

What about the Old Testament?



Acts 6:8-7:51

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Several years ago, Katie and I were newly married. Our first son, Crider, was very small. My parents took us to Disney World on a little vacation. We were having a blast. We were in line for Splash Mountain behind a teenager. He had his headphones on and he was dancing. He was all by himself and he was absolutely feeling it. He was dancing and having a good time. It was a little difficult for us not to stare, as we were right behind him. Crider probably pointed him out to us. Eventually the young man took his headphones off and turned to us. He had a big smile on his face. He was really proud as he pulled out his Discman. Some of you have no idea what a Discman is. It was the device before the iPad and iPhone that you put CDs in. He pulled his Discman from his pocket and said check it out. I just got this new Discman. It has anti-skip. You may also be questioning, what is anti-skip? A Discman playing CDs would quit when it

was bumped, causing a skip. Then they developed a new technology. The Discman would read ahead so that instead of skipping when bumped, it would keep playing. You could run. You could be in line at Disney dancing, and if you hit something, you would be all good. He turned to us and wanted us to know that he had a Discman with anti-skip. I just couldn't tell him that I had an iPhone in my pocket that also had anti-skip. It doesn't have the disc that goes in his Discman. He may even have a hard time finding those discs in the future. He had something that he thought was amazing, but what he had was actually obsolete. Something had already replaced it, something better that he didn't know about.

We can think of a thousand things that are obsolete, things that were critical at the time. When we traveled, we used to have an atlas. How many of you carry one of those in your car now? Then we had the Garmin that set up on the dash. That device was awesome because you could put in coordinates and go. How many of you have those now? Now this technology is on our phones. There were other things we used to have such as phone books, alarm clocks and floppy discs. Imagine going to work tomorrow and someone asks if you have a certain file. You reply and pull out a floppy disc. This won't work anymore, as there is not a drive on the computer for a floppy disc. There were things in our past that were awesome. They were useful. Anti-skip was really cool at a certain point. But then something happened that made it obsolete. It was not useful anymore. You would not go back and buy a Discman because you now have an iPod. All music is digital now.

We will see that we are in a transitional period of the Scriptures. We have the Old Testament and the gospels. Now we are in Acts. In Acts, we have seen the story of the church being built. It was happening. The Spirit had fallen upon people and they were confessing Jesus as Lord. They were being reborn into a new kingdom. The church was being built. All of this was happening inside Jerusalem. Jerusalem was being impacted by the gospel. People were coming into faith in Jerusalem. Jews were coming into faith in Christ. Things were happening. The church was being built, but a question came up. What do we do about Judaism? The gospel had invaded Jerusalem so what about Judaism? What about the temple? What about

the synagogue? What about the laws? What about the festivals? What about the customs? What about all these other things that seemed to be very important to God? They are there in the scripture. God has put His name in the temple. There was a problem, a big rip in the veil. What do we do with the temple, now? What do we do with the law now? What do we do with those things that God clearly spoke of, clearly installed throughout the Old Testament? Now, Jesus has come and the church was being built. The question arose which pointed to Stephen, which we will get to in the scripture. What do we do about Judaism? More pointedly, what do we do about the temple? Do we still go there? Do we still offer sacrifices? Is the temple still important? Or has the temple become like anti-skip? It was good, but it has become obsolete.

As we get into the scriptures, we will begin a sermon. We will get maybe a third through it. It will take a few weeks to complete the whole sermon. We thought of doing it in one chunk but just couldn't. We will see Stephen has to address some of the Jews who are still in Judaism about what you do with Judaism. What do you do with the temple? What do you do with the law? What do you do with Moses? What do you do with all these things now that Christ has come?

For us, this is not really a question. How many of us had a choice today whether to go to the temple or Hardin Baptist Church? You didn't have that decision to make. You came to Hardin. Maybe some of us have a different question. As you look at their question of what to do with the temple and with Judaism, the related question we might ask is what do we do with the Old Testament? What do we do with the Old Testament now that Christ has come? Your Bible is a big book. More than half of it is the Old Testament. When you think of the word, old, you could think that you should probably stay with the new. New is new. Old is old. Old was. New is. Maybe as God's people, we should forget the Old [testament] and consider only the New [testament].

The question is now that Christ has come, what do we do with the Old Testament? I want to bring up three different ways people tend to view the Old Testament before we get into the scripture and deal with Stephen's situation and his sermon.

