

# CHAPTER 7

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 7

**Ver. 1.** *Then said the high priest*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “to him”; that is, to Stephen; for to him he addressed himself: or he “asked him”, as the Syriac version renders it; he put the following question to him:

*are these things so?* is it true what they say, that thou hast spoken blasphemous words against the temple, and the law, and hast said that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the one, and change the other? what hast thou to say for thyself, and in thine own defence? this high priest was either Annas, or rather Caiaphas; (See Gill on “~~406~~Acts 4:6”).

**Ver. 2.** *And he said*, etc.] Stephen replied, in answer to the high priest’s question, and addressed himself to the whole sanhedrim, saying:

*men, brethren, and fathers, hearken*; to the following oration and defence; he calls them men, brethren, by an usual Hebraism, that is, “brethren”; and that, because they were of the same nation; for it was common with the Jews to call those of their own country and religion, brethren; and he calls them “fathers”, because of their age and dignity, being the great council of the nation, and chosen out of the senior and wiser part of the people:

*the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham*; he calls God “the God of glory”, because he is glorious in himself, in all his persons, perfections, and works, and is to be glorified by his people; and his glory is to be sought by all his creatures, and to be the end of all their actions; and the rather he makes use of this epithet of him, to remove the calumny against him, that he had spoke blasphemous things against God; and because God appeared in a glorious manner to Abraham, either in a vision, or by an angel, or in some glorious form, or another; and it is observable, that when the Jews speak of Abraham’s deliverance out of the fiery furnace, for so they interpret Ur of the Chaldees, they give to God much such a title; they say <sup>f256</sup>

““the King of glory” stretched out his right hand, and delivered him out of the fiery furnace, according to (~~0150~~Genesis 15:7).”

Stephen uses a like epithet; and he calls Abraham “our father”, he being a Jew, and according to the common usage of the nation: and this appearance of God to Abraham was “when he was in Mesopotamia”; a country that lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, from whence it had its name; and is the same with Aram Naharaim, the Scriptures speak of; (See Gill on “<sup>4113</sup>Acts 2:9”). Of this appearance of God to Abraham, mentioned by Stephen, the Scriptures are silent; but the Jewish writers seem to hint at it, when they say <sup>f257</sup>,

“thus said the holy blessed God to Abraham, as thou hast enlightened for me Mesopotamia and its companions, come and give light before me in the land of Israel.”

And again, mentioning those words in (<sup>23108</sup>Isaiah 41:8,9) “the seed of Abraham my friend, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth”; add by way of explanation, from Mesopotamia and its companions <sup>f258</sup>: and this was

*before he dwelt in Charan*; or Haran; (see <sup>4113</sup>Genesis 11:31) where the Septuagint call it “Charan”, as here; and by Herodish <sup>f259</sup> it is called *καρραι*, where Antoninus was killed; and by Pliny <sup>f260</sup>, “Carra”; and by Ptolomy <sup>f261</sup>, “Carroe”; it was famous for the slaughter of M. Crassus, by the Parthians <sup>f262</sup>. R. Benjamin gives this account of it in his time <sup>f263</sup>;

“in two days I came to ancient Haran, and in it were about twenty Jews, and there was as it were a synagogue of Ezra; but in the place where was the house of Abraham our father, there was no building upon it; but the Ishmaelites (or Mahometans) honour that place, and come thither to pray.”

Stephanus <sup>f264</sup> says it was a city of Mesopotamia, so called from “Carra”, a river in Syria.

**Ver. 3.** *And said unto him*, etc.] Not the words in (<sup>4113</sup>Genesis 12:1) for they were said in Haran, these in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt there, and besides, these are different from them; no mention is here made of getting out from his father’s house, as there; because his father’s house sent along with him, or rather he with them from Mesopotamia to Haran:

*get thee out of thy country*; from Ur of the Chaldees, where he was born:

*and from thy kindred*; his relations that lived in the same place, who did not go along with him:

*and come into the land which I shall show thee*; not telling him the place whither he was to go; wherefore when he had his first call, and first set out, he knew not whither he went; (see <sup>s1108</sup>Hebrews 11:8). This was an emblem of the calling of the saints out of the world, from their former course of life, and from among their old companions and friends, to follow Christ whithersoever he is pleased to lead them; and who at last will bring them safe to the land afar off, the better and heavenly country.

