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Stephen's Speech Missiological Implications of Stephen's Speech In Luke-Acts

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In Luke-Acts

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INTRODUCTION

"... and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

A. The Place of Stephen and His Speech in Acts

The Messianic movement which began with Jesus finds a distinct mark in Acts 2 where the twelve[1] experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The number of believers in Jesus as the Messiah continued to grow, as Luke reports. And as of 1989, it has reached 1.7 billion and is anticipated to be 2.1 billion in the year of

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[1]Or, 120 depending on how one reads πάντες ὁμοῦ in Acts 2:1. A few manuscripts add οἱ ἀπόστολοι, suggesting that this experience was only to the twelve apostles. The reading seems to be correct for three reasons. One, the promise for the Holy Spirit was given primarily to the eleven according to Acts 1:5. Two, the people who saw them speaking in tongues recognized them as people from Galilee (2:7). Three, it was Peter and the other eleven (by this time Matthias was included) who stood up to speak about the meaning of that event (2:14). However, this is not an exclusive understanding. It may refer to the one hundred twenty of 1:15. A tradition for such a reading has been established since the time of Chrysostom (*Hom.* IV.) who took 2:17-8 as an indication that the gift of the Spirit was not narrowly confined. Zahn goes farther to argue that women were excluded from the choice of Matthias but not from the gift of the Spirit. (Cf. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity*. eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 17., and C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles*. vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 112.)

2000.[2] Millions of Christians today read the two-volume work by Luke[3] as the primary source for the origin and beginning of the world's largest religion. Luke is the only writer who provides the record, in a historical setting, of how the small group of Christians struggled to carry out their vision for the world mission in the face of serious challenges.

For an understanding of the spread of Christianity, Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church, and his speech recorded in the Book of Acts are indispensable for several reasons. The three most obvious ones are: first, his speech ignites the public persecution of the church by the hostile Jewish leaders. After his death, began the dispersion of the Christians into "all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth", as Jesus had predicted. In fact, Stephen's martyrdom marks, if not results in, the beginning

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[2]David Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1989," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13, no. 1 (1989): 20-21.

[3]In regards to the single authorship of the Gospel and Acts, there is a general agreement among Lukan scholars. It is well testified by the internal evidence (prologue of each book, i.e., Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1,2). The single authorship is documented also by the absence of any dispute about the issue and has been a strong tradition fixed in the early church by A.D. 200. (cf. Dorrel L. Bock, *Luke volume 1:1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 5.) For more discussion on this subject, see Henry Cadbury, "Four Features of Lukan Style" in *Studies in Luke-Acts*. eds. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 87-101.

of and expanded mission among the Gentiles. Second, Luke takes the event to introduce Paul to his readers. Paul actually replaces Stephen in many ways, and third, there are parallels between Stephen and Jesus: both offered prayers for their persecutors and both were accused by the same group and charged for the same reason, i.e., blasphemy for violating the law of Moses and speaking against the temple.

Issues such as whether Acts was an afterthought, or whether the Gospel and Acts were conceived as a single work and subsequently separated in the formation of the Christian canon are not the subject to be discussed here. Nevertheless, there can be no question that the two books are related and united in various ways.[4] One of the important themes that unites the two is an interest in the world mission of the church. Thus, for Luke, the beginning of the church's mission outside Jerusalem was a very significant step, and the cause or preceding event of it must receive a careful treatment of him. If Acts 1:8 provides the summary of the whole book in a prophetic form, the speech and death of Stephen prove that the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction in Acts 1:8 began to unfold in a rather striking manner.

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[4]Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1992), 331.

B. The Purpose and Scope of the Study

According to Luke, Stephen was charged for his sayings about the temple, law and traditions. All three were of extreme importance and the last two were the pillars of the Judaism of Stephen's day. In responding to these charges, Stephen nevertheless presents a rather long speech which mainly appears to be a peculiar review of the past of Israel. His speech is not so much a defense nor a deliberate avoidance of the charges. It is in a way a confrontation with selectively and carefully drawn lessons from the history of Israel by Stephen. Stephen, unlike Peter and Paul in many of their speeches, doesn't seem to have the hope to convert his hearers. He places his hearers, the leaders of the Jews, in the same line with their rebelling and wayward ancestors. Nor does Stephen appear to be interested in presenting even the Christological kerygma typical of Peter and Paul's addresses.[5]

Stephen's speech leaves us with many questions. Our study will help to answer some of these questions. Chapter One of this study deals with some background issues, i.e., Who Stephen is among the Seven Deacons, and Who the Hellenists are, whose complaint threatened the unity and harmony of the church in Jerusalem.

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[5]Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1994), 11.

Chapter Two seeks to determine how the reporting of speech in ancient literature is to be understood. This is an attempt to defend the authenticity, and thus, the reliability of the ancient records of various speeches. The third chapter, the main body of the work, handles the issues dealt with in Stephen's speech. Special attention will be given to the following questions: How is Stephen unique in treating and understanding the three patriarchs at the beginning of the speech? How does Stephen use the Old Testament to highlight his points? Is Stephen suggesting that the tabernacle is more divine than the Jerusalem temple? How does Stephen relate his hearers with their ancestors? Chapter Four builds on Chapter Three by arranging and analyzing the speech under three distinctive themes, i.e., Pilgrim theme, Samaritan theme, and Rejection theme, which will lead us to see the missiological implications of the speech in the Book of Acts. We will seek to draw some points focusing on questions like, how the speech might have influenced the development of the first century mission, what the significance of this speech is for the church's mission today, and what insights can be gained from this speech.

Even though an intensive treatment of the Greek text of the whole speech is not given (52 verses altogether), due to the limit of the study, quotations from the Old Testament and some portions

that deal with the most pertinent topics, i.e., tabernacle and temple will be discussed in some detail as they form the climax of the speech. In addition, insights from modern scholars about the speech and various issues about it will prove helpful. The study does not, however, seek to see the issues in the light of non-Lukan writings.[6]

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[6]Martin H. Scharlemann's work includes some thorough treatment in this regard. He seeks to see Stephen in relation to Paul, James, and the author of Hebrews, Matthew, etc.
(M. Scharlemann, *Stephen: A Singular Saint* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968.)

CHAPTER TWO

PREPARATION FOR THE SPEECH

"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

As we read through the Lukan writings, we note that the geographical movement along with the development of the story is carefully arranged and developed. Luke begins his Gospel volume at Jerusalem with John's birth story. He ends it with the resurrected Lord appearing to the disciples, not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem. After Jesus' ascension, which took place in the vicinity of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem, the disciples returned to Jerusalem as their Lord told them to do and "stayed continually at the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:53). The beginning of Luke's second volume, the Book of Acts, repeats the command of Jesus that they should stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit. Despite its perplexing way of ending, which has left some scholars with questions, Luke has Paul staying in Rome preaching and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts, Luke begins the story at Jerusalem and ends it in Rome.

To understand the importance of the events dealt with in Acts 6 and 7 in the whole picture of Lukan writings, it is of some importance to note that according to Luke Jesus, throughout His entire ministry, never left Palestine geographically. (Both Matthew (15:21-28) and Mark (7:20-25) have Jesus once leaving it once.) The story of the Samaritan opposition (Luke 9:51-56) is also unique to Luke. Yet there are plenty of references in the Gospel that speak for universalism.[1] In other words, Luke has a good mixture of particularism and universalism in his first volume. But, geographically speaking, Luke well retains its particularism all the way up to the sixth chapter of his second volume. In chapter seven, Luke actually shows in a "very dramatic and sovereign way" how this message (of Jesus) became universal.[2]

A. The Elected Seven, Who Are They?

Luke very likely had a schematic structure in mind as he recorded the events in chapters 6 through 15. Until the leadership of the first-century church explicitly announces the approval of

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[1]cf. 2:30 ("... a light for revelation to the nations..."), 4:26,7 ("... a widow in Zarephath in the region in Sidon..., ... Naaman the Syrian"), 7:1-10 (Jesus commended the Gentile centurion for his faith), 10:25-37 (the Good Samaritan), etc.

[2]Harold Dollar, *A Biblical-Missiological Exploration of the Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Luke-Acts* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), 113.

the legitimacy of the Gentile mission in the Jerusalem Council, Luke, with the exception of chapter 12, advances the Gospel in the direction of the Gentiles.[3] In the meantime, the church struggled with the internal issues that threatened the unity. Luke begins the story of Stephen's death by introducing his readers to another group of believers that existed in the Jerusalem church: the Hellenists(Ἑλληνιστῶν). They were the ones who complained against the Hebraic Christians(Ἑβραίους). To deal with the issue, the apostles proposed to choose seven men[4] and the church approved the proposal. No method about the selection is mentioned, but the Greek verb ἐξελέξαντο suggests that the selection was made based on the rules stipulated by the apostles.[5] It is not clear whether the whole community got involved or whether it was just the Hellenists who did the selection. What is apparent in the text is that all Seven have Greek names. Of course, that does not make them Hellenists because some native Jews had Greek names as seen in cases of the apostles: Philip and Andrew. Martin Scharlemann, in favor of a Samaritan connection of Stephen, suggests that at least Stephen, if not all other six, does not represent the Hellenist

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[3]Ibid., 115.

[4]Whether this provides an explanation of the rise of the deaconate will be dealt with later.

[5]Simon Kistemaker, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1990), 224.

group. He isolates Stephen from the Hellenists as being more radical on the basis of his view on the temple.[6]

With no specific information given, however, one needs to remember the context in which they were elected. They were chosen for the service of the Hellenist Christians, and all the Seven were recognized by both Hebraists and Hellenists groups. And the fact that they all had Greek names suggests that they might have been recognized leaders of the Hellenists.[7] In addition, it is difficult to conclude that Luke, who is careful with the geographic movement of the gospel, jumps from Jerusalem to Samaria without any hint, if one is to see Stephen as a Samaritan. Therefore, Scharlemann's view may not be acceptable. This point is supported also by the fact that all the Twelve were Hebraic Jews and the community of the two groups needed balance by appointing leaders from the other group.

Were the Seven the first official deacons in the church? The fact that the expression διακονεῖν τραπέζαις is used in Acts 6:2 has been

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[6]M. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 17-19. (About this Samaritan connection of Stephen, a detailed discussion will follow in the last chapter.)

[7]Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 145.

the basis for appealing to Acts 6 as the place to look for the origin of the deaconate.[8] This argument has been supported by the fact that the seven men were elected to do what would be thought of as work appropriate for deacons. But there are a few things that go against the assertion that the Seven are to be equated with 'deacons' in the sense in which that expression is used in the later history of the church. First of all, v. 4 reads that the Twelve apostles wanted to devote themselves to τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου. This suggests that the διακονεῖν in v. 2 might have been used in a neutral sense. Second, chapters 6, 7, and 8 inform us that their activities were not confined to one kind of service. Stephen and Philip were free to preach, dispute and evangelize. Third, the qualifications laid out for the Seven by the apostles differ from those laid by Paul in I Tim. 3:8-13.[9] Paul designates the aptitude for teaching to the bishops, but not to the deacons. Even though

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[8]Beyer, "διακονία" in *The Dictionary of the New Testament*. ed. Gerhard Kittel, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 90.

[9]The apostles thought that the Seven should be full of the Spirit and wisdom and individuals well reported of, while Paul suggests that the deacon should be blameless and temperate, having only one wife and ruling his house well. Paul does not include an aptitude for teaching, while he requires it from a bishop. For this reason, I Tim. 3:8-13, as well as Phil. 1:1, is the appropriate reference for the deaconate.

one may call the Seven "almoners,"[10] the Seven took a lot wider range of responsibilities. It is obvious from the text that they served the Hellenists not only in their materialistic needs, but also in their spiritual needs. Stephen's service in his attending to earthly needs and his preaching of the word both agitated the Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as those from the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. Of the two kinds of service, the preaching ministry is far more emphasized by Luke, as he makes no mention about the other.

The impression is given that Luke abruptly introduces his readers to the conflict which has been boiling up to the point that the church took an official action to appoint the Seven to carry on specific work. He is not interested in explaining the origin of the deaconate but rather in introducing Stephen and Philip, whose work has special significance for the Gentile mission of the church. Could it be that Luke saw the Seven as maintaining the balance between the two groups in the Jerusalem church so that the two deacons were, in a sense, apostles to the Hellenist Christians?

B. Who Are the Hellenists?

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[10]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*. (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 122. Bruce does not think, however, that their activity was by any means confined to service as almoners.

If the Seven are the leaders for the Hellenists in the Jerusalem church, what is this Hellenist group to which Stephen and the other six belong? Where do they stand in their relationship with Judaism? Are they just Jews with only one difference, in that their mother tongue is Greek?

Luke's way of beginning the story is rather surprising since no hint was given with respect to the existence of this group, although even though chapter 2 might be referred to for such a hint. But, it is clear, at least from the context, that they were not Gentiles. Luke, who is so careful to take steps toward Gentile mission, as shown in the case of Cornelius in Acts 10, could not have meant that Gentiles were part of the Jerusalem Church.[11] M. Simon takes the position that the Seven could not be Gentiles on the basis of the difficulty to ascribe their conversion to the preaching of the Twelve, who probably knew little Greek, if any.[12] Another proof for the argument against the possibility of the Hellenists being Gentiles comes from the way Stephen speaks and

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[11]Henry J. Cadbury suggests that there were two different national groups within the Jerusalem church implying that the Hellenists are Gentiles who have come to Jerusalem. (F. J. Jackson and K. Lake eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity*. vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1932), 59-70.

[12]Marcel Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church*. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956), 4.

acts. The opening words of Stephen's speech well testify to this. No Gentile could have said, "Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to **our** (emphasis added) father Abraham... ." (7:2) M. Simon, quoting from some rabbinic writings, disputes even the idea that Stephen might have been a proselyte because only Jews by birth were allowed to call Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "our fathers" while the proselytes had to call them "their fathers".[13]

Linguistically speaking, the Ἑλληνιστής derives from Ἑλληνίζειν which means "to speak Greek," and also "to live as a Greek."[14] But objection to the idea that the word only conveys the linguistic connotation finds its basis from the case of Paul who spoke Greek but would call himself "a Hebrew of Hebrews."[15] Perhaps the word "Hellenists" includes not only the language but also a Greek or non-Jewish mode of life. The Hellenists, most likely, are the Jews who once lived as the diaspora in Greek-speaking cities, but now are back to Jerusalem. They were still retaining (or, better, they

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[13]Ibid., 12. Paul, in his address to the enraged Jews, begins his speech with the same beginning formula: "Brothers and fathers" (Acts 22:1). He also uses the term, "our fathers" (v. 3).

[14]For the linguistic discussion, refer to M. Simon, 8-14., Windisch "Ἕλλην" in *TDNT* vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1964), 511,2., and C. Moule, "Once more, who were the Hellenists?" in *The Expository Times* vol. 70 (1959): 100-102.

[15]Phil. 3:5; cf. 2 Cor. 11:22.

were forced to retain) their language as Greek[16] and, more significantly, were living in a Greek mode. Some perhaps were even under the influence of paganism since the language could be the vehicle for that. To what degree they were different in regards to their view on the law is uncertain.[17] What is certain from the text itself is that, for Luke, the existence of the division between the two groups in one community, which once enjoyed a perfect harmony (Acts 2), became apparent and the conflict was serious enough to prompt the church to take action, namely, election of the Seven.

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[16]Their linguistic orientation must have given them some disadvantages despite their great love for Jerusalem which resulted in the returning to the homeland, and being Roman citizens in some cases. Their language barrier might have prevented a lot of them from going to or presenting themselves in the temple for worship.

[17]M Simon goes too far when he says that the Hellenists were considered as pagans with heretic elements from the standpoint of the orthodox Jews (cf. M. Simon, 18,9.) But this contradicts the text. Stephen's accusers were the Hellenistic Jews, Jews from Greek cities. That they accused Stephen should not confuse one so as to conclude that Stephen must have been someone who was opposed ethnically. One needs to remember the accusation was, in nature, more theological than cultural or cross-cultural. The accusers represent the conservative Jews among the Hellenistic groups. That Stephen represents the Christian Hellenist and his accusers the hard-to-die Jewish Hellenist allows the readers to think that diversity existed among the Hellenists. It is more natural to see Stephen's message being offensive to the community from which he came. This hostility reappears when Paul, shortly after his conversion, was debating with the Hellenistic Jews and they tried to kill Paul (9:29). Paul himself was from Tarsus in Cilicia (22:3). Among several different groups of Jews who accused Stephen, the Cilician group was one of them.

C. Summary

As the immediate context for Stephen's speech, Acts 6:1-7 serves some important purposes for the readers. First, as explained by Harold Dollar, this episode prepares the readers for "an interesting switch from focus on the apostles to the Hellenists."[18] Even though the apostles will continue to play a vital role up to the Jerusalem Council, the apostles disappear gradually after the Stephen episode, and do not appear any more after 16:4. This does not necessarily mean that Luke's sole interest in this episode was to introduce his readers to the Hellenists, using the church conflict merely as a means to achieve such a goal.[19] The second significant point of the episode is information about the diversity which existed within the community. The first five chapters, with the possible exception of the second chapter, give every indication that the Jesus movement consisted exclusively of homogeneous Jews. But with his opening sentence in chapter 6, Luke abruptly introduces the readers to some kind of diversity within the movement.[20] Even though the unity was threatened by the conflict,

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[18]Harold Dollar, *A Biblical-Missiological.*, 117,8.

[19]I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of Apostles* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1980), 124-26.

[20]H. Dollar, 120. (cf. Stephen Wilson argues that a sudden appearance of the two groups in 6:1 means that Luke is drawing on a different source at this point.)

6:5-7 makes clear that the unity was secured in the midst of the diversity.[21] Third, Luke shows a great deal of interest in introducing Stephen. Stephen is given a special introduction: a man filled with faith and the Spirit (v. 5),a man full of God's grace and power (v. 8), a man speaking with wisdom and by the Spirit (v. 10), and a man whose face was like that of an angel (v. 15). No man in the New Testament received such a personal description. Luke, with all that, informs his readers of the importance and reliability of the speech which follows.

[21]Verse 5 informs us that the proposal by the apostles met with the approval of the community and verse 7 speaks about the continual increase of the believers.

CHAPTER THREE

SPEECHES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD AND ACTS

"Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning..." (Lk. 1:3)

The time and the world that Luke, a historian as well as a theologian, lived in had a tradition to honor two kinds of great figures. They are the great general and the great orator, and both possessed the power to make people do as they wished. One used force and the other persuasive speech.[1] Luke, writing the history of first-century Christianity, has at least two dozen speeches, comprising 295 verses of the approximately one thousand verses in Acts. If one includes "partial speeches," speeches in Acts amount to over 365 verses.[2] How does Luke use those speeches in his writings? A brief study about speeches in the ancient world as a background study for Stephen's speech is in order.

