

## CHAPTER V

### THE TEMPLE (Ac 7:44-50)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

“The temple in Jerusalem was of central importance within early Judaism” (Chilton 1997:1159). In the light of this, Stephen is charged before the Jews with claiming that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the temple (Ac 6:13-14). An important question to answer is thus, was Stephen really in opposition to the temple? On the contrary, Luke describes the Jews’ accusation against Stephen as false (Ac 6:13). Luke’s refutation is skilfully revealed in this part of Stephen’s speech.

In developing his argument, Luke provides a selective history of the Israelite tabernacle and temple, and then draws a quoted text from Is 66:1-2. The relationship between the movable tent and the fixed temple becomes clear within the context of the OT as well as the discourse. Throughout Stephen’s address, the theme of the true worship occurs here once again. In the end, Luke’s main points are strongly reinforced at the close of his summary of Israelite history by expounding two central points, namely, God’s transcendence and true worship of God.

#### 2. COMPOSITION

In this section, Stephen proficiently contests one of the charges made against him: (a) “Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert” (Ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἦν τοῖς πατέρασιν ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, v. 44a). The phrase ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου is a normal LXX translation of the Tabernacle -

both אֹהֶל צִדְוֹת ‘tent of the testimony’ and אֹהֶל מוֹצֵד ‘tent of meeting’. P<sup>74</sup> 33 326 pc exclude the genitive pronoun ἡμῶν.

(b) “It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen” (καθὼς διετάξατο ὁ λαλῶν τῷ Μωϋσῆ ποιῆσαι αὐτὴν κατὰ τὸν τύπον ὃν ἑώρακει, v. 44b). The noun διαταγὰς occurs in v. 53. The phrase ὁ λαλῶν seems to point clearly to God despite the fact that there is no reference to his name. According to Barrett (1994:371), the word τύπος means “[a] model to be imitated” (see v. 43). Although Stephen refers here to God’s instructions on the building of the tabernacle in accordance with the pattern shown to Moses (see Ex 25:9, 40), Philo (*VitMos* 2:88) speaks of the tabernacle as something that is made by the hands of men: ἱερὸν χειροποίητον κατασχευάζοντας τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ἡγεμόνι τοῦ παντός.

(c) “Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them<sup>162</sup> when they took the land from the nations” (ἦν καὶ εἰσήγαγον διαδεξάμενοι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ κατασχέσει τῶν ἐθνῶν, v. 45a). Barrett (1994:371) explains that the verb διαδεξάμενοι means “*to succeed to the possession of something* but here may have a weaker sense.”<sup>163</sup>

The expression ‘our father(s)’ occurs 10 times in Stephen’s speech (see v. 2 ‘πατρὶ ἡμῶν’; vv. 11, 15, 39, 45 ‘πατέρες ἡμῶν’; v. 12 ‘πατέρας ἡμῶν’; v. 19 ‘πατέρας [ἡμῶν]’; vv. 38, 45 ‘πατέρων ἡμῶν’; v. 44 ‘πατράσιν ἡμῶν’; contrast vv. 51, 52 ‘πατέρες ὑμῶν’). The phrase occurs six times in the speeches in Acts outside of the Stephen speech (see Ac 3:13; 5:30; 13:17; 15:10; 22:14; 26:6). According to Fitzmyer (1998:383), “Joshua’s name may be significant here, because its

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<sup>162</sup> For the detailed narrative of the OT, see Jos 3:11-4:18.

<sup>163</sup> It refers to “from generation to generation” (Conzelmann 1987:56). Cf. also Haenchen (1971:285).

Hebrew form in Josh 1:1 is *Yĕhōšūāʿ* (“Yahweh, help!” the cry of a woman in birth pangs). Later on, the name was contracted to *Yĕšūāʿ*, which becomes in the LXX *Iĕsous*, ‘Jesus’.”

The noun *κατάσχεσις* already occurred once earlier in v. 5. It means ‘possession’ (Lake & Cadbury 1933:80-81; see also Gn 17:8; 2 Chr 11:14). According to Jos 3:10, “the living God ... will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.” These are the names of seven nations who stayed in Canaan.

(d) “God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David” (*ὧν ἐξώσεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαυίδ*, v. 45b). **N\* E 33 pc** have *ἐξέωσεν* instead of *ἐξώσεν*. Bruce ([1951]1976:175) regards the words *ἀπὸ προσώπου* as a Semitism (see Ac 3:20). Wilson (1962:184) says that “[t]here are no direct quotations, but the language is Septuagintal.”

According to Jos 18:1, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh. As the Israelite history shows, it remained in Shiloh until the time of Samuel (see 1 Sm 4:3). Then the ark of God was taken to the battlefield, captured by the Philistines, and returned to the Israelites (see 1 Sm 4:4-6:21). The men of Kiriath Jearim took it to Abinadab’s house (see 1 Sm 7:1), where it stayed until the time when David became king. David, was the one who brought the ark into Jerusalem and set it in its place inside the tent that he had pitched for it (see 2 Sm 6:17; 1 Chr 16:1), while the tabernacle was placed in Gibeon (see 1 Chr 16:39).

(e) “who enjoyed God’s favour and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob” (*ὃς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἠτήσατο εὖρεϊν σκηνῶμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ*, v. 46). When David brought the ark into Jerusalem, he conveyed to the prophet Nathan his desire to build a house for God (see 2 Sm

7:1-2; 1 Chr 17:1). Fitzmyer (1998:383) explains that in 2 Sm 7:1-16, “there is a play on the word ‘house’. At first it means ‘palace’ (vv 1-2), then ‘temple’ (house of God, vv 5-7, 13), then ‘household, dynasty’ (vv 11, 16)” (see also 1 Chr 17:1-14).

Concerning the reading of οἶκω, Metzger ([1971]1975:351-352) explains:

Of the two readings, οἶκω is to be preferred on the basis of both external evidence (it is supported by a combination of Alexandrian and Western witnesses: P<sup>74</sup>  $\aleph^*$  B D cop<sup>saPt</sup> *a*) and transcriptional probability,<sup>164</sup> for there is no good reason why scribes should have altered θεῶ to οἶκω, whereas the apparent difficulty of the expression ‘a habitation for the house of Jacob’ as well as the temptation to assimilate it to the Septuagint text of Ps 132.5 [= LXX 131.5] (ἕως οὗ εὕρω τόπον τῷ κυρίῳ, σκήνωμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακώβ) would have influenced many to emend the text.

Besides, Hort (1882:92) indicated that κυρίῳ has been left out of the text. The phrase τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰακώβ is not found earlier in the MSS of the OT or the NT. Ropes (1926:72), furthermore, observes that:

if we have here a translation from an Aramaic source, it is easy to suppose that the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew phrase was first rendered by τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰακώβ, and then this unusual expression corrupted to the familiar-sounding but inappropriate phrase τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ.

