
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 119: **Acts 7:29-45**

Acts 7:29-45

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Instructions

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

1. Study the lesson by reading the passage in ACTS, studying the notes, and studying the other passages of the Bible which are cited. It is a good idea to read the whole book of Acts regularly, perhaps at least once a month. This will give you a good overall view of the events in ACTS.
 2. Study the topics in the same way, paying close attention to all of the Bible verses which are mentioned.
 3. Review all of the notes in the ACTS study and the topics
 4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is “open book”. You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
 5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE the file.
 6. Return the completed Quiz to Grace Notes, either by e-mail or regular mail. There are instructions below in the Quiz section.
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Acts 7:29-45**ACTS 7:29-32**

Acts 7:29 Then Moses fled at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

Acts 7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

Acts 7:31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, [KJV]

Acts 7:32 Saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and dared not behold.

The Exodus passage (2:14) says that, when he heard what this man said, he realized that what he had done the day before was common knowledge. After all, he had looked about him carefully before he killed the Egyptian, and hadn't seen any witnesses, certainly neither of these two Hebrew men. But now he knows that apparently there were witnesses and that the word would have got around.

Furthermore, Exodus 2:15 shows that Moses' action was considered a crime in Egypt.

This verse makes a big chronological leap; Moses was in Midian for forty years. Midian was near the Red Sea, taking its name from one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Jerome says that Midian was near Arnon and Areopolis, which he only knew as ruins, even in his day. Here Moses stayed for many years with Jethro, the priest in that place, whose daughter, Zipporah, he married and had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

READ Exodus 2:15-25.

In Exodus, the appearance of the Lord to Moses was said to have occurred at "Mt. Horeb," but this is no contradiction; Horeb and Sinai are different peaks, or elevations, of the same mountain range.

The word "angel" means "messenger" in the generic sense. In Exodus 3:20, it is Jehovah who speaks; the "angel" here is understood to be the "Angel of the Presence" of the Father, the Logos, namely, God the Son.

Jehovah is reminding Moses that God is the one who made a covenant with Israel, who promised the land of Canaan to them and to their descendants. He is the one who promised to bring them out of bondage and into the promised land. All this is implied by God's saying He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

ACTS 7:33, 34

Acts 7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is holy ground.

Acts 7:34 I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you into Egypt.

The priests were barefooted when they ministered in the Temple. There is a widespread custom, among many religions, of removing shoes when entering a place of worship. It was a custom among Jews to remove their shoes whenever they entered any house, as a matter of civility.

This is God's announcement of His purpose for Moses. Stephen does not make any further elaboration, nor does he discuss the argument that Moses had with God about his worthiness to do the job. Since it was a historical fact that Moses did go to Egypt and lead the people out, there's no need for Stephen to go into the details.

ACTS 7:35

Acts 7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Now Stephen does go into detail, probably to begin laying the groundwork for the charge he is going to bring against the Jewish rulers, that they

were stiff-necked and rebellious, just as the Israelites had been in the past.

The word “deliverer” is **lutrothn**, meaning “one who redeems a captive or a prisoner by paying a ransom; hence, a “redeemer.” This word is used of the Lord Jesus Christ, as being the Redeemer of sinners. Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Hebrews 9:12. Moses is called the “deliverer” in the general sense of being one who rescues people in bondage.

ACTS 7:36, 37

Acts 7:36 He brought them out, after he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Acts 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear.

Study Exodus chapters 7 to 14 for an account of the plagues and the exodus.

Note in Exodus 9:20 that during the plague of hail, Egyptian believers were spared the effects of the hail.

Stephen had been accused of blaspheming Moses; here he answers the slander by showing that God Himself directed Moses. Stephen redirects the argument to show that it is really these Pharisees who are opposing Moses.

The very person the Israelites had rejected was the one who redeemed them from their Egyptian bondage. Stephen’s direct implication here is that the very person, Jesus Christ, whom the Jewish leaders had rejected and delivered up into the hands of Pilate to be crucified, was the Person who alone was able to deliver them from their spiritual bondage, and make them partakers of the inheritance among the saints in glory.

Furthermore, it is that same Moses who was the first one to announce the prophet whom the Jews had just put to death.

ACTS 7:38, 39

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

Acts 7:39 Whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

Stephen shows that Moses was only a messenger from God to the people, that he received the message of God in Midian, so that he could give it to the people.

The “church” mentioned here refers to the “congregation” of Israel, a “gathering” of all the Hebrew people, who waited at the base of Mount Sinai while Moses was receiving the Law from Jehovah.

The word “angel,” or “messenger,” is used here, but Exodus does not speak of an angel or any kind of middle man.

See Exodus 32, regarding the broken law, the golden calf, Moses’ advocacy with Jehovah, the disciplinary judgment that came on the Israelites, Moses’ intercession.

Stephen is moving towards the climax of his speech, in which he strongly condemns the Pharisees for the rejection of Christ, the “prophet” whom Moses himself first announced.

ACTS 7:40, 41

Acts 7:40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

Acts 7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

The Israelites already had God going before them, the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. How quickly they had forgotten Jehovah, and Moses; after all he had only been absent from them for about six weeks.