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[1]Conrad Gempf, "Public Speaking and Published Accounts" in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting.*, eds. Bruce Winter and Andrew Clarke (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 260.

[2]The counting differs slightly depending on the angle from which one looks at the subject. M. Dibelius, G. A. Kennedy and G. Schneider recognize 24 or 25 speeches. (Cf. M Soards, 1-2.)

A. Speeches in the Ancient World

To defend the validity of Stephen's speech as a reliable source and subject to study, one needs to confront two challenges. One, while it is true that rhetorical training was regarded as the basis of all literary and intellectual activity in the Graeco-Roman world,[3] and, therefore, a powerful tool in both intellectual and political life, how do we maintain the integrity of Stephen as the speaker? It is one thing to say that Stephen was a great orator - indeed, he was - and yet it is another thing to say that he was true to the subjects that he presented. Did he speak without exaggeration?[4] Two, how do we defend the validity of Stephen's speech in its written form? Since Luke is the writer, the question is, On what ground can we say that there was a real speech made by a real person, Stephen, and that Luke was faithful to the speech itself and not just supporting his own point by inserting an imaginary speech?

Regarding the first challenge, which is to defend the authentic

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[3]Ronald, Mellor, *Tacitus*.(New York: Rontledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1993), 112.

[4]Take Tacitus as an example. At one point, Tacitus, a well-trained man in rhetoric, turned away from oratory because he realized that oratory can be intellectually obsolete and politically irrelevant. He felt sterile tricks were used to flatter tyrants and destroy good men (cf. Ibid., 114).

nature of the speech, Luke has outstanding introductory words about Stephen as mentioned in Chapter One. Luke says the speaker was, first of all, well recognized by the whole believing community as one being full of the Spirit and wisdom (6:3). When Stephen was elected to represent the "Hellenists" (Christians), he even did some great wonders and miraculous signs among them[5] because he was a man full of God's grace and power (v. 8). The "power" is obviously connected with the Spirit who descended upon the disciples (2:1-4). Another reference to Stephen is made in v. 10, namely that the opposing Jews were not able to stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. This witness to Stephen accords well with the self-description of Paul with whom Luke became a traveling companion. Paul says, "My message and preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of Spirit's power" (I Cor. 2:4). How was the power of the Spirit demonstrated in Paul's ministry? If he meant the things accompanied by the Spirit's power, then we have a say that all three were also with Stephen: miraculous signs, power and Spirit. One thing for sure is Luke's unusually strong emphasis on the outstanding quality of Stephen's ability as a speaker.

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[5]cf. Williamson J. Larkin Jr., *Acts - The IVP NT Commentary Series*. ed. Grant R. Osborne (Downers Grove:. IL, Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 103. Larkin takes Stephen's performing miracles as a "token of salvation's advance first to Hellenistic Jews and then to other peoples (8:6; 14:3; 15:12)."

The second challenge, which is to defend the historicity of Stephen's speech against the claim that it is all Lukan composition, presents multiple issues of the relationship between rhetoric and historians in the ancient world.

M. Dibelius, whose pioneer work on speeches in the ancient world is still influential among German students, emphasizes the purpose of the writer of history by arguing:

> The historians' art begins where he no longer contents himself with collecting and framing traditional events, but endeavors to illuminate, and somehow to interpret the meaning of the events.... To the Greek and the Roman historian, speeches served as a means for their purpose, however differently this purpose might be conceived. The ancient historians were not aware of any obligation to reproduce only, or even preferably, the text of a speech which was actually made.[6]

Among the ancient historians Dibelius saw an attempt to provide an insight (i) into the total situation, (ii) into the meaning of the historical movement concerned, (iii) into the character of the speaker, and (iv) into the general ideas which introduce the situation.[7] Despite his serious study, Dibelius' conclusion is misleading, because the speeches in Acts are seen as Luke's free composition. He ignores the authenticity and historicity of the

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[6]M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, H. Greeven ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 138-9.

[7]Ibid., 139-40.

speech itself at the cost of the discovery of the Lukan purpose.

Eduard Schweizer develops what he calls "general scheme," through which he arrives at the conclusion that

> *one and the same author* (italics added) is decisively involved in the composition of all the speeches here investigated.... He is led to make changes within the set pattern primarily by a change of audience.... The difference in speech is far less important.[8]

However, unfortunately, the speech by Stephen deviates from Schweizer's general scheme. Schweizer lays out eight points which form the general scheme of the speeches in Acts. Those are: direct address; appeal for attention; pointing out a misunderstanding among the audience; quotation from the Scripture that begins the speech; the Christological kerygma; scriptural proof proper; the proclamation of salvation; and the focusing of the message upon the specific audience.[9] Out of the eight elements, first of all, Stephen's speech does not point to misunderstanding on the part of the audience. Second, his speech has no clear reference to Christ as do all the speeches by Peter and Paul. Therefore, thirdly, nowhere is the proclamation of salvation made. In this regard, Schweizer's scheme fails to describe the structure of the speech,

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[8]Eduard Schweizer, "Concerning the Speeches in Acts" in *Studies in Luke-Acts*. eds. Leander Keck and Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 212.

[9]Ibid., 210-12.

which in turn speaks against his assertion that there is just one and the same author composing all speeches.

Hans Conzelmann, a faithful follower of Dibelius, is another example of a similar misunderstanding. His claim that Luke follows the general example of ancient historiography by inserting "speeches" into his narrative does have validity to some degree. But, he views the purpose of the speeches to instruct and to please the reader, focusing on the latter more. According to Conzelmann, the speeches are not abbreviated versions of actual speeches but they are simply literary creations by Luke.[10] Conzelmann, however, provides no convincing evidence for his view. His discussion on the persistent elements in the structure,[11] which are to be identified with Schweizer's eight points, can be disputed on the same ground.

That having been said, it seems appropriate to take some examples of ancient historians to examine the authenticity of the ancient speeches recorded. Thucydides (471 ca.-403 B.C.) was the

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[10]H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: Hermenia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. tr. James Limbury, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 43-44.

[11]Ibid., 44.

author of *The Peleponnesian War*. His famous phrase for writing speeches was "A possession for ever, not the rhetorical triumph of an hour." The following words reveal his principle of writing the history of the war:

> With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.[12]

We should not be misguided by a casual reading which may end up seeing a "contradiction" between two criteria, namely, suitability on one hand and the truth on the other hand. We are told that, in composing his speeches, the historian kept as closely as possible to the overall purport or purpose of what was actually said. Yet, the writing was done in such a way as to coincide with the historian's opinion of what the several speakers would have presented to their hearers in the given situation. The reference to the historian's own opinion presents a limiting factor one way, but his reference to the "general sense of what they actually said" is a limiting factor in another.[13] It would be wiser to conclude

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[12]Thucydides, 1.22.1, trans. R. Crawley, *The History of the Peleponnesian War*(London: Longman, Green and Co., 1874) 14.

[13]F.E. Adcock, *Thucydides and His History*(Cambridge: The University Press, 1963), 27-8.

that the historian maintained the balance between the two poles or boundaries on a continuum, not in a contradiction.[14]

Thucydides claims three rules about the actual writings of speeches (*λόγοι*): (i) he introduces a speech only when he had reason to know what the speech was made about, (ii)he would not pretend to give the exact form of the speeches made, (iii) and yet, he has faithfully reproduced the speaker's general line of argument, the purport and substance of his speech, as far as it could be ascertained. These rules, says Thucydides, were disregarded by Herodotus, a great writer who wrote *History* of the Graeco-Roman Wars and lived before Thucydides.[15] Therefore, contrary to the popular understanding, Thucydides was not a historian who felt free to compose for his own purpose.

Polybius,[16] three hundred years later than Thucydides, is another historian who was concerned with actuality and accuracy of his work. Even though he himself inserted many speeches, including those of Hannibal, Scipio, and Aemilius, which were certainly not

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[14]Conrad Gempf, 266-8.

[15]Ibid.

[16]We are familiar with this name because his work had become an occasional secondary source to Josephus who named him freely. (cf. Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 65.)

recorded and preserved for him to write, he claimed that the historian should record only what was actually done and said. His visit to the Alps to study the route of Hannibal demonstrates his sense of duty and thoroughness as a historian.[17] As Thucydides differs from Herodotus, Polybius stands on the other side of Fabius whose inaccuracy had caused offense to Polybius. Whereas Herodotus sought to entertain, Thucydides and Polybius tried to instruct and dwelled on the consequent necessity of accuracy.[18] Thucydides refused to categorize himself even as a poet[19] but claimed to be a chronicler.

For our interest, it is significant to note that Thucydides does not pretend to reproduce the exact words used by various speakers because, as he acknowledges, on many occasions when the speeches were delivered, he was not even present. But both Thucydides and Polybius were conscious about their responsibility to be honest and faithful to the material available to them. This contradicts the conclusions drawn by some biblical scholars. True, there were some historians whose aim was less than to inform and instruct their readers with accurate records. But their existence does not lead

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[17]Clarence Mendell, *Tacitus: The Man and His Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 34-5.

[18]Ibid, 35.

[19]A poet generally had a far better reputation for truthfulness than an orator. (cf. Mellor, *Tacitus.*, 114.)

the Lukan students to conclude that Luke composed two dozen speeches and put them into the mouth of biblical figures.

B. Speeches in Acts

Luke's sense of duty as a historian is manifested throughout his Gospel, in which speeches play an important role. Since the sayings recorded in Luke are for the most part, the sayings of the Lord, they were treated with special veneration. Although recorded in Luke's style, the sense which he found in his sources is faithfully reproduced, even sometimes the very wording.[20] For example, having compared the Lukan version of the Olivet discourse (Luke 21:5-33) with its earlier form in Mark 13:5-37, F. C. Burkitt concluded that, in spite of various changes, it is essentially the same speech. He remarks, "What concerns us here is not that Luke has changed so much, but he has invented so little."[21]

Speeches in Acts, as is the case for most of the ancient historical writings, sometimes play a more important role than narratives. After discussing several important speeches in Acts, Bruce concludes that they

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[20]F. F. Bruce, "The Significance of the Speeches for Interpreting Acts" *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 33, no. 1(1990): 20-28.

[21]Francis C. Burkitt, "The Use of Mark in the Gospel according to Luke," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, F. J. Jackson and K. Lake eds. (London: Macmillan, 1922), 1:115.

> provide Luke with a vehicle for his insistence (a)that Christianity is the true fulfillment of Old Testament revelation.... (b)that Christianity is no threat to Roman law and order.[22]

In the face of constant threat from the leading Jews of the day, Peter, Paul and Stephen did not back off in their speeches. Every occasion that a speech was given, there was some kind of attempt to counteract by Jewish opponents, but in vain. Furthermore, throughout the Book of Acts, the speeches are located at important turning points in the narrative and function to illuminate events and to emphasize special events, and places - especially by justifying the pertinent events and their purpose. For Luke this meant theological cause.[23] Diverse personalities, ethical groups, communities, geographical regions, and historical moments are unified in Acts largely through repetitive occurrences, forms, and contents of the speeches. But this is done without sacrificing the peculiarity and authenticity of various speeches.[24] Therefore, it is important to read Stephen's speech in the context of other

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[22]F. F. Bruce, "The Significance.," 28.

[23]Hemer renders a significant insight for this. A comparison between Josephus and Luke, concludes Hemer, reveals that there exist eight important differences between the writings of these two. Luke's purpose was theological while that of Josephus was intensely porsonal with "ethical providential theism." This difference led Josephus to be prone to sensationalize and exaggerate, and Luke to be more restrained with the vigor of the concept of 'truth' in history "as it actually happened." (Cf. Hemer, 97-100.

[24]M. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 8,15.

speeches and in the Book of Acts, and yet be assured about its reliability as a speech actually made by a person named Stephen.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPEECH

"Then the high priest asked him, 'Are these charges true?'"(7:1)

A. Stephen's Treatment of the Three Patriarchs

As mentioned earlier, Stephen's speech, compared with other speeches in Acts, stands out in several regards. His speech has by far the most extensive review of Israel's history in the New Testament and is the longest speech in Lukan writings, amounting to some six percent of Acts. It is not only the lengthy historical review that distinguishes this speech from other speeches in the book of Acts. It has no specific reference to the name Jesus Christ. Nor does it contain any Gospel message to reveal the speaker's intention to convert his audience.

Some scholars like Raven observe that there is an important connection between the uniqueness of Stephen's appearance and its implications throughout the speech for understanding the whole speech. Whether Stephen's face being "like the face of an angel" has to be interpreted simply as a necessary element that enabled

him to make the speech as a man filled with the Holy Spirit,[1] or even that it puts him on the side of the angels who revealed the name of God at the burning bush and gave the law on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38),[2] there seems to be no convincing evidence. What one can be sure about is that, because of the special personal description given to Stephen, what Stephen has to say, in Luke's mind at least, requires special attention.

1. The Figure Abraham

M. Scharlemann observes that Abraham, who represents a new beginning because Israel became his offspring (Is. 41:8), received growing attention in Judaism in terms of his personal virtues. The writings of the two representative Jewish writers, Josephus and Philo, reflect such a trend.[3]

In favor of making his Jewish readers imitate the virtuous life of Abraham, Philo (20 BC - AD 40) says that Abraham, "not having been taught to do so by written books, but in accordance with the unwritten law of his nature," was anxious to obey all healthful and salutary impulses. Philo concludes his presentation of Abraham by

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[1]E. Haenchen, *The Acts.*, 272.

[2]David Raven, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995)*, 59.

[3]M. Scharlemann, *Stephen.*, 58-59.

exalting him to be "himself the unwritten law and justice of God".[4]

Flavius Josephus (b. AD 37/8, d. cir. AD 100) goes even further in exalting Abraham's personal virtues. According to him, Abraham was the founder of the monotheistic faith and was a great scientist with higher notions of virtue. Abraham is believed to have ventured to publish for the first time that "there was but one God, the Creator of the universe" after observing the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun, moon, and all the heavenly bodies.[5]

Both Philo and Josephus consider Abraham's faith as his personal virtue, not a gift of God. Then God becomes the one who simply gave Abraham's family members whatever they deserved as the consequence of their great obedience to Him.[6]

Even some legends contribute to exalting Abraham's personal virtues. According to a legend, Nimrod, an impious king and cunning astrologer, read in the stars that Abraham would be born in

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[4]Philo, "On Abraham," XLVI, in *The Works of Philo*, trans. C D. Yonge (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 434.

[5]*Antiquities*, I, VII, 2, in *Complete Works of Josephus*, a revised edition of Havercamp's translation (NY: Bigelow, Brown & Co.)

[6]Ibid.

his day, would rise up against him, and would reveal the falsity of his religion. Nimrod, then, like Herod trying to slaughter the baby Jesus in fear of losing his temporal power, ordered the midwives to kill all baby boys. So, Abraham's mother fled to a cave and gave birth to Abraham. He was fed by the angel Gabriel because his mother deserted him.[7] Another legend says that Abraham was able to walk when he was ten days old and, after watching stars and the sun rising and setting, he declared, "There is One who sets them in motion."[8] The list of the pious legends about Abraham goes on and on. There can be no doubt that materials such as these were extant in the days of Stephen. It is, then, very important to note that Stephen used none of them.[9]

As one reads Stephen's presentation of Abraham, there arise some questions about his words. According to Stephen (in verse 2), God's first appearance to Abraham was in Mesopotamia (or, Ur of the Chaldeans). But according to Genesis 11:31, 32 and 12:1, one has good ground to argue that God's appearance was in Haran where his

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[7]Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 87-88.

[8]Ibid., 89. This type of legend is familiar to the Buddhist tradition. According to a legend, Buddha walked at the moment of his birth and uttered a profound philosophical statement. The trend to exaggerate the religiously venerated figure in religious writings is common.

[9]Scharlemann, *Stephen.*, 63.

father, Terah, took Abraham, Sarah and Lot. But, Stephen's argument for God's earlier appearance is not without ground. Both Philo[10] and Josephus[11] render a rather helpful hint that God called Abraham already in the land of the Chaldeans. It is not only Josephus and Philo who give different accounts from Genesis 11 and 12. In Genesis 15:7, God declares to Abraham, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." There is yet one more biblical reference to this. Nehemiah states that God "chose Abraham and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham" (Nehemiah 9:7).[12]

There is another textual problem; that is, to decide the time that Abraham left Haran. Terah was 205 years old when he died (Gen. 11:32) and had Abraham at the age of 70 (Gen. 11:26). When Abraham left Haran, Abraham was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4). So we only have 145 years for Terah and 60 years are missing if one follows Stephen who says Abraham left after Terah had died.

In an attempt to solve the seemingly contradicting chronology, M. Wilcox concludes that there is a connection between the Samaritan Pentateuch (hereafter SP) and SP Targum and Stephen's

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[10]Philo, "On the Migration of Abraham."

[11]*The Works of Josephus*, 38.

[12]cf. Joshua 24:3.

speech. Acts states that Abraham left Haran after his father had died. But the more generally accepted biblical chronology dates Abraham's departure before Terah's death.[13] The SP and its Targum, however, give the total years of Terah's life in Genesis 11:32 as 145 years, which would place his death just before Abraham departed from Haran, and would then provide the basis for the statement in Acts 7:4.

C. K. Barrett calls it Luke's "innumeracy" because he thinks that Luke, without careful computation, simply followed the order set by Genesis.[14] But not everyone agrees with Barrett's argument. In verse 6, Stephen states that the Israelites were enslaved for 400 years. This number is in accordance with God's word spoken to Abraham (Gen. 15:13), but not with Moses' account. According to Moses, the duration of Israel's stay was 430 years (Exod. 12:40-41, see also Gal. 3:17). Obviously, the figure 400 is a round number, while 430 years is more specific. (Rabbinic exegesis explains that the period of 430 years extended from the birth of Isaac to the day of the exodus.[15])

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[13]H. J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Black, 1955), 101-2.

[14]C. K. Barrett, "Old Testament History according to Stephen and Paul" in *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 61.

[15]S. Kistemaker, *Exposition*, 242.

The problem stems from Genesis 11:26: "After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abraham, Nahor and Haran". But this does not imply that the readers are to understand Abraham as the first son. Most likely, the author of Genesis listed Abraham first because of the importance of his name that continues to appear up to Gen. 25.

