



## Acts Chapter 7

Before we begin this evening, once again I'd just like to remind anyone who may be tuning in for the first time that that this study on the book of Acts.. which was originally entitled “The History of Christian Origins” by the Physician Luke.. can not be understood in any real detail with out beginning this study from the beginning.

There is much to know and to understand about the book of Acts, and to simply pick it up and start studying it from the middle of the book is not a wise idea with out knowing what it's origins are, and the mechanics of the culture and the belief systems that were in place at that time.

Anyone who has been with us during this study from the very beginning I'm sure would agree with me when I say that if you're a new viewer.. you may want to go back and start from the beginning of this study in order to better understand much of what we'll be talking about here today.

So with that being said.. we welcome you one and all but the last thing we want to do is to confuse anyone or leave anyone behind. This is an important book to understand if we're going to even attempt to understand the rest of the New Testament writings.

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### Recap From Last Week

Last week we spoke about the many books that the Apostle Paul had written, and we mentioned the fact that Paul had written over two thirds of the New Testament. And because he had written over two thirds of the New Testament it's techtonically important for us to begin to understand the culture of Paul's time. It's important to understand the traditions, the Oral Laws, the people, the culture, and the many different doctrines that they had created for themselves.

It's important to know this book of Acts that once again was originally entitled “The History of Christian Origins”. It's important to know the doctrines of the many different factions of Judaism, and what scripture they were reading from.. whether it be the Hebrew Torah or the Greek Septuagint, or the Talmud, or the Midrash, ect. Ect. What did they believe back in those days?

We spoke about the doctrines of the Pharisees who ran the Synagogues of that time and how their man made, man created, man fabricated “Oral Laws” had flat out angered our Messiah, and we looked back at what he had said to them when he was still in the flesh.

*Mat 15:8 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me.*

*Mat 15:9 Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.' "*

In the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Matthew alone our Messiah called these Pastors, Priests, Bishops, and Popish leaders of his time by many different names, many of which were not all that flattering.

He called them “hypocrites” and “White Washed Tombs” he said that they were a “Brood of Vipers” and even went as far as to call them two fold children of hell, and “Blind Guides” and all of this in the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Matthew alone.

He told us in Matthew 5:20 that if our righteousness did not far exceed that of the Pharisees and the Scribes that we would certainly not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

We spoke about the Pharisees who ran the Synagogues of that time and the Saducees who ran the Temple.. we spoke about the Esseens, and the Samaritans and the many different factions of Judaism, not unlike our many different denominational charters of men with in Christianity today.

We spoke about how the Synagogues were born out of Babylon, and that the word Synagogue is not found anywhere in the Torah because the Synagogues were not commanded, nor were they sanctioned anywhere in the Torah or the Tanakh by God or any of his High Priests, or his Prophets.

And in chapter 6 we can clearly see this same “Brood of Vipers” now conspiring to trap Stephen in their web of lies and deception so that they can once again murder him just like they had trapped his Messiah in their web of lies and deception so that they could murder him just a month or so earlier.

We just saw these same men beating and flogging Peter and John as they commanded them not to even speak the name of Yahshua, and yet.. Peter and John who also had also contended for the faith knew that there was no doubt whether they should listen to men or listen to God.. and so it was they had filled Jerusalem with the Gospel message of our Messiah boldly and with out fear or shame.

The civil disobedience of the Apostles was running wild all over the authority of these wicked Jewish Leaders and there was nothing that they could do but murder them... because there was

nothing short of that, that was going to shut these Apostles up or keep them quite.

And so it is that we find Stephen in the steel jaws of this “Brood of Vipers” who are about to put him to death because of the wickedness in their hearts. They chose that very day to make themselves the seed of the serpent himself, but not before Stephen would turn the tables on them and would convict them all of their wickedness.

And once again we can clearly see in chapter 7 verse 54 that these men were “cut to their hearts” and that they “ground their teeth” at Stephen, but Stephen being full of the Ruach Hakodesh absolutely condemns this brood of vipers with the truth of his Messiah's Gospel as we'll soon see in chapter 7.

So... with all of that being said... lets move forward and read... Acts Chapter 7.

