



Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 11 and begin with an opening prayer

The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them, The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those whose love violence his soul hates. For the Lord is righteous...upright men will see his face. (Psalm 11:4-7)

Begin today by asking the steadfast, unwavering God who has made you righteous in Christ (2 Cor 5:21) to examine your heart and life. This isn't scary when our position with God is secure. Because of God's unchanging grace we have the security to love God and be loved by him. When we love, we become interested in gazing upon someone's face (vs 7). Take a minute to ask that His love would become more real to you today - that his love would bring out new life in you.

Acts 7:1-16

Passage Introduction: Stephen's Speech pt. 1

Stephen's speech in chapter 7 is much more than an abstract history lesson, although that's how it first appears. Instead, this chapter is an exercise in biblical theology. Stephen is retelling Israel's history in order to make a specific point about how that history anticipated the person and work of Jesus Christ, and about how his opponents' response to truth is nothing new. As we might expect, Stephen's speech focuses particularly on the themes of the temple and the law. He demonstrates how each one was fulfilled by Christ with the inauguration of the new covenant.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 7:1-16 - **1** 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. **3** 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' **4** "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. **5** He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. **6** God spoke to him in this way: 'For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. **7** But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.' **8** Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham

My notes:

became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

9 “Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him **10** and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace. **11** “Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. **12** When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. **13** On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. **14** After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. **15** Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. **16** Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.”

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage and his plans for establishing a people for himself?
- How is God’s faithfulness to his promises to Abraham relevant to you today? (If you have time, read Galatians 3:7-9 for more insight)

Key Takeaway:

As you read today’s passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Thank God for revealing himself throughout history, and for showing himself to be reliable and faithful.