In summary, Stephen's account that God called Abraham in Mesopotamia is well testified by other traditions. It may well be that God called Abraham twice, and when God appeared to him in Chaldea, He told Abraham what Stephen repeats, that is, Gen. 12:1 without καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός (Gen. 12:1 LXX) because Terah went to Haran with Abraham, and most of all, Haran was not Abraham's γῆ but Ur was. Stephen may be interpreting Abraham's account (Gen. 11 and 12) by clarifying. Another possible explanation for the omission of the clause is that, it is either a simple abbreviation of a pleonastic text, or an intentional alteration reflecting the influences of Old Testament passages such as Gen. 15:7 and Neh. 9:7.

Now, we turn our focus to the question of how Stephen's Abraham account fits into the picture drawn by the New Testament writers. A concordance survey reveals that there are roughly five categories for the New Testament references to Abraham.

(1) There is a strong warning against any generic use of his name. The warning comes from John the Baptist: "... And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'" (Lk. 3:8b, cf. Matt. 3:8 and Jn. 8:39). The attack on the abusive use of his name is due to (2) the biblical witness that Abraham is the man of faith and his faith produced obedience (fruit or act of faith). This is the most prominent theme that the New Testament references to Abraham call attention to. References in Romans, Galatians, James, and Hebrews 11 explicitly make this point. And Jesus confronted the Jews who said the same thing in Jn. 8:39.

(3) Few, but worthy references that stand out are found in Luke's Gospel (13:16, 19:9, and 16:19-31). For the interest of our study, we need to take a closer look. In chapter 13, Luke introduces a synagogue ruler exhorting the worshipers not to work on the Sabbath as he saw Jesus healing a crippled woman. In response, Jesus said, "You hypocrites! ... Then should this woman, a daughter of Abraham...be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" (Lk 13:15-6) Another saying similar to this was made by Jesus when Zacchaeus repented: "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk 19:9-10). There is yet a more striking reference in Luke's Gospel: the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Whether this is based on a true story or not

is not our focus. What is so striking about the story is the manner in which the story was constructed. The merciless rich man who had enjoyed his earthly life is now in hell and is looking up in agony and crying, "Father Abraham, have pity on me ..." (Lk 16:24a). How does Abraham respond? Quite strikingly! He replied, "**Son** (emphasis added), remember that in your lifetime you received your good things" (25a). The man ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ calls him, "Father Abraham" and he in return calls the man, "Son".

All three of these telling Lukan stories speak for two points: God desires to show His mercy to the marginalized, sick and poor-stricken children of Abraham. On the other hand, a legitimate child of Abraham, a Jew, can end up in a disastrous destiny unless there is true repentance of heart producing fruit-bearing life of faith which is mentioned in the second category.

The fourth category forms a theme around eschatology and resurrection. Again, we hear Jesus speaking against the misled conviction that all the Jews would participate in the feast of the *eschaton* (Matt 8:4 and Lk 13:28). The last category which is related to Stephen's speech is formulated with the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. In the Magnificat, Mary sings, "He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers" (Lk. 1:54-5).

In the Song of Zechariah, he offers praise for the same reason: "to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham" (vv. 72-3). We note that neither Mary nor Zechariah regards Abraham higher than the actual Abraham in history. Abraham's life is mentioned in his connection with God.

Stephen's words about Abraham highlight God, not Abraham as do the references shown outside the New Testament. No place in the references in the Scripture is there any suggestion that somehow the father of Israel took the initiative to go from his previous idolatrous life (cf. Josh. 24:2) into a recognition of the one true God. The thought of any merit attaching to the patriarch's behavior is not even hinted at.[16] It was God who appeared to Abraham in the foreign land and God who gave him the covenant (ἔδωκεν).

In summary, one can ask what the points are that Stephen wanted to highlight. Stephen's intention was not to give general biographical information about Abraham because, as N. A. Dahl points out, Stephen leaves out a number of events, like Abraham in Egypt, Abraham and Lot, and most remarkably, the sacrifice of

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[16]Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 63.

Isaac.[17] He even changes to adjust his account into the present situation.[18] There are three things the Abraham account conveys to the hearers.

First, Stephen once again reminds his hearers that the central themes in Abraham's life and story are covenant and God's mercy. His hearers were not to be boasting for the reason that they had Abraham as their father by birth. It is God's redemptive action which initiated God's covenant relationship with Abraham and God preserved that relationship despite Abraham's human errors. This is highlighted by Stephen's opening words, "The God of glory," a phrase found in Ps. 28:3 (LXX). This beginning emphasizes God's divine authority as God becomes involved with the entire narrative about Abraham (vi. 2-8a). Krodel goes so far as to argue that "the God of glory" is the central theme of the entire speech.[19] This line is, argues Soards, an anticipation of the narrative conclusion of the Stephen story, for in 7:55 one reads that Stephen gazed into

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[17]Nils A. Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis, 1976), 71.

[18]Exodus 3:12 states that God informed Moses in the Sinai Desert, "You will worship [me] on this mountain." Stephen changes the words "on this mountain" to "in this place", thus pointing to the Jerusalem temple.

[19]Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 140.

heaven and saw the "glory of God."[20]

Kistemaker looks at this matter from a different angle when he suggests that Stephen had a hidden agenda to introduce the concept of covenant at this juncture. Stephen's purpose was to show that covenant precedes the temple and law, and, therefore, it is basic to Israel's religion.[21] This seems plausible, yet it may be that, Stephen, relying on his memory, was following the chronology.

The second thing that stands out is that God cannot be confined to one place. In other words, God is everywhere. God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, then in Haran and in the land where the descendants of Abraham are living now. This point prepares Stephen for the important upcoming argument for the temple that even the temple cannot and should not confine God's abode (vv. 47-50).

Last, Stephen unfailingly draws the attention to Abraham's suffering in the midst of his pilgrimage. He only received the promise for the Promised Land but didn't see any actual fulfillment. Stephen says, God "gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground" (v. 5a). Abraham had to walk by faith, not by facts proven. Such a walk required a great deal of suffering

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[20]Soards, 61.

[21]Kistemaker, *Exposition.*, 243.

which he, and his descendants in turn, would experience in Egypt. But, before Stephen moves on to the promise given to Moses on Horeb, he quotes Genesis 15:14 which reveals God's intention to punish the oppressive nation. Could it be that Stephen is giving a hint that the same doom would wait for the oppressive Jewish leaders who killed the Righteous One (v. 52) and even the one who was speaking?

God's initiation, direction and authority are assumed in this portion of the speech, and that interpretation fits into the New Testament picture as well as that of Genesis. As Paul's extensive presentation of Abraham in Romans 4 serves its purpose, i.e., to prove that a man is justified by faith, without deviating from the biblical witness, Stephen highlights features in the life of Abraham without violating the picture of Abraham drawn in the Old Testament. Seen against the background of the contemporary Jewish material available to his hearers, Stephen's interpretation is distinctive: theocentric and realistic. It is a rediscovery of God's salvific action free from any particular place and time and refocuses on the theocentric history of Israel.

2. The Figure of Joseph (vi. 9-16)

Stephen's review of the history with a careful selection continues as he moves on to the episode of Joseph. Why he skipped

Isaac and Jacob is totally a matter of speculation. Joseph's story is told throughout eleven chapters in Genesis and it is condensed into roughly eight verses. What are some points that Stephen wants to make through this section?

Haenchen maintains that verses 2-46 are a mere didactic recapitulation of Israel's relations with God. For him the story of the three patriarchs told by Stephen "is simply sacred history told for its own sake and with no other theme."[22] M. Dibelius sees the irrelevance of this section (vv. 9-16) as the most striking feature of the speech, as can be seen from the fact that Stephen was to give a defense against the charges. As does Haenchen, Dibelius sees the didactic element as being strong.[23] However, a closer examination of this section proves that Haenchen and Dibelius argue without proper ground.

Psalm 105 (104 LXX) has 7 verses depicting the time of Joseph. Here, even though a strong word δοῦλος is employed, the main focus still rests on God's mercy in remembering His covenant. The brutal treatment was given to Joseph by some Egyptians, not his brothers. So one can argue that though the word δοῦλος used in Ps. 105 (104

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[22]E. Haenchen, *Acts.*, 288.

[23]M. Dibelius, *Studies.*, 169.
Haenchen and Earl Richard call Dibelius' position a 'neutral presentation of sacred history'.

LXX):17 creates a vivid picture of Joseph's affliction in Egypt, a reference to Joseph's brothers and the biblically testified cause for the affliction, namely, the jealousy of the brothers, is omitted. Stephen's deliberate choice of the verb ἀπέδοντο becomes more obvious in the light of other biblical stories such as Josh. 24 and Neh. 9 (both of these contain references to Abraham), and of extra-biblical material like Judith 5 which omit the incident entirely.[24] Stephen emphatically brings up the point that the very brothers of Joseph, i.e., the ancestors of the audience, are the ones who betrayed Joseph whom God appointed for them.

The second phrase of interest is 9b: ἀπέδοντο εἰς Αἴγυπτον. The Genesis story tells that it is not the brothers of Joseph who sold him into Egypt, but the Midianites (37:36). Then why does Stephen say his brothers performed the act? Stephen's assertion does not lack its biblical basis as Joseph told his brothers later, "I am your brother Joseph, the one **you** (emphasis added) sold into Egypt (LXX: ὃν ἀπέδοσθε εἰς Αἴγυπτον). And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here" (45:4b-5a). Richard argues that the author (Stephen in mind) could hardly be more severe on Joseph's brothers, and thus the phrase reveals its

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[24]Earl Richard, "Joseph Episode in Acts 7" *JBL* vol. 98 (1979), 258.

polemical nature.[25] Stephen tells us that Joseph was sold by his own brothers because of their jealousy. With the phrase "all troubles" from which God rescued, Stephen summarizes Joseph's several years of afflicted life in Egypt.

There is another point that Stephen seems to highlight in verse 11. What he presents here is not in accord with the Genesis text, namely, Gen. 42:1-2. According to Genesis, it is Jacob, not the brothers of Joseph, who takes the action to solve the problem of food shortage. However, Stephen reports that it is "our fathers", most likely Joseph's brothers, who saw the trouble.

Further, Gen. 42:2 (LXX) and 43:2 employ μικρὰ βρώματα which Stephen replaces with χορτα΄σματα. Richard surveys the LXX references of the latter term and says there are eight occurrences and that the word obviously refers to some type of animal food.[26] Why did Stephen avoid using the term βρῶμα which occurs in the New Testament seventeen times (twice in Luke and none in Acts)? Stephen's word χορτα- is found in the story of the Lost Son (Lk. 15:16). The wayward son was sent to fields to feed pigs. And he longed to be fed (χορτασθῆναι) with the pods that the pigs were eating. That is

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[25]Ibid., 258-9.

[26]Earl Richard, *Acts 6:1-8:4, The Author's Method of Composition, SBL Dissertation Series* no. 41 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 67.

a pretty desperate and even miserable condition!

It is clear that Stephen chose to use this term instead of the LXX term to present the intensity of the misery that Joseph's brothers had to taste because God was not with them. God was with Joseph and the divine presence brought Joseph not only wisdom and honor but also abundance of grain (στι'α, not χορτάσματα). God rescued Joseph from all his troubles(θλίφεων) while the famine which came upon both Egypt and Canaan became a great trouble (θλῖψις). E. Richard regards this as another polemical unit.[27] Stephen, who stays closely with the LXX, deliberately departs from it to highlight his point.

Verse 16, the last portion of Stephen's treatment of Joseph, has been the most troublesome part of the Stephen material for many scholars, because not only does Stephen deviate from the LXX accounts, but he also seems confused in giving out the data regarding the burial place for the patriarchs. The related texts are Gen. 23:16, 33: 19, 50:13, Ex. 13:19, and Josh. 24:32. Jacob was buried in the cave of Machpelah which Abraham bought from the sons of Hamor (Josh. 24:32). There is no biblical record indicating where Joseph's brothers were buried. Only Josephus

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[27]E. Richard, 186, 7.

states that the eleven, along with Jacob, were buried at Hebron.[28] Acts 7:16 seems to hold that all twelve were buried at Shechem and, on the contrary to the data given in Gen. 23, Stephen says Jacob bought the property. Why does Stephen give this wrong information to the audience who knew the Scripture so well?

Different suggestions are made by different scholars to solve this problem. J. Jeremias argues that an established Shechemite tradition[29] was available for Stephen. This argument goes along with the idea that Stephen was depending on the Samaritan tradition or that he was a Samaritan. R. Koivisko attempts to solve the problem by distinguishing between inerrancy of content and inerrancy of record in Acts 7. He allows Stephen's errors since inspiration is "only posited of the author of Acts and not of Stephen as a character in the narrative."[30] Still Kistemaker suggests another:

> The name *Abraham* in verse 16b calls to mind the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, where Jacob was buried. And Shechem in the place where the Israelites buried the bones of Joseph. The two accounts have been telescoped in one

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[28]*Antiquities.*, 2. 8. 2 (200).

[29]J Jeremias, *Heiligengraeber in Jesu-Umwelt* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 38, 39.

[30]R. Koivisko, "Stephen' Speech: A Theology of Errors?," in *Grace Theological Journal* vol. 8 (1987), 1:101-114.

short sentence.[31]

A lot more can be said about the different opinions of scholars. But as this issue does not seem to relate to our concern, we don't need to go any further.[32]

Our study proves that Stephen's account about Joseph cannot be considered as a mere presentation of the history with didactic purposes. It is not reasonable to say that Stephen attempted to instruct the members of the Sanhedrin. Nor is it possible to see it as neutral history. Stephen's audience, namely, members of Sanhedrin, didn't need a mere review of history. As Stephen did in the story of Abraham, so also with Joseph he carefully selects from the vast resource, especially from the LXX, and yet departs from the familiar text if necessary to highlight the points. He does not let Joseph's brothers walk away free from the guilt. He draws a sharp contrast between Joseph and his jealous brothers. To argue his point, he skips a lot, like Joseph's life in Potiphar's house and prison, a moving story of Joseph's forgiveness and the like.

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[31]Kistemaker, 249.

[32]See Max Wilcox, "The Bones of Joseph: Hebrews 11:22" in *Scripture: Meaning and Method*, Barry Thompson ed. (North Yorkshire, England: Hull University Press, 1987, (126) for the comparison between Acts 7:16 and Heb. 11:22. Wilcox argues that the writer of Hebrews chose to refer to Joseph's words because they fit at once with the picture elsewhere in Jewish exegesis of the piety and faithfulness of Joseph.

Overall, Stephen remains faithful to the Old Testament testimony that God was the one who was behind all the story of Joseph and gave him wisdom. Both Potiphar and Pharaoh saw that the Lord was with Joseph, which moved them to put Joseph in the place next only to them. This is precisely the point Stephen was making. Apart from God's gracious presence, Joseph was only an insensitive person whose uncontrolled frankness (Gen. 37:2-9) evoked the jealousy of his brothers and anger of his father. Philo's story that Jacob observed some outstanding virtues in his young son Joseph is sheer imagination.[33]

3. The Figure of Moses (vv.17-43)

a. vv. 17-19

This unit serves as a summary of Exodus 1, and, in this speech, as the transition from Joseph to Moses. The three verses are faithful to their LXX source and, the close connection between v. 18 and Ex. 1:8 (LXX) is especially striking. However, 17a finds no Old Testament counterpart and must be considered as the author's injected interpretation. The interjected clause, "As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham," takes us back to Abraham and the thoughts of Abraham's story: freedom, and possession of the land to fulfill the national purpose, which is

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[33]Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 435.

the worship of Yahweh.[34]

b. vv. 20-22

Dealing with the childhood of Moses, this unit presents two questions. First of all, we need to ask why Stephen adds the rather detailed notes about Moses' childhood. The term ἀστεῖος that Stephen uses to describe the child Moses comes directly from the LXX and no clue is given to why the LXX rendered טוֹב in this manner.[35] Kilgallen suggests that Stephen's account about Moses' childhood in detail should be understood in connection with Jesus growing in wisdom and in favor of God and men (Lk. 2:52).[36] Kistemaker goes even further, saying that the threatening situation of Moses' infancy serves Moses to make a type of Jesus.[37] Their suggestion that vv. 19-22 have Christological implication in Stephen's mind challenges the view that his speech lacks Christology. Such an argument is true in the sense that Stephen has an implicit reference to Christ, i.e., "the Righteous One"(v.52). If that is the case, Moses being an extraordinary child reminds us of the boy Jesus listening to the teachers and

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[34]John J. Kilgallen, *The Stephen Speech* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 64.

[35]Barrett, *Acts*, 353.

[36]Kilgallen, 66.

[37]Kistemaker, 251.

asking questions in the temple, which amazed everyone around him(Lk. 2:46-7). Another thing to be mindful of is the fact that Joseph had to take the baby Jesus to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-18). The time in which both Moses and Jesus were born witnessed that the contemporary political leaders were hostile to those who, in the future, would manifest and carry out God's salvific plan for His chosen people.

The second question to be answered is regarding verse 22. What Stephen testifies about Moses' days in the Egyptian palace is not found elsewhere in the Scripture. Furthermore, that Moses "was powerful in words" contradicts what Moses himself professes[38] in Exodus 4:10: "Moses said to the Lord, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue'" (Ex. 4:10). Is Stephen following Philo[39] who, despite his attempts to be faithful to the biblical account, "fails to avoid dressing Moses in typical Greek garb"?[40] One can raise the same kind of question from reading Hebrews 11:24-27. The author of this epistle seems to add a little

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[38]This is based on the assumption that Moses was really aware of his inadequacy, instead of not being self-confident in spite of his eloquence.

[39]Kistemaker indeed suggests that this verse is due to Stephen's following the tradition.

[40]Scharlemann, *Stephen.*, 70.

more pious color in that several things mentioned in that particular pericope are rather unknown to the Exodus text. Even though there is no absolute evidence, and thus one cannot exclude the possibility that Stephen and the author of Hebrews were using the already developed tradition by writers like Philo, it is more natural to ascribe these odd accounts to taking the total figure of Moses as their basis. One cannot read the end chapter of Deuteronomy without being impressed by the deeds and words of Moses.[41] It may be necessary at this juncture for Stephen to mention Moses as being well educated and powerful for the following argument, that is, that Moses' qualifications for being the leader were neither appreciated nor accepted by the people for whom he had concerns.

c. vv. 23-29

There is little doubt about the source of the concepts and story here because this unit, except v. 25, depends on Exodus 2:11-15b. Especially in verses 27 and 28 Stephen quotes word for word. As mentioned earlier, the beginning section of Moses story takes us to Abraham. Yet, this unit brings the audience to the theme dealt with in the story of Joseph, i.e., rejection.