Although Lachmann (1850:viii) supposed that the original text is εὐρεῖν σκήνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ (cf. also Dunn 1996:97), Klijn (1957:29-30) mentions

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<sup>164</sup> For the reading of οἶκω, cf. also Haenchen (1971:285); Combrink (1979:17, 27); Marshall (1980:146).

that Stephen's idea of "a house within the house of Israel as a substitute for the temple and thus as the real temple of God," is an idea that is unknown hitherto in Jewish writings. However, the idea can be found in 1QS 9:3-6. It is unlikely that Stephen already regards the house as the Jewish Christian community (cf. Witherington 1998:273), but if one accepts Klijn's statement that seems to uphold the original reading οἶκω, such a reading is possible. Knowling ([1900]1951:198) also mentions (cf. also Witherington 1998:272-273) that:

in LXX, Ps. Cxxxi.3, we have σκήνωμα οἴκου, and a similar expression *may* have been the orig. reading here; again, in Ps. Xxiv. 6, Heb., we have 'Jacob' = 'the God of Jacob' (LXX 23.6), and it has been suggested that some such abbreviation or mode of speech lies at the bottom of the difficulty here.

In the end, Lake and Cadbury (1933:81) say that "the Temple, like the Tabernacle, was a house or tent 'of meeting,' and it was to be used by the house of Jacob as well as by the Almighty." Barrett (1994:372) concludes:

The difference between the two readings is not as great as is sometimes thought: a dwelling for the God of Jacob is undoubtedly a temple for him to dwell in, and a dwelling for the house of Jacob is a place that the house of Jacob may use as a temple, that is, it means a dwelling (for God) to be used as such by the house of Jacob.

Notwithstanding, I prefer the reading 'σκήνωμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακώβ' for the following reasons summarised by Johnson (1992:133):<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> For the reading of θεῷ, cf. also Bruce ([1951]1976:175); Rackham (1953:98); Wilson (1962:185); Kilgallen (1976<sup>a</sup>:89); Richard (1978:131-132); Longenecker (1981:143); Conzelmann (1987:56); Kistemaker (1990:270); Soards (1994:67). Fitzmyer (1998:383) understands that the homoeoteleuton might occur amongst copyists.

There are three reasons for overturning the rules of textual criticism, here: a) the language clearly forms an allusion to LXX Ps 131:5, “until I find a place (*topos*) for the Lord, a dwelling for the God of Jacob (*skēnōma tō theō Iakob*)”; b) the *autō* in the next verse makes good sense if the reading here is God rather than Jacob (“Solomon built a house for him”); c) This reading makes better sense of the emphatic declaration in v. 48, “*God* does not dwell.”

(f) “But it was Solomon who built the house for him” (Σολομῶν δὲ οἰκοδόμησεν<sup>166</sup> αὐτῷ οἶκον, v. 47). The word δέ is an adversative conjunction. The word αὐτῷ evidently refers to God (θεῷ) (see 1 Ki 5:5; 6:1-2, 37-38; 8:20; 2 Chr 2:1; 3:1; 5:1; 6:10). In spite of David’s desire, God instructed Nathan to tell him that God wanted David’s son to build the house (see 2 Sm 7:13; 1 Chr 17:12). The reason was because David was a warrior and had shed blood (see 1 Chr 22:8; 28:3). In the end, the Temple was constructed by Solomon (see 1 Ki 5:1-6:38; 7:13-51).

(g) “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says” (ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁ ὑψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ, καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει, v. 48). Moulton (1963:287) explains that the place of the negative particle οὐχ “may be altered to achieve emphasis, and in Acts 7.48 the position of οὐχ puts *the Most High* in relief” (cf. also Blass & Debrunner 1961 §433.1).

According to Fitzmyer (1998:384), ὁ ὑψιστος is a divine name which is discovered in many Greek writings. “It is used of Zeus in the Greco-Roman world (Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 1.90; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 28); also in inscriptions, esp. from Cyprus (PGM 4.1068; 5.46) and Cyrene, where it was

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<sup>166</sup> For unaugmented verbs beginning with οἰ, see Moulton & Howard (1929:191), Blass & Debrunner (1961 §67.1).

employed even as a designation for Egyptian Isis.” In the LXX it is a general name of God (see Gn 14:18, 19, 22; Ps 46:4). In Philo’s (*Flacc* 7:46; *LegGaj* 36:278) and Josephus’ (*Ant* 16:163) works, it is also applied to God. This name for God occurs eight times in the NT (cf. Roberts, Skeat & Nock 1936:39-88; see Mk 5:7; Heb 7:1; Lk 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35; 8:28; Ac 16:17).

The word χειροποιήτοισι commonly means the idolatry which has negative connotations in the LXX (see Lv 26:1, 30; Is 2:8; 10:11; 16:12; Ps 113:12; Dn 5:4, 23; Jdt 8:18; Wis 14:8; contrast Dibelius 1956<sup>b</sup>:41-42). In the Pauline speech (Ac 17:24) this word appears once again with the same principle (see also Mk 14:58; Heb 9:11, 24).<sup>167</sup> To employ this word for the Temple must consequently have been extremely offensive to the Jewish ears (cf. Barrett 1994:373; Dunn 1996:97).

Barrett’s words (2002:106) are noteworthy:

**But** at the beginning of the verse is probably strongly adversative (Solomon built a house but should have done no such thing), not slightly so (Solomon built a house, but we must not think that God is confined to it). The verse states only what the OT already knows (1 Kings 8.27); but it is to be noted that Stephen picks out not the many OT passages that glorify the Temple but some of the few that criticize it. ... It must be remembered that in Acts 1-5 Christians continue to use the Temple ... A twofold attitude to the Temple matches Luke’s attitude to Judaism in general.

However, Evans and Sanders (1993:198) correctly indicate concerning the building of the temple:

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<sup>167</sup> For the similar comparison which is made regarding circumcision, see also Eph 2:11; Col 2:11.

Nothing is wrong with the temple nor with building it, but it is wrong to believe that it (and perhaps it alone) is the habitation of God. Moreover, allegiance to a temple built with human hands could place Israel in danger of repeating its earlier wilderness sin, for the golden calf had also been made by ‘their hands’ (v. 41).

(h) “Heaven is my throne” (Ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, v. 49a). P<sup>74</sup> D\* read μου (1<sup>st</sup> person singular genitive pronoun) instead of μοι (1<sup>st</sup> person singular dative pronoun). (i) “and the earth is my footstool” (ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου, v. 49b). B h read καὶ ἡ instead of ἡ δέ.

(j) “What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord” (ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετε μοι, λέγει κύριος, v. 49c). (k) “Or where will my resting place be?” (ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου; v. 49d). Instead of τίς, D h have ποῖος, corresponding to the reading of the LXX. (l) “Has not my hand made all these things?” (οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα; v. 50). P<sup>74</sup> A C D E *pm* h read πάντα ταῦτα, corresponding to the order of the LXX, but the exact reading of the LXX has πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα.

### 3. GOD’S TRANSCENDENCE AND THE QUOTATION

#### 3.1 The quotation from Is 66:1-2 in Ac 7:49-50

##### 3.1.1 Other occasions of Is 66:1-2

Although there may be a faint, or implied, reference to Is 66:1-2 in Mt 5:34, this quotation is not found as an explicit quotation anywhere else in the NT. It looks as if this is the first time that the explicit quotation appears here in NT writings. It



is interesting that this text is cited by early Christian writers (see *Barn* 16:2; Justin, *Dial* 22:11).

### 3.1.2 The introductory formula (Ac 7:48b)

The introductory formula is formed by the words: “As the prophet says” (καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει, v. 48b). After “the prophet” cop<sup>G67</sup> adds “Isaiah”.