Three ways people deal with the Old Testament

1. Jesus replaces the Old Testament. Now that Christ has come, He replaces the Old Testament. All you need now is the New. You shouldn't go to the Old Testament. How wise can the Proverbs be if you don't have Jesus? Forget the Old Testament. Don't look at it. All you need is the New Testament because Jesus replaced the Old Testament. It is old. Forget it and go to the New Testament.

2. A second view is that Jesus does not replace the Old Testament but adds to it. We have both the Old Testament and the New Testament to mix together. We take the old covenant and the new covenant and blend them. You see this happening in Bible Belt Christianity. We take passages that were spoken to Israel and we apply them to ourselves. We will even apply them to our country. We will recall that God said if we obey Him, we will be blessed. We conclude that all the bad things are happening because we are not obeying God. We receive His curse rather than His blessing. If we, as a people, would get our act right and obey God personally, culturally, everything would be great. God's blessings would shine upon us because He told the people of Israel that if they obeyed, He would bless. Our being cursed comes from disobedience. So, we need to try harder. We need to follow more rules, more laws, get better. If we would get better, God would love us. Then God would pour His blessings upon us. God would be for us instead of against us. We need to get better. This view marries Jesus with obeying the Old Testament, its laws and commands. It is actually our doing and our obedience that gives us God's favor. This is the addition of Jesus to the Old Testament. You would pick and choose where you would like to follow.

3. What I argue, and what Stephen argued, is that neither of these first two is how we should view the Old Testament. Christ didn't replace the Old Testament nor did He add to it. Christ fulfilled the Old Testament. Is the Old Testament important? Absolutely! It is not just Israel's story. It is our story. It is the story of our father, Abraham. It is the story of a promised

ending that includes us, the Gentiles. When we go to the Old Testament, we must view it through the lens of Christ. When we come to a temple, we don't say that God's name dwells in a temple so it places Him in a box and we need to try to figure out where that is. No, we go to the temple and say that it points to Jesus. Jesus is the place of God. Now we are the temple of God.

Stephen's Sermon

We will see that through Stephen's encounter with these people who were still practicing Judaism, the question came up about what to do about Judaism. Stephen gave a long sermon retelling Israel's history, to recreate the Old Testament. As he does so, he will help us to understand how we should deal with the Old Testament. Christ did not replace the Old Testament. Instead, He fulfilled it. He did not add to it but fulfilled it.

Let's look at Stephen's sermon. We will first look at his punch line. It is a long sermon and we won't get close to the ending today. I want to read his punch line.

Acts 7:51:

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

Stephen's sermon got him killed. We now need to see what led to this conclusion. The people were stiff-necked. They did not submit to God. Instead, they resisted the Spirit.

As we read Stephen's punch line, we have to figure out why he even preached this sermon in the first place. We have seen as we have gone through Acts chapters 1 through 8 that the gospel had come to Jerusalem. Chapters 8 through 12 are transitional scriptures where the gospel did what Luke said it would do and what Jesus said it would do from the very beginning. The gospel would go not just to Jerusalem but to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. We will see that the gospel will get out of Jerusalem. And, it will get out in unlikely ways. We thought the apostles would surely take the gospel out of Jerusalem. It was, actually, the deacons. We saw earlier in the scripture that deacons were called because

there were a lot of needs that were not being addressed. Deacons were raised up. We will see Stephen, as a deacon, will teach a lot. Through his persecution and through another deacon, the gospel would get out past Jerusalem into Judea and then Samaria.

Let's read the story that introduces where the sermon comes from.

Acts 6:8:

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders, and signs among the people.

Let's pause here for a moment because we have seen that phrase before. That phrase, great works, mighty works, mighty signs, has been spoken about of the apostles. The apostles were the ones who did great works and mighty signs. Now it is spoken of this deacon. Stephen was also doing mighty works. He was also performing great signs. God used a variety of people, not just the apostles. We will see throughout Acts that God used ordinary people to do extraordinary things. He used people just like you to take the gospel to all places.

Acts 6:9:

Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

There were people who belonged to a synagogue that rose up and began to dispute with Stephen. They were not happy with his message. He was not only doing mighty works, he was also preaching. He was telling. He was speaking and those people did not approve of his message.

Acts 6:10:

But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

They tried to corner him. They were trying to say he was not in Bible territory anymore. They were claiming he was taking a detour in this Christianity. But they were unable to argue against him because the Spirit

was with him. They couldn't withstand the wisdom he had from the Lord. They were trying to derail Stephen but they couldn't because he was on the side of the Lord.

