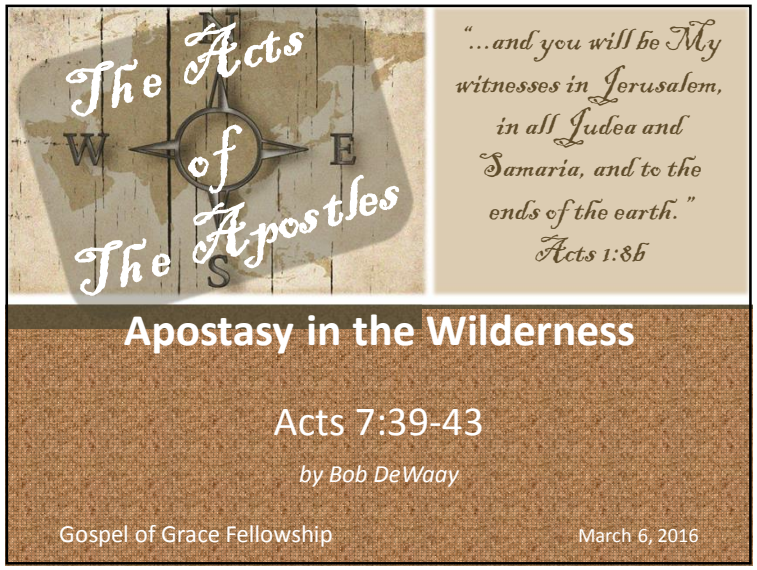

Stephen Uses Corporate Solidarity

Acts 7:39 (ESV)

Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt.

- Stephen still identifies with his Jewish audience by using "our fathers"
- "Thrust aside" is identical language from Acts 7:27; Moses was rejected again, even after all that God did
- The term "turned" (*strepho_*) is used in Matt 18:3 for conversion. Here it is for apostasy (reverse conversion)

"Our Fathers" Then "Your Fathers" Stephen Indicts the Sanhedrin

- "Our Fathers" in Stephen's speech: Acts 7:12; 7:19; 7:38; 7:39; 7:44; 7:45
- "Your Fathers" in Stephen's speech: Acts 7:51; 7:52

Stephen was willing to own their joint, sinful, corporate past until it came to their treatment of Messiah, the greater "Moses." Then the Jewish leadership still owned the corporate guilt, but Stephen who had come to Messiah no longer did. The only way to escape from their history of apostasy was to believe in Christ.

Stephen's Moses - Jesus Analogy

- The man rejected by the people becomes ruler and deliverer (7:35)
- He becomes deliverer through signs and wonders given by God (7:36)
- Moses is both prophet and type of Christ (7:37)
- Moses is mediator between God and the people in the "assembly" (*ekkle_sia*) (7:38)
- He is the receiver and giver of words of life (7:38)
- His people reject him (7:39)
  - (Adapted from Mikeal Parsons commentary)

They Lose Faith When Moses Is Gone

Acts 7:40 (ESV)

saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'

- God promised to go before them, now they decide to make their own "god" for that role
- Moses was out of sight and their faith failed
- They wanted something tangible that they could control and did not speak true moral law

Apostasy in the Wilderness: Acts 7:39 - 43 5

They Have an Idol Celebration

Acts 7:41 (ESV)

And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

- They make an illicit sacrifice of their own devices
- "Rejoicing" is used in LXX Deut 12:7 for the Lord
- "Made with hands" will be referenced in 7:48 for houses God does not dwell in
- "Works of hands" describes the nature of idols in the OT

Apostasy in the Wilderness: Acts 7:39 - 43 6

They Turned from God, Now God Turns

Acts 7:42 (ESV)

But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: " 'Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

- Vs 39 they "turned" and here God "turned" using *strepho_* in each case
- "gave them over" denotes reprobation
- The "host of heaven" are spiritual beings not merely constellations

Apostasy in the Wilderness: Acts 7:39 - 43 7

They Worshipped Astral Deities

Acts 7:43 (ESV)

'You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.'

- This is the astral idolatry (Amos 5:25-27)
- The "tabernacle of Moloch" is a Canaanite sun god
- "Rephan" had to do with astral idolatry
- Astral terminology is often used of evil spirits as in Isaiah 14:12f

Apostasy in the Wilderness: Acts 7:39 - 43 8