Two points stand out. First of all, the repeated usage of the

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[41]Kilgallen, 66.

term "brother"(23,25, and 26) reveals the intention of Stephen since the Exodus story uses the phrase "own people." With the term "brother," Stephen emphasizes the obvious connection which should have tied Moses and his fellow Israelites together. Following the Old Testament account, Stephen says that Moses, at the age of forty, went out to see "his brothers," instead of "his own people" (Ex. 2:11). He was troubled by seeing the affliction placed upon the Israelites to the point that he even killed the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. On his second visit, Moses saw two Israelites fighting, and said, "Men, you're brothers, why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" in Exodus 2:13, hoping to bring them back to their senses.

Secondly, his speech brings us to the ignorance of the Israelites. It is to be noted that both Philo and Josephus say a great deal about the political jealousy of the Egyptian leaders. Thus Moses had to flee to Midian because his political opponents entertained hatred against him.[42] But according to Stephen, Moses fled because of his own brothers when they failed to understand Moses' killing the oppressive Egyptian as a sign for God's deliverance through his appointed redeemer, Moses (v. 25).[43] This

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[42]cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2.9. 205-15 and Philo, *On the Life of Moses*, I:44-50.

[43]E. Richard sees this verse as an obvious redactional assertion. (cf. E. Richard, *Acts*, 83.)

comment made by Stephen is rather peculiar interpretation when compared with the Old Testament text and any other traditions.[44]

The Old Testament text tells us that Moses was only slightly influenced by God prior to the burning bush experience. In the mind of Stephen and Luke, the lack of understanding on the part of the Israelites, even though the term συνῆκαν is not employed, seems to be one of the major themes. Rejection of Jesus is often attributed to the lack of acceptance, but more often to the lack of understanding.[45] There are several references to the more explicit references to ignorance in Acts: 3:17, 13:27, 14:16, and 17:30. The first two are referring to the ignorance that led the Israelites to kill Jesus (and the latter two to that among the Gentiles which resulted in pagan worship practice).

As Joseph was hated and rejected by his brothers because of his dreams which God fulfilled in the course of his life, Moses was misunderstood and rejected. Once again, a sharp contrast is drawn between Moses and his brothers, the sons of Israel, and thus the nation Israel. In doing this, Stephen not only cites the words of

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[44]The author of Hebrews does the same thing. Heb. 11 states that it was by faith that Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God and that he left Egypt, not because of the fear for the anger-filled king, but because he sought the invisible (Heb. 11:25-27).

[45]G. Ludemann, *Early Christianity.*, 87.

the misguided Israelite, but also presents some peculiar information that Moses was well educated and that he understood himself as a person to bring God's "salvation (σωτηρίαν) to them (v. 25). This foolish man's cynical response is repeated almost verbatim in verse 35, and probably verse 27 (... "Who made you ruler and judge over us?") and is central to the Moses' episode when one considers the effect that the verse might have created in the hearers mind.

d. vv. 30-34

This unit takes us back to the beginning section of the Moses story (vv. 17-19) and deals with the central episode of the speech, i.e., the theophany and mission. The weight of the event, in Stephen's estimation, for his message is revealed by word-for-word quotation from the LXX. Yet, as we compare this account with that of Old Testament, there are few significant things that Stephen didn't include as he drew upon the Old Testament account.

First of all, one should note that Stephen changed the place of the theophany from Horeb (Ex. 3:1 MS and LXX) to Sinai. The change seems to be intentional if one takes Acts 7:38 into consideration. Stephen is following the late tradition that, on Mount Sinai, God first appeared to Moses and people worshiped (Ex. 19:11-13) near the Mount fulfilling the promise given in Ex. 3:12 ("on this

mountain"). Here recurs the important theme that God's sacred presence is not limited to the Jerusalem temple. This is the theme hinted at in earlier presentations of Abraham's account and even at Joseph's.

Secondly, several scholars note that there is a deliberate switch in verses 32 and 33. In the Exodus text, God tells Moses to take off his sandals and then reveals himself as the God of the patriarchs. But in our text, God's revelation comes first and then follows the command to take off the sandals. Richard concludes that Stephen returned to a "more systematic use of his source"[46] and yet provides no suggestion as to why Stephen did that. C. K. Barrett attributes it to (Stephen's) defective memory.[47] Carter and Earle, in their co-authored commentary, see it from a thematic point of view which represents the view of the majority of scholars. The first-century Jews thought that the temple in Jerusalem was **the** (emphasis added) holy place. But, Stephen's words are a reminder that wherever God reveals himself is holy place.[48] So it was not simply an accidental switch, but it was more deliberate for emphasis. By including God's demanding to take off

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[46]Richard, *Acts.*, 102.

[47]C. K. Barrett, *Acts*, 361.

[48]C. W. Carter and Richard Earl, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 101.

sandals, Stephen could build up "God's-abode-outside-Jerusalem" theme and also prepare his hearers to be aware that the word that Moses would receive is of utter importance for the Israelites as well as Moses.

e. vv. 35-41

The Old Testament text continues to furnish Stephen with valuable data for his speech in this unit. But it is hard to miss that there is something different from the Old Testament material regarding Moses. There seems to be "an abrupt change of style"[49] whose function acquires an increasingly demonstrative, illustrative, and even polemic character. According to Haenchen, this unit gives way to passionate, rhetorically highlighted indictment. The change of style is marked by the repeated use of τοῦτον, taken up again in verses 36-8 by the threefold οὗτος.[50] The beginning phrase, "this is the same Moses," marks that Stephen is no longer recounting the history of Moses. By interpreting, he goes back to the significant theme, the theme of rejection[51] which he wants, invites, and even drives his hearers to face. This theme intensifies as the story moves on. The rejection of the divinely

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[49]Haenchen, *Acts.*, 282.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Kistemaker, *Acts*, 259.

appointed ruler, Moses whose call was supposed to have a lasting result[52] as seen in the verb ἀπέσταλκεν (v. 35, perfect in tense), ends up with rejecting the very God himself (cf. Mt. 10:40). Out of impatience and distrust in Moses who was waiting to receive the "living oracles" from God, the people of Israel made a golden calf and worshiped "what their hands had made" (v. 41). Thus, Stephen prepares his audience for the most climactic point that God does not dwell in houses made with hands (v. 48).

In addition to the change of the style, we find an implicit reference to Christology. This is hinted at already in verse 35 as Stephen speaks of Moses being sent as a ruler and deliverer (or, redeemer). The term λυτρωτὴν cannot be found anywhere in classical Greek. It comes from the verb which means "to ransom" or "to redeem." The idea that Moses was a redeemer takes Stephen's audience to the Moses who delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Furthermore, this term unfailingly points the Christians to Christ.

Verse 37 contains Moses' prophecy ("God will send you a prophet like me from your own people") ruled by the so-called "telescopic"

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[52]F. F. Bruce points out that "the abiding results of Moses' mission formed a thought never absent from a Jew's mind." (Bruce, *Acts.*, 201.)

principle.[53] This prophecy was quoted once again by Peter (Acts 3:22). Considering that Peter and Stephen spoke to the same audience, this quote must have created a strong impression and implication. According to David Tiede, the expression "a prophet like me" from Deut. 18 and 34 plays a very significant role to understand Israel's complex role in the divine plan. This promise cited twice in Acts, in effect, raises the prospect of a "prophet" successor to Moses and insists that Moses' immediate successor Joshua (LXX: Ἰησοῦς) did not fill the bill.[54] The citation, as other verses about Moses in the speech, reminds the audience of the truth drawn from Deuteronomy that Israel's election was emphatically not due to the obedience and righteousness of the people, but was secured for them by the prophet who both accused the people of their sin and still carried their cause to God in plea for divine compassion (Deut. 9).[55]

Therefore, the citation conveys two implied messages to the mind of the hearers. First, taken from the original context of Deuteronomy, it confronts the hearers with their accountability for

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[53]Carter and Richard, *Acts.*, 102.

[54]This is clear in Deut. 34. Joshua was "filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him" (v.9). Yet, since then, says the following text, "no prophet was risen in Israel like Moses" (v. 10a).

[55]David Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 39-40.

the refusal. Moses, in Deut. 18:15, tells the Israelites that raising "a prophet like me" is for their benefit because they feared that they would perish to face the Lord. In verse 19 of the same chapter, however, Moses warns the sons of Israel, citing the words of the Lord that anyone who refuses to listen to the prophet (like Moses himself) would have to face God's call.[56] Considering the veneration for Moses among the first century Jews, the Deuteronomic context could not be hidden to them. Second, taken in the context of the speech, the citation connects Moses with Jesus as both of them experienced a great deal of suffering that came from misunderstanding (or, ignorance) and refusal.

Verse 38, which talks about Moses on Mount Sinai receiving the commands, chronologically speaking, goes back to the event recorded in Exodus 24 and this event is reviewed by Moses later (Deut. 4:10, 9:10 and 18:16). Stephen's words seem to summarize the event but he does so with something in his mind. F. F. Bruce says:

> Moses is thus presented as being, under God, the founder of pure, spiritual cult - a presentation found elsewhere in Hellenistic appreciations of him. Under his leadership, people had experienced the redemptive power of God. The place of their assembly was holy ground, because God manifested his presence there: God's presence and that alone could convey holiness to any place on earth, and no material shrine enclosed that holiness.[57]

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[56]For a fuller discussion, see P. Minear, *To Heal and To Reveal* (New York: The Seabury Book, 1976), 102-111.

[57]F. F. Bruce, *Acts.*, 202.

The Christological hint, implicit in verse 37, is seen once again in this verse which says that Jesus is the new founder of the lost "pure, spiritual cult" and what he brought was the living words of God. And in this verse, the "God-outside-Jerusalem" theme recurs once more.

In summary, the theme of rejection began with the story of Joseph, developed step by step in the Moses account. Stephen recounts how the Israelites "pushed" Moses "aside" (Acts 7:27 and 39 using the term ἀπώθέομαι) and his word recurs only once more in Lukan writings (Acts 13:46). In Acts 13, Paul tells how the Jews of Antioch treated the word of God. After the term ἀπωθεῖσθε, follows the verb στρέφω (turn to). Because the Jews refused to listen to Paul and Barnabas, they said they had to turn to the Gentiles. The rejection of Moses led the Jews to idolatry exactly as the Antiochean Jews' rejection of God's word resulted in turning Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. In both passages, the rejection called for a fatal consequence. The deadly result of the idol worship in the desert is spelled out in verses 42 and 43.

f. vv. 42 and 43

As the people of Israel failed "God for the very reason for

which they were freed,"[58] which was to worship God as promised to Abraham (Acts 7:7) and to Moses (Exodus 3:12), there comes the divine response.

Scholars are divided on how to interpret the term ἔστρεψεν as it can be rendered both with intransitive or transitive meaning.[59] I agree with K. Lake that it is not a matter of grammar, but a matter of taste.[60] But viewed with the next verb, παρέδωκεν, the transitive nature seems to fit better. Paul uses the term παραδίδωμι intensively in Romans 1:24, 26, and 28, and Lake suggests that the idea of the divine punishment for sinners to worse sin should not have been alien to the mind of Jews.[61]

Before we turn to Stephen's quote from the book of Amos, we need to review v. 42a in a larger context and see its importance. Stephen stated that God chose Moses and the Israelites rejected him. That rejection introduced them to idol worship, and both rejection and idol worship brought them God's punishment, that is, enslavement to a worse condition. Thus the desert community

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[58]Kilgallen, *Stephen.*, 87.

[59]For a fuller discussion, see *The Beginnings*. vol 4, 79 note and Richard *Acts*, 121-2. Bruce, Conzelmann and Haenchen affirm its intransitive nature.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

(ἐκκλησία, v. 38) that gathered to receive God's divine word was no longer able to offer true worship. This conclusion must have had a strong impact on the mind of the audience who rejected "the prophet like Moses" (v. 37). Rejecting God's spokesman, that is, Jesus, the Jews are not in the position to offer true worship any more. This same thought is repeated later. In Acts 21, for an example, Paul got arrested in the Jerusalem temple area and, right after Paul was dragged out from the temple by the misled and blood-thirsty Jews, "immediately the gates were shut" (21:30).[62]

g. Summary

What can be said about Stephen's presentation about Moses? The most obvious point being made in this section is the theme of rejection. This theme was already introduced in the story of Joseph. In addition to what was discussed above as being unique about Stephen's laying out the accounts, there is one more to note, that is, Stephen's focus on the communal aspect of the history of Israel. Already in verses 11 and 12, Stephen has "our fathers" referring to the brothers of Joseph. They collectively represent the whole nation of Israel and forefathers of the audience. Verse

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[62]Even though somebody ordered that, the incident, in Luke's mind, was significant and left a strong symbolic impression upon him. Bruce suggests that this event might have made the impression in Luke's mind that "the temple ceased to fill the honorable role hitherto allotted to it in his twofold history." (Bruce, *Acts*, 450.) Also see Luke 1:5-25 for Luke's careful record of what had happened in the temple.

25 states, "Moses thought that his people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but **they** (emphasis added) did not." It was not only one particular Jewish man whose anger unfortunately led him to the failure of recognizing Moses as a divine instrument to save, but the whole community.

This theme is recurring in verse 39, a cardinal verse in the section. It has, "but our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt." Rejecting God's appointed one and turning to Egypt come together. By turning to Egypt, they rejected all salvific actions of God that they have experienced since the time of the exodus. In the story of Joseph, the rejection was done to one particular person, Joseph. But in the story of Moses, it was both to the person of Moses and to God, and the action of rejection now runs full circle in verse 42: God rejects the Israelites. The rejection by God is not explicit in the story of Joseph even though a hint is given in terms of God's presence with Joseph, not with his brothers.

B. Stephen's View on Tabernacle and Temple (Seeking Some Insights from the OT Passages)

1. Preparatory Quote from Amos for the Climax (vv. 42-43)

First of all, a sudden quotation from the book of Amos seems to create confusion because, after this quote, Stephen comes back to

the time of Moses. Why would he do this after treating the history of Israel in fairly chronological order? This question is of great importance for understanding the proper place of this quotation in carrying out the speaker's argument.

Amos 5:25-27 has raised many questions and issues, a fact which reflects on the complexity of the text, and suggests that there is no easy assessment. William R. Harper in his commentary lays out several different ways to interpret the question which revolves around verse Amos 5:25: "Have you offered sacrifices and offerings to me forty years in the wilderness, O House of Israel?"[1] Harper lists several different interpretations for the word, וּמִנְחָה (but (or, yes) you have lifted up) as no clue is given to how the ו should be rendered in the text, a conjunctive, adversative, or consecutive?[2]

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[1]He says, "Interpretations have greatly varied; according as they have represented Israel during this period, offering (1) idolatrous sacrifice to Yahweh; (2) sacrifice acceptable in form, but not continuous because of lack of animals; (3) required sacrifices, but no freewill offerings; (4) sacrifices to idols, but not to Yahweh; (5) sacrifice accompanied by idol-worship; (6) few sacrifices compared with their many rebellions; (7) no sacrifices at all; (8) sacrifices to be sure, but also something else, viz. 'true worship of the heart and righteousness, public and private.'" (cf. William R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* The ICC series., ed. Charles A. Briggs, et al. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 136.

[2]Ibid., 136-7.

Stephen, in quoting this notoriously difficult passage, follows the translation of the LXX. A comparison between the texts in the MT and the LXX reveals that the LXX not only takes up one of the several alternatives, but also makes some changes. In place of the 'סכות' for an example, it has σκήνην. The 'מַלְכְּכֶם'(your king) is rendered as Μολὸχ and the 'כִּיּוּן' into Ραίφαν. The complex nature of translating the Hebrew text is reflected in the textual apparatus regarding the term Ραίφαν in the Nestle-Aland Greek text. But we are not to be occupied with the question which one has to ask with regard to these changes. Rather, it is the adjustments made by Stephen without which he would be following the LXX translation word for word.

Here is the writer's English translation of Amos 5:25-27a LXX:

v. 25 Did you offer to me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O House of Israel?

v. 26 And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of your God, Raiphan, their figures which you made for yourselves.

v. 27a And I will carry you away beyond Damascus.

There is no major change in verse 25, except that "O House of Israel" is located differently. Verse 26 contains two changes: αυτῶν is omitted and προσκυνει ˆν is inserted αὐτοῖς which replaces ἑαυτοῖς of the LXX. Translating verse 27a LXX, our Greek text has "Babylon" in place of "Damascus". The affinity between the two texts is striking, but there are apparent changes which are significant for the present study. First of all, we need to pause to survey the meanings of each of the verse in their context, i.e., in the whole book of Amos and history of Israel.

v. 25 with a rhetorical question

הַזְּבָחִים וּמִנְחָה הִגַּשְׁתֶּם־לִי בַּמִּדְבָּר

אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

Even though there is ambiguity in Hebrew grammar as to how to translate the ה which is attached to the verb, the LXX translation (μῆ beginning the sentence) makes it clear that it should be rendered as an interrogative expecting a negative answer. According to the LXX and, therefore, Acts 7:42b, the Israelites clearly did not bring sacrifices and victims, judging on the basis of Greek grammar. Is it true, then, that the scholars and Stephen conclude that the prophet really criticized his contemporaries because their forefathers didn't bring sacrifices to God during

those 40 years? Certainly not. The prophet says that the Israelites in the wilderness didn't offer them not because they were not commanded as Jeremiah 7:22 suggests,[3] nor because they did not have cattle or they were unable to raise crops for grain offerings,[4] but because, since they also brought sacrifices to other gods, their sacrifices to Yahweh in those forty years were not acceptable.[5] Their evil hearts and practices all together nullified the sacrifices that they offered to Yahweh. This interpretation is supported by both Amos 5:26 and the larger context of Acts 7:42b. A stronger support comes from Jeremiah, the contemporary of Amos:

> they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again, I sent you my servants, the prophets. But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers. (Jer. 7:24-6)

Both Amos and Jeremiah, delivering the divine message, have a

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[3]This contradicts the position of the Pentateuch. According to Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy especially, God did give the laws concerning sacrifice in the wilderness.

[4]cf. Erling Hammershaimb, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary,* John Sturdy (trans.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 92.

