

**Acts 7: History of the Building of God's House**

- I. **God Desires to Obtain a Dwelling Place** (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19; Ephesians 2:22)
- II. **God Is the Designer, Christ is the Model** (Foundation [1 Corinthians 3:11], Cornerstone [Ephesians 2:20]), and the Holy Spirit Is the Executor (Building Through the Discipline of Man)
- III. **The Reality of God's House Is the History of Man's Spiritual Experience: Four Spiritual Principles** (vv. 1–47)
  - A. Abraham: Faith
    1. The glorious God revealed Himself to Abraham — a personal encounter with God is the first step
    2. Lived in God's promise — pointing to the things to come, salvation, and a never-changing goal
      - a) cut off all old earthly relationships — leaving these relationships is entering into God's promise
      - b) Christ is the heavenly inheritance — having “not even a foot of ground” (v. 5)
    3. God gave the covenant of circumcision — living by relying not on the flesh but on God
    4. Faith was the response in everything
  - B. Joseph: The journey of life (a life with God's presence)
    1. Sold — no freedom, in bondage
    2. “But God was with him” (v. 9)
      - a) saw God in all circumstances
      - b) freedom in the spirit is God's greatest deliverance
    3. Exalted through sufferings
    4. Reigned to bring in an abundant supply of life in order to preserve life
      - a) experiencing life supplies life
      - b) authority comes out of life; life is glory
  - C. Moses: Service
    1. The first forty years — fleshly service
      - a) the oppression of God's people — the time and background of the oppression
      - b) unordinary birth
      - c) unordinary wisdom and abilities — excellent natural talents
      - d) the failure of fleshly service — became a fugitive
    2. The second forty years — the burning bush: the vision of the cross controls the life of service
      - a) the desert near Mount Sinai — the place where life was purified under God's strict requirements
      - b) cut off earthly ties and stood on holy ground
      - c) experienced life that came out of being oppressed, ready to receive God's mission
    3. The third forty years — bearing spiritual responsibilities, being a ruler and a deliverer
      - a) led the Israelites out of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert — the most loyal and beautiful service
      - b) experienced God's work, became God's masterpiece, was built up so all the people would be built up — a type of Christ
      - c) passed on living words through the Lord's presence
      - d) rejected by the people — experiencing agony caused by man's betrayal of God
        - refusing to obey
        - turning their hearts to the world
        - making an idol
        - honoring what their hands had made
      - e) built the tabernacle in the desert
        - faithful to the pattern he had seen

- establishing the testimony of the Lord in the world

D. David and Solomon: Building God's kingdom and house

1. David
  - a) the purpose of being blessed is for God to be King, to be glorified
  - b) enjoyed favor and asked to provide God a dwelling place — a resting place for God
2. Solomon: Built God's house during a time of peace

**IV. God Desires a Spiritual House: The Most High Does Not Live in Houses Made by Men** (vv. 48–53)

A. The prophet's two questions revealed the desire of the Lord's heart (v. 49)

1. "What kind of house will you build for me?"
2. "Where will my resting place be?"

B. To resist the Holy Spirit is to resist God's purpose

1. Stiff-necked with uncircumcised hearts and ears — manifestation of religious forms
2. Killed the prophets and even killed the Lord

**V. Stephen Was Martyred for This Very Purpose (God's House)** (vv. 54–60)

A. He was full of the Holy Spirit

B. He looked up and saw heaven open

1. Saw the glory of God
2. Saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God — the Lord gave him the highest honor
3. Stephen's martyrdom was similar to the Lord's — "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (v. 60)

C. He became a vessel of the Holy Spirit's response — caused God's house to move forward