Acts 6:11:

Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

The synagogue guys, the good guys, the religious guys, were secretly instigating things. They were unable to disprove him so they were setting up a trap for him. This sounds like what happened to Jesus. It sounds like what the Pharisees and scribes did to Jesus. They could not discredit Him in what He was saying, so they would bring a bunch of lies and false accusations against Him. That would work. They were acting against what would be a good conscience and sincerity.

They got these men to come together and they were instructed on what to say about Stephen. He is saying blasphemous things about God and Moses. When you brought a charge like that to a Jew, it was a big deal. Blasphemy was a capital punishment offense. You would die for that. It was not a charge to be taken lightly. Blasphemy against God and Moses was their charge. When they referenced Moses, they were not talking about the person. They were talking about his writings, the first five books of the Old Testament. That was the law. So, they were accusing Stephen of blaspheming God, and also the law, speaking against it, speaking crudely to it, saying it didn't matter, saying it is not important. That was what they were accusing Stephen of.

Acts 6:12-13:

And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law."

Again, this sounds exactly like what happened to Jesus. This was the same idea. There was a false trial with false information and the stirring up of a crowd. They brought false witnesses. This was like a repeated process.

There were people saying false things. Then there were false witnesses. Stephen was accused of speaking against this holy place. The accusation against him was that he was speaking blasphemy against God and the law. And, he was speaking against this holy place. For us, we might not know exactly what that was. Maybe you are new to Christianity. What exactly is this holy place? They were talking about the temple of God. They were contending that, somehow, Stephen was saying the temple didn't matter anymore. The synagogue people, those still practicing Judaism, were saying that Stephen was saying the temple, the holy place, the place where God put His name, didn't matter anymore. These were the charges brought against Stephen.

He was also accused of speaking against the law. He was not just picking on the temple; he was also picking on the law.

Acts 6:14:

...for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.

We have heard him say it. We have heard him say things like Jesus would destroy the temple. Where do you think Stephen got that? It sounds like what Jesus actually said. In the reading of the gospels, we find that Jesus would often say things like that. The disciples would say look at the temple and say to Jesus how magnificent and great it was. Jesus would say I will destroy it and raise it up in three days. The people would get mad at Jesus and want to throw Him out. And, they wanted to kill Him. They did kill Him. They were mad at Jesus for saying things like that against the temple. John would insert things in his gospel explaining that Jesus was actually speaking of His body. The gospel writers recorded that Jesus said the temple had lost its significance. Something better was here. Jesus is here. He is better than the temple.

Stephen repeated what Jesus had said and it got him in big trouble. The synagogue leaders claimed Stephen wanted to change the customs that Moses delivered to us. He wanted to change things! He wanted to change what we do and who we are and all we are accustomed to. He wanted to

change what Moses gave to us. He said the temple is unimportant. We need to get rid of this guy. They were not happy.

Before we go further, let's put ourselves in their shoes for a moment. We don't often put ourselves in the positions of the people in the Bible. Let's put on some synagogue sandals for a moment. You have been going to the synagogue all your life. You go because your mom and dad went there, as did your grandparents and great-grandparents. You are connected to Abraham. You are one of the tribe people. This is who you are. You have done this all your life. This is everything. You participate in the festivals. You come to all the Passovers just as you come to VBS every year. VBS in the summer is what we do. Passover is what they did. These were the customs and the norms. Then, there is a message that seems to be changing things. Let's be honest. No one likes change. We do not like change. 2020 was a year of change. That is why we hated it so badly. Instead of the normal, everything became a new normal. We had to pivot. We had to say all those words we can't stand. Everything changed. The custom of going to church changed. Everything was changed. We don't like change. We like things to stay the way they were. Here is a gospel message that was changing the order of Judaism. It was changing the order of the synagogue. It was changing the order of the temple. Things were happening and they didn't know what to do with it.

Here was the accusation. Stephen was speaking against the temple. He was speaking against the law. He was blaspheming God. He was changing the customs. So, we need to get rid of this guy.

Acts 6:15:

And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

It is interesting that Luke would include verse 15. It is an interesting side note. They were saying that he was against Moses. Your face looks like an angel's face. If you were a Jewish person who grew up in the Old Testament, who was the guy in the Old Testament that had a face like an angel? He had to cover his face when he came down from the mountain with the law because people couldn't see his face. These synagogue

leaders were saying that Stephen was picking on Moses but he somewhat looked just like him. We can't look at you. Luke is giving us a hint into who is right and who is wrong. Stephen is not the one who is picking on Moses. He was not the one who was against Moses and the law. He was actually on Moses' side. He was the one who actually understood the law. Those of the synagogue were the ones who couldn't understand what was happening.