[5]Exodus 24, 32, and 40:29; Lev. 8, 9, 10; and Num. 7, 8, and 9 describe and testify to the existence of offerings during the wilderness period.

unified view for the history of Israel, namely, that the hearts of the wilderness community made their sacrifices unacceptable to Yahweh. Their message does not negate the whole sacrificial system in Israel's religious life.[6] Instead, it invites and forces the hearers to seek the acceptable purpose of the sacrifices. As Smith points out, "ritual was designated to symbolize reality, but it can just as easily cover up the attitude that is behind a mechanical performance of a duty."[7] Even though this problem of *ex opere operato* became more obvious in the 8th century, the dubious mind of the wilderness community which constantly grew rebellious against the leadership of Moses and even of Yahweh Himself (Nm 21:4-9) led Amos to ask the rhetorical question in 5:25. The tension between Amos and his contemporary Jews parallels well with that between Jesus and the Jewish leaders of his day on the same issue. Criticized by the Pharisees for eating with the tax collectors at Matthew's home, Jesus responded: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" (Matt. 9:12-3a). This is a direct quote from Hosea 6:6, and Micah, who is one of Hosea's contemporaries,

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[6]cf. Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, Frank Moore Cross ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 193-4.

[7]Gary V. Smith, *Amos: A Commentary* - Library of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 191.

has similar words in 6:6-8.

The time of Moses witnessed the rebellious hearts of the Israelites against the leadership of Moses and Yahweh. The time of Hosea as well as Amos and Micah got worse by the addition of social injustice to idolatry. The religious leading community of Jesus was most often called "hypocrites" by Jesus. Living in a different point in history, God's chosen servants saw the need to reform the sacrificial practice. They were not against the sacrificial system per se, but were against any mechanical and incomplete, corrupted sacrifices and saw them as being unacceptable.

v. 26: history contaminated by idolatry

Depending on how one reads the historic time of Amos, there are two camps of translators of Amos 5:26:

נְשָׂאתֶם אֶת סִכּוּת מַלְכְּכֶם וְאֶת כִּיּוּן

צַלְמֵיכֶם כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם

To be more precise, how to render the first word (נְשָׂאתֶם) in this verse depends on how one looks at the historical reality of Amos' time. Apparently, the LXX and Stephen chose to read it as if it is without the ו consecutive. One cannot be sure whether the changes

made in translating its Hebrew text into Greek are due to this reading of the ו consecutive. What is obvious in the LXX text and Acts 7:43 is that Amos is pointing to the idolatry of the Israelites in terms of "the tent of Moloch" and the astral deity, Raiphan.[8] Moloch and Raiphan are members of the host of heaven. Stephen says that the worship of these planetary powers, for which the nation lost its liberty, directly led God's chosen people to a tragic experience of deportation. As mentioned above, Stephen replaces "beyond Damascus" (the MT and the LXX) with "beyond Babylon" without any apparent reason for doing so. The reading of D* gig (ep), which puts "επι τα μερη" in place of ἐπέκεινα, seems to bring the meaning into closer agreement with the LXX because the district of Babylon is beyond Damascus. Another way to explain the change without concluding that Stephen relies on false memory is that, historically speaking, the southern kingdom faced the same reality of divine judgement which led it to the deportation in the Babylonian exile.[9] With this deliberate change, Stephen told his hearers that their forefathers faced the same severe reality as did the people of the northern kingdom. Amos, prophesying to the northern kingdom, was looking forward, while Stephen backward in

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[8]In their commentaries, Bruce (144-5), Barrett (368-71) and Haenchen (284) have some excellent, though not exhaustive, background information on this matter. The complexity of interpreting this verse is well reflected once again in its textual apparatus.

[9]Bruce, 146.

retrospect. With this change, Stephen makes the prophecy of Amos more relevant for his hearers. Without it, Amos would have been confined to the northern Kingdom and so remained irrelevant to the hearers of Stephen.

A more important thing is brought up in the same verse. In place of the LXX οὓς ἐποιήσατε ἑαυτοῖς, Stephen has οὓς ἐποιήσατε προσκυνεῖν αὐτοῖς. What Stephen has Amos say is this: they (the forefathers of his audience) made the images of Moloch and Raiphan for their self-interest, that is, **to worship them**. This interpretive approach to the history of Israel is customary throughout his speech. Stephen makes changes not to change the history, but to interpret and build up on what actually happened based on his hermeneutical principle.

Amos quotation in its context

Stephen, after this quotation, comes back to the time of Moses in verse 44 giving the impression that, though the time of Amos is several centuries later than the time prior to the settlement into Canaan, the prophetic message by Amos can be understood in connection with the golden calf episode (vv.39-41). The two are linked by verse 42 which reveals Stephen's hermeneutical principle in his reading the message of Amos.

The readers of the Old Testament may not agree with Stephen's

words in verse 42 on the basis that the text between Exodus 32:7 and Exodus 33:6 leaves room for Moses' intercession for the idolatrous Israelites and a partial forgiveness on God's part. Stephen makes no mention of them, but, instead, says that God turned away from his people completely and surrendered them to the cult of the celestial host.[10] How do we explain the difference? Or, what is Stephen's intended message? Where does he take us as well as his audience? Didn't God continue to guide His people, lead them, and love them with his presence, Word, and other means of grace? He did, indeed, despite all their faults. God's covenantal relationship continued and was even renewed after this. But as Amos and Stephen review the history of Israel, the intercession of Moses and divine forgiveness failed to stop the idolatry. Despite the chances given to them, they opted to continue in their sins. For Stephen, therefore, Amos 5:25-27 provides an excellent summary of the history.[11]

Contrary to the rabbinic attempt to exonerate Aaron and the wilderness community,[12] the verdict spoken by Stephen was very

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[10]Huub van de Sandt, "Why is Amos 5, 25-27 quoted in Acts 7:42f.?" *Zeitschrift fuer die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 82 (1991): 71.

[11]For the possible reading of Amos 5:25-7 in connection with Deut. 4:1-28 in terms of fulfillment, see Sandt, 71-87.

[12]For an example, Rashi (1040-1105), a Jewish rabbi and philosopher, thought that his main burden of interpreting Exodus 32

severe and sharp. This verdict was prepared for the previous section of Stephen's speech. The ten brothers of Joseph, the patriarchs, rejected Joseph and sold him into slavery. Likewise, the ignorant sons of Israel in Egypt failed to recognize Moses as their savior but rejected him. The hints given in the episodes of those two figures have prepared Stephen to say that the wilderness community rejected the God who delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage. By quoting words of Amos, Stephen posits severe judgement that this evil pattern was never interrupted. This "rejection theme" reaches its climax at verse 52 as the persecution of "the righteous" is dealt with. "In this way, Amos' text is made to function within a scriptural argument the purpose of which is to explain the passion of Jesus."[13]

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was to reduce the apparent guilt of the people and of Aaron. He claims that the people erred by one day in their count as they had been told to expect Moses' return on the 40th day. They also were tempted by Satan who convinced them of the death of Moses. Aaron was consoled by Moses who said, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" (Exodus 32:21) which should be read, "How much pain this people must have caused you to suffer so much that you were finally forced to bring this sin upon them!" According to Rashi, it all took place in one short day and it was not Aaron who actually made the golden-calf, but the Egyptian magicians. (Marvin Fox, "R. Isaac Arama's Philosophical Exegesis of the Golden Calf Episode" in *Minhah le-Nahum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna* in Honor of his 70th Birthday, Marc Brettler and Michael Fishbane (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 88-9.) This kind of exoneration is nothing new as some examples were reviewed in the story of Abraham.

[13]Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles*, 140.

2. Climactic presentation (vv. 44-50)

a. Initial observations regarding verses 44-47

This section demands special attention not so much because it draws an end to Stephen's historical review, but because it forms the climax of his speech. Following this section are Stephen's sharp words of accusation to the hearers (vv. 51-53) which, in turn, provoked them to stone him to death. Stephen's switch from "our fathers" (v. 44) to "you stiff-necked people" (v. 51) is to be noted.

Compared to the preceding episodes of the speech in its form, there is nothing new in the sense that these verses (vv. 44-47) present their subject matter in the form of a brief or synoptic history. However, when the subject itself is taken into consideration, one notes a subtle switch from people to places of worship.[14] Seen through the issue of worship, however, we note that, v. 44 and the following verses of this section are well connected to the preceding body of the speech. Abraham, the first figure in the speech, received God's promise that Abraham's descendants will "worship me in this place" (v. 7). In the section dealing with Moses and the wilderness community, the worship issue

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[14]Kilgallen, 87-88.

is most prevalent. The summary is that the forefathers of the present hearers both in the wilderness and the Promised Land failed God who, under the leadership of Moses, brought them out of Egypt to worship Him. The verdict on the history of Israel was already made and pronounced by Stephen through the words of Amos. Therefore, this section beginning with v. 44 is a continuation of the same theme.

On the surface, the claim that Stephen still treats people as Moses did seems legitimate. New figures, like David, Solomon, and Joshua, appear on the stage. However, it is important to note the above mentioned switch from people to places of worship. Stephen no longer presents their personal stories as he did in the episodes of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Stephen needed them as they serve primarily as temporal signs. They help the audience to identify and move along the temporal background of the subject, that is, worship or the place of worship.[15] It is rather the three places of worship, namely, σκηνὴ, σκήνωμα and οἶκος that Stephen is interested in. The four persons are important as they are related to these three places. With this in mind, we move on to each verse in preparation for discussing the issue of tabernacle and temple.

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[15]Ibid.

v. 44

Ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἦν τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καθὼς διετάξατο ὁ λαλῶν τῷ Μωϋσῇ ποιῆσαι αὐτὴν κατὰ τὸν τύπον ὃν ἑωράκει

Commentators are divided by the question of how to see v. 44, which has received considerable attention. The majority of them want to see v. 44 as the beginning of a new theme[16] and section,[17] while a few try to see these in connection with the preceding verses.[18]

After a lengthy presentation on Moses with a heavily negative mood, at least in our English translations, Stephen, in verse 44,

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[16]cf. Johannes Bihler, *Die Stephanusgeschichte: im Zusammenhang der Apostelgeschichte* (Muenchen: Max Hueber Verlag, 1963), 71. Bihler titles this section, "Der Bau des Tempels," and says, "mit v 44 beginnt ein neues Thema".

[17]cf. Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 103. Carter and Earle title this section, "The answer to the second charge" and claim that v. 44 begins Stephen's response "to the charge of blasphemy against the temple by showing that God was worshipped by the Israelites in the wilderness in the tabernacle..."

[18]Haenchen sees it astonishing that the fathers nevertheless had the "tent of witness" despite their idolatrous behavior in the wilderness. He points to the striking contrast of the style with the preceding verses. (cf. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 284.) Conzelmann's view is that, on the basis of the change in style, the author has returned to his source, after having made an interpretation. Therefore, he assumes that the author did not catch the juxtaposition of two "tents" formed in his text. (cf. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 55.

seems to begin the sentence with a positive tone by employing "our fathers". There is nothing unusual about the use of "our forefathers" because this expression was used when he accused them in v. 39 as being rebellious against Moses. A good number of the commentators[19] see a strong connection between v. 44 and 43 through the word σκηνὴ and τύπος Stephen criticized the wilderness community for erecting the shrine (σκηνὴ) of Molech in verse 43, but, in v. 44, he says that the Israelites had **the tabernacle** (σκηνὴ) **of the testimony** (emphasis added). Most scholars agree that this is the LXX translation for אהל הָעֵדוּת (tent of testimony) or אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (tent of meeting) whose first appearance is in Ex. 27. This Greek term employed by Stephen is a regular LXX term for the tabernacle. In the speech, the σκηνὴ of Molech is contrasted with that of Yahweh.

τύπος is another term that makes a strong, contrasting connection between the two verses. The Israelites made idols (τύπους) to worship, and yet God gave Moses the pattern (τύπον: model[20])

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[19]Cf. Bruce, 147., Larkin, 117., and Barrett, 371.

[20]Etymologically speaking, it derives from τύπτω (to strike) which developed an astonishing number of further meanings, like, 'what is stamped,' 'mark,' 'mold,' 'hollow form,' etc. While as the first reference to the tabernacle is in Ex. 27, the term for pattern fist appears in Ex. 25:40. Another term referring to the same subject is παραδεῖγ α (twice in Ex. 25:9). In I Chr. 28, David gives Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple. Regarding this, it is claimed that:

according to which Moses was to build the tabernacle. The author of Hebrews lays special emphasis on this pattern, identifying it with the heavenly sanctuary, "set up not by man but by the Lord" (Heb. 8:2). And Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern(τύπον) shown you on the mountain" (Heb. 8:5). Speaking of the same subject, Stephen, however, differs from the writer of this Epistle in the sense that he makes no mention about "the sacrifices offered in association with the wilderness sanctuary and their typological significance".[21]

Whatever the intended message was, there are two points that the present verse presents. (1) Despite the continued rebellion in the future, God gave the Israelites the sanctuary. Or, as Bruce puts it, the wilderness community had no excuse for forgetting God and falling into idolatry so soon because they had the perfect reminder of the presence of Yahweh in their midst. (This accusatory meaning

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> Whereas Palestinian apocalyptic and Rabbinism simply make the heavenly sanctuary a bit of heavenly geography and a depository for plans of the earthly sanctuary, Hellenistic Judaism, Wisdom 9:8 and especially Philo see here (I Chr. 28:11-2, 18-19) a reference to the difference in worth between the heavenly and earthy sanctuaries.

(Leonard Goppelt, "τυπος" in TDNT vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 257.)

[21]Bruce, 147. The difference is natural because the two were addressing two different topics to two different audiences.

is apparent in the Greek text: Ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἦν τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν. Unlike the English translations, the tent of the testimony is emphasized by its position.) Therefore, Stephen's introducing the tabernacle going backwards chronologically becomes another hard blow on the history of Israel. The forefathers in the desert were fully accountable for what they had done.[22] (2) Put in a strong contrast with the "tent of Molech" in v. 43, the tabernacle whose pattern was given to Moses (v. 44) was revealed and, thus divinely instituted. This not only goes back to v. 43, but also prepares Stephen to present the last topic, the temple, in its relation to the tabernacle(vv. 47-50).

v. 45

ἣν καὶ εἰσήγαγον διαδεξάμενοι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ κατασχέσει τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὧν ἐξῶσεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαυίδ,

The emotional tone of verse 45, despite the fact that it is longer than v. 44, is much weaker. In this verse, many centuries of history is summarized.[23] The reference of the phrase "until the days of David" is a little ambiguous. Accordingly, there could be two questions: Is this verse focusing on the continued presence of the tabernacle with Israel until the time of David? Or, does the

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[22]Bruce, 147.

[23]Kilgallen, 88.

focus lie on the divine action shown in expelling the pagans from the Promised Land? The former makes better sense as its continued focus on the important issue, tabernacle. However, the latter also has validity on the basis of history. Not until the time of David, were the non-Israelite inhabitants driven out of Canaan.[24] It would be an overstatement to say that "the speaker is thinking, above all, of the use of the tabernacle, not of the expulsion of the heathen, which is only **incidentally**(emphasis added) mentioned." In my estimation, the idea that the speaker switches his focus, at least momentarily, fits better with the preceding verse and its larger context.

Exodus 33:2, following the chapter which introduces the Golden Calf episode, provides the historical context: "I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites" etc. Even though here it is God's angel who would drive out the enemies, Stephen rightly makes it plain that the agent was God Himself.[25] To see the full force of Stephen's speech in this verse, one needs to see Stephen's claim in its larger historical context. Ex. 33:3 provides the reason for the divine resolution to send His angel to

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[24]In favor of this view, see Barrett, 372.

[25]On this shift, E. Richard suggests that the speaker would have been acquainted with passages such as Ex. 34:11 and Deut. 7:1 which expresse the same concept but present God as the agent(Cf. E. Richard, 129).

conquer the pagans: "But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way." After the people heard these "distressing words" they began to mourn (v.4). To this, God replies, "Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you" (v. 5). So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb (v.6). And it turned out that Yahweh repented and He Himself went with the Israelites.
What a distressing message that Yahweh was leaving them for their sin, yet what a comfort to know that His presence continued to be with them.

In his later sermon, Moses seriously warned the Israelites not to make any treaty nor show any mercy (Deut. 7:2) "when the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations - the Hittites, Girgashites," etc (Deut. 7:1). This sermon and warning of Moses were no doubt familiar to Stephen's hearers. Not only did the Israelites fail to keep that command, but they also actively sought after the idolatry practiced by the pagans whom God Himself drove out. They forgot the fact that their making the Golden Calf had threatened their very existence, and how sincerely they had pleaded with Him for mercy. The implied message of Stephen is, "In spite of God's repentance, your forefathers remained stiff-necked throughout."

There is yet one more significant point in this verse. The speaker makes a reference to Joshua who appears only in this text and in Heb. 4:8 in the entire New Testament. Interestingly, KJV renders this as well as the reference in Heb. 4:8 as "Jesus." Bruce suggests:

> There may be a tacit suggestion that it is not by accident that the leader who brought them into the earthly land of promise bore the same name as the one under whose leadership the people of God were to inherit better promises.[26]

Despite its conjectural nature, Bruce's point is supported if one notes that, in the time of Jesus and before, the name Ἰησοῦς and its Hebrew form, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, were very common. But with the second century A.D., they disappear as a proper name. Among the 72 translators of the LXX, for example, three bore this name. Josephus mentions some twenty of the name, including ten contemporaries of Jesus.[27] That this name Jesus, so common throughout history, disappeared so suddenly reflects the Jewish attitude toward this name as they remembered and knew the one they crucified. Therefore, what I see, as Bruce suggested as a possibility, is Stephen's deliberate use of this provocative name in addition to its role as temporary mark referring to the time of

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[26]Bruce, 78., footnote.

[27]Werner Foerster, "Ἰησοῦς" in TDNT vol. 3(Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972),290.

Joshua. If that is true, this is yet another implicit reference on the part of Stephen to Jesus.

In verse 45, Stephen, without departing from his focus on the tabernacle, reminds the hearers of God's never-ceasing, never-failing presence through the tabernacle and faithfulness to the promise as He drove out the pagans. Yet the knowledge of Stephen's hearers about the way that their forefathers had conducted themselves afterwards could not possibly let them take this section as a mere presentation of neutral history.

v. 46

ὃς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἠτήσατο εὑρεῖν σκήνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ.

This verse, beginning with the relative pronoun ὃς smoothly carries the story on. The question whether David's desire to build a "dwelling place" is to be seen as a shift[28], or in a different light on the ground that Solomon's temple was not what David had in mind, is of great importance. Kilgallen argues for the latter on the basis that David's desire to build a σκήνωμα is linked strongly

[28]Polhill sees it this way. He does not distinguish between what David intended to build and what Solomon built. David made the proposal and Solomon carried it out. In other words, in Polhill's evaluation, there was little connection between the tabernacle and what David proposed to build (cf. Polhill, 202.).

to the fact that David had first found favor in the eyes of God. Before one goes too far to conclude whether the building of the temple was presented as an apostasy from the true service of God, or simply a fulfillment of David's plan and proposal,[29] we need to note, at least, that David and Solomon are different as far as Stephen sees them. Solomon receives no positive evaluation.

b. vv. 44-47 in their OT background

The intention of this part is to take a closer look at the subjects dealt with in these verses so that the relationship between the tabernacle and temple might be seen in its Old Testament context. This will eventually help us to determine how Stephen evaluates them. As suggested earlier, it would be appropriate to discuss the textual problem at this juncture.

