

The background of the slide features a white dove with its wings spread, set against a backdrop of intense orange and yellow flames. The dove is positioned in the center-right of the frame, facing left. The flames are more concentrated on the right side, creating a dramatic contrast with the white bird. The overall composition suggests the Holy Spirit and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS

Stephen
*The Faithful
Witness*

Acts 6:8–7:53

OF THE

Holy Spirit

Acts 6:8–7:60 STEPHEN: A FAITH THAT STANDS

Two-Part Sermon

- **Sermon 1:**

The Faithful Witness

(Acts 6:8–7:53)

- **Sermon 2:**

The Faithful Martyr

(Acts 7:54–60)





Acts 6:8–7:53 Stephen The Faithful Witness

Theme: *A Spirit-filled church produces courageous witnesses who speak God's truth regardless of the cost. God calls His people to faithfully proclaim His truth.*

Stephen - A Spirit-filled Faithful Witness

⁸ Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:4 men of good repute, full of Spirit and wisdom)

Full of Grace and Power

His life reflected Christ.

The Spirit worked through him.

Full of Spirit and Wisdom

He trusted God and led by God.



Context: The Confrontation

⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) – Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia – who began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

His opponents supported by Paul couldn't refute him





Three False Charges before the Sanhedrin

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, ‘We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God...’ This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.’

He was against God, the Temple and the Law
Abolishing the law and security and sanctity of the temple

The Spirit-led Defence

1. Concerning the Temple

*The Presence and Worship of God
are not confined to building or place.*

2. Concerning Moses and the law

They rejected Moses, disobeyed the law

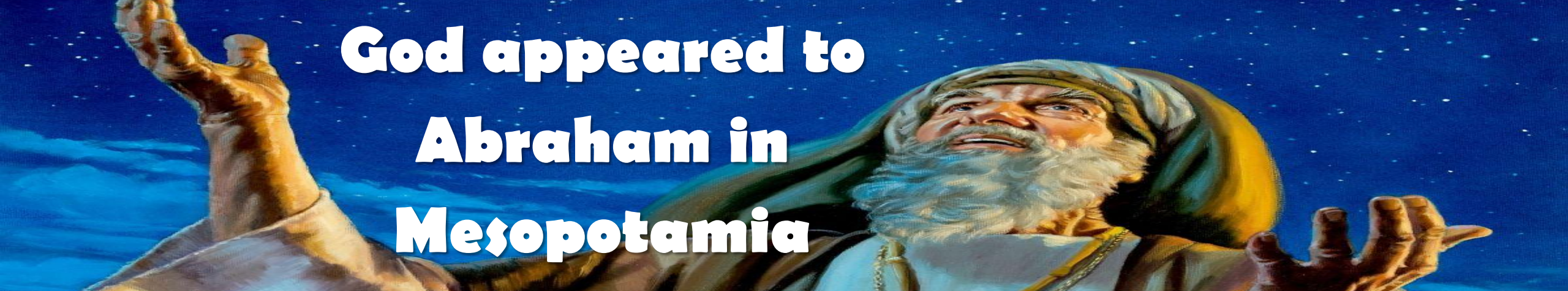
3. Concerning God

They stubbornly rejected God

*They persecuted His prophets
killed the Messiah*

They





God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia

1. Concerning the Temple

God's Presence is not confined to place or building

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."

God's presence always preceded the temple

God is not confined to one geographical location or temple



God appeared to Moses before the temple

After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.

**The worship of God
cannot be limited to
buildings (Acts 7:44–50)**

**The Tabernacle, Joshua,
David, and Solomon**

'Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness...Joshua brought it with them when they took the land...It remained in the land until the time of David...asked that he might provide a dwelling-place for the God of Jacob.'





King Solomon built the temple

It was Solomon who built a house for him.

But God does not dwell in temple

Isaiah 66:1-2 'Heaven is my throne...'

*The Most High does not dwell in houses made
by human hands.*

2. Concerning Moses and the law

Israel Rejected Moses

"Who made you ruler and judge?"

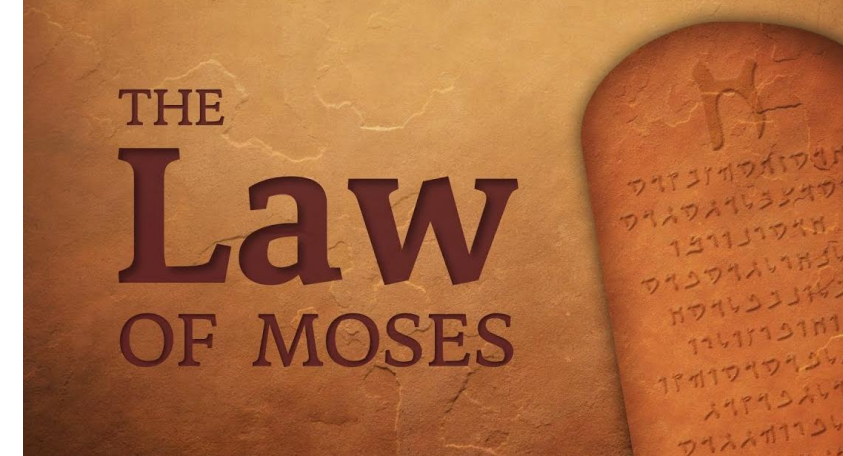
They refused to listen to Moses³⁹ *'But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.'*

They rejected God and worship idol

⁴¹ *That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf.*

They disobeyed the law!