**Ver. 4.** *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans*, etc.] The same with Mesopotamia; so Pliny says <sup>f265</sup>, that

“because of Babylon the head of the Chaldean nation — -the other part of Mesopotamia and Assyria is called Babylonia.”

And he places Babylon in Mesopotamia; it was out of Ur, in the land of the Chaldeans particularly, that Abraham came, upon his first call:

*and dwelt in Charan*: according to the Jewish writers <sup>f266</sup>, he dwelt here five years:

*and from thence, when his father was dead*; who died in Haran, as is said in (<sup>o1132</sup>Genesis 11:32) and that it was after the death of Terah his father, that Abraham went from thence, is manifest from (<sup>o1131</sup>Genesis 11:31,32) (<sup>o1134</sup>Genesis 12:4,5) and yet a Jew <sup>f267</sup> has the impudence to charge Stephen with a mistake, and to affirm, that Abraham went from Haran, whilst his father was yet living; proceeding upon a false hypothesis, that Terah begat Abraham when he was seventy years of age: but Philo the Jew is expressly with Stephen in this circumstance; he says <sup>f268</sup>,

“I think no man versed in the laws can be ignorant, that Abraham, when he first went out of the land of Chaldea, dwelt in Charan; *τελευτησαντος τε αυτω του πατρος εκενυσι* “but his father dying there”, he removed from thence:”

and so says Stephen:

*he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell*; the land of Canaan; (see <sup>o1135</sup>Genesis 12:5) or “he removed himself”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or rather “God removed him”, as the Syriac version reads, and so one copy in the Bodleian library; for it was by the order and assistance,

and under the direction and protection of God, that he came into that land: after the words

*wherein ye now dwell*, Beza's ancient copy adds, "and our fathers that were before us".

**Ver. 5.** *And he gave him none inheritance in it*, etc.] To be personally enjoyed by him; and which was a great trial to Abraham's faith, to be brought out of his country, and into another land, and which was promised to him and his; and yet, as not the whole, so not a single part of it was given him to possess:

*no, not so much as to set his foot on*: so that when Sarah his wife died, he was obliged to buy a piece of ground for a burying place to bury her in: and which could not be said to be given him by the Lord, for he bought it with his money:

*yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child*; which was another exercise of Abraham's faith, that he should have a whole country promised him and his seed, and yet had no seed given him; (see <sup><0127></sup>Genesis 12:7 13:15 15:2,3,7).

**Ver. 6.** *And God spake on this wise*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "and God spake to him", and so does one of Beza's copies; and the Ethiopic version reads it both ways, God "said thus to Abraham", as in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13).

*That his seed should sojourn in a strange land*; or "be a stranger in a land not theirs"; first in the land of Canaan, and then in Egypt, which were possessed by other persons, the natives of them:

*and that they should bring them into bondage*; that is, the inhabitants of the lands, and particularly Egypt, should bring the seed of Abraham into bondage, as they did; and very hard bondage it was, at least some part of it:

*and entreat them evil four hundred years*; which must be reckoned not from the time of their going down into Egypt, which to their coming up out of it were but two hundred and ten years, but from the birth of Isaac: which was as soon as Abraham had the promised seed, and may be reckoned after this manner; from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, sixty years, (<sup><0226></sup>Genesis 25:26) and from thence to the coming of Jacob

into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years, (<sup>Q170</sup>Genesis 47:9) and from thence to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; which in all make up four hundred years; for the sojourning and evil entreating of Abraham's seed are not to be confined to the land of Egypt, but belong to other lands, where they were within this time, though that land is more especially intended; and so the Septuagint version renders the text in (<sup>Q124</sup>Exodus 12:40). "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, which they (and some copies add, and their fathers) sojourned in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, were four hundred and thirty years": and this text is differently read in the Talmuds, in one of them thus <sup>f269</sup>; "and the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt", *twxrah l kbw*, "and in all the lands, were four hundred and thirty years"; and in the other of them thus <sup>f270</sup>, "and the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt", *twxra raçbw*, "and in the rest of the lands, were four hundred years"; upon which latter the gloss has these words;