Tabernacle(Tent of Meeting) in Exodus

The first Old Testament reference to the tabernacle appears in Ex. 25:8:

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם

"Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." What is expressed explicitly in this verse is the purpose of the tabernacle, that is, a sanctuary to be made where God dwells in the

[29]Haenchen, 285.

midst of Israel. The Hebrew verb שכן is a technical one and to be sharply distinguished from the usual Hebrew term for inhabiting place (ישב).[30] Etymologically speaking, the former Hebrew word, from which the Greek word σκηνὴ derives, applies to a temporary residence. Therefore, the dweller is always free to leave. On the other hand, the latter Hebrew verb expresses the idea of fixation at one place. Naturally, the idea of being confined is reflected in this verb.[31]

T. Fretheim summarizes well the thirteen chapters(25-31 and 35-40) of the book of Exodus, which deal extensively with the subject, tabernacle, as he says: "It centers on the forms of worship that are to provide the vehicle for the divine presence with Israel on this journey."[32] This portion of the book also signals a change in the way God is present with Israel: (1) From the occasional appearance on Mount Sinai or at a traveling tent(33:7-11) to the ongoing presence. (2)From the distance of the divine presence at

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[30]B.S.Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), 540.

[31]Goerg employs the term "mansive" to express this verb's static idea of dwelling. Referred to sitting or exalted on His throne, the verb can be used as "sedative." (cf. M. Goerg, "ישב" in *TDOT*, vol. VI (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 435 and 438.)

[32]Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* in Interpretation Bible Commentary Series (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 264.

the remote top of the Mountain to closeness of it. God comes down to be with His people at close, even intimate, range. (3) From one fixed place to portable place. God is on the move with His people.[33]

In presenting the issue of tabernacle and worship, Stephen no longer seems to be concerned with following the order of history. After quoting from Amos to highlight the consequence of rejecting the leadership of Moses, and thus that of Yahweh Himself, by making the Golden Calf, Stephen takes the hearers to the pre-golden calf stage. Even though the personal reference in v. 44 is "our forefathers," the personal focus is Moses who was receiving the instructions about the tabernacle on Mt. Sinai. What are, then, some effects that were created in the mind of Stephen's hearers by introducing the topic of tabernacle after giving a synopsized history from the wilderness period to that of exile?

In the previous section under "initial observations regarding verse 44-47," I suggested that there is a sense of a great reverse. Despite the idolatry of the Israelites, God graciously allowed them to have the tabernacle. Or, it can be that, despite the divine presence in the tabernacle, the Israelites fell prey to idol worship. Whatever the intended message is, there is one more

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[33]Ibid.

important thing to note as an effect of Stephen's mention of the tabernacle, that is, the contrast between the Golden Calf and the tabernacle. Fretheim's comparison between the two renders some helpful insights:

TABERNACLE	**GOLDEN CALF**
God's initiative	People's initiative
a willing offering requested	Aaron commands gold
painstaking preparations	no planning
lengthy building process	made quickly
safeguarding of divine holiness	immediate accessibility
invisible God	visible god
personal, active God	impersonal object[34]

It is doubtful that Stephen's hearers drew such a succinct comparison between the two. Yet, the contrasting imagery must have been created by this speech as Stephen juxtaposed it. This imagery remains important in the following section (vv. 48-50) and will be referred to again in a later discussion.

c. Textual Problem in verse 46

In verse 46a, Stephen reminds his readers that David, like Joseph and Moses in his earlier presentation, found favor with God and he, in turn, sought to find a dwelling place. But the significant textual question is, "a dwelling place for what?" Our

[34]Ibid., 267.

present Greek text reads "a dwelling place for (to) the House of Jacob." "A dwelling place for (to) God of Jacob" is suggested by some significant resources.

First of all, the readers of the Old Testament know that there are three possible Old Testament references from which the story of verse 46 might have derived. David's desire to build a house for God to dwell in is found in 2 Sam. 7:2-5. The story is repeated in 1 Chr. 17:1-4. A more elaborate expression is found in Ps. 132 (LXX 131). One can ask a simple question: Which is Stephen's reference? That the textual apparatus contains Ps. 132 may suggest an answer. The LXX rendering of the Hebrew text supports this point well. Yet, 2 Sam 7:2-5 (1 Chr. 17:1-4) is not out of consideration. As Barrett suggests, David's finding favor before God (Acts 7:46) is not said in so many words in the Old Testament.[35] It is true in Ps. 132. Of course, it is alluded to many times throughout his life from the day of anointment to the time of his death in peace, but no explicit reference. However, 1 Chr. 17 and, especially, 2 Sam. 7 provides the historical background for Acts 7:46. Finding God's favor is, according to 2 Sam. 7:1, demonstrated by the fact that God drove out all David's enemies and gave him rest: "After the king was settled in his palace and the

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[35]Barrett, 372.

Lord gave him rest from his enemies around him,[36] he said to Nathan that he wanted to build a house" (vv.1-2a). As we will deal with next, the Ps 132 passage, because of its similar wording, is what Stephen is quoting from. Yet, the historical narratives of that Psalm do provide the Old Testament background to v. 46. This is an important point in order to understand the issue.

On the issue whether it is the dwelling place "for the God of Jacob," or "for the house of Jacob," Ps 132 once again is strong external evidence for the first. Metzger says that the LXX text of Ps. 132 would have influenced some to emend the text.[37] LXX Ps. 131:5 says "σκήνωμα τῷ θεῷ Ιακωβ". Most of the modern commentators[38] agree with Metzger on this external evidence, and support for "the

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[36]This verse creates some difficulty because David had wars which he had fought as recorded in chapters that come after this. For example, chapter 8 introduces several wars which David involved. Chapter 11, the chapter dealing with David's affair with Bathsheba, also indicates that David was not free from "all enemies". This confusion can be resolved by two considerations. (1) The expression "from all his enemies" is to be taken as exaggeration or hyperbole. The focus is more on the fact that David settled in his new cedar palace. (2) The order in this book does not necessarily follow the exact chronology. Thus, the event in chapter 7 might have occurred even after he fell into sin with Bathsheba.

[37]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (NY: United Bible Societies, 1971), 352.

[38]Barrett, 372.; Cadbury, *The Beginnings.*, 81.; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: WM B. Eerdmans 1998), 272-3.

dwelling place for the house of Jacob." The textual apparatus indicates that this is "supported by a combination of Alexandrian and Western witnesses: P^{46}, $\aleph^{*}$, B, D, cop^{sapt} al". Not only that external evidence but also the transcriptional possibility suggests that this reading is to be preferred as there is no apparent reason why scribes should have altered "for God" to "for house."[39] This is more difficult reading. Having said that, the more significant question is whether determining one reading makes great a difference. It is Barrett who says that it does not make as great a difference as some imagine on the basis of the following argument:

> A dwelling place for the God of Jacob is undoubtedly a temple for God to dwell in and a dwelling for the house of Jacob is a place which Jacob may use as a temple, that is, a dwelling (for God) to be used as such by the house of Jacob.[40]

Witherington disagrees. For him, the temple was thought to be a place where people could come and be with Him, and so in a real sense it was a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. The frequent references in Psalms to the idea of dwelling in the house of the Lord forever (Ps. 23:6; 24:6; 27:4; and 52:8), and to the fact that the God who is spoken of in the Psalms which deal with the temple is called the "God of Jacob" both support the reading "a dwelling

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[39]Metzger, 352.

[40]Barrett, 372.

place for the house of Jacob" for being more natural (cf. Ps. 24:6: 46:11: 47:4: 76:6: and 81:4).[41] But in the end, Barrett and Witherington seem to move in the same direction.

Another negative response to the previously asked question is made by Klijn. His choice for the reading of "the dwelling place for the house of Jacob" comes from his argument that, by "house of Jacob," Stephen meant either a tabernacle or house in which God is served in a purely spiritual sense (cf. John 4:38; I Pet. 2:5; and Eph. 2:21-2). He sees "the house of Jacob" as a spiritual community which really is the Christian Jews. The new community of believers in Christ replaced or substituted for the temple. This argument is based on the Dead Sea *Manual of Discipline* (I QS IX, 3-6). In I QS, there is a clear example that a special group of Israel considers itself as the true Israel and denies any further need for the temple because it is of itself the temple.[42] Despite being insightful, Klijn's point is difficult to accept because the idea that the temple is a spiritual house is not found in Luke's writings.[43]

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[41]Witherington, 273.

[42]A. F. J. Klijn, "Stephen's Speech - Acts 7:2-53," in *NTS* 2 (1957): 25-31.

[43]Haenchen, 285.

In summary, we have noted that David's having found God's favor, which is historically grounded but whose expression does not occur in the Old Testament texts, is a key to this understanding of this verse. Especially that there is nothing mentioned about Solomon in his relationship with God stands out. Another thing noted was David's desire to build "a dwelling place for the house of Jacob." Its historical context is II Sam. 7 and I Chr. 17. Ps. 132 provides David's elaborate expression of his desire and serves as the basis for our Greek text. Taken from the narrative of 2 Sam 7, it is clear that David wanted to build a house (בֵּיתָ, οἶκος), a nobler dwelling place for the ark (the token of God's presence with His people) than the tent-shrine.

d. Solomon Built a House (v. 47)

Nothing was said about the divine response to David's noble desire to build a dwelling place. Stephen simply switches to Solomon in v. 47 with the particle δὲ. Even though no one clearly explains this particle, one thing evident is that the majority of commentators translate it as "but".[44] Therefore an impression is created that there is a sense of contrast between v. 46 and v. 47. But not all of them agree that this particle in itself forces one to read it in an appositional sense, even though it could just be

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[44]Simon, 101.; Larkin, 118.; Earle, 104,; Bruce, 149.; and Barrett 333; etc. Also do *NIV, Moffat*, and *Oxford*.

postpositive.

Grammatically speaking, sometimes δὲ will have the strong adversative force of ἀλλὰ. But this happens only when it is after a foregoing negative.[45] Therefore, the idea that δὲ in this verse serves as a signal to show that Solomon is opposed to Moses and David is not valid. It is likely that this particle is used to introduce the last subject in a series "without any connotation of opposition between preceding and subsequent subjects."[46] In other words, the particle signals the final moment in a series of events: the building of the temple.[47] In accordance with this understanding, *The Jerusalem Bible* renders: "though it was Solomon who actually built God's house for him."

One should ask, however, whether there is any adversative connotation in this verse. Without depending on δὲ too much, is it possible to see v. 47 in a contrasting relation to v. 46? There could be two possibilities to interpret this way. When the above mentioned commentators and Bible translations render 'δὲ' as "but," such a term could have been employed not to disapprove of Solomon

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[45]James H. Moulton, *A Grammar of NT Greek,* vol III (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 331. Usually δὲ is weaker ἀλλὰ and indistingushable from καὶ.

[46]Killgallen, 89.

[47]E. Larsson, "Temple-Criticism.," 390-1.

himself, but the temple. Therefore, what is being criticized is not the person of Solomon, but what he had done. In other words, what Solomon had done was not something that David desired nor was it pleasing to God.

Another way to understand this verse in contrast with the preceding verse can be paraphrased: "Even though David wanted to build 'a dwelling place (of God) for the house of Jacob,' it was Solomon who **actually** (emphasis added) built the house for him." The focus lies on the actual fulfillment of David's noble desire. Neither Solomon nor the temple is reproached in this way. Therefore, according to this interpretation, no negative position is displayed in this verse.

Before we move on to vv. 48-50, a brief historical survey is necessary to understand the relationship between v. 46 and v. 47.

Both II Sam. 7 and I Chr. 17 contain God's response to David's desire expressed to Nathan. Nathan at first approved David's proposal, heard God's message that God desired no house of cedar from David; instead, God Himself would establish David's house, namely, his dynasty, in eternity. With this message was the divine plan that David's son shall build a house for God's name (II Sam. 7:13) or for Him (I Chr. 17:12).

One does great damage to the text in arguing that II Sam. 7:13 is a "later legitimation of Solomon and his temple, because this verse seems to envision the very 'house' (temple) precluded in verses 5-7."[48] That critical position about the Old Testament text has some validity in the sense that, from the beginning to the end of the divine message, the issue of building the temple is no longer central. The subject changed from David to Yahweh as the focal theme changed. It was all God's doing for David, instead of David's doing for God. Therefore, God's brief message that David's son would build a house for his name seems out of place. Or, best, "Solomon's building a temple is an element of secondary importance compared with the promise for the everlasting dynasty. In its context it is only a result, and evidence of the strength which God is going to grant his monarchy."[49]

Apart from the issue of whom we should understand by David's son who is supposed to build a house for God,[50] the Old Testament witnesses three important things concerning the building of the

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[48]Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation : A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching - I & II Samuel* (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1990), 255.

[49]J. P. Folkelmann, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel, Vol. III: Throne and City (II Sam. 2-8 and 21-24)* (The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 231.

[50]This will be addressed later as a part of the conclusion of this thesis.

temple: (1) David understood the son to be his succeeding son, Solomon (I Chr. 22:7-10). (2) Solomon agreed that it was his task to build the temple (I Ki. 5:3-5). (3) And, Solomon carried out his father's plan in accordance with David's instruction (I Chr. 22:5 and I Ki. 6:14).

e. vv. 48-50: Temple Viewed from Isaian Perspective

It was noted that one cannot make too much out of vv. 46-7 to determine the relationship between tabernacle and temple, or how Stephen sees them. Had Stephen used ἀλλὰ in place of δὲ in verse 47, one could have concluded that, regardless of what the Old Testament testifies, Stephen did present a negative view on the temple, if not in favor of, at least in relation to the tabernacle. Neither the relevant OT passages or verses 46 and 47 of Acts 7 seem to provide any explicit or implicit stance on this issue, which suggests that one needs to read the following verses to determine Stephen's access to the issue. For this reason, the next three verses contain a significant message to illumine what is said previously.

V. 48

ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ, καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει,

Attempting to determine whether the negative οὐχ negates the word which follows immediately,[51] or the main verb κατοικεῖ[52] is no easy task, as we do not have any specific rule of grammar. According to the first interpretation, this verse reads, "However, it is not the Most High who dwells..." Therefore, the position of the negative serves to emphasize "the Most High", contrasting the pagan idea that gods live in temples (cf. Acts 17:22-25). This interpretation should not mislead one to suggest that Stephen believed in the existence of other gods. The latter one[53] renders the verse, "However, the Most High does not dwell in .." In this case, the verb is emphasized by the position of the negative. While the Western text (D(sy^{p}:" ο δε υψ. ου κατ. εν χ")) smooths down the clumsiness of the Greek and the theological problem associated with the first interpretation, it loses its emphasizing tone.[54]

Though both have validity on their own, the latter view seems to be more fitting because of the phrase εν χειροποιήτοις sandwiched

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[51]*Beginnings.*, 4:81.

[52]J. Moulton, *Grammar.*, 3:287.

[53]Stanley E. Porter lays out a general rule that often the whole clause can be negated with the negative placed at the beginning of the sentence. He also sees that the negative negates the main verb as it is placed either at the beginning of the sentence or next to the verb. (S. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek NT, Biblical Languages: Greek 2* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 281-2.

[54]Barrett, 373.

between ὕψιστος and κατοικεῖ[55]. Χειρ- not only connects v. 48 with the quote from Isaiah, but also invites readers to take v. 48 as the climax of the speech. Stephen already used associated expressions such as ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν.(v. 41) and τύπους οὓς ἐποιήσατε (v. 43). χειρ- is an important concept in this speech. The use of this term in its context "would have had a blasphemous ring for Jews, because Judaism did not represent Yahweh Himself as dwelling in the Temple, but only His name."[56] This term is used most frequently of idolatrous temples, and has a derogatory implication.[57] It is possible to argue that Stephen did not intend to offend his hearers by employing the term, but the effect could not be avoided when taken in its context.[58]

The force of Stephen's words in v. 48 depends on three things: αλλα, the Old Testament (Is.) quotation[59], and χειρ-. First, as Barrett suggests, ἀλλὰ, taken in its most frequent case in

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[55]One should not exclude the possibility that the negative negates ἐν χειροποιήτοις.

[56]Haenchen, 285.

[57]Cf. Isa 2:8; 16:12(χειροποίητα αὐτῆς); Ps. 115(LXX 113):12(ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων); 115:4; Acts 17:24, etc.

[58]For further discussions on this word, see the following two articles: Michel, "ναος" in *TDNT* IV:885 and Lohse, "χειροιποιητος κτλ. 1-2" in *TDNT* IX:436.

[59]Barrett suggests these two (cf. Barrett, 374).

correlation with a preceding negation, has strong adversative force. Therefore, the implied meaning of the vv. 47-8 is, "Solomon built a house for God, but this was a complete misunderstanding of the nature of God and should not have been done." (The weaker force would be in rendering, "Solomon built a house for God, but we must not think that God is confined to it."[60])

Second, there are some Old Testament passages which appear to be critical of the temple because it was built by human hands (I Ki. 8:27 (II Chr. 6:18), and Is. 16:12 LXX). Yet, there are many more passages that praise and glorify it[61]. A similar point can be made from the later Jewish writings. Conzelmann observes that even Josephus (*Ant.*, 8, 107-8) and Philo (*Cher.*, 99-105) criticize the temple. Yet, they do not end their presentation without leaving a concern or defending words to justify the existence of it.[62] Thus, what is unique and provocative with verse 48 is the fact that Stephen uses the term plainly associated with idolatry to describe the temple, and ends without any positive appraisal.

The third, related to the second point is that, though one

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[60]Ibid.

[61]Ps. 27:4, Is. 6:1, Ezek. 43:4, and Hab. 2:20, just to mention a few.

