

**Text:** Ac 7.35-43

**Proposition:** Salvation depends on obedience to a God-approved Saviour.

As we continue to look at Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, we will today come to the end of the section where Stephen deals with Moses. He is both recalling facts they know and proposing truths they must accept in his message.

So far:

- He recalls God's promises to Abraham – identifying with the root of the only divinely revealed way of salvation.
- He recalls God's deliverance of Israel's family – through the rejected Joseph.
- He recalls God's intervention by raising up Moses – whom Israel rejected.
- He recalls God's appointment of Moses, who served in dependence on God.

Now we come to a mini-conclusion in Stephen's message. God intervened and delivered the nation through Moses – what then? Did God's people appreciate the divinely appointed leader God gave them? Did God's people faithfully follow the faithful leader God approved?

In our passage today, we shall see.

In addition, we shall see one other thing: a seed that perhaps the Sanhedrin missed, but it is critical for the *ultimate* conclusion towards which Stephen is leading his audience. He is about to point them to the one, true Saviour of all mankind, and point out their constant rejection of him.

Read Ac 7.35-43

**Proposition:** Salvation depends on obedience to a God-approved Saviour.

As we begin our message, I want you to see something in our text, a repeated "demonstrative pronoun" — "this."

- v. 35: "This Moses" "[this] one"
- v. 36: "This man"
- v. 37: "This is that Moses"
- v. 38: "This is the one"
- v. 40: "as for this Moses"

Steven is insistently pointing at Moses.

# I. God's approval of 'this Moses' (35-38)

## A. This Moses God appointed (35)

We partly talked about this verse last week

### 1. Key points:

- a. This Moses whom they disowned
  - b. This Moses ... God sent forth
    - 1) As a ruler
    - 2) As a deliverer
  - c. This Moses ... aided by the angel (Angel of the Lord)
2. The parallels with Jesus are striking and unmistakable
3. The importance of God's appointment can't be missed
- a. The one whom God appointed is given a position of supreme leadership: Moses ruled Aaron
  - b. The one whom God appointed becomes the saviour of the nation (this is the message of the gospel)

## B. This Moses led them out of Egypt and out of the wilderness (36)

- 1. Notice the places where Moses performed his signs
  - a. In Egypt (pre-exodus)
  - b. In the Red Sea (in the midst of the exodus)
  - c. In the wilderness (after the exodus)
- 2. The signs are from God to confirm authentic leadership

Remember that Moses asked God for confirmations *for his own people* that God had appointed him: God gave miraculous signs

- 3. The Lord Jesus likewise manifested signs
  - a. The many miracles before the crucifixion
  - b. The specific signs in the midst of the crucifixion
  - c. The signs at the hands of the apostles post-crucifixion

Not only did God appoint and approve, but also God manifested his approval: Moses was God's man; Jesus *is* God's man.

C. This Moses said God will raise a prophet (37)

1. As a prophet, Moses spoke for God
2. The content of his prophecy: God will raise a prophet like me

I will come back to this verse later in the message, but as we move past it, I want you to think about how it fits in the context of what Stephen is saying about Moses...

D. This Moses spoke to God and for God (38)

1. The location is specific
  - a. With the congregation in the wilderness
  - b. Speaking with the angel on Mt. Sinai

Again, the term 'angel' – in the book of Exodus, on Mt. Sinai, we see Moses speaking on the mountain face to face with YHWH God – who is this "angel"?

2. Note that the time is specific: he is 'with our fathers' – with the whole congregation in the wilderness
3. Moses is given 'living oracles' to pass on to the people: the Law of God

The angel of the Lord communicated the living word of God through this specific man: Moses, the one they had rejected... and the one they would reject yet again.

We see this when we come to the last "this Moses" reference in our passage:

## II. Israel's disapproval of 'this Moses' (39-43)

This Moses, where is he? (39-43, cf. Ex 32.1-6)

A. The character of Israelite apostasy (39)

1. Unwilling to obey
2. Repudiated God's appointed leader

### 3. Turned back to Egypt (in their hearts)

## B. The first instance of Israelite apostasy (40)

### 1. The incident of the Golden Calf – when was this?

- a. After the ten plagues
- b. After the Red Sea
- c. After the curing of the water in the wilderness
- d. After the water from the rock
- e. After the manna

The very morning they asked for a god (golden calf), they ate manna for breakfast. They would eat manna for lunch. And they would eat manna for supper that very night.

- f. After the voice of God from the mountain at Sinai (Ten Commandments)
- g. After Moses went up the mountain to speak to God *at their request* – and had been up there almost forty days

### 2. How the people spoke about “this Moses”

- a. A term of derision
- b. Dismissive, no respect

**Exo 32:1** Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; **as for this Moses**, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

**Exo 32:23** “For they said to me, Make a god for us who will go before us; **for this Moses**, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.

- c. Were they telling the truth? They knew where Moses was – the cloud hadn’t departed from Sinai

### C. What the apostates did (41-43)

1. They rejoiced in the work of their hands (41)
2. They were delivered over by God (42a)
3. They carried idolatry along with them in the wilderness, though in the very presence of the Holy God (42b-43)

Even after the golden calf incident was over, their rebellious hearts continued in apostasy through those forty long years.

Now let's go back to v. 37

## III. This Moses and that prophet (focal point) (37)

A. Stephen makes this point very quietly, it doesn't seem to fit the narrative he is giving, he almost brushes by with just this quick reference

1. What did the Sanhedrin think when he made the quotation?
  - a. The Rabbis taught that Moses was predicting another prophet
  - b. References, some in the Qumran scrolls and Rabbinic writings (4Q175 5-8; targum on Exod. 12:42; Ruth Rabbah 5.6; Pesiqta Rabbati 15.10; also 4Q158 and 4QExod<sup>a</sup>; 1QS 1.9-11)
  - c. Josephus thought Moses was referring to Joshua
2. But the rabbis clearly expected someone else, other than Joshua (Jn 1.19-21)

**John 1.19-21** This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you **the Prophet?**" And he answered, "No."

B. The prophecy is found in Dt 18.15-19

**Deuteronomy 18.15-19** “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. <sup>16</sup> “This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' <sup>17</sup> “The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. <sup>18</sup> 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him.

1. The people ask, and cannot be blamed, that God give them a spokesman; they cannot endure to hear God directly
2. God promises that another spokesman will come
  - a. He will be the voice of God to them, just as Moses was
  - b. He will speak all that God commanded him
3. God requires of men that they respond in *obedience* to the words that other Prophet speaks

The Sanhedrin and the majority of the Jewish nation *refused to obey* him. They *refuse to this day*.

**Conclusion:**

What about you?

How do you respond to him? Do you obey him?

**Proposition:** Salvation depends on obedience to a God-approved Saviour.

The apostles and prophets call to you over the years, “God appointed a Prophet like Moses, will you hear him?”