

Hidden

6.23.19

Acts 7:39-43; 51-53 NASB “Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us; for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt—we do not know what happened to him.’

⁴¹ At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. ⁴² But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, ‘It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? ⁴³ You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.’ ⁵¹ You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. ⁵² Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; ⁵³ you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

I. Stephen’s Sermon

A. The charges against Stephen

1. Blasphemy against God (his response 7:2-37)
2. Blasphemy against The Temple (his response 7:44-50)
3. Blasphemy against The Law (his response 7:38-43)

B. The counter-charges against the religious leaders

1. Blasphemy against God - Idols were carried into the wilderness.
2. Blasphemy against God’s Presence - The Holy Spirit was resisted at every turn.
3. Blasphemy against The Law - The Law of God was desecrated by their treatment of it.

C. Their response: kill the messenger and quench the Spirit of God.

II. The verdict

A. The tendency of every generation is to carry contraband on the journey.

1. Rachel did it. (Genesis 31:19)
2. Moses

- a. **Leviticus 17:7** ⁷They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.

- b. **Deuteronomy 4:19-20** ¹⁹ And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. ²⁰ But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today.

3. Joshua found it necessary to command Israel to put away their false gods. (Joshua 24:23)

4. Joshua's generation had not kept the most basic covenant agreement of circumcision (Joshua 5:2-7) and Israel chronically failed to observe Passover with regularity.

B. It always turns into something bigger than we ever intended.

1. The Rabbi's blamed the idolatry on the "mixed multitude," but Amos and Stephen laid the blame at the feet of God's own people.

2. It was of such consequence that God's people would fail to live in the Land of Promise.

C. Idols can remain hidden even while we grow into spiritual greatness.

1. Consider the splendor of The Temple, its liturgy, and its treasury.

2. It represented God's Presence, but Ezekiel revealed God's Glory was long gone (nearly 600 years earlier).

3. There is great peril in living in the past!

D. All that is needed to bring it into the open is a manifestation of God's Glory.

1. Sometimes it is the mercy of God not to come to us as we have asked.

2. Do we really want Him to come?

3. Do we have any idea what it will cost us?