### 3.1.3 Establishing and describing the textual differences

NT( NA27)	LXX	MT
Ac 7:49-50	Is 66:1-2 <sup>168</sup>	Is 66:1-2
	<sup>1</sup> οὕτως λέγει κύριος	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
<sup>49</sup> ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος,	ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος	הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסֵּאִי
ἢ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον	ἢ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον	וְהָאָרֶץ הָדָם
τῶν ποδῶν μου·	τῶν ποδῶν μου	רַגְלֵי
ποιον οἶκον	ποιον οἶκον	אֵיזָה בַּיִת
οἰκοδομήσατέ μοι,	οἰκοδομήσατέ μοι	אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנוּ לִי
<u>λέγει κύριος,</u>		
ἢ τίς τόπος	ἢ ποῖος τόπος	וְאֵיזָה מְקוֹם
τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου;	τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου	מְנוּחָתִי:
<sup>50</sup> <u>οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν</u>	<sup>2</sup> <u>πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα</u>	וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲלֵה
<u>ταῦτα πάντα;</u>	<u>ἐποίησεν ἡ χεὶρ μου</u>	יְדֵי עֲשָׂתָהּ

#### 3.1.3.1 Textual differences between MT and LXX

The LXX follows the MT very closely, in spite of one minor difference. The

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<sup>168</sup> Unless otherwise referred to, the LXX version edited by Ziegler ([1939]1984) is used for the Greek translation of Isaiah.

reading of the MT has “and what (is) this place” (וְאֵי-יָדָה זֶה הַמָּקוֹם), while the reading of the LXX has “or what kind of place” (ἢ ποῖος τόπος). In relation to these representations of the phrase, the NT has “or what (is) the place” (ἢ τίς τόπος). The variations between three versions are somewhat insignificant to the meaning of the text.

### 3.1.3.2 Textual differences between Acts and LXX (and their relation with MT)

There are 3 major changes to be displayed between the readings of Ac 7:49-50 and Is 66:1-2 (LXX): (1) one transposition in the NT of the LXX phrases, λέγει κύριος; (2) one substitution of τίς for ποῖος in the NT; and (3) another transposition with the changes οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα.

#### (a) Transposition:

[1] λέγει κύριος (Ac 7:49)

In the LXX the phrase λέγει κύριος is found at the beginning of the verse with the adverb οὕτως, corresponding to the MT. But, in the NT it occurs at the middle of the verse, that is, before ἢ τίς τόπος.

#### (b) Substitution:

[2] ποῖος → τίς (Ac 7:49)

The interrogative adjective (ποῖος) in the LXX text is substituted by the interrogative adjective (τίς) in Ac 7:49.

#### (c) Transposition with the changes:

[3] οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα; (Ac 7:50)

This phrase is also found in the LXX. But, the order in the LXX reading is πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα ἐποίησεν ἡ χεὶρ μου, corresponding to the MT. It, moreover, appears in

the interrogative particle οὐχι (Ac 7:50) instead of the conjunction γάρ as in the LXX reading.

### 3.2 Luke's method used for the quotation

There are 3 major changes between Ac 7:49-50 and Is 66:1-2 (LXX). *First*, the transposition of λέγει κύριος shows possibly that it was placed here in an emphatic position by Luke himself. Furthermore it is more suitable to place the phrase in the middle of v. 49, since Luke already placed the introductory formula into v. 48b.

*Secondly*, Luke substitutes ποῖος, which is used in direct and indirect interrogative sentence, by τίς, which might be used in a rhetorical question (cf. Arndt & Gingrich 1957:691, 826; Blass & Debrunner 1961:64). By employing this rhetorical device, Luke seems to link vv. 49-50 with vv. 42-43, using these last two quotations from the prophetic texts as a powerful and influential tool for his argument.

*Thirdly*, by changing a declarative sentence of Isaiah “assigning the reason for the previous inquiries” (Turpie 1868:133), into a question through the transposition-cum-substitution, Luke has made it much stronger than its original meaning. As a strengthened type of οὐ, Luke's use of οὐχι in place of γάρ (LXX) implies an answer in the affirmative.

According to Thornton (1974:432-434), one needs to examine a fragment of Aramaic midrash which was discovered in *Codex Reuchlinianus* and *Codex Vaticanus Ebr. Urbin.* / .<sup>169</sup> The midrash which contains the Targum of

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<sup>169</sup> Grelot (1972:511-527) edited the two codices in 1972.

Jonathan on Isaiah (cf. Stenning 1949:226-227; Sperber 1962:129-130), states:

Jerusalem Targum on 'The heavens are my throne'. A prophecy of Isaiah which he prophesied ... to the people, the house of Israel: 'Thus says the Lord: The heavens are the throne of my glory. And why are you proud before me because of this house which has been built by the hands of king Solomon for my name? The higher and lower heavens do not succeed in containing the presence of my glory, according as it was said through Solomon: ... Now I have no pleasure in it, because you provoke my anger. And so, behold, my decision goes forth to make Nebuchadrezzar come and he will destroy it, and exile you from the city of Jerusalem.' When Manasseh heard Isaiah's words of warning he was filled with anger against him. He said to his servants: 'Run after him, seize him!' ... He fled before them, and a carob-tree opened its mouth and swallowed him. They brought iron saws and cut the tree so that Isaiah's blood flowed like water.<sup>170</sup>

Thornton (1974:433) affirms that if the above explanation was accepted in the days of Stephen, it would shed light on the false accusation made against Stephen concerning the temple and the shift from vv. 44-50 to v. 52 would become smoother. However, he (1974:434) himself says that unfortunately "[t]he date of this Aramaic midrash is uncertain."

According to Lake and Cadbury (1933:82), the use of this quoted text by early Christian writers (e.g. *Barn* 16:2; Justin, *Dial* 22:11), as mentioned earlier, makes us suppose that a collection of 'Testimonies' has been drawn on by the writers. Haenchen (1971:285), however, indicates that "Justin does not cite these verses in immediate succession, and he gives in each case the exact

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<sup>170</sup> This translation, which originally follows the *Codex Reuchlinianus*, is here recited from Thornton (1974:432-433).

source of quotation.” Bruce ([1951]1976:176) presents the proposal that both Barnabas and Justin depended on Acts as an alternative insight. On the contrary, Cerfaux (1950:46) feels that Barnabas and Luke modified the quoted text separately.<sup>171</sup>

It is decisively clear that Luke quotes from the LXX text (cf. Haenchen 1971:285; Conzelmann 1987:56; Kistemaker 1990:271; Johnson 1992:133; Barrett 1994:375; Fitzmyer 1998:384). Ringgren (1986:234) states that Luke’s changes “are not rooted in any other textual traditions” except the LXX.

### 3.3 Lukan interpretation of the quotation

Luke now turns his attention to the tabernacle and the temple, which has been implicitly evident from the beginning of Stephen’s speech in the theme ‘God outside of the land’. Luke also disproves the accusation of Stephen’s blasphemy against the temple: “this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place” (i.e. temple, *J-W Kim*) (see Ac 6:14). Moving on to the temple, Luke firstly traces back to the time of Moses in order to deal with the tabernacle. Surprisingly, Israel’s people own the tabernacle of the testimony according to the heavenly prototype that God gave Moses, in spite of their disobedience and unfaithfulness in the desert (Haenchen 1971:284).