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### **Read Acts Chapter 7:**

*Act 7:1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?"*

*Act 7:2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,*

*Act 7:3 and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.'*

*Act 7:4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living.*

*Act 7:5 Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child.*

*Act 7:6 And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years.*

*Act 7:7 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.'*

*Act 7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.*

*Act 7:9 "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him*

*Act 7:10 and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.*

*Act 7:11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food.*

*Act 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit.*

*Act 7:13 And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh.*

*Act 7:14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all.*

*Act 7:15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers,*

*Act 7:16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.*

*Act 7:17 "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt*

*Act 7:18 until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph.*

*Act 7:19 He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive.*

*Act 7:20 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house,*

*Act 7:21 and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son.*

*Act 7:22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.*

*Act 7:23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.*

*Act 7:24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.*

*Act 7:25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand.*

*Act 7:26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?'*

*Act 7:27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?'*

*Act 7:28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'*

*Act 7:29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.*

*Act 7:30 "Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush.*

*Act 7:31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord:*

*Act 7:32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look.*

*Act 7:33 Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.*

*Act 7:34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'*

*Act 7:35 "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.*

*Act 7:36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.*

*Act 7:37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.'*

*Act 7:38 This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.*

*Act 7:39 Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt,*

*Act 7:40 saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'*

*Act 7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.*

*Act 7:42 But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: "'Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?*

*Act 7:43 You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.'*

*Act 7:44 "Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen.*

*Act 7:45 Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David,*

*Act 7:46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.*

*Act 7:47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him.*

*Act 7:48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,*

*Act 7:49 "'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?*

*Act 7:50 Did not my hand make all these things?'*

*Act 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.*

*Act 7:52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,*

*Act 7:53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."*

*Act 7:54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.*

*Act 7:55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*

*Act 7:56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

*Act 7:57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.*

*Act 7:58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

*Act 7:59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

*Act 7:60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

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Alright now there is much more to what you have just heard in this scripture that I want to point out, and some of what I'm going to tell you here this evening about Stephen may surprise some or even most of you.. but these things are important to know and understand.

Fasten your seat belts because this is going to be an interesting ride to say the least.

Before we get into the speech that Stephen gave to this wicked brood of vipers... I want us to keep in mind the hybrid religion that the Pharisees and the Scribes who were the leadership of the Synagogues of that time had created for themselves.

Once again this Jewish hybrid religion consisted of a mixture of man made laws and God's laws that had been mixed together to create this hybrid religion that the Pharisees of the Synagogues were preaching and teaching, and are even to this very day still formulating I might add.

And I want us to remember that our Messiah absolutely hated this hybrid religion that these men had created for themselves.

*Deu 4:2 You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.*

I want us to know and understand what this commandment given to us by our Father in Heaven says. It's not encoded.. it's not on a record that you have to play backwards... it's not in Morris code. It's plain... it's simple.. it's direct.. and it's to the point. Our Father says "do not add to or take away from my Word".

So knowing this now lets get back to Stephen.

First of all we see Stephen addressing them as "brothers" and "fathers" so he clearly gives them the respect of being part of the House of Israel, and this is important to notice.

And as we move down through Stephen's speech we're going to see some very curious things that may very well point to exactly who Stephen was and how he was brought up as a young man.

So let me pose this question to you.. when Stephen was giving his history lesson to this wicked

brood of vipers... was he quoting from the Torah? Was everything that Stephen said true and correct according to the Hebrew Torah?

What if I told you that some of the facts that Stephen had laid out in his speech were incorrect according to the Hebrew Torah? Could that even be possible?.. and if so... how could it be possible? And if true.. what does this tell us about Stephen? And not only Stephen.. but what does this say about us as Christians today?

Do I have your attention yet?

Lets take a look at Acts 7 verse 14:

### **ESV**

*Act 7:14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, **seventy-five persons in all.***

So Stephen says that Jacob and his kindred numbered 75 in all in Acts 7:14 right?

Now if we turn back to the Hebrew Torah or the Pentateuch also known as the “Old Testament” what do we find?

### **English Standard Version:**

*Gen 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. **All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.***

Now keep this in mind as we take a look at what the Septuagint has to say, and again this was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah that was translated back in about 132BC:

### **Brenton's English Septuagint:**

*Gen 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were **seventy-five souls.***

So the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew Torah doesn't it? And so was Stephen wrong? No.. he was simply quoting from the Greek “Septuagint”.

And do you remember which Jewish faction that we said read from the Greek “Septuagint”? Let me give you a hint.. it was the Jewish faction that was most hated by all the other Jewish factions.