⁵³ *received the law...but have not obeyed it.'*



3. Concerning God

***They stubbornly rejected God
and His salvation plan***

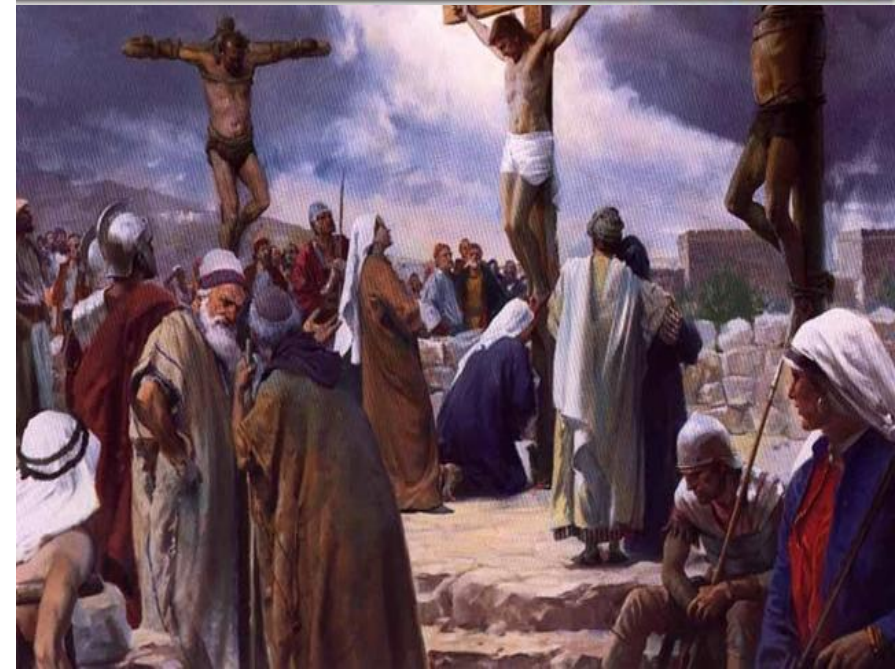
*⁵¹ 'You stiff-necked people with
uncircumcised hearts and ears!
You are just like your ancestors:
you always resist the Holy Spirit!*

They persecuted God's prophets

*"Which of the prophets did
your fathers not persecute?"*

They Killed His Messiah

*And now you have betrayed
and murdered him*





The central message of Stephen's defence

Pre-occupied by religiosity of the temple & the law, missed out God and His greatest salvation plan

- God's plan has always been larger than place, land, building, or religious system.
- Jesus is the fulfilment of everything God promised through Abraham, Moses, the Law, the prophets, and the Temple.
- Israel's history consistently shows resistance to God's work.
- The real issue is not the Temple or the Law but whether people will receive God's Messiah and be saved.



Applications: Be Faithful Witnesses

1. Know Scripture deeply

- *Stephen did not rely on clever arguments. He relied on God's Word. Christians defend the faith best when they know the Bible.*

2. Speak the truth courageously

- *Stephen spoke respectfully but fearlessly.*
- *Faithfulness is measured by obedience, not popularity.*



External religion cannot replace obedience

3. Worship God sincerely

- Church buildings, traditions, and religious activities are valuable, but they must never replace wholehearted devotion to God.

4. Examine your own heart

- *Have we given our hearts to Jesus?*
People can be outwardly religious while inwardly resisting God.



Faithfulness often carries a cost

Ask yourself: Have I died to self and born again filled with the Spirit?

- Am I more concerned about pleasing people than pleasing God?***
- Have I remained silent when I should have spoken for Christ?***
- Am I willing to pay the price for obedience?***

Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani

An Iranian Christian leader



**When judges told him to repent
or face the gallows:**

*"I am resolute in my faith. I have repented of my sins,
but I cannot repent of my conversion to Christ."*

A letter written on the day of his release in 2023:

*"I have been locked up many times because of His name... but
I consider everything I have endured as my small part
in sharing in the labour and suffering of Christ.*

*I know that these things happen to me because
I want to live according to God's will."*

HLCE Theme 2026 - Church on the Move

The Spirit Empowered Mission and Service



GO Be Spirit-Filled Faithful Witnesses