Furthermore the Israelites need not have the tent of Molech because they already had the tent of the testimony in the desert, as mentioned above. Conzelmann (1987:55) states that by means of two tents the correlation between vv. 43 and 44 is hard to follow here (cf. also Fitzmyer 1998:382). However, Barrett (1994:371) reckons that the words ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου stand

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<sup>171</sup> Recited from Wilson (1962:186).

against τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μόλοχ in the previous verse, and thus the two verses form the ideological contrast (cf. also Haenchen 1971:284; Johnson 1992:132). Simon (1951:127-142) also portrays the two tents as signs of the line of true worship and of idol worship. Although God wishes the Israelites to adore him, they turn away from him in mistrust.

Moreover Spencer (1997:76-77) states that the idolatrous ‘images’ (τύπους) in v. 43 were in opposition to the real ‘pattern’ (τύπον) of worship shown to Moses by God in v. 44, “which included not only the sacred stipulations of the law but also the blueprints for the proper place (*topos*) of worship: the portable ‘tent (*skēnē*) of testimony in the wilderness.” It is made expressly clear that the concomitant of the law is the tent of the testimony. God provided the Israelites with the tent where they worshipped him and where he put the witness of the Ten Commandments (Kistemaker 1990:268).

Luke here describes the tent of the testimony or meeting as ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου, corresponding to the LXX (Ex 27:21; 28:43; 33:7; Nm 1:50; 12:4; Dt 31:14). Soards (1994:66-67) says, “[t]he reference to ‘the tent of witness’ both registers the important general theme of ‘witness’ (see 1:8) and illustrates the point that people in former times were ‘not without a witness,’ a theme that occurs in 7:44; 14:17; 17:25b-28.”

According to Dunn (1996:96), v. 44 “fed directly into the apocalyptic idea that God’s plans for the future had all been already drawn up in heaven.” The proposal to make the tent stemmed from God himself not from any creature. The tabernacle thus points to God’s idea, command, and power. As mentioned earlier, the expression ‘our forefathers’ occurs repeatedly in the discourse. Luke continually calls the Israelites ‘our forefathers’ up to now in spite of their defiance of God. Finally, the key point of v. 44 seems to demonstrate the

existence of God's tent in contradiction to the tent of Molech in the previous verse.

Carried into the land under the leadership of Joshua, the portable sanctuary as the sign to Israel that God's presence was sufficient until the days of David. The transportability of the tabernacle points implicitly to the substance of temporality that is not fixed to one spot. A hint of the motif 'God outside the land' is given here once again. God's promise that the Israelites would possess (κατάσχεσιν) the land in v. 5, is now fulfilled in v. 45. By God's dispossessing the heathen before her, Israel finally possessed (κατασχέςσει) the land.

However, it is true that the seven nations were not eliminated fully until the time of David. Here Luke gives God the admiration and reverence for the take-over of Canaan. The reason for this is in recognition of the reality that God was always with Israel in the transferable tent. The tabernacle was an emblem of God's continual and energetic leadership. The major actor was still God throughout the Israelite history.

As compared with the DSS and Hebrews, in relation to the tabernacle Longenecker (1981:142) states as follows (cf. also Dunn 1996:96):

Like the covenanters at Qumran (cf. 1QS 8.7-8) and the writer to the Hebrews (cf. Heb 8:2, 5; 9:1-5, 11, 24), and probably like many other nonconformist Jews of his time, Stephen seems to have viewed the epitome of Jewish worship in terms of the tabernacle, not the temple. Very likely this was because he felt the mobility of the tabernacle was a restraint on the status quo mentality that had grown up around the temple. But unlike the Qumranites, who desired a restoration of that classical ideal, Stephen, as well as the writer to the Hebrews, was attempting to lift his compatriots' vision to

something far superior to even the wilderness tabernacle--viz., to the dwelling of God with men in Jesus of Nazareth and as expressed through the new covenant.

After Moses and Joshua, David makes an appearance in v. 46 that was implied in the preceding verse. He wins God's grace and desires to offer a better dwelling place for the God of Jacob. The phrase εἶπεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ recurs in the OT (see Gn 6:8; 1 Sm 16:22). The expression, which can be likened to that in v. 20 where Moses is said to be 'beautiful before God', refers to God's sovereignty because it shows how a human being appears before God. It means that the human race should live in keeping with the criterion set out by God.

The reading 'a dwelling for the God of Jacob' seems to fit the flow of the thought, as discussed earlier. According to Marshall (1980:146), whether 'the dwelling place' (σκήνωμα) means the movable tent or the fixed temple is not clear. However, throughout the original context of the OT and this section as well as the following verse, it becomes clear that Luke uses the Greek word in order to describe the temple. Neudorfer's contrast (1998:290) of the dwelling place by David in v. 46 with the house by Solomon in v. 47 is, therefore, incorrect. Luke is just employing v. 46 so as to represent the shift from the tabernacle to the temple.<sup>172</sup>

For this debate, Sylva's statement (1987:264) is appropriate as follows (cf. also Larsson 1993:391; Neagoe 2002:167):

One possible argument for interpreting *skēnōma* in 7:46 as "tent" could be the

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<sup>172</sup> Stier (1869:131) says that "[t]here are three stages of the expression – first, *tabernacle*, or tent; next, *habitation*, or dwelling (σκήνωμα; cf. John 1:14); then *house* or completed building."



similarity of this term to *skēnē*, which was just used to refer to the tent of witness in Acts 7:44. However, the evidence from Luke's use of these terms may argue just as strongly for the opinion that *skēnōma* refers to the temple. As *skēnē tou martyriou* in 7:44 is in no way related to *skēnē tou Moloch* in 7:43 but rather is simply a way of making a transition from one topic to another, so too in 7:46 ... may simply be a way of making the transition from writing about the ark and the tent to writing about the temple.

He adds that the term σκήνωμα in the LXX text is employed to point both to the tabernacle and to the temple. For instance, the term is employed to point to the tent in 1 Ki 2:28; 8:4 (LXX), while it is used to point to the temple in Ps 14:1; 45:5; 73:7 (LXX).

V. 47 is the only mention of “Solomon as a historical figure in the speeches, but from 3:11 and 5:12 the reader should already associate Solomon with the Temple” (Soards 1994:67). God turns down David's bid, but he carries on declaring that David's son would build him the house, and so God promises to establish the kingdom (pedigree) of David forever. According to Beale (2004:217), this verse is “the conclusion and climax of Stephen's historical narration.”

Although Longenecker (1981:142) forms a comparison between the tabernacle and the temple in vv. 44-50 (cf. Marshall 1980:146),<sup>173</sup> on the contrary the analogy occurs between the two structures. God himself showed clear directions for the temple as well (see 1 Chr 28:12, 19), in the same way as he did for the tabernacle in v. 44. It is evident that God approved of building both structures.

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. also Conzelmann (1987:56), though he acknowledges the parallel between the tent and the temple in the OT.

