### Acts

## Chapter 7

1So the High Priest asked him:  
  
 ‘Is all of this true?’  
  
2And [Stephen] said:  
  
 ‘Men… Brothers… Fathers… Listen!  
  
 ‘Our father AbraHam saw the Glorious God while he was in MesoPotamia, before he moved to Haran.  
  
 3‘And [God] said to him:  
  
 ‘Leave your land and your relatives and go to the land that I’m going to show you.’ [Genesis 12:1]  
  
 4‘So he went to the land of the Chaldeans and started living in Haran. Then after his father died, [God] caused him to move to the land where you now live.  
  
 5‘However, He didn’t give him any land as his inheritance… Not a foot’s width! Yet [God] did promise him a land that he could own and pass on to his descendants, even though at the time when he didn’t have any children.  
  
 6‘Moreover, God spoke to him and told him that his descendants would also have to live in a foreign land where they’d be oppressed and serve as slaves for 400 years.  
  
 7‘But God said that thereafter, He would pass judgment on the nation [that makes them] slaves… And then [his descendants] would come here and serve Him. 8So he made a Sacred Agreement with [AbraHam] [that required] circumcision.  
  
 ‘And after that, [AbraHam] went on to father IsaAc, whom he circumcised on the 8th day… As IsaAc did to Jacob, and Jacob did to the 12 family heads.  
  
 9‘However, these family heads soon became jealous of [their brother] JoSeph, and they sold him into Egypt. 10But God was with him and He carried him through all of his problems. Then He made him likeable and wise in the eyes of PharaOh, the king of Egypt. So [PharaOh] appointed [JoSeph] to govern Egypt, as well as [to be over] his entire house.  
  
 11‘Then a famine came upon Egypt and CanaAn, which created such a difficult time that our ancestors couldn’t find any food. 12But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors down there for the first time. 13And it was on their second visit that JoSeph made himself known to his brothers… Which was when JoSeph’s ethnic background first became known to PharaOh.  
  
 14‘Thereafter, JoSeph sent for his father Jacob and all of his relatives (some 75 people); 15and Jacob went down to Egypt, where he died, as did the rest of our ancestors…  
  
 16‘And their bodies were taken to SheChem, where they were laid in the tomb that AbraHam had bought with silver from Hamor’s sons in SheChem. [spurious text]  
  
 17‘Well, by the time that God’s promise to AbraHam had reached its fulfillment, the people had grown and multiplied in Egypt. 18And soon another king had arisen to rule over Egypt that was unfamiliar with JoSeph. 19So he treated our people treacherously and he forced our fathers to give up their young children to be killed… 20And that’s when Moses was born.  
  
 ‘Well, [Moses] was beautiful to God, and he was nursed for three months in [his] father’s home. 21But when he was discovered, the daughter of PharaOh picked him up and raised him as her own son.  
  
 22‘So, this is how Moses came to be trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians… And he grew up to become mighty in everything that he said and did.  
  
 23‘Then when he turned 40 years old, [Moses] decided to pay more attention to his brothers, the sons of IsraEl. 24So when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he came to [the man’s] defense and took vengeance on behalf of the one who was being abused, by beating an Egyptian to death!  
  
 25‘Well, he assumed that his brothers would understand that God was going to use him to save them… However, they didn’t understand. 26So when he came to [his people] the next day and found [two of them] fighting, he tried to bring them together peacefully by saying:  
  
 ‘Men… You are brothers! Why are you treating each other so badly?’ [paraphrase of Exodus 2:13]  
  
 27‘And at that, the one who was mistreating his neighbor just pushed him away and asked:  
  
 ‘Who appointed you as the ruler and judge over us?  
 28Do you want to kill me the same as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?’  
 [Exodus 2:14]  
  
 29‘And when Moses heard him say this, he ran away and lived in the land of MidiAn, where he fathered two sons.  
  
 30‘Well, after 40 more years, Jehovah’s&nbsp;messenger&nbsp;appeared to him in the flames of a burning thorn bush while he was in the desert near Mount SinAi. 31And when Moses saw it, he was dazzled by the sight!  
  
 ‘But as he came closer to investigate, the voice of the Lord said to him:  
  
 32‘I am the God of your fathers… The God of AbraHam, IsaAc, and Jacob.’ [paraphrase of Exodus 3:6]  
  
 ‘And at that, Moses started to shake so hard that he didn’t want to investigate any further.  
  
