

This is that Moses

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[0 : 00] In Acts chapter 7, we read at verse 37, although it has reference to the entire section of the chapter, verse 37.

This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear.

We could just as easily have taken verse 35, this Moses, whom they refused, saying, who may be a ruler and a judge. And throughout the chapter that we have read most of, most of the reference is itself to Moses, the prophet of the Lord, the one who is visualized on the Mount of Transfiguration as the personification of the law.

In the same way as Elijah represents the personification of the prophets, all the prophets, he gathered, as it were, into the personification that Elijah represents. Moses, in a sense, is the law in human form there, given that it is given to him and through him to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

And if we were to go back to just before the beginning of chapter 7, we would find that when Stephen is arrested, remember Stephen is one of the six deacons, we can call them deacons if you like, in chapter 6, although they're not explicitly mentioned as such.

[1 : 26] Those who were to have a concern for the Grecian, that is the non-Palestinian Jewish women and children and widows and so on within the congregation amongst the Christians there.

So they chose these six men, Stephen, a man full of faith, this is verse 5 of chapter 6, of the Holy, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Procorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Harmanus, and Nicholas, and Proselite, and Antioch.

All of these men have Greek names. And it is, remember, there's a murmuring of the Grecians, chapter 6, verse 1, against the Hebrews. That is, those who were of the dispersion, those who were from elsewhere in the Roman Empire, Greek Jews, as it were, who had come into Palestine and were murmuring against the Palestinian Jews, because they felt they were being passed over in the care of the widows, and the distribution of the aid that was given out to those who were in need or who were hungry.

So the church chooses these men, and they choose those who are all of Greek extraction, so that there can be no question that they are in any way discriminating against their own people in that sense.

But Stephen, of course, likewise, full of the Holy Ghost, and the word of God increased, and Stephen, full of faith, verse 8 of chapter 6, empowered great wonders and miracles among the people.

[2 : 55] Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the libertines, or the freedmen, in other words, of those who had been slaves, but were now free, and had a synagogue of their own.

Now, of them of Cilicia, from where Saul of Tarsus came, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom of the spirit by which he spake. Now, I'd like you to notice this verse 10 of chapter 6, because this is significant. This is significant with what we find the conclusion in chapter 7.

It is the standard response of evil when it cannot overcome good. It seeks to end it. It seeks to simply kill it, or prevent it from opening its mouth.

They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Of course they weren't, because all their spirit and all their wisdom was simply earthbound.

[3 : 56] It was man-centered. Stephen is speaking forth with the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, God, the Holy Ghost, is speaking through him. He is being brought down and being uttered

through the mouth of the servant Stephen.

He is expanding. He is arguing. He is debating with them. They are not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.

Now, that would be a lie, because he's not going to be seeking to destroy the law and the prophets, of which Jesus is the very full food. And they stirred up the people and the elders in the scribes, and came upon him and caught him and brought him unto the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, that is the temple, and the law.

And for we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. So there are these three elements, remember, which Stephen is charged with.

That he has spoken against Moses and against the customs which he set up, against the law and against the temple, the holy place, and of course against God, supposedly, by criticizing these things.

[5 : 20] Now, if one thing is obvious in chapter 7 that we read from, it is that far from speaking against Moses, Stephen's speech and his defense is full of Moses.

It's almost all about Moses, but in reality, of course, it's not about Moses. It's about God speaking through Moses. And it is how that he is exposing his accusers as the fact that although they reverence Moses now, when it's thousands of years later and he's safely dead and out of the way and can't contradict them, and although they reverence the temple, which was raised up on the site of Solomon's temple, they don't reverence the God whose temple it is and who Moses served and the law that he gave them.

Now, the very things that they accused Stephen of opposing, they were the ones that actually opposed it. And this is what he is showing. That when Moses came to the Israelites, they opposed him.

When he went to the Lord of Egypt, they said, let's turn back into Egypt. When he said, no, worship the Lord your God through the Lord, they said, no, let's have our own gods, let's make our own false gods.

When he gave them the temple, he said, the prophets spoke and said, yes, the temple's great, but the Most High dwelleth not in temple made with hands. You know, even Solomon himself said, you know, heaven and earth can't contain you, Lord, how much less this house which I have built.

[6 : 46] And this temple that Herod had built on the site of Solomon's temple, it was less spectacular than Solomon's. But nobody could pretend God was contained within it.