There is already a gaping problem in Judaism that is not addressed in the text. Let's talk about that temple for a moment. The temple was the place that God ordained to bring sacrifices. He had to make this giant veil so that His presence would be in the Holy of Holies. No one could enter into the Holy of Holies, into His presence. There was a big problem with Judaism because there was a temple but there was no longer a veil. The veil was recently ripped when a guy got up from His grave. That veil ripped from top to bottom. There was already a hole, a crack, in Judaism. Have you been to that temple, the place you are going to where God dwelt, lately? He is not there. The door is wide open. You can go and see for yourself. He is not there in the Holy of Holies. There were already problems in Judaism. Synagogue leaders were trying to put the pieces together, rein in this gospel message. Stephen, the apostles, and the Christians were correctly understanding that the temple was like anti-skip. It had its good purpose. God intended it for a good purpose. Things were changing. Things were now different. Something better had come.

Stephen's Defense

Acts 7:1:

And the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

Is it true, Stephen? He is on trial before the council. Are these things true? You are saying bad things about the temple, the law, and the customs. Are you saying bad things about Moses? So Stephen gives his defense and delivers a long sermon. We will begin this sermon today and get into it more next week. Basically, the point of Stephen's sermon is this. Christ is not a deviation from God's story. Christ was the whole intended point all along. Christ did not come to change Judaism, change customs, change all

the ways. All the customs, the traditions, and all those things were pointing to Jesus. Now that Jesus had come, they did not have to go back to all those things. Those were shadows. They were templates. They were pointers. Now you have Christ. Let's now just have Christ and not go back to those things that pointed to Him. He would try to point out that Christ was not some detour to the plan. No, Christ was the plan all along. As we read the Old Testament, we should think through this. We are not reading some foreign text. We are reading about the coming of the Messiah who is Christ. We see that the Old Testament is something that Christ fulfilled.

We will see in Stephen's sermon that God is not bound to a temple. Instead, God binds Himself to people. The Jews could not keep the law anyway. Jesus had to rescue them from it. That is what Stephen will tell them. They were actually the ones who were rebelling against Moses. It was not Stephen that was rebelling against him. They were rebelling against Moses, just as their fathers had done. This is a summary of the whole sermon. We will now get into the meat of the text.

John Stott said (about this sermon) that Stephen is trying to say that Jesus was and is Himself the replacement of the temple and fulfillment of the law. Jesus is that better temple and is the fulfillment of the law. How does Stephen do this? He does it through preaching the Old Testament. We will see the lengthiest discourse in Acts. It is a long sermon. We will see that Stephen's basic defense is that God is not bound to the temple. Their accusation was that he was speaking against the temple. Stephen was trying to say that God has not always been there. Before, He was moving and doing. And, He is not there now. He is not bound to a place.

Acts 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, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.'

Stephen said that God appeared to Abraham, not in the temple, but in Mesopotamia. The accusation against Stephen was that he was speaking

against the temple. You are speaking against the house that God lives in. You are speaking about the place that God exists, the place we bring our offerings, the place we bring our sacrifices, the place we sing. You are speaking about the place that God is at. For Judaism, everything revolved around the temple. It was the centerpiece for everything. Stephen, in subtle and not so subtle ways (as we will see next week), was saying that God has not always been in the temple. He was moving before the temple actually got here. The promises, the covenants, and the laws all came before the temple. He told them they were holding on to this certain place, customs, and traditions. But God existed long before that. He had been moving in people long before that. Just because things were changing, He was still with them and moving long after that. Stephen was trying to get them to see that God had appeared to Abraham, not in Jerusalem, not in the holy land, but in a foreign land. God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia. God was outside the temple. And, God is always on the move.

The God of glory is a great description of Him. If you were going to start a sermon, a good way to start it would be with God's glory. Let's talk about God, God's glory. Probably in their imagination, they would have thought about God's glory. The heavens declare His glory. They would have considered who God is, His holiness, His beauty, His majesty. Thinking about the glory of God, they would have thought it existed in the temple. If you want to see the glory of God, it is in the temple. You go to the temple to see the glory of God. That is where God has put His glory. But Stephen is saying the glory of God existed long before the temple and will be present long after the temple. The glory of God appeared in Mesopotamia to a guy who worshipped pagan gods. This was long before the temple, the customs, and Moses. God engaged a man named Abram and called him. God called him to leave familiarity, to leave his family, his place, and go to a land he did not know.