"from the time that the decree of the captivity was made between them to the birth of Isaac, were thirty years; and from the birth of Isaac, until the Israelites went out of Egypt, were four hundred years; take out of them the sixty of Isaac, and the one hundred and thirty that Jacob had lived when he went down into Egypt, and there remain two hundred and ten; and so is the decree, that "thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs", (<sup>Q153</sup>Genesis 15:13) and it is not said in Egypt, but in a land not theirs; and when Isaac was born, Abraham was a sojourner in the land of the Philistines; and from thence, till they went out of Egypt, it will be found that Isaac and his seed who were the seed of Abraham, were strangers: and the thirty years before that are not numbered in the decree;"

(See Gill on "<sup>Q177</sup>Galatians 3:17").

**Ver. 7.** *And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage*, etc.] At the end of the four hundred years, and which was the Egyptian nation:

*I will judge, said God*; that is, condemn and punish them, as he did, by inflicting the ten plagues upon them:

*and after that they shall come forth*; out of the land of Egypt, and their hard bondage there; and which was brought about by the judgments executed upon the Egyptians:

*and serve me in this place*; in the land of Canaan; though these words are not to be found in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13) what comes nearest them is in (<sup><0182></sup>Exodus 3:12). “Ye shall serve God upon this mountain”; meaning Mount Horeb, where Moses then was, and from whence the law was afterwards given.

**Ver. 8.** *And he gave him the covenant of circumcision*, etc.] Or the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign or token, (<sup><0171></sup>Genesis 17:11). Stephen speaks here in the language of the Jews, who are wont to speak of circumcision after this manner; hence in the Jewish liturgy, there is a collect, *hl ym tyrbī*, “for the covenant of circumcision”<sup>f271</sup>; and so it is said<sup>f272</sup>,

“when Joseph died, they made void the “covenant of circumcision”.”

*and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day*; according to the express command in (<sup><0172></sup>Genesis 17:12 (See Gill on “<sup><0185></sup>Philippians 3:5”))

*and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs*; the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Ver. 9.** *And the patriarchs, moved with envy*, etc.] (see <sup><0171></sup>Genesis 37:11) the sons of Jacob and brethren of Joseph were filled with envy, and enraged at him, because of the evil report of them he brought to his father; and because he had a greater share in his father’s love than they had; and because of his dreams, which signified that he should have the dominion over them, and they should be obliged to yield obedience to him: wherefore they

*sold Joseph into Egypt*; they sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, who were going down to Egypt, and who carried him thither with them: these twenty pieces of silver, the Jews say, the ten brethren of Joseph divided among themselves; everyone took two shekels, and bought shoes for his feet; to which they apply the passage in (<sup><0186></sup>Amos 2:6) “they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes”<sup>f273</sup>; and they suggest, that the redemption of the firstborn among the Israelites on account of the selling of Joseph; they say<sup>f274</sup>,

“because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, let everyone redeem his son, his firstborn, with twenty pieces

of silver; says R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Levi, because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, and there fell to each of them a piece of coined money (the value of half a shekel), therefore let everyone pay his shekel coined.”

They also affirm <sup>f275</sup>, that the selling of Joseph was not expiated by the tribes, until they were dead, according to (<sup>2724</sup>Isaiah 22:14) and that on the account of it, there was a famine in the land of Israel seven years. There seems to be some likeness between the treatment of Joseph and Jesus Christ, which Stephen may have some respect unto; as Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty of silver, so Christ was sold by one of his disciples, that ate bread with him, for thirty pieces of silver; and as it was through envy the brethren of Joseph used him in this manner, so it was through envy that the Jews delivered Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate, to be condemned to death: of this selling of Joseph into Egypt, Justin the historian speaks <sup>f276</sup>; his words are,

“Joseph was the youngest of his brethren, whose excellent wit his brethren fearing, secretly took him and sold him to strange merchants, by whom he was carried into Egypt.”

