THEY DISOBEYED THEIR LAW 37-43

They accused Stephen of speaking against the sacred Law of Moses,

God at Mount Sinai, gave the Law, his Holy Word, to his church

Thru the mediation of the Holy Spirit and angel.

But history reveals that Israel no sooner had received the Law

then they disobeyed

**<sup>40</sup>They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt--we don't know what has happened to him! Acts 8:40**

The Jews had gotten into the habit of worshiping idols in Egypt.

They even brought them along with them in the wilderness.

**That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. Acts 7:40-41**

God repeatedly disciplined His people  
 He opened the earth to swallow them up,  
 He sent plagues of sickness upon them,  
 He sent deadly snakes amongst them.

The prophets preached

**You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Babylon. Acts 7:43**

Finally he led them off to Babylon into slavery,  
 Where in their total misery they were finally cured of idolatry.

God is not some idle bystander confused by the events of our world.  
 He is alive and involved.

What slavery must God allow for America,  
 Until the pain is so great that once again we return to the living God,  
 Must we suffer a total collapse of our financial system?  
 Must we be owned by a foreign nations?  
 Must our English language be held hostage to four letters words  
 And f- bombs, such that our dictionaries and classroom text  
 will be filled with this filth  
 like the music lyrics and rap airways are today?

Friends we in America must wake up and cast off its filth,  
 Lest God allows the slavery of moral depravity,  
 The bottomless pit of sexual rottenness to  
 destroy any semblance of normal family life,  
 Until our children are so damaged psychologically and spiritually  
 That they are beyond repair.  
 raping one another, mindlessly killing one another,  
 with gang fights, and drunken binges, a common occurrence.

The reason God hated pagan religions  
 And wanted Israel to destroy them.  
 Was their use of obscene and unnatural sex  
 With their Male and female prostitutes in the temples  
 And their brutal abuse of offering children  
 as a sacrifice to Molech, their god of fire.  
 Stephen said:.

**<sup>51</sup> "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Acts 7:51**

We were a nation that was blessed with a new beginning by God.  
 But we moved from one god to a plurality of Gods  
 And now Hindu temples and Buddhist shrines,  
 Scientology centers and Bahi buildings  
 And demon filled mosques fill our landscapes and inner cities.  
 No person in his right minds straps bombs onto his children  
 And offers them as a sacrifice to this fire god  
 Without being demon possessed or demonically conceived.  
 We have disobeyed God's law.

And last we have

## V. THEY RESISTED THE TRUTH

Stephen here shows them.

**Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- <sup>53</sup>you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." Acts 8:52-53**

Stephen pointed his finger at Sanhedrin  
 And the Jewish nation that had refused  
 to submit to God and obey the truth.  
 Their ears did not hear the truth,  
 Their hearts did not receive the truth  
 And their necks did not bow to the truth  
 They killed their own messiah.  
 Because they wanted it their own way.

Isn't it rather frightening that in our enlightened age  
 That we started out with 10 laws,  
 And how we have an estimated 35 million laws on  
 the books in the United States alone.

The heart of man has not changed nor can it be changed,  
 Apart from the grace of God  
 We are a sinful people.

Who would you trust with your life today?  
 Your business, your family?

A police officer was called to testifying in court as to the integrity of his fellow officers.  
 The defense attorney who was trying to free his client and discredit the police asked:  
 Do you trust your fellow officers?  
 Yes the officer said: I would trust them with my life.  
 The defense attorney said:  
 Do you have a common locker room in the police department?  
 Yes we all have lockers in the same room.  
 The attorney said: Do you have lock on your locker?  
 Yes said the police officer.  
 The attorney said: If you trust your fellow officer with your life, than why do you have to  
 have a lock on your locker.  
 The police officer said: Well sometimes an attorney might walk through.

We joke but its not just attorneys,  
 But teachers, police, pastors, laity,  
 Boys and girls  
 Who have a heart that is desperately wicked  
 And in need of the cleansing blood of Jesus.

And until we accept that fact.  
 American will continue to face the decline of marriage between a man and a woman,  
 We will continue to see the decadence of immorality in the media and on the news.

We will continue to count the casualties of abortions, assassination and terrorist bombings,  
 We will continue to bury the victims of HIV, alcoholism, drug dependence,  
 We will continue to see new Plagues of disease upon us.  
 We will continue to see Gods word discarded and scoffed  
 on talk shows and twitter sites.  
 We will continue to see our society overtaken with dead men's traditions.  
 The heart of man has not changed nor can it be changed  
 Apart from the grace of God.

A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.  
 Martin Luther  
 But in the midst of the darkness.  
 The light of the living truth of God remains.  
 That our hearts can be changed,  
 Our minds can be transformed,  
 Our wills can be bent into submission,  
 Our lives can be restored into hope of the living God.  
 We can be set free.  
 God does not call us all to be martyrs like Stephen,  
 But he does call us to be a living sacrifices. Rom 12:1-2

**In a Midwest town some time ago, a little twelve-year old girl named Terri** was babysitting her little brother. Terri walked outside to check the mail. As she turned back from the mailbox, she couldn't believe her eyes. The house was on fire. The fire spread very quickly so that house was enveloped in flames, But Terri ran as fast as she could into the flaming house only to find her baby brother trapped by a burning rafter. Hurriedly, Terri worked to free her brother. as the flames were dancing around their heads. Finally freed, she picked him up and quickly took him outside just as the roof caved in. firemen were on the scene and the neighbors had gathered and they were impressed with the courage of the twelve-year old girl. They asked her: "What were you thinking about when you ran into the burning house?" Terri's answer. "I wasn't thinking about anything. I just heard my little brother crying."

We have a world that is on fire.  
 People are trapped in this sin and death without a savior.  
 But let me ask you something.  
 How long has it been since you heard your brother or sister crying?  
 James W. Moore, Collected Sermons, ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc.  
 Stephen stood up  
 Laid down his life,  
 So other might have a better life.  
 Will you stand with me?