[62]Conzelmann, 56.

cannot be sure about what to make of the **plural** form of χειροποιήτοις[63], what is clear in this verse is that Stephen uses χειροποιήτοις to describe something about the temple. One needs to bear in mind that the thought expressed in this verse is not alien to the Old Testament. In fact, it is Solomon himself who said, "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (ὅτι εἰ ἀληθῶς κατοικήσει ὁ θεὸς μετὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἰ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐκ ἀρκέσουσίν σοι πλὴν καὶ ὁ οἶκος οὗτος ὃν ᾠκοδόμησα τῷ ὀνόματί σου[64]) (I Ki. 8:27). But, the use of the term, in place of any word associated with ᾠκοδόμησα, is deliberate and thus can be highly offensive to the ears of the Jews as they were forced to think of the associated meanings of χειροποιήτοις, both for the Golden Calf and the Shrine of Molech.

vv. 49-50 (Is. 66:1-2)[65]

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[63]Does Stephen refer to all the temples that the Jews built in the course of history? Or, is he referring to the ones in his speech, i.e., Golden Calf (vv.40-41), the Shrine of Molech (v. 43), the tabernacle (v. 45), and the temple built by Solomon (v. 47)? Or, the plural could be referring to the handy works signifying the labor of thousands of people behind one edifice.

[64]Note that the LXX text adds "τῷ ὀνόματί σου" which is not part of the Hebrew text (cf. אַף כִּי־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּנִיתִי).

[65]It is interesting to note that the Korean translation includes "Thus the Lord says" in the quotation. Both the Hebrew and its Greek counterpart have this. Had our text had "אָמַר יְהוָה כֹּה," known as the prophetic formula, the nuance would have been stronger and clearer. Why the Korean translation has this is not

49. Ο οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου·
ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετε μοι, λέγει κύριος,
ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου;
50. Οὐχὶ ἡ χείρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα;

The quotation from Isaiah does not intensify what was said in v. 48, but it serves as the prophetic, biblical basis. Having said something highly offensive in v. 48, Stephen quotes this to demonstrate quickly that, by what he said, "he stands in the line of the prophetic critique of a temple theology that neglects or negates the transcendence of God."[66] As Stephen has done so far in the speech, he here also stays in very close agreement with the LXX text.

A comparison between two texts, namely, Acts 49-50 and Is. 66:1-2, unless we follow the variant readings, reveals that the first two lines of the two texts are almost identical. The variant readings do not contain any significant change. One obvious change is that Isaiah's question becomes a prophetic declaration in our text. The third line is identical except that our text replaces ποῖς with τίς. Concerning the last line, Barrett thinks that the LXX

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known to us, thus is for further study.

[66]Witherington, 274.

has basically the equivalent statement recognizing the variant reading of this verse being closer to the LXX text (πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα ἐποίησεν ἡ χείρ μου). However, E. Richard contributes the notable difference between the two texts to Stephen's tendency to conflate the texts. According to Richard, Stephen quotes the fourth line from Is. 41:20 (ὅτι χεὶρ κυρίου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα).[67] This view does not seem to be adequate because Isaiah 41 describes Yahweh as the Helper of Israel. Thus, the context of Is. 41:20 is not related to the temple, while Is. 66:1-3a is a well known passage about the temple. Our concern is, therefore, not about the little changes Stephen makes in the quoting process. Rather it is about the meaning of Isa 66:1-2 and Stephen's intention in quoting it.

To understand Is. 66:1-2a quoted in our text, two questions have to be asked. One needs to ask how Is. 66:1-2a is to be taken in the larger context of the Book of Isaiah. What is the overall view of Isaiah on the temple? (How does Is. 66 speak for the temple and in what context? The second question is: How did the first century Jews understand this text?

Because of the strong impression that Is. 66:1-3 makes, it is easy to make an assumption that the prophet stands in line with Amos, whose strong criticism on the temple cult is well-known.

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[67]E. Richard, *Acts: 6:1-8:4.*, 135.

However, what makes it hard to determine the meaning of this passage is the presence of the seemingly contradicting passages in the other chapters regarding the building of the temple. They are, 44:28, 54:7, 60:7 and 13, and 62:9. In the midst of the message that speaks of the dark future of Israel, especially in the first part (chaps.1-39) of the book, God's promise holds out the prospect of the rebuilding of the temple. Further, Isaiah's prophetic career began with the glorious vision that he had observed in the temple (6:1-4). In the light of these passages that speak for the existence of the temple, how do we understand Is. 66:1-2a which not only negates the existence of it but also of the sacrifices in the temple? Do these seemingly contradictory references refer to different temples, one being historical and the other eschatological and thus spiritual? The more confusing issue is to identify to what Is. 66:1-2a is objecting.

To handle the above mentioned issues requires a vast research that is beyond the scope of the present study. However, the overall message of the prophet becomes clear when taken in its historical context. Unless one follows the critical view that Is. 40-66 was written by a different person than the prophet introduced in 1:1, much of chapters 40-66 was spoken for the future exile in Babylon. When Isaiah was uttering his prophetic messages including chapter 66, there still was a temple in Jerusalem. It was in

586(7) B.C. that Jerusalem with the temple was destroyed at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and Isaiah's call, according to Is. 6:1, came in 740 BC. The promise of rebuilding the temple was given to the future generation in exile and the message was uttered while the temple built by Solomon was still existing. History proves the message for the destruction and rebuilding of the temple to be true. The message for the future generation was that the captives in Babylon who would come back to fulfill the promise are to take heed to Is. 66:1-4 so that they would not think "by temple-building itself to do Him service and forget His infinite majesty in **petty** (emphasis added) architecture".[68]

Here we pause to ask another question: What was the implied message of Isa 66 for his contemporaries? How relevant was his message about the temple to the people who were still enjoying the existence of the very temple built by Solomon? The message of Isa. 66:2b-4[69] reveals that Isaiah was standing on the same ground with

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[68]Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah,* S. R. Driver trans.(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1894), 454.

[69] But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word (Is. 66:2b). He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a cereal offering, like him who offers swine's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like him who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations (v.3);I also will choose affliction for them, and bring their fears upon them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not listen; but they did what was

Jeremiah whose ministry witnessed the fulfillment of the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem. In Jer. 7:1-15, the prophet was ordered by the Lord to stand at the temple gate and proclaim the message that, because of the double-mindedness of the worshipers, the common belief that their coming to the Lord's house was warranty for their safety was false and illusionary. Therefore, the implied message of Is. 66 to his contemporaries most probably bore the same nuance as it did to Jeremiah's audience as well as to the future generation in exile. The purpose of the message was to warn the future generation against any false security.

Now we turn to the question of what Stephen is attempting to say by quoting Is. 66:1-2b which concludes his long historical review. The issue could be understood better if we ask another question: How did Stephen's audience understand Is. 66?

A fragment of the Aramaic Midrash[70] contains a piece of exegesis which may shed light on the use made of this passage in Stephen's speech. The relevant part of this midrash runs as follows:

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evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight (v.4).

[70]This can be found both in a marginal note in the *Codex Reuchlinianus* (which contains the Targum Jonathan) and on folio 616 of *Codex Vaticanus Ebr. Urbin. I.* This was recently edited by P. Grelot.

> Jerusalem Targum on 'The heavens are my throne'. A prophecy of Isaiah which he prophecied at the end of his prophetic mission in the days of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, king of the tribe of the house of Judah, on the fifteenth of Tammuz when Manasseh erected the image in the temple. He prophesied to the people, the house of Israel: "Thus says the Lord: The heavens are the throne of my glory. And why are you proud before me because of this house which has been built by king Solomon for my name? The higher and lower heavens do not succeed in containing the presence of my glory, according as it was said through Solomon .... Now I have no pleasure in it, because you provoke my anger. And so, behold, my decision goes forth to make Nebuchadnezzar come and he will destroy it, and exile you from the city of Jerusalem."[71]

The story goes on to tell that, when king Manasseh heard Isaiah's warning message, he was filled with anger against him and ordered to seize Isaiah who tried to run. A carob-tree opened its mouth to swallow him. They brought iron saws and cut the tree so that Isaiah's blood flowed like water.

Thornton draws our attention to two important features of this midrash: the connection between the message of the prophet and his martyrdom and warning message against any false belief on the mere existence of the temple. On the basis of those features, Thornton suggests two things: (1) A smooth transition was made from the theme concerning the tabernacle and the temple (Acts 7:44-50) to the topic of the persecution of the prophets (v. 52). Further, the quotation of Isaiah's prophecy, which led him to martyrdom, connects this section to the theme of rejection which Moses and

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[71]This translation follows the text of the *Codex Reuchlinianus*.

Joseph suffered. (2) Stephen, by quoting Is. 66, may be suggesting that God can cause the Jerusalem temple to be destroyed since He does not dwell in any man-made temple. Stephen's main concern may have been to emphasize that Jews should not feel confident that their safety would be guaranteed by the presence of the temple. But this message could easily be twisted by his enemies into an accusation: "We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place" (Acts 6:14)[72].

Due to the difficulty of establishing the exact date for this particular midrash, we cannot be sure that this story was circulated widely among the first-century Jews. However, Thornton concludes that the existence of this exegesis suggests that "Isa. 66:1 may well have different associations for Jews in New Testament times from those which it has for most readers today."[73]

Josephus, when referring to the temple built by Herod, himself seems to have been really impressed by its beauty and grandeur size. The following quote reveals it well:

> But the temple itself was built by the priests in a year and six months, upon which all the people were full of joy; and

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[72]T. C. G. Thornton, "Stephen's Use of Isaiah LXVI. I" *JTS* no. 25 (1974): 432-4.

[73]Ibid., 434. Also, see Barrett, 375-6.

> presently they returned thanks, in the first place to God; and in the next place for the alacrity the king had shown. They feasted and celebrated this rebuilding of the temple and for the king, he sacrificed three hundred oxen to God; as did the rest, everyone according to his ability(*Ant.* 15. 11. 6).

From this quote and other sections of his writing on this temple, one notes three things: (1) Even though the temple building was facilitated by the Herodian dynasty[74], the sanctity of the temple itself was preserved as the priests built the temple. (2) Contrary to the negative picture drawn by the Gospels about the Herodian family in general(Lk. 13:32, etc.), this particular one, Agrippa II[75], must have been well received by the majority of the Jews. (3) Therefore, Herod and the Jews stayed in a close tie at least around the time of the dedication of the temple.

f. Conclusion:

It was noted that the temple criticism was not unique to

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[74]The story of the Herodian dynasty goes back to the latter half century when his Idumean family converted to Juidaism. Since Herod the Great's return to Judea in 37 B.C., the relationship between the Herodian dynasty with Rome has been very close. Such a close tie was needed for the family to sustain the political power, which often brought hostility of the Jews(cf. L.I. Levine, "Herod the Great," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol 3, David N. Freedman ed.(New York: Doubleday, 1992), 160.).

[75]The question who was ruling at the time of Stephen depends on how one dates the occasion of Stephen's speech. Agrippa I died in A.D. 42 and Agrippa II remained in power after the Jewish revolt in A.D. 66.

Stephen, and yet what makes this section of Stephen's speech distinct is the fact that he does not provide any positive view on the temple and even employs provocative terms. As the words of Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah were invectives to the ears of the hearers, of their time, Stephen's words and the manner he presented the quote from a prophet were offensive to the Jews who, like their ancestors, were impressed and filled with pride in the marvelous temple being built (Mk. 13:1 and Jn. 2:20). By the time Stephen delivered his speech, the building project must have been progressed a lot more than at the time of Jesus. From a human perspective this temple, the building of which had begun in 20 B.C. by Herod and was completed in 64 A.D., well deserved honor and respect for many reasons. Yet, Stephen's verdict is that God would not dwell nor can be confined in the house built by human hands which God's people keep failing to live up to the lessons from the past. The temple, once accepted by God and used as a means of providing God's grace at the early period of its history (cf. I King 8), has lost its meaning and function through abuse and false belief. Thus, it has become merely a place built by human hands. Probably, the implied message is that the Jerusalem temple is like any other temple where a pagan god is worshiped unless it is cleansed from deviation. As Jesus predicted and as spoken by Stephen, the glorious temple, completed after eighty some years of hard work and ardent expectation, did not secure God's presence and

favor since it was utterly destroyed a few years after its completion and dedication.

It is therefore my contention that v. 48 is not intensified but explained through quotes from the Prophet Isaiah. As were Isaiah and other prophets, Stephen was not against the temple *per se*. Nor did Stephen see the temple being somehow inferior to the tabernacle and that there was discontinuity between the two as a place for worship and meeting between God and His people.

C. The Closing Words of Stephen as Conclusion : VV. 51-53

Some commentators conclude[76] that Stephen must have been interrupted after verse 50, and therefore vv. 51-3 present Stephen's reaction, but this seems to be an unnecessary assumption. If that had been the case, Luke would have provided information about such interruptions as he does in Acts 22:22. The abrupt switch from a review history to accusation with the use of the personal pronoun ὑμεῖς marks the change. Therefore, one can argue that vv. 3-50 were his defense and that this section is an application to his hearers "in true prophetic vein."[77] Kilgallen makes a strong point that the phrase ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς. to which the adverb ἀει is joined is the key to unlock the relationship

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[76]See Haenchen, 286 and Bruce 151.

[77]Bruce, 151.

between Stephen's audience and its ancestors. Therefore, argues Kilgallen, it became clear by this phrase and the adverb that what Stephen has narrated so far to the audience cannot be viewed just as indifferent history. The audience was led to see themselves and their conduct in the life of their forefathers through the speech.[78] The last three verses reveal and clarify the point that Stephen wanted to make about the spiritual state of his hearers. There are some words and expressions that deserve our closer look.

"Stiff-necked" (Σκληροτράχηλοι), in verse 51 depicts the stubborn heart which is unwilling to bend or rethink things for a change. This term is used by the Lord in Ex. 33:3 and 5 after the Israelites built the Golden Calf. This strong derogatory term could make Stephen's voice to his audience similar to the Lord's denunciation.

The expression "uncircumsized hearts and ears" (ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὠσιν) is a far more familiar one to Stephen's audience due to the widely scattered references throughout the Old Testament. (Lev. 26:41, Jer. 4:4, 6:10, 9:26, and Ezek. 44:7, just to mention a few. An interesting episode is introduced in Ex. 4. God tried to kill Moses for not circumcising his son, but was prevented by Zipporah, Moses' wife, who cut off the foreskin of her son.) These

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[78]Kilgallen, *The Stephen Speech.*, 95.

references testify that God would not deal lightly with the uncircumsized. The expression implies the deadness and unwillingness to listen to the truth. Connected to this phrase as well as *stiff-necked* is the idea of opposing the Holy Spirit. One is not "in a position to understand how intense Stephen conceives the hard-heartedness and recalcitrance of the Jews" without realizing the significant actions of the Spirit of Acts and for Luke.[79] It would not be assuming too much to see that Stephen's conclusion about his audience in opposition to the Holy Spirit is based on his evaluation that Isaiah's warning words went unheeded by Israel and his audience.

The idea that the forefathers **persecuted** all the prophets is not well testified by the Old Testament, but probably based on I Ki. 19:10 and 14; Neh. 9:26 and II Chr. 36:16, with the last two being strong evidence. The idea about the martyrdom of the prophets grew up in late Judaism(2 Macc. 7:14-19 and 4 Macc. 5 and 12)[80] and is reflected somewhat in the New Testament (Matt. 23:29-37[81], Lk.

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[79]Ibid., 95-6.

[80]According to Charles Torrey, there is ample evidence of the persecution and killing in the canonical books and Jewish tradition. (Cf. Charles C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1946))

[81]Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding blood of the prophets.'" Then, Jesus continued to conclude, "But you would have. You are more

13:34, I Thess. 2:15 and Heb. 11:36).

"Betrayal and murder of the Righteous One" (προδόται καὶ φονεῖς), according to Stephen and other New Testament writers, was the climax of Israel's history of rejection, because Jesus was greater than any other prophet and even any angel. "The Righteous One" is used as a title of Jesus in 3:14 and 22:14. Outside the Book of Acts, it appears in Mt. 27:19 and Luke 23:47. Therefore, it is not improbable that this was one of the earliest titles used by the Christians in Jerusalem.[82] The term προδότης appears in the NT only once more to label none other than Judas (Lk. 6:16). For this reason, Kilgallen's argument that terms such as προδότης and φονεύς are the strongest words of accusation in the Lukan writings[83] proves to be true. For Stephen, the Jews handed Jesus over to Pilate and such an action toward their fellow Israelites can be seen as betrayal.

Verse 53 sums up the two previous verses. The hearers did all this despite the fact that they had received the divinely instituted law. In other words, their status as the recipients of

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responsible for their blood than any one else." This is what Stephen is getting at!

[82]*Beginnings.*, 4:83.

[83]Kilgallen, 96.

the divine law made them more culpable for what they had done: opposing the Holy Spirit as hard necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, persecuting and even killing the prophets, and murdering the Righteous One.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary of Chapters One and Two

We have now reached the point where it is necessary to present a summary of the thesis. We set out to analyze the information given in Acts 6 and 7. We studied Stephen's speech in its historical context in the first chapter of this study, in the light of the ancient historigraphical works in the second chapter, and in detail by going over verse by verse in the third chapter.

The first part of the study was meant to see who the selective seven were and their relation to the Hellenist Christians, whose need and complaint led to the selection of the Seven. We noted that the purpose of selecting the Seven was to take care of the arising needs of the Christian community that the apostles could not meet. The analysis of the situation gave us the hint that tension existed between two groups: the Hebraic and Hellenistic Christians. It was noted that Stephen was presented as a person with excellent credentials in Acts 6, and that that set up the credibility of Stephen as a speaker and a testimony for what he was to speak. In regards to who the Hellenist Christians were in the Jerusalem Church, a point was made that they were not proselyte

Jews because Stephen, who represents and belongs to this group, calls Abraham "our father." The Hellenist Christians used to live in the diaspora, but now are back in Jerusalem. Therefore, they were distinguished not only by their language but also by their somewhat Greek mode of life.

The concern of the second chapter was to see whether or not the Lukan account bore the marks of authenticity. The purpose of the chapter, therefore, was to claim the integrity and reliability of our text. To that end, we have observed that some critics beginning with M. Dibelius, have a tendency to overemphasize the motive of the ancient historians (in our case, Luke), and thus the authenticity of Stephen's speech itself is disregarded and destroyed. However, examples were given to prove that some ancient historians, like Thucydides and Polybius, were faithful to what actually had been said by real speakers, and yet did not pretend to reproduce exactly the same words spoken. Luke's records about Jesus disproves the critics' view. Though Luke had his own theological view, which is well reflected in his two-volume work, he did not sacrifice the peculiarity and authenticity of Stephen's speech to make it accord with his theology.

B. Analysis of the Speech

The first two chapters of my work having been summarized, it is

appropriate that the summary of the third chapter of the thesis should be made through an analysis of Acts 7 because it is about six percent of the whole book of Acts, consists of many pages and forms the main body of my thesis. In my estimation, and according to some scholars[1] engaged in studying Stephen's speech, this speech can be analyzed on the basis of three distinct themes: Pilgrim (Worship) Theme, Rejection Theme, and Samaritan Theme. These themes would help us to see the emphasis of the speech and to draw a conclusion about the discourse.