The conjunction  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  has an antithetical meaning, as stated previously. According to Simon (1951:129), the word  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  implies that Solomon built a house which was opposed to God's will. Rather, Luke here uses the conjunction so as to depict the fact that Solomon achieved what David had hoped. Witherington's statement (1998:273) is right: "the contrast comes not between vv. 46 and 47, but between v. 48 and what precedes it" (cf. also Blackburn 1997:1124). The conjunction  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$  which means clearly 'but' also gives rise to the contrast.

On the one hand, according to some scholars (Jones 1917:167; Tasker 1946:65; Simon 1951:127-131; Cadbury 1955:105; Stagg 1955:98; Barnard 1960-1961:31-45; Scharlemann 1968:77; Haenchen 1971:285; Bruce 1979:53; Longenecker 1981:346; Conzelmann 1987:56; Willimon 1988:62; Koester 1989:97-98; Neudorfer 1998:289-290), Stephen supposed that Solomon erred in building the temple which served to confine God. For instance, Simon (1958:51) maintains that Stephen understands "the building of the temple ... to be on a par with the making of the golden calf and a consequence of it" (cf. also Simon 1951:127).<sup>174</sup>

On the other hand, others (Shedd 1899:98; Grieve 1919:614-615; Manson 1951:34; Heather 1959:238; McKelvey [1962]2000:1159; Munck 1967:66; Bell 1970:25; Kistemaker 1990:272) assert that Stephen was arguing against the contemporary viewpoint of the temple and its function rather than the existence of the temple itself. The temple itself is beyond the reproach. That is why the making of the tabernacle and its entry in the land naturally directed David's attention to build the permanent dwelling place for God. Franklin (1975:105) says that Stephen delivers an attack against "an attitude which assigned

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<sup>174</sup> Cullmann (1957:28) also considers the building of the temple as "an act of the worst unfaithfulness."

permanence and finality to it.”

He adds that although the temple was also made by human hands (χειροποίητος) just like the golden calf in the desert,<sup>175</sup> “the question here is not one of worship, and so of idolatrous activity, but rather of a man-made institution which, by seeking to express some claim upon God, limits the divine freedom and so impairs the divine transcendence.” It would seem that labelling the temple as ‘hand-made’ (χειροποίητος) in this context, lends support to Franklin’s view that despite its common negative usage as discussed earlier, it relativizes the significance of the temple among the Jews, and thus seems purposefully intended to weaken the authority of the Sanhedrin, rather than the temple itself (Spencer 1997:79).

Of course, Kistemaker’s statement (1990:270) is probable: “God’s denial against David’s offer to build the temple, in a sense, points out that the worship of God can take place without a permanent temple. If this building were essential, God would not have delayed its construction.” Conclusively, according to Tannehill (1990:93), the criticism is not laid on either David’s proposal to build the temple or Solomon’s building it. No rejection of the temple itself is apparent. Rather, the promise to Abraham is fulfilled through the temple: “they will ... worship me in this place” (v. 7). Kilgallen (1976<sup>a</sup>:94) says that

worship of God in the Temple was the final reason why Abraham (and through him the Israelite nation) was ever called at all. In short, this worship was to be the fundamental reason for, and the essential quality of, the very nation itself.

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<sup>175</sup> In contrast, Dunn (1996:97) states that “[t]he history of Israel’s own idolatry is thereby shown to extend from the golden calf, ‘the works of their hands’ in v. 41, not only to the worship of the planetary powers in vv. 42-43, but also to their devotion to the temple itself!” Cf. also Dunn (1991:67).

However, Luke abruptly proclaims through v. 48 that God does not dwell in the temple, before quoting from Is 66:1-2 (LXX). Isaiah's prophecy is then used to support this warning. "While Stephen's high-priestly auditors would no doubt regard Solomon's magnificent temple-house as a crowning achievement in Israel's history" (Spencer 1997:78), Stephen harshly argues against their assessment in v. 48. In the course of the dedication of the temple by Solomon, however, the thought of v. 48 is already present in the following text (see also 1 Ki 8: 27, 30):

But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ... Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive (NIV).

De Vaux (1961:330) says that "[t]he question asked in 1 Kings 8.27 here receives a different answer from the one in Deuteronomy: Yahweh has no need of any Temple." Accordingly, some scholars (cf. Marshall 1980:146; Dunn 1996:97) view that in the Bible there has mainly been a negative stance directed against the temple.

In fact, the biblical prophets in the OT cautioned Israel to avoid her hypocritical temple worship but did not censure the temple itself (see Is 1:10-17; Jr 7; Hs 6:6; Mi 6:6-8). According to Barrett (1994:375), "[m]ost OT scholars are now agreed that the prophecy did not originally constitute an attack on the Temple." Furthermore Moyise (2001:55) says that "[i]t would appear that the early Church saw no contradiction between having its own meeting and attendance at the temple."

Luke finally quotes from Is 66:1-2, which is the last quotation in the discourse.<sup>176</sup> Chapter 66 of Isaiah is actually a summary of the book. The opening verses of the chapter deal with the Jews who are vainly proud of their temple and sacrifices (cf. Calvin 1853:400). Therefore, the context of the OT is one of rebuke because of an idolatrous attitude toward the temple ritual. It is not the external act of offering sacrifices and oblations that pleases God, but the man who trembles at his word (see Is 66:2-3).

Like Isaiah, Luke desired that the Jews should realize through the following verses (Is 66:2b-4) that (cf. Longenecker 1981:142; Dunn 1996:97):

This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, ..., and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, ... so I also will ... bring upon them what they dread ... (NIV).

The quotation is used as a proof-text to support the principle stated in v. 48 and to reject the erroneous feelings regarding the temple which existed in Stephen's day.

The temple was originally intended as a house for Israel to worship in, not a place where Israel sought to restrict their God and manipulate him according to their own concerns. At the time of exile, Solomon's temple was in ruins. Yet the people continued to worship God in Babylon and other places of exile. Moreover the Most Holy Place in the temple Herod built was empty because the

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<sup>176</sup> According to Sanders (1982:144), Isaiah appears in the NT more than any other OT book (cf. Songer 1968:459-470; Flamming 1968:89-103).

ark of the covenant and its contents were either destroyed or lost (Jr 3:16). Luke, as well as a long line of prophets, have warned Israel of their tendency to substitute man-made institutions and rituals for a living relationship with the Almighty God. Luke's quotation is not a rejection of the temple but a condemnation of a wrong attitude toward worship and sacrifice within it.

As regards this quotation, Spencer (1997:78-79) states that

Firstly, a simple, declarative couplet sketches a universal-cosmic image of God's (omni-) presence ... Next, a rhetorical, interrogative couplet challenges human attempts to delimit God's presence ... Finally, a single rhetorical question logically links God's pervasive presence to creative omnipotence.

Ps 11:4's assertion that God governs in heaven is a general idea in the OT. It never means that he is not active on earth. In contrast, God is so mighty a sovereign that he is capable of doing whatever he desires. The second line of the Greek text is to join earth to heaven with the concept of God's omnipresence.

Thus, Longenecker's statement (1981:142) is not correct, i.e., that as stated by the Jews, God himself does not remain present in the temple rather only God's name is present in it (cf. Haenchen 1971:285). Bietenhard (1976:650) asserts that God's name denotes his attendance, which is assured in the temple. Simply, it is true that God himself transcends all creation, as is stated in the fifth line. In a word, there is a God-beyond-the-temple theology against "a God-in-the-box theology"<sup>177</sup> through the third and fourth line. Just as Luke refers to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, he illustrates from first to last that God is unlimited and

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<sup>177</sup> Witherington (1998:273) employs the term.

transcendent.

As mentioned earlier, this passage from Isaiah is used in *Barn* 16:2 in order to express the same sentiment. Barnabas introduces the quotation with the following statement of v. 1: “Moreover I will tell you likewise concerning the temple, how these wretched men being led astray set their hope on the building, and not on their God that made them, as being a house of God.”<sup>178</sup> Barnabas consents to Stephen’s insinuation: In the end, they crafted a god by means of the temple.

From a different viewpoint, Stephen’s words are of a customary form typical of pious Jews who were outspoken against pagan shrines and the theology of God’s dwelling that was involved in pagan ideas (Hill 1992:74). It should also be noted that the word *χειροποίητον* is found at Jesus’ trial (Mk 14:58), implying the inter-relationship between Jesus and the new temple. Beale (2004:218) states that “Christ is the one who began to build the true temple composed of himself and his people” (cf. Bruce [1951]1987:158-159; Dunn 1996:97). Ironically, “[a]lthough Jesus does not destroy the temple, the temple is destroyed because of the blindness of those who reject Jesus and his witnesses. ... people who are zealous for the temple manifest the blindness that brings its destruction” (Tannehill 1990:94).

Luke here comes to answer the charge brought against Stephen in Ac 6:13-14. Throughout the discourse, the temple is in reality substantially significant. Tannehill (1990:85) explains that “[e]arly in the speech Luke acknowledges God’s promise that Abraham’s offering would ‘worship me in this place’ (7:7), and he returns to the topic of Israel’s sanctuaries, including the temple, near the

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<sup>178</sup> For the recited translation, cf. Lightfoot (1956:152).

end of the speech (7:44-50).”

What is more, is that here Luke prepares the transition for the gentile mission which will virtually appear in the next chapter of his book. According to Koet (2005:90), “[i]mplicitly, Luke’s interpretation gives rise to a certain openness as an ultimate consequence of the relative importance of the temple. This openness is not alien to Isaiah 66, because in 66:23, a counterpart of Isa. 66:1-2,” it is written that “all mankind will come and bow down before me” (i.e. God, *J-W Kim*) (see also Is 66:20; cf. 40:5). It is also necessary to note Jesus’ saying that the temple is a house of prayer for all nations (see Mk 11:17; Is 56:7).

One can illustrate this section briefly as follows:

vv. 44-45	σκηνή	Made as God directed Moses	Sanction
v. 46	σκήνωμα	Desired by David after he won God’s favour	Sanction
v. 47	οἶκος	Built for God by Solomon	Sanction [implicitly]
vv. 48-50	οἶκος & τόπος	Made by human hands	Condemnation

The tabernacle was not bound to any one place. In fact, it was carried into the promised land from outside. In contrast to this, the temple was fixed to one place. Nonetheless, there is a similarity between the two constructions. Both of them were made according to God’s directions. Indeed, for the temple, it is not clear in v. 47, but the truth can be easily proved by the context of this section, and also by the OT context. It finally means that God sanctions the building of the temple as well as the tabernacle. Whereas Israel had a tabernacle then and has a temple now, the worship of God is not limited to a tabernacle or a temple.



The object of God's condemnation is the Jewish thought that God can be confined to the temple, or any single place for that matter.

Therefore, the problem of this section is not with what the temple "was", but with what it "has been" (Neagoe 2002:167), and thus Stephen now does "not challenge the *legitimacy* of the temple but only its *necessity*" (Blackburn 1997:1124). Besides, the *crux* of vv. 48-50 convincingly "is not that God's presence can't be found in the temple (clearly Acts 2-4 shows it can), but that God's presence can't be confined there, nor can God be controlled or manipulated by the building of a temple and by the rituals of the temple cultus or the power moves of the temple hierarchy" (Witherington 1998:273).

#### 4. SUMMARY

The highlighted phrase 'Ο οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου, ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετέ μοι, λέγει κύριος, ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου; οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα; in vv. 49-50 is an explicit quotation from Is 66:1-2 (LXX) that is indicated by my underlined introductory formula καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει which I derived from v. 48. Luke's changes are likely to be attributed to his literary and stylistic preference within the new context.

This quotation is used to uphold the idea that God does not live in houses made by men. Here the idea might be that God cannot be confined to any place. It is worth noticing that this quotation works as proof to sustain Stephen's statement (v. 47) before the quotation. Coming to the conclusion of Stephen's discourse, in the end, Luke summarises his theological motif that the worship of God is not limited to one particular place.

In conclusion, Luke draws on the quoted text from Is 66:1-2 to depict the theme

of the true worship of God that is not confined to the temple. When Luke relates the quotation from a LXX version to his new context, these changes might be due to his stylistic preference. However, the meaning between the original and new context is not considerably different.

## CHAPTER VI

### STEPHEN'S INDICTMENT (Ac 7:51-53)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is “to bring the audience to an awareness of their personal responsibility in these matters and move them to take remedial action” (White 1992:218; cf. also Dupont 1985:154). Stephen eventually reaches the conclusion of his speech where he condemns his hearers. Just like their fathers, they reject God’s agent by persecuting and killing the one whom God had sent, namely Jesus Christ, although he does not mention Jesus’ name explicitly.

The Jews are not the people of God’s covenant any more, according to Stephen, and they – not Stephen - have violated the law in spite of being the recipients of the law. In the last three verses no quotation is found, but in the Septuagintal language Luke clearly illustrates that the Jews are really antagonists against God.

#### 2. COMPOSITION<sup>179</sup>

Witherington (1998:274) says, finally Stephen’s

indictment in the *peroratio* involves the charges that the audience is: (1) stiff-necked (i.e., stubborn, unwilling to bend or rethink things); (2) uncircumcised in heart and ears (spiritually dead and unwilling to listen to the

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<sup>179</sup> Combrink (1979:18) asserts that this section consists of a chiasmic structure with the pronoun ὑμεῖς.

truth); and thus in general (3) always opposing the Holy Spirit.<sup>180</sup>

(a) “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!” (Σκληροτράχηλοι καὶ ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίας καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν, v. 51a). It appears likely that Luke uses Septuagintal language here to depict Israelite sinfulness and disobedience (cf. Wilson 1962:186). The adjective σκληροτράχηλοι is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT, but seems to be drawn from Ex 33:3, 5; 34:9; Dt 9:6, 13 (LXX).<sup>181</sup> According to Kistemaker (1990:273), the word “stiff-necked originates in the agricultural world of that day, in which oxen or horses refuse to yield to the yoke the farmers try to put around their necks.”

ⲫ (Ψ) 945 1175 1739 1891 *pc* read ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, B reads καρδίας, and E M it vg<sup>mss</sup> sy<sup>p</sup> Lcf GrNy Cyr<sup>dt</sup> have τῇ καρδίᾳ. The expressions ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίας and ἀπερίτμητοι τοῖς ὠσίν appear in Lv 26:41; Jr 9:25; Ezk 44:7, 9 and Jr 6:10 (LXX) respectively (see also Dt 10:16; Cf. Jr 4:4; Jub 1:7, 23), but the word ἀπερίτμητοι is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT. It also occurs in 1QpHab 11:13 (“He did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart.”) and 1QS 5:5 (“They shall circumcise the foreskin of the inclination.”). However, Braun (1966:157-158) indicates that here it does not reveal the dualistic thought of the Qumran community.

(b) “You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!” (ὕμεις ἀεὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ἀντιπίπτετε ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς, v. 51b). The 2<sup>nd</sup> personal plural pronoun here appears once in the genitive (ὑμῶν) and twice in the nominative (ὕμεις), implying Luke’s emphatic intention. Once again it seems to employ the ideas of Isaiah to depict the Israelite rebellion against God’s Holy

<sup>180</sup> Malina & Neyrey (1991:97-122) add the following elements: prophet-killers and law-breakers.

<sup>181</sup> According to Fitzmyer (1998:384), one can find its Hebrew counterpart in Ex 32:9 (see Neh 9:29-30).

Spirit (see Is 63:10). The verb ἀντιπίπτετε is found nowhere else in the NT, but seems to occur in Ex 26:5, 17; Nm 27:14; Job 23:13 (LXX). According to Wilson (1962:187), the thought of the phrase ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς might be drawn from the OT:

Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly (Psalm 106:6)... yea, I will repay into their bosom their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together, says the Lord (Isaiah 65:6c-7ab)... for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers (Jeremiah 3:25b)... because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people have become a byword among all who are round about us (Daniel 9:16b).

(c) “Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?” (τίνα τῶν προφητῶν οὐκ ἐδίωξαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν; v. 52a). Fitzmyer (1998:385) states that

The murder of the prophets was a Jewish motif, even though most OT books do not speak of it. It began to surface in 1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 19:10, 14 (Elijah's complaint to God) and is continued in Jer 2:30; 26:20-24 (Uriah of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against Jerusalem and Judah); 2 Chr 24:20-21 (Zechariah, son of Jehoiada); the apocryphal *Martyrdom of Isaiah*<sup>182</sup> ... Stories about martyrs who were considered prophets continued in the rabbinic tradition.<sup>183</sup>

(d) “They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One” (καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τοὺς προκαταγγείλαντας περὶ τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ δικαίου, v. 52b). D

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<sup>182</sup> For the martyrdom of Isaiah, cf. *Sanh* 103b; *Yebam* 49b; Ascens; Justin, *Dial* 120; Tertullian, *Pat* 14. For the martyrdom of Jeremiah, cf. also Tertullian, *Scorp* 8; Jerome, *Jov* 2:37.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Lake & Cadbury 1933:82; Bruce [1951]1987:162; Amaru 1983:153-180; see also Mt 23:31; Lk 13:34; 1 Th 2:15; Heb 11:32, 36-37.

has αὐτούς before τοὺς προκαταγγείλαντας. Black ([1946]1967:71) and Wilcox (1965:128, 130) assert that the pronoun αὐτούς seems to be a Semitism. According to O'Reilly (1987:117), the word κατάγγελεῖν "is a post-resurrection word in the Lukan vocabulary and indicates that the days which are announced refer to the time of the church" (cf. also O'Toole 1979:88).

Kilpatrick (1945:142) advocates that "the original of the phrase (i.e. τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ δικαίου, *J-W Kim*) ... is to be found in the Greek form of the cycle of Jewish pseudepigrapha ascribed to the prophets." He thinks the word ἔλευσις to be a messianic term (1945:136-137; cf. also Lake & Cadbury 1933:83). It occurs only once in the NT. The term δικαίου also seems to be a messianic title (cf. Marshall 1980:147; Kistemaker 1990:275; Barrett 1994:196; contrast O'Neill [1961]1970:140-142).<sup>184</sup> Fitzmyer (1998:286) asserts that the term is from Gn 6:9; Sir 44:17. Haenchen (1971:206) refers to 1 En 38:2;<sup>185</sup> 53:6<sup>186</sup> (47:1, 4 are uncertain), where the messiah is called 'the righteous' as he emerges before the last judgement of the ungodly and the justification of the pious.

(e) "And now you have betrayed and murdered him - you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it" (οὐδὲ νῦν ὑμεῖς προδότες καὶ φονεῖς ἐγένεσθε, οἵτινες ἐλάβετε τὸν νόμον εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων καὶ οὐκ ἐφύλαξατε, vv. 52c-53). The noun προδότες appears in 2 Tm 3:4 and with the singular form προδότης in Lk 6:16.

The preposition εἰς is possibly equivalent to ἐν in the instrumental meaning (cf.

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<sup>184</sup> Steyn (1995:134) notes Judas' τῆς ἀδικίας in Ac 1:18.

<sup>185</sup> "... and when the Righteous One shall appear before the face of the righteous, those elect ones, their deeds are hung upon the Lord of the Spirits, he shall reveal light to the righteous and the elect who dwell upon the earth, where will the dwelling of the sinners be, and where the resting place of those who denied the name of the Lord of the Spirits? It would have been better for them not to have been born."

<sup>186</sup> "After this, the Righteous and Elect One will reveal the house of his congregation. From that time, they shall not be hindered in the name of the Lord of the Spirits."

Blass & Debrunner § 206.1; Zerwick § 101). A contemporary Jewish belief seems probable that the law was given to Moses by angels (see Dt 33:2 (LXX)). It is also supported by NT writers (see Ac 7:38; Gl 3:19; Heb 2:2) as well as Christian writers, but is also debated by some (see Jub 1:27-29; Josephus, *Ant* 15:136; contrast Barrett 1994:378). TDan 6:2 and CD 5:18 are doubtful (cf. Braun 1966:166). The verb φυλάσσω is used with the meaning of obedient observance by Luke (see Lk 11:28; 18:21; Ac 16:4; 21:24).

### 3. LUKAN INTERPRETATION OF THE SECTION

Beyond the narration of Israel's obstinate resistance to God within her history, Luke now directs attention to the members of the Sanhedrin. At this point Stephen seems to know that his hearers will not allow him anymore time to speak (cf. Bruce 1942:22; Klijn 1957:30; Haenchen 1971:286; Neil 1987:114; Kistemaker 1990:59). Similarly, some allege that the abruptness and crudity of the condemnation were induced by a furious outbreak before the Sanhedrin (cf. Longenecker 1981:143). Strictly speaking, however, the hearers' enraged response which is described in 7:54, (that is, just after Stephen finishes his discourse), does not allow him to carry on (Tannehill 1990:86).

According to Barrett (1994:378), "Luke does not indicate whether Stephen had finished his speech or was interrupted. It seems probable ... that the reference to Jesus was added as a new climax for a Hellenistic Jewish sermon intended to expose the errors of the people and summon them to repentance." It is thus clear that Stephen's address has led unsurprisingly to the extent of the tirade (Longenecker 1981:143). As Johnson (1977:76) indicates, "the speech functions as a prophecy for the narrative."

Although Luke does not quote explicitly from the OT at this point, he repeatedly

chooses the Septuagintal wordings that God used to describe the rebellious Israel, as discussed earlier. In picturesque language, Luke describes Israel's obstinacy against the Holy Spirit as resulting from her stiff neck, uncircumcised hearts and ears. Marshall (1980:147) explains that "[c]ircumcision was understood metaphorically as the cutting away of pride and sinfulness from the heart."

The word ἀπερίτμητοι means all gentiles who are outside the Abrahamic covenant. Luke's use of this term is equivalent to calling Stephen's listeners gentiles, though every male among them who is eight days old must be circumcised. Finally, Luke states that they are not in the covenant since they have neglected to heed God's words. Here "the charge takes on force from the 'covenant of circumcision'" in v. 8 (Johnson 1992:134). As Kistemaker (1990:274) states, the Jews "have the external sign on their physical bodies, but they lack the internal sign---an obedient heart regenerated by the Holy Spirit."

The mention of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Israelites' disobedience occurs often in Luke's two volumes. Johnson (1992:134) says:

The reader is reminded in particular of Peter's statement about the Holy Spirit given to those who obey God (Acts 5:32), and how those who 'falsified' or 'tested' the Holy Spirit have been 'cut off from the people' (Acts 5:1-11; 3:23), and Jesus' words concerning the unforgivability of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:10).

Whereas Stephen is speaking here under the power of the Holy Spirit (Ac 6:10), the Israelites oppose the Holy Spirit all the time. In the long run, as discussed earlier, Stephen shifts from 'our fathers' to 'your fathers'. He now differentiates himself from his audience, initiating a straight "condemnation of his



condemners” (Malina & Neyrey 1991:119).<sup>187</sup> According to Soards (1994:68), Luke depicts the fault of the audience in a frank manner through the assertion of the speeches in Acts (see Ac 2:36).

Stephen now accuses the Israelite fathers of being persecutors of the prophets and murderers of those who foretold the coming of Christ, the Righteous One. The Israelites’ behavior against God’s will, repeated throughout their history keeps on in the days of Jesus, and then is exclusively related to the oppressing and killing of God’s prophets, Jesus, and Stephen. When Stephen here criticises the Israelite infidelity, he does it in the manner of the OT. According to Tannehill (1990:87), “[t]o this pattern, found in 2 Ki 17:7-20, a reference is added in Neh 9:26 to the prophets being killed, and 2 Chr 36:14-16 indicates that they were scoffed at.”

The verb *προκαταγγέλλω* occurs only twice in the NT (see Ac 3:18). Both occurrences refer to a prediction about the passion of Christ (Conzelmann 1960:220). Hays (1997:119) says that “Jesus died in accordance with the Scriptures, as the Righteous One prefigured in Isaiah, the lament psalms, and Wisdom of Solomon.”<sup>188</sup> His suffering and death corroborate that the authentic prophet has to be discarded. His passion also foreshadows an example for his followers, of which Stephen’s own martyrdom would be a first witness to the truth (cf. also Foakes-Jackson 1931:58; Hays 1989<sup>b</sup>:194-198). According to Kilgallen (1976<sup>a</sup>:94), “as *Moses* was rejected and the people’s *worship* became

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<sup>187</sup> Longenecker (1981:144) explains that “[p]erhaps he (i.e. Stephen, *J-W Kim*) jabbed with a finger at his accusers—though even a blind man would have felt his verbal blows.”

<sup>188</sup> See Wis 2:12-13, 17-20: “Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions; he reproaches us for sins against the law, and accuses us of sins against our training. He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord. ... Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us test him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected” (RSV).

blasphemous thereby, so with *Christ* rejected ... It represents the most antagonistic of all claims by Stephen.”

The motif of killing the prophets is also found in several passages in Luke’s Gospel (see Lk 6:22-23; 11:47-51; 13:33-34). Kimball (1994:147-163) indicates that the backdrop of the theme seems to be the parable of the Wicked Tenants (see Lk 20:9-19 and par.; cf. also Koet 2005:98). Furthermore, some places in the NT signify a tradition close to Luke’s (see Mt 5:12; 23:31-37; 1 Th 2:14-15; Heb 11:36-38).

As mentioned earlier, Luke uses the title *δίκαιος* in order to apply to Jesus in Ac 3:14, and it recurs again in 22:14. Three orators in Acts - Peter, Stephen, and Paul - regard the Righteous One as Jesus, and also refer to Jesus’ death (see Ac 2:14-41; 3:11-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-33; 10:34-43; 13:16-48; cf. also Tyson 1986:118). Interestingly, the Israelite sustained insubordination “is the linchpin of cohesion” among these figures (Moessner 1986:227). Buckwalter (1996:257) states that “[δ]ίκαιο probably links up here to some degree with the *δικαιῶσαι δίκαιον* of Isa. 53:11,<sup>189</sup> rather than only with the more general righteous sufferer of Judaism.”<sup>190</sup> He (1996:256) adds that Luke “features Jesus’ obedient service and his humiliation-exaltation” even in Stephen’s message.

Spencer (1997:80) explains that “[i]ronically, the Israelites were also put to shame by the affirmation of a Roman centurion”: “Surely this was a righteous man” (Lk 23:47). As Soards (1994:69) indicates, Bihler’s suggestion of an analogy between Stephen’s speech and Paul’s speech in Athens (Ac 17:22-33) is present “in their lack of standard kerygma.”

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<sup>189</sup> Some (Cullmann 1959:72; Franklin 1975:62-63; Seccombe 1981:257; Marty 1984:186; Green 1990:19-21) take notice of Is 53:11 (LXX).

<sup>190</sup> For the latter opinion, cf. Karris (1990:68-78).

Lastly, Stephen charges that Israel has broken the law that was given through the angels. It also seems to censure a contemporary Jewish faith through the law, which was given rather by angels than by God. As Witherington (1998:275) states, Stephen's discourse is "*not* Law or temple critical, it is people critical on the basis of the Law and the Prophets."

In this section it is evident that the concentration is not on the idea of prophets' martyrdom, but on the Israelite wrongdoing. Barrett (1994:376) states that Luke "is less concerned here to bring out the positive significance of Moses and of Jesus than to accuse the Jews." Simon (1958:41) also describes this part as "[t]he unworthiness and perpetual rebelliousness of the Jews who ... exhaust the immense riches of God's mercy."

In conclusion, the Israelite desire to destroy Stephen in v. 54 is the highest pitch of hostility as in 5:33, along with Luke's employment of the same unusual verb *διεπρίοντο* (cf. Tannehill 1990:96; contrast Ac 2:36-37). Stephen is finally put to death by the Jews without any of the customary legal formalities. Nonetheless, his last word in v. 60 reminds us of Jesus who forgave those killing him (see Lk 23:34). Jesus' action serves "as an example for Luke's depiction of the first Christian martyr" (Breytenbach 2005:93). After Stephen's death, a great persecution breaks out and Christians are scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

#### **4. SUMMARY**

In this section, no explicit quotation is found. This section is somewhat different from the previous (sub)sections without explicit quotations within Stephen's speech. In spite of not having an explicit quotation, this point still adds a seminal

contribution to the author's overall theological intention, which is developed through previous sections of Stephen's speech. This section seems to culminate in the Israelite rejection of God's messengers. In Stephen's speech, the focus on past and present rejection of God's chosen servants fits the speech's setting. Throughout the past, and even in the present, Israel has resisted the will of God.