Remember Judaism was not just one band of merry Jewish people.. Judaism was broken into at least four main factions back in the Apostles time. You had the Pharisees that ran the many Synagogues, and we know that there were about 490 of those church like structures that

stretched out all across the land for at least a thousand miles. And then we had the Saducees that ran the Temple in Jerusalem.

And then we had the Esseens that hatted the Saducees and their crooked Temple authority, and the Esseens had their own little places of worship. And then you had the Samaritans who were hated by almost all factions of Judaism because they had built their own temple at Mount Gerzim, and held the Greek translated Septuagint as the authoritative word of God.

So could it be.. that Stephen himself, as a young man was originally a Samaritan? Many bible scholars believe that he indeed was because of this discourse that he gives right here in chapter 7 of the book of Acts.

Now remember their were many Israelites from the 10 tribes of Israel who lived in, and were part of, the Samaritans, and there were undoubtedly some from the tribe of Judah who also may have been part of this faction of Judaism and who lived in Samaria as well.

And there are several points to be made with in this speech that Stephen gives to point to the fact that he himself may very well had originally been... a Samaritan.

**Stephen says that the tomb of Abraham is in Shechem in Acts 7:16:**

*Act 7:15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers,*

*Act 7:16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.*

**But the Hebrew Bible says that Abraham was buried in Hebron just before Mamre**

*Gen 49:30 In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.*

*Gen 49:31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.*

Lets take a look at this map that shows where Shechem and Mamre were located:



But we find that according to the Septuagint Stephen was correct. It says that Abraham was buried in Shechem. So once again the rabbit hole gets a little deeper.

**Stephen says that God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia:**

*Act 7:2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,*

**The Hebrew bible says in Genesis that God appeared to Abraham in Haran:**

*Gen 11:31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.*

*And in just one verse later we see God appears to Abraham:*

*Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.*

*Gen 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*

*Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

Once again Stephen falls in line with what is taught in the Septuagint

And now with all of that being said lets take a look at something else that we find in Stephens discourse.

Notice in verse 23 of Acts chapter 7 that according to Stephen Abraham was 40 years old when he was still a member of Pharaoh's household and decided to visit his brothers.

No where in the Torah do we find that Moses was 40 years old when he went to see his Israelite brothers. It's simply not there. So did Stephen just make up the fact that Moses was 40 years old when he went to see his brothers?

No.. not at all.. you see this was part of the "Oral Law" the "Customs" the man made, man created, man fabricated tradition that was handed down by the Pharisees. This is what they taught in their Synagogues. So on this point.. the Pharisees would have agreed with Stephen because it had always been taught in the Synagogues that Abraham was 40 years old at that point... again... even though that's not found anywhere in the Torah.

What did our Father command us in Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 2?... not to add to or take away from.. his Word?

Now why do I bring all of this up, and why is it important to understand what Stephen is saying here? Because even back then during the times of the Apostles.. man has always been a product of what he believes. Have you ever heard that old saying "you are what you eat"? Well the truth is my friends that we are what we believe.

What you've been taught over and over and over again becomes what you believe.. and what you believe becomes who you are. Take for example the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week Sunday Sabbath.

No where and I mean NO WHERE is a 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week "Sunday Sabbath" commanded or found anywhere in the New Testament. It was created by the Roman Catholic church hundreds of years later.. and anyone who does more then a 10 minute search on the subject can know and understand that.. but how many professing Christians today believe that Sunday is Gods holy

sanctified Sabbath day that he said would be a sign between him and his people and a perpetual agreement for all generations?

You see we've just become a product of what we've been fed. We've been taught that false man made, man created, man fabricated doctrine over and over and over again and so we simply believe it and because we believe it.. it becomes part of who we are... so much so that we don't even question it anymore.

And because some well dressed fellow with 10 or 20 degrees hanging on his office wall says so.. we just believe it.. even though our Messiah warned us about these well dressed fellows with 10 or 20 degrees on their wall. He calls them wolves in sheep's clothing.. what do expect a wolf in sheep's clothing to look like? A wolf... or a sheep?

Food for thought.

And we are by no means finished with this chapter because there's lots more to know and understand but until next week my friends.. let us take these things to our prayer closets and test these things in the fire of prayer and ask for the discernment to learn from these things.