

Acts.

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“I was the enemy Jesus told you to love.”

- BISHOP YASSIR ERIC
CHRISTIANITY TODAY, SEP/OCT 2025

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“Don’t you recognize me?” he finally asked. I noticed his crippled hand and how his right eye didn’t move, frozen in place as if from an old injury. When he said, ‘I’m Zakariya,’ I was speechless.

He pulled out his Bible and showed me the front page. My name was there, first on a list. **‘Because you hated me so deeply,’ he said, ‘I always prayed for you.’**

- BISHOP YASSIR ERIC
CHRISTIANITY TODAY, SEP/OCT 2025

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Martyr

GREEK: MARTYS/ 'WITNESS'

“And when the blood of Stephen your **witness (martys)** was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.”

ACTS 22:20 ESV

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Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

ACTS 6:8-10 NIV

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Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.¹³ They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

ACTS 6:11-14 NIV

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All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen,
and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

ACTS 6:15 NIV

Character

→ Who we are

³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **full of the Spirit and wisdom...**

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man **full of faith and of the Holy Spirit...**

ACTS 6:3,5B NIV

Character

→ Who we are

⁸ Now Stephen, a man **full of God's grace and power**, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

¹⁰ But they could not stand up against **the wisdom the Spirit gave him** as he spoke.

¹⁵ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that **his face was like the face of an angel**.

ACTS 6:8,10,15 NIV

Character

→ Who we are

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and **through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him** everywhere.¹⁵ For **we are the aroma of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

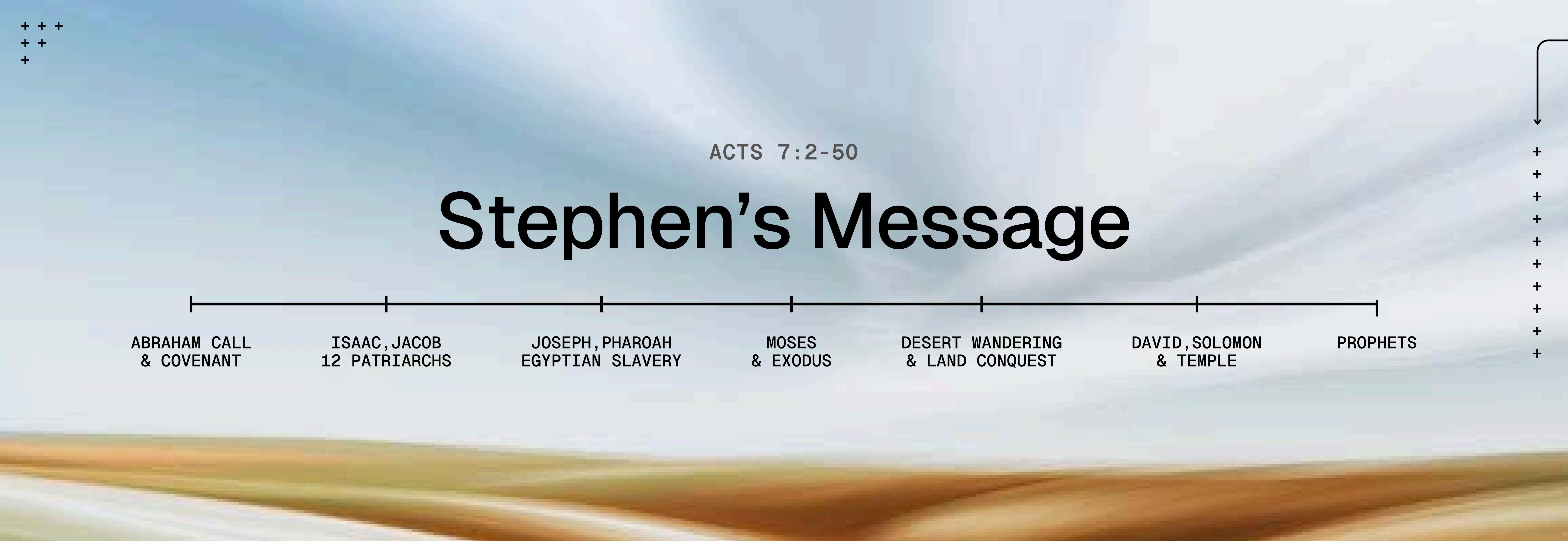
2 CORINTHIANS 2:14-15 ESV

Message

→ What we say

Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these charges true?”² To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! **The God of glory appeared** to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran.

ACTS 7:1-2 NIV



ACTS 7:2-50

Stephen's Message

ABRAHAM CALL
& COVENANT

ISAAC, JACOB
12 PATRIARCHS

JOSEPH, PHAROAH
EGYPTIAN SLAVERY

MOSES
& EXODUS

DESERT WANDERING
& LAND CONQUEST

DAVID, SOLOMON
& TEMPLE

PROPHETS

PROPHETIC

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For more information → fellowshipbentonville.org

Panorama of the Bible

Understand the story & timeline of the Bible



Message

→ What we say

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted **the coming of the Righteous One**. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

ACTS 7:51-53 NIV

Message

→ What we say

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and **through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him** everywhere.¹⁵ For **we are the aroma of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

2 CORINTHIANS 2:14-15 ESV

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Hope

→ What we cling to

When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and **Jesus standing at the right hand of God.**

ACTS 7:54-55 NIV

Hope

→ What we cling to

“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

ACTS 7:56-58 NIV

Hope

→ What we cling to

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

ACTS 7:59-60 NIV

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Stephen → → → → Jesus

+ “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

ACTS 7:59

+ “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

ACTS 7:60

+ “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”

LUKE 23:46

+ “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

LUKE 23:34

Hope

→ What we cling to

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**”⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, **he fell asleep.**

ACTS 7:59-60 NIV

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On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were **scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.**² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.⁴ **Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**

ACTS 8:1-4 NIV

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“The earth has been filled with the blood of the martyrs as with seed, and from that seed have sprung the crops of the church. **They have asserted Christ’s cause more effectively when dead than when they were alive.** They assert it today, they preach him today; their tongues are silent, their deeds echo round the world. They were arrested, bound, imprisoned, brought to trial, tortured, burned at the stake, stoned to death, run through, fed to wild beasts. In all their kinds of death they were jeered at as worthless, but ‘precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints’”

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, 354-430

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Pastor Jin “Ezra” Mingri

ZION CHURCH, BEIJING

Today's sermon from Acts 7:54-60

Preached by Pastor Long via Zoom to Zion Church

“No suffering, no glory-- that's the most important spiritual DNA of the Chinese house church movement through history. We are willing to pay the price to bear the cost of discipleship.”

The making of a **Witness/Martyr**

Character → Who we are

Message → What we say

Hope → What we cling to