

Some of us just don't seem to learn from our mistakes. So how can we keep from repeating the same old mistakes over and over again? That is Stephen's question to the nation of Israel. It was his argument that the nation of Israel persistently refused to learn the lessons of history. They lived in perpetual disobedience. They made the mistake of allowing a relationship with God to degrade into ritual, ceremony, sacrifice, duty and legalism. God is much more concerned with the state of our heart than the rituals and trappings of religion.

Four main types of apologetics.

Prophetic: Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates that you can trust the Bible

Evidential/Classical: logic and evidence make the case for Christianity

Presuppositional: Christianity has the most consistent belief system

Historical: History and Archaeology confirm biblical truth

Stephen's historical argument.

#1 You don't need the temple to worship God.

#2 You need to worship God in spirit and truth.

Abraham obeyed God's call 2-8

In Judaism, Abraham is considered the most revered figure in history.

The Abrahamic covenant promises the LAND, SEED, and the BLESSING!

Abraham worshiped God before there was a Temple.

Abraham had no inheritance in the promised land!

The Patriarchs Disobeyed God 9-17

The patriarchs had some serious failings.

They were envious and sold Joseph into Egypt.

Joseph was a deliverer just like Jesus and is a "Type" of Christ.

Even without a temple, "God was with him!" Verse 9

Moses Obeyed God 18-34

Moses had a bad start, but a great ending.

He tried to deliver Israel his way instead of God's way.

Even after a bad start, Moses obeyed God.

Moses was well pleasing to God. 20

Even outside the land of Israel, the Lord appeared to him. verse 30

The Lord spoke directly to him. Verse 31

Wherever God is, it is holy ground. (even with no temple) Verse 33 –

The Israelites Disobeyed God 35-43

While Moses did good, Israel did evil.

35: They rejected Moses, their deliverer.

40: They worshiped the Golden Calf instead of the Living God.

43: they worshiped at the tabernacle of Moloch a detestable Idol!

37: Moses foretold of a greater prophet to come. Jesus

David and Solomon Obeyed God 44-50

God gave Moses, David and Solomon a pattern for His house.

This Pattern was a blueprint for how to approach God.

God cannot be constrained or limited to the four walls of a building!

God wants you to worship Him in spirit and truth. Joh 4:21-24;

The Great Sanhedrin Resisted God 51-53

Stephen's speech was not calculated to win his hearers to Christ.

His harsh words were reserved for those who opposed the work of God.

This method is not our typical mode of operation for evangelism.

There are times for harsh messages. There are occasions when we Christians must recognize our message has been firmly rejected by false teachers who are preaching another way of Salvation and are shutting the door for others to hear the good news. When that happens, we must firmly and soundly reprove them. It's not a question of, "do I worship at the temple," it is a question of, "do I worship from the heart." And that is the heart of Stephen's message.