Solomon built him a house, verse 47 of our chapter 7 here. But Stephen is showing throughout not only his knowledge of the law and the prophets, which he is quoting right left and center, but also how that the history of it proves that when Moses came and sought to speak to them the law and the word of God, they resisted him.

They resisted the Holy Ghost speaking through the law. They resisted the Holy Ghost speaking through Moses. They resisted the Holy Ghost to talk on how to worship the tabernacle and through the temple and so on.

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart. And here's verse 51. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do ye.

And this is what he has demonstrated. That no matter who it is, in whatever generation, that which is of God, fallen men who have set their hearts to serve only themselves, even if they do it with a religious packaging, or with a religious sort of covering or veneer, those who have set themselves simply to serve themselves, or to worship the things of their own making or convenience, cannot abide the spirit and the presence of the living God amongst them.

[8 : 21] Because it exposes the falsehood, the shallowness, and the emptiness of what they themselves had set up. You can't have the reality up against the falsehood.

Because the falsehood looks good as long as there's nothing to challenge it. You know, as I've used an illustration in the past, if I were to go to a sports shop and buy myself a Scotland strip and put it on, and put a ball there, and sort of, I do some keepy-uppies, and as long as there's nobody playing with me or against me, I look pretty good.

And there I am in my Scotland strip, and there I am playing away, and there I am looking good, as long as nobody challenges me. But bring on the proper Scotland team, and even though they may be not that great in terms of world football, they're going to run rings round me, and I will be shown to be false.

I'll be shown to be a fake. I'm not really a Scotland player. I'm not any use at the game. They'll be brilliant by comparison. The reality will show up the emptiness of the falsehood.

Even though I may be dressed for the part in my Scotland strip, even though I may look as though I can play the keepy-uppie, and I must be really reasonably good at football, because look, there I am in a Scotland strip, and so on.

[9 : 33] But bring in the reality, and the emptiness of the sham is exposed. Now, as long as the Jewish council and those who were of the same generation that had put Jesus to death, and so on, as long as nobody was challenging them, they looked pretty good.

There was the temple in place. There was the priesthood and the sacrifices going on as God had appointed, supposedly. There was the law being kept as they saw it, with all their additional little regulations and rules and so on, making them look good, measuring themselves by themselves. As long as it was simply their rules, and they were able to interpret who kept them and how they were kept, so that they continued to look good, everything was fine. But bring in the reality of God, shine the light of the gospel into the darkness of their man-made regulations and commandments, and the emptiness of them is exposed.

They cannot abide that, nor can they answer it. They don't have an answer, they don't have an argument, they don't have any power to overcome it, so what did they do?

They killed it. That's what they did with Jesus. That's what they do now with Stephen. And that is the standard response of the devil throughout the world.

[10 : 56] When people cannot make their false gods or their false prophets to overcome the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, they just kill his followers. When they cannot enter into debate, when they cannot abide the contrast between the Christian lives of those who follow Jesus and the darkness of the lives of those who follow false gods, when the contrast becomes unbearable, just kill the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is one of Satan's most ancient tricks. All the way back to Cain and Abel. Wherefore slew he his brother? Because his deeds were righteous and his own were evil.

And evil cannot abide the presence of good, because it shows up its emptiness and its evil. It shows up the pretense, the sham. Chapter 6, again going back to it, remember, they were unable, they were not able, verse 10, to resist the wisdom of the spirit by which he spake.

And what is it that he is speaking? He is showing, repeatedly, as we said, that that Moses whom they sought to revere at a safe distance was in fact the very one who was pointing them forward to the fulfilment of all his word and teaching in Jesus of Nazareth.

Now remember that Jesus of Nazareth is the big threat here. Go back to chapter 6, verse 14. We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

[12 : 39] Now Jesus, of course, had said, if you destroy this temple in three days I will rebuild it. But he was talking about the temple of his own body. Kill me and I'll come back within three days. I will rise again within three days.

We have heard him say this, Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place. We've heard him speak blasphemous words against the law and against this holy place and against Moses and against God, all of which was lies.

The trouble is when you allow him to speak, as he does, he shows it to do lies. And initially, of course, he's simply giving the narrative of the children of Israel.

He is giving the narrative of how God had made his promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and how when the fullness of time was come, he called and used Moses. And this is what we find where he begins to deal with Moses.

Where we began to read, When the time of the promise drew nigh. This is the promise to Abraham, both to increase his seed as the stars of heaven, and also there was a promise that his children, his seed, would be evil and treated 400 years.

[13 : 44] So as the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt. That's part of the promise being fulfilled. Yet another king arose, which he knew not jostle, the same dealt subtly with our kindred and evil and treated our fathers.

So they cast out their young children to the end, they might not live, and so on. And then Moses was brought forth. And he went out when he's 20, 40 years old.

This is a detail which acts, supplies, which Exodus does not. Obviously, the Lord inspiring this to be written down, so we have that information. We know that Moses was 80 years old when he stood before Pharaoh.

And that's in Exodus 7, verse 7. We know that he had been 40 years in the wilderness, and so on. Or that he spent 40 years out there in the wilderness.

Another 40 years with the children of Israel, wandering in the wilderness. And he was 120 when he died. But Stephen tells us explicitly that when he was 40 years old, he went out to see his brethren, the children of Israel.

[14 : 49] Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him. And he was oppressed and smote the Egyptians. For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them.

But they understood not. Now, even in this verse 25, we can see encapsulated here, you could take out one word, Moses, and substitute Jesus for it here.

Apart from the fact that Jesus didn't kill anyone the way that Moses did. He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them.

But they understood not. Remember how that when Jesus went to his own town of Nazareth, he could there do no great work because of their unbelief. And he marveled because of their unbelief. He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them.

But they understood not. They didn't understand it for Moses. They didn't understand it for Jesus.

[15 : 48] Because these things are not humanly, fleshly designed. They are spiritually designed.

And unless the Lord opens the eyes of the heart, the mind, unless the Lord enables us to be born again, we will never grasp this truth.

No matter how many times we are told. No matter how much it is, as it were, set before us. He supposed his brethren would have understood. Jesus supposed. Moses supposed.

And verse 27. He that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who they may be, a ruler and a judge over us. What do we find when Jesus was preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth? They were offended at him.

Why would he be offended at him? He said, We know who this guy is. We know his mother. We know his sisters. We know his brothers. They're all here with us. We've known him since he was a little boy. Who does he think he is? They were offended at him.

They thrust him away. They would have thrown off the mountain, the hill, on which their village was built. Who may be, a ruler and a judge over us. And when he's out in the wilderness, and has fled from Egypt, and the Lord speaks to him then, he says, I have seen, verse 34, I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt.

[17 : 02] Now that's a literal translation would be seeing, I have seen. And it's emphasis. Because it's doubled, it's for emphasis. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt.

And I have heard their groaning, and am come down. to deliver them. Now who is speaking? God is speaking. And God has come down to deliver his people.

Now obviously Moses is not a personification of God. He is simply the prophet of God being used. But of course Jesus is the personification of God. If that is true of God working through Moses, it is even more true of God working through his son, Jesus of Nazareth.

I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. In Jesus Christ, God has come down amongst men to deliver them, to save them.

Not from the bondage of Egypt, but from the bondage of sin. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. He said not the bondage of Egypt, but of course spiritually, it is the bondage of Egypt.

[18 : 10] You can make up of course what Revelation says in chapter 11, verse 8, talking about the two witnesses of the Lord. Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, when also our Lord was crucified.

Spiritually Sodom, spiritually Egypt, the place of debauchery, the place of bondage and enslavement, the place where Jesus was crucified. Or we could say, this earth, this fallen earth.

I will deliver them. I will send thee into Egypt. I will send thee amongst where thy people are in bondage. This Moses, verse 35, this Moses, whom they refused, saying, who may be a ruler and a judge?

You see what Stephen is doing here, showing how they didn't want Moses either, in the day. The only reason they are happy with Moses now, is because he's safely dead hundreds of years ago. It's okay to revere him now, because he's no threat to them.

They can make Moses be whatever they want him to be, just as nowadays, of course, people make Jesus to be whatever they want him to be, regardless of what his word says.

[19 : 23] This is one reason why, of course, other religions, whether Hinduism or Buddhism, are quite happy to revere Jesus as a great teacher, or as a great healer, or as a great guru, or a person of great inspiration.

It's why Islam is quite happy to have Jesus as one prophet amongst many. Not as important a prophet as Muhammad in their eyes, but, of course, a prophet still, just the same.

And it's why other religions, false religions, are quite happy to acknowledge some place for Jesus. It's one reason why even those who are scornful of Christianity will speak reasonably respectfully of Jesus.

And yet will say, oh, but his followers don't obey him. That's the problem, because if they were more like Jesus, we'd all be Christians then. Of course, they wouldn't be. But still, this is the point. Jesus commands respect, but then that's partly because he's not here to challenge us physically, and because his teaching isn't able to clash in contrast with what we want to make Jesus into.

It's why you'll have people say, oh, of course, Jesus improves inclusion and tolerance, which, in a sense, he does, but not in the way that modern political correctness means it.

[20 : 37] Jesus is never going to approve of sin. Jesus is never going to condone sin, nor the confusion of that which his heavenly father has ordained. Jesus is never going to go against his father, or his father's word, that people remake him into their image.

It's why you can have a Jesus of so-called liberation theology, as though he's some kind of revolutionary, leading the oppressed peoples to overthrow their oppressors with bloodshed. But, of course, that's not what we find Jesus doing in the scriptures, not even what we find Moses doing, other than the killing of the Egyptian that one time.

This Moses, whom they refused, saying, who made ye a ruler and a judge, the same that God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Now remember, of course, that the Lord says to Moses that he will send this angel before him. He will use an angel to deliver him. Chapter 33 of Exodus, verse 2, I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Ammonite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Herodite, and the Jebusite.

That the Lord will make use of this angel. And, of course, elsewhere in scripture, it strongly implies that the angel that went before them, the presence, the messenger, was in fact God the Son.

[21 : 59] That it was Jesus himself, before his incarnation, before he came on the flesh. This Moses, whom they refused, the same that God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer.

Just as they refused Moses, they refused Jesus. He brought them out, after that he had showed signs and wonders, in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, in the wilderness, 40 years.

Just as Jesus had showed signs and wonders. I know I've mentioned in the past, and it doesn't do any harm to reiterate it again. We have a tendency to think in terms of, biblical times, signs and wonders were like an everyday occurrence.

People were always getting healed, or raised from the dead, or evil blind being made to see, or Red Sea parting, or whatever. All these things, Saul of Tarsus, the road to Damascus, all these things, they happened every day.

No, they didn't actually happen every day. The Bible covers a period of thousands of years.

Thousands of years. The period covered between the Old Testament, into the New, and to the end of the first century AD, it's approximately 4,000 years.

[23 : 05] And in the space of that 4,000 years, how many times do you have, where there are actually signs and wonders, and what we call miracles being done.

You've got three basic periods. You've got Moses and Joshua. In other words, the Exodus, and the entering into the Promised Land. And you've got, you know, the parting of the Red Sea, the manna, the parting of the Jordan, and so on.

You've got these occasions, when signs and wonders do happen. And not actually as frequently, as you would think, but they do happen. And then you've got the period, with Elijah and Yemeshach, where signs and wonders again happen, and people get raised from the dead, and lepers get

cleansed, and so on.

And then you've got the time of Jesus, and the apostles. And beyond that, you don't really have signs and wonders. In fact, if you think on to the latter part of the New Testament, when Paul is writing his letters, to find Nero, and to Titus, and Timothy, and so on, you don't find him saying, oh, lay hands on people, and cure them, and raise the dead, and sort of, sort of, you know, heal the sick, and all these things.

You don't find people saying that. Yes, you've got James saying, let the elders pray over somebody, and the prayer of faith will save them, but you don't have an awful lot of signs and wonders happening in the post-apostolic period.

[24 : 28] You've got these three periods. Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and the apostles. And these are all centuries apart.

In all the times of the conquest of Canaan, you know, and all the battles that the judges fought, you don't really find signs and wonders happening there. Maybe an occasional work of God speaking directly to somebody.

David and Goliath have got things that are amazing that happen, and David's battles that he wins, but it's not really signs and wonders. People having to depend on God and live in faith, and live it out.

And all the times throughout the prophets, you don't really have signs and wonders happening there. They're speaking from God. God gives them the word. They write it down, but you don't really have spectacular miracles and signs and wonders happening.

They've got God causing ordinary means to bring about amazing results, but it's not really miracles and signs and wonders throughout all these hundreds of years.

[25 : 33] And you don't have it until the time of Jesus and the apostles. And then you can see it's beginning to fade away, even in the post-apostolic New Testament. So the doing of signs and wonders is a rarity, even in Scripture.

It is a rarity, even in all the massive Scriptural record there. This is that Moses, verse 37, which said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear.

So this is what Moses said. You say I'm speaking against Moses? Let's see what Moses actually says. This is what he says. Stephen is quoting Deuteronomy 18, verse 15.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken. Now this must be the Messiah that he is speaking of, because it's not Joshua.

It's not just the next guy along the line, because we read in the end of Deuteronomy, chapter 34, verses 10 and 11, for example, that we read, there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses.

[26 : 47] Now remember, this is being written in the time of Joshua, and it's being recorded, there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do, in the land of Egypt, with the Pharaoh, to all the signs, and to all the land.

So in the time of Joshua, even when signs and wonders are still going on, there's not been a prophet like Moses. And that still stands throughout all the ages of the kings, and all the other prophets, and so on, that God, not a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. There hasn't been a fulfillment, in other words, of that promise, until such time, as the Lord fulfills it, with his son, Jesus Christ.

We read then, Deuteronomy 18, verse 19, it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he, that is the prophet, will speak in my name, I will require it of him.

A prophet from among their brethren, like unto me, and whoever will not hearken to him, I will require it of him. And this is the one that they were asking, remember, John the Baptist, when they said, are you Elijah?

[27 : 58] He said, no, I'm not. Art thou that prophet? And that's who they meant, the prophet that Moses had prophesied about. He said, I'm not, but Jesus is. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me.

Him shall ye hear. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake down the Mount Sinai, to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their

hearts turned back again to Egypt.

You see, human nature does not change. Whether it is Moses, whether it is Jesus, whether it's the apostle, whatever the generations that rise and pass away, human nature does not change. That which is of God, fallen human nature, cannot abide, unless it has been changed within, by the Spirit of Christ.

Unless it has been changed. David wanted to build the Lord a temple, but Solomon built him a house. How be it? The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet.

[29 : 06] What is the prophet? Isaiah 66, verses 1 and 2. Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

And this is all that Stephen is quoting. The law and the prophets. Moses and the prophets. Hath not my hand made all these? And then he says, ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did.

So do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? They have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just one. That was pointing forward to Christ.

Of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. Even if the generations change, they have slain them which before showed them of the coming of the just one.

[30 : 11] Whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers. You see, human nature doesn't change. You have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it.

You're the ones, in other words, you see, which have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed in him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

Now it's interesting there, say standing. It's, I think, probably the only instance where we read of Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father as opposed to seated at the right hand.

Why would he be standing? Well, we can only speculate to an extent, but I would suggest to you that bearing in mind that Stephen is the first martyr of the Christian church, then perhaps when somebody is seated in a place, but then somebody is brought in, or they're about to welcome them, what do they do?

They stand up. They stand up when they're about to welcome somebody, and if people are sitting in a room, and somebody comes in, and whoever's in charge, or chairman of the way, will stand up and say, oh, welcome, please have a seat, you know, sit down, this is Mr. So-and-so, this is Mrs. So-and-so, and so on, and they'll welcome them in by standing up.

[31 : 29] It used to be thought chivalrous or gentlemanly, if there were a gentleman in a room and a lady would come in, the gentleman would stand up because it was polite, because it was a sort of welcome, it was a showing of respect, and I would suggest to you that it is because the Lord knows that Stephen is about to depart this world, he is seen standing at the right hand of his father, ready to welcome Stephen into the divine presence.

Why does Stephen see this and nobody else sees it? Because this is spiritually discerned. The Lord is, as it were, drawing back the curtain of the spiritual realm and giving him a glimpse of glory, which, of course, the world cannot see, and these unbelieving men cannot see.

They cast him out of the city and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down, in the clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. Irony of ironies. Why have we got one chapter's worth, two at the most, of Stephen refuting his enemies.

He thought Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost and a troublemaker, and what did he do? When they are busy stoning him, there they are laying their jackets down at his feet, Saul of Darsus. And if the devil thought he had won with putting Stephen to death, the cork was about to come out of the bottle with St. Paul just literally standing there, ready to be used of the Lord in a very short time. You think you're putting Jesus to death? Two days later, three days later, there's the resurrection. Oh dear, how much worse for the devil. You put Stephen to death, and there's Paul starts being brought into play.

[33 : 01] And Paul proves to be much, much harder to kill. The devil cannot win this battle. What he can do, and what he does do, is he seeks to silence the truth wherever it is to be found.

You find this still nowadays in our present-day universities. No platform for those who are pro-life, for those who are pro-Christian, or those who are seeking to present the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

There is no place for those who will present the claims of Christ, those who seek to present biblical purity. No platform, no place for them, no stall at the freshers' week, no opportunity to speak, shut down the debate, prevent any kind of sound, any kind of word of the truth.

That is all the devil can do. And sometimes, of course, he will kill those who are the messengers of that truth. You can still see today, of course, St. Stephen's Gate in the Wall of Jerusalem.

It's not the original wall, of course, it's been rebuilt in the Turkish Middle Ages, but it's still in the same place where that gate would have been. That's the one they would have dragged him out of because the Temple Mount, it's the nearest one to the Temple Mount, and the Sanhedrin, the council would have been meeting in the temple area as they dragged Stephen out of the temple that had taken him out the nearest gate straight down to the Kidron Valley where the natural sloping of the valley of the defiled would have provided an opportunity, a place, a natural theatre in which he could be stoned.

[34 : 31] That is where he was put to death. You can still see it there today because it's the only place it could have been done. They stoned Stephen who was calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. When he had said this, he fell asleep. Now, elsewhere, the New Testament, of course, describes those who pass out of this life in a state of faith as having fallen asleep.

Paul mentions it in 1 Corinthians 5, 15 at verse 6, and likewise in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. We believe that Jesus died and rose again.

Even so, them which also sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with a voice of the archangel and with a trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

[35 : 39] And so shall we ever be with the Lord. And later on in chapter 5 it says, so who died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him.

Whether we have already gone on from this world when the Lord comes back we'll still be with him for all eternity. We'll still be with him when he comes back. But it is to comfort the consolation that even if we end up being put to death for our faith it is for the believer simply like falling asleep. is falling asleep in Jesus and our souls are immediately in his presence and at the last day our bodies our resurrection bodies are united to our glorified souls.

But what is Stephen showing? He is showing that in every generation that which the Lord reveals only the very few only the saved will recognize and obey most will reject.

Most, even those who are meant to be the Lord will reject. But what do we find for those who are opposing Stephen? That if they had eyes to see then everything they think they hold dear is in fact pointing in one direction.

[36 : 59] If they revere the temple the temple is a thing that is pointing to the fulfillment of God in Christ. He is the ultimate temple. The reason God dwells with man is because ultimately he's going to come down in human form to redeem to save him.

The temple points to Christ who is the ultimate temple the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. Moses points forward to Christ. They think they reverence Moses if they really listen to Moses he is pointing them on to fulfillment in Christ.

They think they reverence the law the law has its fulfillment in Christ who said I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill. Now whatever may be the false gods or the things of this world that we may make our gods instead of Jesus all of them ultimately will point us if we have eyes to see will point us to the perfection as it is in Christ Jesus.

All the beauties of science and wonder and nature biology and physics and chemistry all the wonder of mathematics and its perfect order and the way that all the equations and things fit together it is all about working of God's perfect order and wonder all that we do by way of pleasure if we recognize the goodness that the Lord has placed in this world it is all pointing us to fulfillment and perfection which is found only in Christ Jesus.

The fact of our bodies aging and knowing we cannot have long for this world should point us to what is the purpose what is the meaning is there something afterwards yes there is an eternity there is a heaven to be gained and a hell to be shunned it points us to the fulfillment in Christ Jesus if we had only eyes to see and to examine the evidence with a truthful objectivity they would see it points them to Christ and whatever it is you may be holding dear in this world whether it be your culture or your language or your home or your family ultimately it will be pointing you to fulfillment in Christ what is the greatest highest expression of the English language for example even somebody like Richard Dawkins would acknowledge the highest expression of the English language is the authorised version of the Bible it is that which points men to God if you love your native [39 : 31] Gaelic culture what is the highest expression of the Gaelic language is it not the Gaelic Bible the Gaelic Psalms that which proclaims the Lord the living God it is the greatest nobility of any language of any culture is that which points to God whatever you hold dear as they pretended to hold these things dear if they would see them as they were designed Moses the Lord the temple the Lord pointing them to Christ look around at what you have in your life see where it is leading you see what is the fulfillment see what is the culmination and the consummation of it all and you will find it begins and it ends with Christ let us pray God from God pardon to God God Jesus the Lord the Lord the Lord the Lord will you and evitar it to God may bear your
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