 33‘And the Lord said to him:  
  
 ‘Remove your sandals; for the place where you’re standing is holy ground!’ [Exodus 3:5]  
  
 [‘And:]  
  
 34‘Now, I’ve seen the bad treatment of my people in Egypt and I’ve heard their groaning; therefore, I’ve come down here to take them... So come on, for I’m going to send you to Egypt!’ [paraphrase of Exodus 3:7-10]  
  
 35‘And although this was the same Moses whom [the IsraElites] had previously disowned, asking, ‘Who appointed you as our ruler and judge?’… He was the one whom God sent off as both a ruler and savior by the hand of the messenger who had appeared to him in the thorn bush.  
  
 36‘And then, after he’d performed many omens and signs, he’s also the man who led them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the desert for the next 40 years.  
  
 37‘Yes, this was the [man] who told the sons of IsraEl:  
  
 ‘God will raise a Prophet like me from among your brothers.’ [Deuteronomy 18:15]  
  
 38‘And he was the one who was with the congregation [when they lived] in the desert, who talked to [God’s] messenger on Mount SinAi, and who received life-giving signs for our ancestors, so that we might receive them!  
  
 39‘But then our ancestors refused to obey him… They just pushed him aside, and in their hearts they were back in Egypt! 40For then they told Aaron:  
  
 ‘Make gods to lead us, because we don’t know what has happened to this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt!’ [Exodus 32:1]  
  
 41‘As a result, [Aaron] made [an image of] a calf, and then they offered sacrifices to the idol… For they were very happy with this thing that they’d made with their hands!  
  
 42‘So thereafter, God handed them over to bow before the [stars] in the skies, just as it’s written in the Book of the Prophets:  
  
 ‘It wasn’t to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices for 40 years in the desert, was it, O house of IsraEl?  
  
 43‘Rather, you took up with the images that you made for worship in the tent of Moloch, and with the star of the god Rephan. This is why I’m going to send you into exile beyond Babylon!’   
  
 [paraphrase of Amos 5:25-26]  
  
 44‘However, back when our ancestors lived in the desert, they had the Tent of Proofs that [God] had ordered Moses to build using the pattern that he was shown.  
  
 45‘And our ancestors who received it then brought it into this land that was once owned by the nations that God had pushed out ahead of them as they were coming here with JoShua… And it remained here until the time of David!  
  
 46‘Then [David] found God’s favor, and he asked that [he might be allowed] to build a Temple for the God of Jacob… 47Although it was really Solomon who built the House for him. 48However, the Most High doesn’t really live in houses that are made by [human] hands, just as the Prophet foretold.  
  
 49‘For Jehovah said:  
  
 ‘Since the heavens are My throne and the earth is My footstool;  
 What kind of House can you build for Me...  
 And in what sort of place should I rest,  
 50Since all of these things were made by My hands?’  
 [Isaiah 66:1-2a]  
  
 51‘So now – you with the hardened necks and uncircumcised hearts and ears – you’ve become just like your ancestors, for you’re always resisting [God’s] Holy Breath!  
  
 52‘Which of the Prophets weren’t persecuted by your ancestors?  
  
 ‘Yes, they even killed the Prophets who foretold the coming of the Righteous One… And now you’ve become the betrayers and murderers of him also!  
  
 53‘So although you were the ones who received the Law that was brought to us by the messengers [of God], you haven’t kept it!’  
  
  
54Well when they heard this, they were really cut down and they were grinding their teeth at him! 55But as he was being filled with Holy Breath, he stared into the sky and saw the Glory of God with Jesus standing at His right hand!  
  
56So he said:  
  
 ‘Look! I see the sky opening up!  
  
 ‘And there’s the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’  
  
57Then when he said this, they all started shouting as loudly as they could and putting their hands over their ears. Then they ran up to him and grabbed him, 58and they dragged him outside of the city, where they started stoning him!  
  
(Well at the time, those who came to watch started laying their coats at the feet of a young man called Saul.)  
  
59Then Stephen said this as they were stoning him:  
  
 ‘Lord Jesus,  
  
 ‘Take my breath.’  
  
60And he fell to his knees and shouted loudly:  
  
 ‘Lord, don’t hold this sin against them!’  
  
And with that, he fell asleep [in death].