1. The Samaritan Theme:

The argument that Acts 7, and very likely 6, reflect the Samaritan theme starts from the assumption that the speech in Acts 7 is so different from the other speeches in Acts that it is not likely that Luke himself wrote it.[2] The questions concerning Acts 7 have made it "fertile ground for source criticism."[3] Confronting some unusual difficulties to understand the speech in relation to its forensic context and to its Old Testament source, many scholars have concluded that Acts 7 is heavily dependent on the Samaritan Pentateuch.

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[1]See Witherington, 260.; Bruce, 130.; Haenchen, 290.

[2]See A.F.J. Klijn, "Stephen's Speech - Acts vii.2-53", *NTS* 4 (1957-8), 25. Also, H. Conzelmann, *Acts.*, 257.

[3]Wayne Litke, "Acts.," 156.

Among such scholars are Charles H. Scobie, Earl Richard, A. Spiro, and Martin Scharlemann. Even though they differ on the issue as to whether Stephen himself was a Samaritan[4], all of them agree that Stephen's speech has Samaritan characteristics. Spiro lists fourteen references in Acts 7 which support the Samaritan connection of the speech, while C. Scobie has twelve. Some references that point to the speech's dependency on the Samaritan Pentateuch are: the time of Abraham's departure; the use of 'your fathers' (the singular form is used in MT and LXX texts); the reference to Shechem; the contradiction between 'place' and 'house' (the Jewish term for the worship place); and the switch from 'Damascus' to 'Babylon'.

Even though it was not from the perspective of the Samaritan theme, most of those references were treated in chapter 3. It was suggested that Stephen's departure from the Masoretic text and its Greek counterpart is due to the fact that he was depending on other books or parts of the Old Testament. Therefore, the argument for Samaritan influence based on the above mentioned references is denied, and that leaves us with the task to study why Stephen made

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[4]Scharlemann denies Spiro's opinion that Stephen was a Samaritan. Spiro's argument is based on the native tradition preserved by Abul-Fath. (See Scharlemann, 20 and also A. Spiro "Stephen's Samaritan Background," Appendix V in J. Munck, *The Acts of Apostles*, The Anchor Bible vol. 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 285-300.

such intentional alterations.

In this connection Scharlemann's argument is of special interest. After comparing Stephen with the authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Gospel of Matthew, and II Corinthians, he concludes that Stephen is an isolated theologian and "religious genius who addressed himself to a particular problem of Samaria."[5] This problem, as it is related to both Judaism and Christianity, occasioned Stephen's speech which, in turn, occurred at the moment when "early Christianity was on the verge of moving out of Samaria."[6] Scharlemann even suggests the possibility that Stephen might have come from Ephraim where certain traditions of Joseph, Moses, and Joshua lived on. Further, he sees a possible connection between Jesus and Stephen in John 11:54. That is the time, Scharlemann argues, when Jesus might have taught Stephen that the temple in Jerusalem was a place of idolatry, and Solomon's decision to build the sanctuary on Zion embodied and symbolized the whole story of Israel's disobedience to the law.[7]

But it has to be noted that the Samaritans did not dispute the principle of a temple, as Stephen did. The dialogue between Jesus

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[5]Scharlemann, 185.

[6]Ibid., 186.

[7]Ibid., 186-8.

and the Samaritan woman at the well determines that. The Samaritans differed from the Jews on the question of the proper locality of the temple - on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem. If Jesus had been against the temple per se, he would not have claimed it to be 'the House of Prayer" (Luke 19:46). If Solomon's decisions were displeasing to the Lord, why did He answer Solomon's Prayer of Dedication with the magnificent glory shown in II Chr. 7:1-3? Despite its thorough treatment of the text from many angles, Scharlemann's argument for a Samaritan theme is too speculative and assumptive.

2. Rejection Theme

The second theme most commonly recognized and accepted by scholars is the rejection theme. Beginning with the Joseph episode, this theme develops and reaches its climax in verse 52 with reference to the 'Righteous One.' This theme is closely related to, and even builds up, the next theme, the pilgrim, or worship theme.

It was noted in chapter 2 that Dibelius argued that the main section of the speech is irrelevant to the charges made against Stephen, and he believed the didactic purpose to be the prevailing mood.[8] J. Dupont and Witherington argued that vv.2b-34 should be

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[8]M. Dibelius, *Studies.*, 169.

labeled as "narratio section" which does not offer or anticipate the actual arguments.[9] However, seen in the light of the Old Testament records, Stephen's words in this section are more than didactic or simple "narratio." Actually, Stephen's presentation of the Joseph episode cannot be more severe on the patriarchs. We have noted that the word ζηλώσαντες is very significant. Out of jealousy, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt. (Psalm 105:17 omits any reference to who sold Joseph and why this incident took place.) The term χορτάσματα was employed to depict the miserable condition of the patriarchs since this word stands for animal food (cf. Luke 15:16). Such misery, according to v. 9b ("And yet God was with him"), brought about an affliction (vv.10-11), and the idea of this section is to contrast Joseph, the rejected one, with his brothers.

The second person in the speech who suffered rejection is Moses. Stephen gives a detailed description of Moses, that he was lovingly watched over by God at his birth, and was powerful in words and deeds, a comment not found in the Book of Exodus. It was suggested

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[9]According to them, this *narratio* section functions to prepare for the "*argumentatio*" (in this speech, vv. 34-50). To them, the lengthy speech was necessary from the ancient rhetorical perspective. Long history review in crises situation was common for ancient historiographical works (cf. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Josephus). In this speech, the *narratio* section allows Stephen to take the "indirect route of insinuation" so that the angry and hostile mood of the audience be pacified and Stephen may be heard (Cf. Witherington, 260-4.).

that Stephen could have drawn this idea from Moses' career during the forty years in the wilderness (cf. Deut. 34:10-12). The purpose of such a detailed personal description is to suggest that Moses was qualified as one who "would give salvation to them" (δίδωσιν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖς·, v.25). The words of the Israelite man rejecting Moses to be the reconciler (vv.27-38) are important for the speech since Stephen quotes them in full detail, because God appeared to and appointed "this man" (τοῦτον or οὗτός) to be the ruler and redeemer (ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν, v.35). Stephen's strong emotion with polemic tone cannot be missed if we note the four consecutive verses (vv.35-38), which begin with "this man" in the Greek text.

The rejection theme continues as the Israelites were unwilling to obey him (ᾧ: in an emphatic position at the beginning of the v. 39). Instead they rejected (ἀπώσαντο,v. 39) him, and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,[10] requesting Aaron to make gods for them, because (γὰρ, v. 40) they did not know what happened to Moses. Kilgallen speaks of the importance of this γὰρ, because "it is the hinge which swings the story from concentration on Moses to emphasis on unacceptable and punished worship."[11] Their ignorance

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[10]This is well evidenced by references like Ex. 16:3, 17:3 etc. During the forty years in the wilderness, they kept turning to Egypt in their hearts.

[11]Kilgallen, "The Function.", 177, ft. 8.

about Moses, whose key role is to help Israel to be united with God, resulted in idolatry and thus losing God. This ignorance led to rejection, and the rejection to seeking salvation from an idol rather than from God (v. 40). God, in turn, rejected His people, specifically by letting them worship false gods (vv. 42-43), to such a degree that they deserved nothing less than the Babylonian exile for their sin (v. 43).[12]

Before we turn to the next section to pursue the rejection is theme, a comparison between Moses and Jesus bears mentioning here. Even though Stephen's speech about Moses contains no direct mention of Jesus, there is a revealing parallel between the description of Moses here and that of Jesus in other speeches in Acts. Moses' being sent to be the "ruler and redeemer" (v. 35) to give Israel salvation (v. 25, RSV: "deliverance") can be compared to Jesus being exalted as "leader and savior" (5:31). But, the people did not understand the divine commission of these two redeemers (3:17 and 7:35). They "denied" Moses as they did Jesus (3:13, 14 and 7:35. In all these verses, αρνέομαι is used). The strong affirmation and human denial (of the Messiah) in Peter's speech in Acts 2 is also apparent in Stephen's. Both Jesus and Moses were rejected despite their performing wonders and signs for the people (2:22 and

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[12]Ibid., 176.

7:36). The phrase, "a prophet like me" also forms a remarkable connection between Jesus and Moses (3:22 and 7:37).[13]

Much can be said about the current theme from Stephen's presentation of the Temple. But this will be highlighted when we deal with the issue of worship. The rejection theme is concluded in v. 51b: "You always resist the Holy Spirit" meaning that their ancestors' rejection of Joseph and Moses is of one piece with the attitude of the audience, because the latter rejected and betrayed Jesus, the Messiah. Stephen makes this point clear by adding a somewhat exaggerated phrase in v. 52. In this verse, the rejection in the past (they) and present (now you) converge. Yet, the purpose of this long historical review is expressed for the present. In other words, the focus lies on the now.

Having said this, let us consider now the question: What is the point that Stephen makes when he emphasizes this theme? (How does his message apply to his audience?) The Joseph episode suggests that even though the majority, in this case, his ten brothers who became the patriarchs of the present audience, rejected Joseph and

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[13]Robert Tannehill, *Narrative.*, 91-92.
David Moessner also makes a comment in this connection, namely that "Jesus' coming is the consummation of the calling of Moses to lead Israel on the Exodus journey to the place, in the land of Promise for the true worship of God." (Cf. D. Moessner, "Christ.", 223.

wanted to bring his life an end and likewise their relationship with him, God acted on behalf of the rejected one. The rejection, in turn, brought God's favor and a tremendous blessing to Joseph, but horrible misery to his brothers. Stephen does not omit the fact that Joseph and his brothers were brought together through divine providence. Likewise, Moses was rejected by his fellow Jews(v. 23), yet God appeared to this rejected man and brought him back to the Jews as their ruler and redeemer. But in the case of Moses, he was rejected again, and the second rejection brought a dramatic result: God permitted the people to fall into idolatry. Now, Stephen ends the speech by concluding that the unbroken story of the rejection culminates in the rejecting and killing of the Righteous One whom Moses prophesied about long before. What is the implied message for the audience? How would God react to those who rejected this Righteous One if he let the Israelites fall into such idolatry?

3. Worship (Pilgrim) Theme

It is not that the worship theme and pilgrim theme are two titles touching on one subject which prompts us to bring them together here. It is simply because they are so intertwined that one cannot separate the one from the other.

Throughout the speech, one marvels at the emphasis that God is transcendent, an emphasis that is made over and over. First of all, Stephen says that God had appeared to Abraham twice: in Mesopotamia and Haran, both outside of the land of Israel. In Canaan Abraham received the promise: "And after that they will come out and serve me in this place." Yet, Stephen makes a point that God gave Abraham "no inheritance, not even a foot of ground" (v. 5a).

In the Joseph episode, God's presence was once again outside of the holy land. The birth of Moses took place in Egypt. God made Himself known to Moses in the "Wilderness of Mount Sinai" (v. 30), in the flame of a burning bush, claiming the place to be holy ground (v. 33). It is conceivable that Stephen intends to make a point by quoting the Old Testament narrative in great detail. God's abode is not, and, thus, cannot and should not be restricted to one place. God is everywhere with His chosen person(s) according to His own purpose. To Stephen, the God of Israel is One who is always on the move. This idea is well demonstrated by the fact that God was with the "church in the wilderness" (v. 38), and through the tabernacle, the movable tent in the wilderness, and in the holy land until the time of Solomon.

In the section which deals with the Temple, we have noted the complexity of the issue revolving around the question: Is Stephen against the Temple which speaks of the Tabernacle as the only mode of the divine presence,[14] or is he simply against the idea that the Temple is the house?[15]

My conclusion was that Stephen was not against the Temple per se. What he argues regarding this subject has to be seen through the quotation from the Prophet Isaiah. Was Isaiah against the Temple? Our survey revealed that the answer should be negative. In fact, Solomon's prayer, offered as the Ark was brought into the Temple (I Ki. 8:27), expresses an idea similar to that of the Isaian quote. What Stephen is up to is the idea that the Temple is a house, localizing God. This idea is against God's transcendence as shown in the previous episodes. God's abode cannot be localized and limited to a place made with human hands (Χειροποιήτοις).

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[14]Among many are M. Simon ("Saint Stephen", *JEH* 2(1951): 127-42.), D. Moessner ("The Christ Must Suffer", *Novum Testamentum* 28, 3 (1986): 220-256.), D. Sylva ("The Meaning and Function of Acts 7, 46-50", *JBL* 106 (1987): 261-275), Donalson ("Moses' Typology.", 27-52), and C.K. Barrett ("Old Testament", 57-69) who argue that Stephen was against the Temple.

[15]For this position, see Robert Tannehill ("Climax", 93), David Ravens ("Stephen's Speech", 65-67.), John Kilgallen ("The Function.", 177-8.), and Edvin Larsson ("Temple-Criticism and the Jewish Heritage: Some reflections on Acts 6-7", *NTS* 39(1993), 397-95). They do not agree on all points, but they maintain that Stephen's criticism is toward the misconception of the people.

Stephen's use of this term has a strong echo of the Golden Calf (cf. ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, v. 41), and the heavenly deities which "you made" to worship. Stephen uses the term Χειροποιήτοις to warn the audience that what human hands make is imperfect, vain, or can be even idolatrous if any work by human hands is assumed to be able to confine God's presence. This conviction is expressed by a reliable spokesman, Paul (Acts 17:24-25). God always has also been on the move outside of the land of Israel. Therefore, it can be said that "Stephen's charge denies the fulfillment of the Exodus salvation to worship God in Jerusalem for his audience."[16]

C. Conclusion: Missiological Implications of Stephen's Speech

Luke begins his second volume with Jesus giving the promise of the Holy Spirit and the prediction that the disciples will be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4 and 7-8). The introduction of this thesis noted that, in Acts especially, Luke is very careful in following the geographical movement of the gospel: from Jerusalem (Acts 1, and Temple in Luke 1 and 2) to Rome (Acts 28). The final question of the thesis then is, "What is the function of this speech according to Luke?" Or, what are some missiological implications of Stephen's speech, assuming, of course, that Luke is

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[16]D. Moessner, "Christ.", 233.

providing us with crucial information on how the Jesus movement in Jerusalem grew to expand to Samaria, Asia Minor, and Rome? To answer this question, I want to make an assumption that Stephen's speech has a message not only for the Sanhedrin members, but also for his fellow Christians.

Seen through the two important themes, the rejection theme and the pilgrim (worship) theme, several points became obvious. (1) The human tendency to localize God is contrary to the nature of God who is transcendent[17] and universal. (2) The ignorance about the true nature of God on the part of the Israelites had an idolatrous result. (3) Not only were the Israelites ignorant of their God, but they were also insensitive to the chosen ones of God to the point that they rejected them. (4) Both their spiritual ignorance and rejection of God's servants caused them only to sin the more, failing themselves to be the proper worshipers. (5) The Babylonian exile was God's reaction to and denouncement of the defiled sacrifices.[18] (6) Despite the important role of the temple in the

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[17]Tannehill says that God, being the maker of all things and transcendent, is the fundamental theological axiom of Acts as seen in 17:24-5. (cf. *Narrative.*, 93.)

[18]One has to see that Stephen is not against the Old Testament sacrificial system. Also, it is to be noted that this speech is only an overall view on the past of Israel, not meant to be a detailed analysis of it.

history of Israel from the time of Solomon up to the present, the people's misunderstanding of the temple to localize and manipulate God's abode, and rejection and persecution of God's prophets, worked against them to the point that they rejected the Messiah.

Stephen's speech is not meant to be merely a didactic historical review. It is a kerygma in which Stephen had a distinctive message for the Jews of the first century. The speech shows that contemporary Judaism stands as the continuum of the past. To be precise, the spiritual ignorance of Stephen's audience, as that of their ancestors, resulted in preventing the temple from functioning not only as the focal place for worship, but also as the proper place for it. And, the worshipers rejected the Righteous One, Jesus. The other side of the rejection story in the speech was that God continued to be with the rejected. Who are the rejected in the eyes of Stephen? This question takes us to another question: What does the speech say to his fellow Christians?

Up to Chapter 6, the preaching activities of the apostles have been exclusively in Jerusalem around the temple. But, Jesus' command to stay in Jerusalem (1:4) took on a new direction after they had received the Holy Spirit. Once they had received the promised gift, they were free to leave, so that they could fulfill

what the giving of the power through the Spirit (1:8) intended, that is, to be in mission to the ends of the earth. Stepping beyond Jerusalem took place in a strange way. It was through the persecuted Christians, excluding the apostles. The immediate flame of such a "great persecution" (8:1) was ignited by Stephen's speech.[19] The implied message of the speech is that the Temple is no longer the focal place for true worship,[20] nor are the Jews the true worshipers. Stephen arrived at this conclusion from lessons of the past.

Thus, Stephen's speech provides the Christians, who were persecuted and scattered, the lost paradigm of true mission. The speech attempts to restore and rediscover true worship and God's transcendent nature beyond Jerusalem.[21] God's presence is not confined to Jerusalem or the Temple. God can be worshiped outside

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[19]Actually the tension between the Jewish and Christian leaders was present before. Yet, the fact that the apostles remained in Jerusalem after the persecution convinces us of the importance of this speech on the matter.

[20]The idea that Jesus replaced the Temple and finished the cult in it can be found elsewhere in the New Testament (John 2:19, Matt. 16:21, and Hebrews 10:10-18), but not in this speech.

[21]Ravens sees Luke's concern for restoring the united Israel to be the focal point of the speech. The united Israel is formed under its new Lord, the prophet like Moses and the Davidic King. (Cf. Ravens, "Stephen's Speech.", 71.)

Jerusalem. With this assurance and promise, the "new Israelites"[22] were forced to scatter as Jesus predicted. Their scattering beyond Jerusalem resulted in bringing the Gospel to Samaria, and this marked the actual parting[23] between Christianity and Judaism.

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[22]Barrett argues that Christianity is the exclusive fulfillment of the Old Testament. (Cf. Barrett, "Old Testament.", 69.)

[23]For further study on the issue of the partings between the two, read the outstanding work by J. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press Int'l, 1991).
Kilgallen's contention is that the function of the speech is to aim at underlining the attitude of Israel in the past and now, and to explain how and why Christianity separated itself from the temple and the Law as it professed Jesus alone as the one means necessary for salvation. (Cf. Kilgallen, "Function.", 193.)

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