This is interesting. This is what God is about to do with the church. The Jews are in Jerusalem, their place, their safety, their families, and their security. Everything they knew was wrapped up in the temple and Jerusalem. They knew the streets, the places, the restaurants. God,

through His Spirit, was about to send them out to the nations. The church was about to do what Abram had to do. Abram was called to a land so that His people could go from that land to all lands. Stephen was using this example to show that God was outside the temple before and is outside the temple now.

Acts 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 which you are now living.

How did they get to this land? It was a gift. It was given to them by God. They did not get there by their own works or their own doing. It was God who brought them there. They did not bring God there. They didn't build the temple and bring God there. God brought them there and dwelled in the temple among them. They were getting this backwards. – *We were the ones who brought God here.* – No, God brought them there and God was about to leave there and take them on a ride to go rescue the nations.

Acts 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.

He moves on in verse 5 to talk about the promises and the covenants. God promised Abraham an inheritance but he had nothing, not even a place for his foot. God promised land and children. He had neither. He had no sons. Abraham was given a promise that he couldn't see. It was a promise he must believe. He must believe in a promise from God that he couldn't put his hands on. But by faith, he could envision what God was going to do.

Acts 7:6-8:

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. 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' And he gave them 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.

God showed up outside Jerusalem to call Abraham. God moved His people outside Jerusalem. He would take them into Egypt. But guess what. Everywhere God's people were – God was there. He was not in the temple. He was with His people. God is always on the move, working with His people. Notice that Stephen brought out the promises and the covenant. Both of those were given before the temple, before the festivals, before the customs, before all the things they were relying on. The promises and the covenants were already established. These things did not come through the temple. It was OK that the temple was now obsolete. The promises and the covenants were not bound to a place. This was what Stephen was trying to get the people to see.

Then in verse 8, he said the one man, Jacob, would become twelve. There were now patriarchs. The promise of God was now growing. And then, Stephen moved on to a guy named Joseph.

Acts 7:9:

And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him.

The patriarchs, people who were supposed to be the ones to follow the Lord, were jealous of their brother and sold him to a foreign power. Why would Stephen bring up Joseph? There are a number of stories in the Old Testament. Why did he go to Joseph? I think in a not so subtle way that Stephen was trying to get them to make the connection between Joseph and the Lord Jesus. The patriarchs were jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. What just happened days earlier, weeks earlier? The Jews were jealous of Jesus. They gave Him over to a foreign power as well. The synagogue followers were actually doing what the brothers who were jealous of Joseph did. They were not on the side of Joseph. They were on the side of the brothers who did wrong. They were on the side of the Pharisees and the scribes who abandoned Jesus to another foreign power. But God was with Joseph. How could God be in Egypt if he were bound to

a temple? He was not bound to a temple. He is in all places. He will always be bound to His people.

Acts 7:10-14:

...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 his household. Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. But Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all (the promise was growing from twelve to seventy-five).

Acts 7:15-16:

And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, 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.

Stephen brought up Joseph. He was trying to show that in the Old Testament, God worked outside the temple, even long before the temple. The promises of God came long before the temple, and continued to happen after the temple. He used the example of Joseph. If you haven't read the story, you can find it in the second half of Genesis.

It is an amazing story. Joseph's brothers sold him into Egypt. He went there enslaved. God was with him and raised him up to a powerhouse in Egypt. He was given great authority. God gave him a vision that there would be a great famine. The famine came, but Joseph had stored up enough grain to save all the people. Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt. He was not aware that Joseph was there. He sent his brothers to go to Egypt to buy grain. Eventually, Jacob found himself in Egypt. He understood that Joseph was there. He learned that Joseph saved all of

Egypt and Israel. The brothers sold Joseph with the intent of killing him. God used their sin to save them.

Does that sound familiar? Does that sound like a gospel connection? Stephen was talking to a group of people who belonged to the same group of people who had gotten rid of Jesus, who just betrayed Jesus. They had just had Jesus crucified. Yet, in selling their brother, crucifying Jesus, God was actually rescuing the whole world. Stephen was showing all these Old Testament stories. Jesus was not just an off-shoot from these stories. He was not a detour from them. God was working through a people and the promise was always Jesus, always pointed to Jesus. The story of Joseph was replicated in the story of Jesus.

Stephen's obvious question to them was what side are you on? Are you on the side of the brothers or the side of Joseph? The obvious answer is that they were with the brothers. They were siding against the Messiah, against the Christ. So, what should they do? They should repent. What do they do? They resist. Even in Egypt, when Jacob died, they took his body back to Shechem and buried him there. They buried him in the land.

