

Introduction:

Today we're going to continue looking at *Stephen's Arrest and Trial*.

Things we will look at in this lesson:

Stephen's Ministry and the Charges Against Him (Part Two)

Stephen's Ministry and the Charges Against Him (Part Two):

01. How many distinct sections did Stephen have in his sermon?

02. What did Stephen's introduction immediately imply continuity between?

03. What did the unbelief in Israel stand in sharp contrast with?

04. What did God do even though Jesus was rejected as deliverer and ruler?

05. What did Stephen use Israel's rejection of Moses to illustrate?

Article 1)

The assembly in the wilderness (Acts 7:38):

Refers to Israel as God's chosen people—the ones through whom he would reveal his plans and purposes to all nations. In Hebrew, the word translated "church" is *qahal*, which in turn is translated in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) as *ekklësia* (i.e., "assembly" or "church").

(1) Just as Moses led the church of the OT, Christ leads the church of the NT. The NT church is called "Abraham's seed" (i.e., his spiritual descendants, Gal 3:29; cf. Ro 4:11–18) and the "Israel of God" (i.e., the true and spiritual Israel, Gal 6:16). This means that the church has a continuity and connection with God's OT people.

(2) Like the OT church, the church of the NT is "in the desert," meaning that it is a pilgrim church—just passing through the world—far from its final promised land (Heb 11:6–16). For this reason, we must never become too comfortable with life here on this earth because it is not our final home.

Article 2)

God turned away (Acts 7:42):

Stephen's words reflect a well-established principle of God's Word, proven throughout the history of God's people.

- (1) Those who persist in rejecting God are eventually given over to the influence of evil, Satan and their own immoral desires (cf. Ro 1:24, 28).
- (2) Contrary to popular teaching, God does not continue to show unlimited love and forgiveness without any condition or response on our part.
- (3) He forgives and communicates his love to those whose hearts are still open and who admit their sin, turn to him for mercy, surrender their lives to Christ and begin following his purposes in true obedience.
- (4) For those who harden their hearts, resist God's Spirit and refuse to accept God's gracious gift of forgiveness and spiritual salvation, there is nothing else left but to face God's anger and judgment (Ro 2:4–6, 8).