Aaron, of course, caves in immediately to this demand, and makes the golden calf idol which the people wanted. Aaron made the calf, but so did the people; it was a community effort.

This was a completely heathen activity. Every idolatrous religion worships their god through the image of an idol. Egyptians honored the sun god Osiris, at Memphis, by worshipping Apis the bull; and they had another sacred byll Mnevis at the city of Heliopolis, in the Temple of the Sun.

See Herodotus on the subject of Egyptian worship: "Now this Apis is the calf of a cow which is never afterward able to bear young. The Egyptians say that fire comes down from heaven upon the cow, which thereupon conceives Apis. The calf has the following marks: he is black, with a square spot of white upon his forehead, and on his back the figure of an eagle." He was lodged in a magnificent court, ornamented with figures twelve cubits high, which he never left except on fixed days, when he was led in procession through the streets. His festival lasted seven days, and all came forward from their houses to welcome him as he passed. He was not allowed to reach the natural term of his life. If a natural death did not remove him earlier, he was drowned when he reached the age of twenty-five, and was then embalmed and entombed in one of the sepulchral chambers of the Serapeum, a temple devoted expressly to the burial of these animals.

Notice the completely works oriented worship evident in the last phrase of verse 41. They are completely divorced from Grace.

ACTS 7:42, 43

Acts 7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O you house of Israel, have you offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

Acts 7:43 Yea, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which you made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

It seems that the Israelites also were involved in star worship ("hosts of heaven"). In the Chaldean religion, the heavenly bodies were thought to be real persons, and not just astronomical objects.

Moloch was an Ammonite idol to whom children were sacrificed. According to the tradition of the Rabbis, his image was hollow, heated from below, with the head of an ox and outstretched arms, into which children were laid, their cries being drowned out by the beating of drums.

Moloch was carried along with the people, with a tent in which to place the idol when there were stopped; this instead of the tabernacle which God had designed for them.

The word Remphan is supposed to be the Coptic name for Saturn, which the Arabs, Egyptians, and Phoenicians, worshipped as a god.

No wonder, then, that the Israelites were in such poor spiritual condition at the end of their wilderness wanderings. The large majority did not have faith in Jehovah, had not grown spiritually, therefore lacked the courage to face their enemies.

The 12 men who went into Canaan to spy out the land were the leaders, or generals, of the 12 tribes. If we consider that 10 of the 12 brought back a bad report which expressed great fear of their enemies, we might be justified in saying that 80% or more of the Israelites could not believe that Jehovah would lead them victorious into the land.

READ Romans 1:14 to 2:6. As you read this, keep in mind the behavior and spiritual attitude of the Hebrews in the wilderness.

READ Romans 2:1-6. As you read this, keep in mind the Sanhedrin which Stephen is facing.

ACTS 7:44

Acts 7:44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

The "tabernacle of witness" which had the two tables of stone, which were a testimony that God had delivered these laws to the people, and that they had promised to obey them. The ark, also, was called the "ark of the testimony."The

tabernacle was the visible witness or proof of God's presence with them; and the cloud by day and fire by night hovered over the tabernacle.

Stephen continues to show that God did not confine His worship to one place. He was worshipped without any shrine in the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, during the time of Joseph, in fact, all the time that the Hebrews were in Egypt. Then, He was worshipped in this portable temple, the tabernacle in the wilderness. Later, he was worshipped in the Temple built by Solomon.

But, as Stephen asserts later (verse 48) God is not confined to buildings made with human hands.

Thus, he proves that neither tabernacle or temple are required for the true worship of the true God.

“according to the fashion that he had seen” – from Exo. 25:40, “And see that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the mount.”

ACTS 7:45

Acts 7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the

possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; [KJV]

Acts 7:45 "And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David. [NASB]

Comparing the KJV and NASB versions will add some clarity to this verse.

“that came after” is **diadexameni**, meaning “receiving from one another, or in succession.”

This refers to those who came after those who had died in the wilderness. They received the tabernacle from their fathers, brought it into the land of Canaan. Joshua led Israel as they conquered the Canaanites and took over their “possessions.”

The tabernacle was still in the possession of the Israelites in the time of David, and it was replaced by the fixed Temple in Jerusalem.

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Lesson 19 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

Quiz

1. Moses was aware that many people knew that he had killed the Egyptian man. [True/False]

Answer:

2. The geographical area called Midian was named for _____.

Answer:

3. How did God emphasize the idea to Moses that He is the One who made a covenant with Israel and promised them the land of Canaan?

Answer:

4. The words "deliverer" and "redeemer" are synonymous in this context. [True/False]

Answer:

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5. When the plague of hail came in Egypt, the Hebrew people's property was damaged as badly as that of their Egyptian neighbors. [True/False]

Answer:

6. Who was the first prophet in ancient time to announce the "prophet" Jesus Christ?

Answer:

7. To what does the word "church" refer to in Acts 7:38?

Answer:

8. Aaron was thoroughly opposed to the idea of making a golden calf idol for the Hebrew people. [True/False]

Answer:

9. In the Chaldean religion of ancient times, the stars and planets were thought to be real persons. [True/False]

Answer:

10. How many of the 12 leaders who went into Canaan to spy out the land returned with a favorable report?

Answer:

End of Quiz