Why would they bury him in that Promised Land? Even though it might not seem like it would come true, God's promise was still happening. God would get His people to where they should be so that they could then go and be the blessing to all the nations. There were now people in that place where Jacob and Abraham were buried. The promise still remained even though Abraham and Jacob's bodies were in the grave. The promise of God's blessing to the nations, through this family, through these Israelites, still remain. And it is about to happen here. It will happen when another man loses his life. It will happen when they stone Stephen. His death will send the gospel to the nations. We will see that happen. Another man loses his life in the Promised Land and it brings the promise to all lands and all nations. We will see the glory of God as He works through these people.

So again, what do we do with Judaism? What do we do with the temple? What do we do with the laws? What do we do with these things? See that Jesus was the fulfillment of all of them. They all pointed to Jesus. Abraham pointed to Jesus. Joseph pointed to Jesus. Everything pointed to Jesus.

The Exodus pointed to Jesus. Next week, we will see that Moses pointed to Jesus. David pointed to Jesus. Solomon pointed to Jesus. All the prophets pointed to Jesus. These people had the Old Testament stories, but they were missing Jesus. Stephen was trying to get them to see that Jesus was not a detour from the plan. He is the plan. He has always been the plan, that in Him, all of the promises of God find their “yes” and “amen.”

Their Response to Stephen

Acts 7:51:

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

The people were being stiff-necked. They are like an animal that won't move because it doesn't want to go. The animal stiffens its neck and plants its front feet, refusing to move. Stephen said they were resisting the Holy Spirit just as their fathers did. You should not be resisting but repenting. He was trying to give them the full story. He was trying to show them that they could not mix the Old with the New. They were to see the fulfillment of it and come to Christ. Christ is the true temple.

What about us? How do we land this plane for us? Maybe some of us are like them. Maybe you have been a Baptist all your life. Somehow, you may have taken Jesus but still mix and match. You have taken Jesus by faith but you also try really hard to earn God's love, thinking you will earn His favor by doing really good. It is a mix and match of faith and works. – *I will try hard to please God; that will be what I do.* – Stephen would come to you and say that you don't need the temple anymore. Since Jesus has come, you don't please God through your goodness. You don't please God through your works. You please God by repenting and believing in Christ. In Christ, you have the favor of God. In Christ, you become a beloved son of God. In Christ, you don't earn God's love through obedience. You have God's love through Christ. Therefore, you obey. This is the whole difference of the gospel.

For us, this is how we must understand the Old Testament. For them, it was what do we do with the temple? For us, it is what do we do with the

Old Testament? What do we do with the passages that say if you obey, God will bless? Should we go obey to be blessed? No, that was an old covenant. There is a new covenant. There was one guy who obeyed. There was one guy who did it. Now you don't try to obey to be blessed. You come to Him who did obey so that you can have His blessing and be one of the blessed of God, not because you are good, but because Christ is good. Christ gave you His goodness and it is for His glory! Christ is good. We are not to see Jesus as added to, or a replacement of, the Old Testament. Christ fulfilled the Old Testament. When we see the sacrifices in the Old Testament, we don't look for our goat. No, we say thank God that Christ is the lamb. When we find the temple bears the name of God in the Old Testament, we don't ask where that is at. No, we see the story of the Bible that God's presence was in the Garden, but because of our sin, He had to move to a tent because God couldn't dwell with people in sin. The tent became a temple, a permanent place. When Christ came, He became the dwelling place of God. The temple is now obsolete. Because of the iPhone, you don't need the Walkman anymore because you have something better. We have Christ now and when He ascended, we, the church, became His temple. We are the dwelling place of God. You don't have to go to a certain location in a Holy of Holies. Everywhere God is, is holy. You are the holy people. You are the temple. We, as His temple, are to go out into the world preaching the gospel. We are going to one day live in a place where there will be no temple at all. The whole earth will be filled with His glory.

What do you do with the temple? The temple was good. But now, the temple is obsolete because Christ's fulfillment has come. What do we do with the Old Testament? We don't replace it or add to it. We see it correctly. We love it. We enjoy it. We are enriched by it. We follow God through it, but we do so by seeing the fulfillment of the Old Testament is Christ. When we march through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, all the way through Malachi, we are to look at how these scriptures connect to Christ. We don't work harder to earn God's love. We are thankful that Christ sealed His love for us. By repentance and faith, we are put in Him and we become the beloved people of God.