

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 27, 2011

God's Provision Through Joseph
Acts 7:9-16

Stephen's appearance before the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, is the third of four times the council appears in Acts (4:1-22; 5:17-42; 23:1-10).

Hebrew Jews

From Judea
Spoke Aramaic
Used Hebrew Bible
Culturally Hebrew
Strictly followed Law

Hellenistic Jews

From Outside Judea
Spoke Greek Only
Used Septuagint
Culturally Greek
Casually followed Law

Stephen's defense against the charges of blasphemy of God (Acts 6:11) is found in Acts 7:1-16. His defense against the charge of blasphemy of the Law (Acts 6:13) is found in Acts 7:17-42. His defense against the charge of blasphemy of the temple (Acts 6:13) is found in Acts 7:43-53.

Stephen's defense is not merely a personal defense but is a defense of Christianity as God's plan for Israel, being consistent with and the culmination of the Old Testament.

1. God provides for Joseph (7:9-10)

a. The betrayal of the brothers (7:9a)

The jealousy of the brothers was rooted in Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph, the first-born son of his wife, Rachel. The jealousy also came from Joseph's own boasting of his dreams (Genesis 37:5-11).

b. The blessing of the Lord (7:9b-10)

These blessings include:

- Presence of God

- Preservation through affliction
- Preference from the king
- Position of power

Egypt is mentioned repeatedly in order to emphasize that the Hebrew Jews had also come from a foreign land.

2. God provides for Joseph's family (7:11-16)

- a. Barren soil (7:11)
- b. Beginning of the sojourn (7:12-13)

Joseph

Opposed by Israelites
 Taken to Egypt
 Betrayed for 20 pieces of silver
 (Genesis 37:28)
 Betrayal brought deliverance
 Had bread for life
 Was not recognized in first visit but was
 revealed in second visit

Jesus

Opposed by Israelites
 Taken to Egypt
 Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
 (Matthew 26:15)
 Betrayal brought deliverance
 Was Bread of Life
 Was not recognized in first coming but will
 be revealed in second coming

- c. Bringing of the seventy-five (7:14-15)
- d. Burial in Shechem (7:16)

Shechem was the first capital of Israel and was about 40 miles north of Jerusalem, which, at the time of Stephen, would place the tomb in Samaria.

How ironic that the forefathers of the Hebrew Jews would be laid to rest in a land they refused to enter.

This reference by Stephen to Samaria will set the stage for the gospel's advance to this area in Acts 8-12 (cf. Acts 1:8)

May we, by God's grace, recognize that the same God who delivered us desires our participation in His work of reaching all peoples of the world.