

# Acts

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## Part 18 – “The Rejected Redeemer”

### Acts 7:17-43

#### Exegetical Outline:

- I. Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin (7:2-56)
  - A. God and Abraham (7:2-8)
  - B. God and Joseph (7:9-16)
  - C. God and Moses (7:17-43)**
    1. Moses’s birth and protection in Egypt (7:17-29)
    2. God’s commissioning of Moses (7:30-34)
    3. Moses and Israel (7:35-43)
      - a. Moses was rejected by Israel (17:35)
      - b. Moses was the miracle worker who led Israel out of Egypt (17:36)
      - c. Moses was the prophet who foretold of Christ (7:37)
      - d. Moses was the mediator of God’s law (17:38)
      - e. Israel refused to obey Moses (17:39)
      - f. Israel fell into idolatry (17:40-41)
      - g. God gave Israel over to her idolatry (17:42)
      - h. Israel’s indictment by the prophets (17:42-43)

**Main Idea:** Rejecting God and his gracious salvation in Jesus Christ inevitably leads to idolatry and, after that, judgment.

#### Three ways the life and ministry of Moses anticipated Jesus:

##### 1. The Ideal Ruler

Stephen recounts the extraordinary acts of providence that guided Moses’ life (20-22).

**Vs. 20** – “At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God’s sight...”

- The word translated “beautiful” carries with it the meaning of “well bred.” This is intended as a confirmation of Moses’ call to lead the people.

**Vs. 22** – “And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

- Stephen describes Moses as “mighty in word and deed” echoing Luke’s description of Jesus as “a prophet, mighty in deed and word” (**Lk 24:19**).

##### 2. The Rejected Ruler

Stephen divides Moses’ life into three 40 year phases. The first phase was from his birth through his life in Egypt as a member of Pharaoh’s house. The second 40 years covered his sojourn in Midian. The third phase describes his journey back to Egypt to lead the people out of captivity. In his first forty years and during the exodus Moses was repeatedly criticized, grumbled against, and rejected by the people. His authority was routinely questioned.

**Vv 23-29** – Here, Stephen explains that Moses expected this fellow Israelites to recognize him – especially in his defending a fellow Israelite being victimized by an Egyptian – as the arrival of the Lord’s deliverance. Instead, they rejected him. When Moses tried to reconcile two feuding Israelites the

aggressor taunted him and “thrust him aside.” After this Moses fled to Midian for the second 40 years, living in relative anonymity.

### 3. The Rejected Redeemer

Throughout this portion of his speech, Stephen portrays Moses as God’s chosen instrument to deliver His people.

- Just as Moses had been sent to deliver the people from captivity, So Jesus was the one who was to redeem God’s people from their sins (Luke 24:21).
- Just as Moses was in Egypt had been attested by wonders and miraculous signs, so also had Jesus (Acts 2:22).
- Just as Moses had received the oracles of God, so Jesus revealed the very words of God.

**Vs. 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.”

- Stephen recounts the sad trajectory of Israel’s rejection of their redeemer. Our hearts never operate in a vacuum. We will always worship and serve something or someone because we were created to worship. When Israel rejected Moses they also rejected God who had sent Moses to them. And having rejected Yahweh they turned to a god of their own making.

Theology in Application
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#### 1. Every place is God’s place.

**Vs 33** – “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’”

- Stephen has been accused of speaking against “this holy place” (the temple). But here he reminds them that the temple mount is not the only “holy ground.” God is everywhere present. He is not confined to a particular building or piece of real estate.
- In our rebellion we will never successfully flee from God.
- In our pain and sorrow God will never abandon us.

#### 2. The human heart is prone to reject God.

**Vs 35** – “This Moses, whom they rejected...”

- Even though God appointed Moses as ruler and redeemer for the house of Israel, they rejected him. In the same way they would reject the prophets and finally the Lord Jesus.
- This is not unique to Israel. The human heart is bent toward sin. Outside of Christ mankind will always seek to save himself rather than look to the Redeemer sent by God.

#### 3. We ought to regularly examine ourselves for the presence of idolatry.

Diagnostic Questions:

- What do you daydream about?
- How do you think about your future?
- What occupies your thoughts?
- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- What would you like to spend most of your time doing?
- In what ways do you envy others?