



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Judgement For Leaders – (ACTS Chapter 7)

MARCH 27, 2019

Dave DePue / Kansas Capitol Commission Pastor /dave.depue@capitolcom.org

*When under attack, sharp leaders shift attention away from themselves to a focus on facts. Facts are truths as verified by science, recorded in history, or documented in law. A wise debater will stay on focus regardless of the question asked by an accuser or opponent. Acts chapter seven gives an eyewitness account of the disciple Stephen's spirit-filled response to an indictment by the High Priest in the Supreme Court of Israel.* **Have you practiced steering an interview onto solid ground using established truths?**

### INTRODUCTION

The early church grew dramatically in the first few years, and many priests came to faith in Jesus (Acts 6:7). Some leaders from the surrounding synagogues debated the disciple Stephen during the mass meetings at the Jerusalem capital (Acts 6:9). *“But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking”* (Acts 6:10). Unable to prevail in open debate, Stephen's adversaries resorted to deceit and conspiracy. They enticed false witnesses to spread lies, stating that Stephen was blasphemous, speaking against God and Moses (Acts 6:13; Matthew 26:59). Stephen was arrested, dragged away, and brought before the Supreme Court. **What strategy have you seen work against false accusations?**

### HOW DO YOU PLEAD

*Acts 7:1 Then the High Priest asked him, “Are these charges true?”* (NIV)

As Stephen stood, facing the Court, his pure, calm, and unruffled composure reflected as if he had been in the very presence of God (Exodus 34:29; Acts 7:55)! *All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel* (Acts 6:15). Stephen courteously addressed the members of the court as men, brethren (fellow Jews), and fathers, “elders of Israel” rulers. He did not defend himself from charges of dishonoring God and Moses. Rather, Stephen opened by honoring God and giving an overview of Israel's history from Abraham through Moses and the patriarchs. **When is it advisable for you to skip a defense of yourself or of your actions?**

### DEFENDANT TURNED PROSECUTOR

*Acts 7:2-50 “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you....’”* (NASB).

Stephen began his testimony with a summary account of Abraham learning to trust God, living in a tent, depending upon the goodness of God and those who possessed the land at the time. When he was 100, his son Isaac was born. Isaac became the father of Jacob, who was father of the twelve patriarchs. They became heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. **Who in your family line first trusted God, impacting those who followed?**

### RESCUERS ARE REJECTED

*Acts 7:52 “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?”* (NKJV)

As young men, the eleven brothers were envious of Joseph and his dream of provision for the family. Joseph was cast out, and after a dozen years of testing, was raised up as governor of Egypt. He rescued his family from famine in their land and provided a safe environment for them to flourish. A later ruler enslaved the Hebrew people. God prepared Moses, through trials, to lead the people out of bondage. Though a series of miracles, God brought the people to the Promised Land. However, they grumbled and rejected Moses. God raised up Joshua to lead the next generation into the land. They flourished for several generations only to fall into idolatry. The people rejected warnings of many prophets. In Stephen's generation, the Hebrews were in captivity under the Romans. These same members of the Sanhedrin had rejected Jesus! Stephen's sermon was likely their last warning! All adult males in Jerusalem were killed when the Roman army sacked the city in 70AD. **Have you observed people, even nations fail to heed warnings?**

### A PRAYER

Father God: Please help me to gain wisdom from the experience of others rather than from my own! Reveal Your purpose in my work and my life! I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen!