

Chapter Seven

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- In verse 1, the High Priest asks a very specific and pointed question. What was the question?
 - Why was this question so important?
 - The answer to this question will be the foundation and major premise of a logic argument that will either take us to truth or to error.
 - Traditional Christian commentaries are consistent in accepting as their premise that these were all “true statements”.
 - Traditional Christianity does teach against the temple, against the Torah and against the customs of Moses.
 - Replacement theology and the more recent error of Dispensationalism are based on the assumption that

these statements were and are true.

- The author, Luke, is careful to point out that these charges were FALSE. What do you make of the discrepancy between what is written in the record with what is taught by the traditions of men in today's theological world?
- In verse 2, Stephen begins a long and in-depth historical account of the very foundations of the Jewish faith. As an eloquent and Spirit-filled leader, his message was in concert with and supported the Apostolic message of “Repent” or “Teshuva”, meaning a return to God and His Torah. It is important to consider that Stephen's amazing message was content rich and historically solid especially as he was speaking before a hostile crowd with no preparation time. He had no notes, outlines or Powerpoint slides. How would you fare if suddenly called upon before a hostile crowd to explain the basis of your faith in the Messiah?
 - Since Stephen's defense is based squarely on the Torah for his authority, can it be truly affirmed that he was “against the Torah” as was falsely claimed?
 - Since his defense was very pro-Temple/Tabernacle,

can it be truly affirmed that he was “against the Temple” as was falsely claimed?

- Since his defense was very pro-Moses, can it be truly affirmed that he was “against Moses” as was falsely claimed?
- Stephen’s in-depth historical review would certainly have been known to everyone in attendance as it was the very basis of their faith.
 - Why do you suppose that he chose to assert what was common knowledge?
 - Is there value in beginning a defense by demonstrating the commonality of the origins of the faith?
- In verse 37, he quotes Moses who said, “The Lord our God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, like me.”
 - As Yeshua is presented as this “prophet like Moses”, what would it mean if He went against the very Torah given to Moses from the mouth of God?
 - If Yeshua was “against the Torah”, would He be

considered a false prophet? Consider Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:15.

- What does this mean for teachers and theologians today who teach “against the Torah”?
- In refuting the charges against him, Stephen affirmed his high view of the Torah, Moses and the Temple/Tabernacle.
 - He went so far as to link the present rejection of Yeshua to the hard-heartedness of past leaders who have also resisted the Holy Spirit. Consider the supernatural courage it must have taken to do this in a hostile environment.
 - In verse 53, he stated, “You received the Torah as it was ordained by angels, and didn’t keep it!”
- Is mere possession of the Torah the same as doing what it says?
- Is there a difference between “lip-service” and obedience of faith.
- As Yeshua is the Messiah, as prophesied in the Torah, does it not mean that rejecting Him is also

a rejection of the Torah?

- The description of the reaction from the crowd in verse 54 includes the phrase “cut to the heart” and “gnashing at him with their teeth”. Does this sound like a respectable and fare-minded legal deliberation?
- According to verse 55-56, in his Spirit-filled state, Stephen shares a vision of Yeshua standing at the right hand of the glory of God.
 - According to verse 57, what was the reaction of the crowd?
 - The text says in verses 57 and 58, “But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, then rushed at him with one accord. They threw him out of the city and stoned him.”
- This clearly demonstrates that the final actions were not on the basis of established legal procedure, especially since we know that the Sanhedrin was not allowed to prescribe the death penalty under Roman law.
- Is there a link between feverish emotionalism and the “mob mentality”?

- When people are screaming and refusing to listen, does it give license for unbridled hatred and violence?
- According to verses 59 and 60, how did Stephen respond to the unlawful, murderous attack upon him?
 - What did he do?
 - How would you fare in the same situation?