And then follow other things concerning him, some true and some false; Stephen here adds,

*but God was with him*; (see <sup>433D</sup>Genesis 39:2) he was with him, and prospered him in Potiphar’s house; he was with him, and kept him from the temptations of his mistress; he was with him in prison, and supported and comforted him, and at length delivered him from it, and promoted him as follows; and caused all the evil that befell him to work for good to him and his father’s family.

**Ver. 10.** *And delivered him out of all his afflictions*, etc.] From the evil designs of his mistress, and from all the miseries of a prison:

*and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt*; so Justin in the place above cited says, that Joseph was very dear to the king; but not through his knowledge of magic arts, as he suggests, but on account of the wisdom which God gave him; for when he is said to have favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, the meaning is, that he was highly esteemed of by him, because of the wisdom he saw in him; and both the favour he had with him, and the wisdom he had in himself, were from the Lord; and in a very humble and modest manner does he speak of

himself, in (<sup><0416></sup>Genesis 41:16) which Onkelos the Targumist paraphrases thus:

““not from my wisdom”, but from the Lord, shall the peace of Pharaoh be answered;”

the name of this Pharaoh was Misphragmuthosis; by the Jews he is called Rian ben Walid <sup>f277</sup>:

*and he made him governor over Egypt*: a deputy governor under him; for Pharaoh kept the throne, and in it was greater than Joseph, and had the other ensigns of royalty, and Joseph rode in the second chariot to him:

*and all his house*; (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 41:40,41,43) as he had the affairs of the kingdom committed to him, so likewise the domestic affairs of Pharaoh, he was steward of his household.

**Ver. 11.** *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt, and Canaan*, etc.] This dearth, or famine, is said to be in all lands, (<sup><0454></sup>Genesis 41:54) though only Egypt and Canaan are mentioned here, because the history is concerned with no other. The Jewish writers <sup>f278</sup> speak of three lands particularly, which were affected with it, Phenicia, Arabia, and Palestine; and this famine in the land of Israel, they say <sup>f279</sup>, which lasted seven years, was on account of the selling of Joseph into Egypt, as before observed. The Heathen writers make mention of this famine, particularly Justin <sup>f280</sup>, who speaking of Joseph says, that he foresaw many years before the barrenness of the fields; and all Egypt would have perished with famine, had not the king, through his advice, ordered by an edict, that corn should be laid up for many years: this was the fifth of the ten famines, the Jews say have been, or shall be in the world <sup>f281</sup>:

*and great affliction*; meaning the famine, which was very severe, and lasted a long time, even seven years: want of eating is called *ywny* [ , “affliction”, by the Jews <sup>f282</sup>; by which they mean fasting, which is a voluntary want of eating, or abstinence from it; and if that is an affliction, then much more want of food, or abstinence through necessity; compare (<sup><5450></sup>1 Timothy 5:10).

*And our fathers found not sustenance*; Jacob and his family could not get sufficient provision for them in the land of Canaan, where they then were, but were obliged to go to Egypt for it.



**Ver. 12.** *But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt*, etc.] Not then growing, or gathering in there, or that was of that year's produce; for the famine was strong in the land of Egypt, as well as in Canaan; but was what had been laid up, and preserved in the seven years of plenty, by the order and care of Joseph; which by some means or another, Jacob had heard of; (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 42:1,2) the Jews suggest <sup>f283</sup>, that it was by divine revelation:

*he sent out our fathers first*; the first time, or the first year of the famine; or he sent them first, he laid his commands on them, or they had not gone; these were the ten sons of Jacob, and brethren of Joseph, who were sent the first time, for Benjamin stayed with his father: (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 42:3,13).

**Ver. 13.** *And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren*, etc.] That is, when the brethren of Joseph went a second time down to Egypt for corn, Joseph made himself known unto them, (<sup><0440></sup>Genesis 45:1).

*And Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh*; for though it was known before that he was an Hebrew, (see <sup><0397></sup>Genesis 39:17 41:12) yet it was not known of what family he was, who was his father, or his brethren, but now it was known, (<sup><0456></sup>Genesis 45:16).

**Ver. 14.** *Then sent Joseph*, etc.] Gifts and presents to his father, and wagons, to fetch down him and his family into Egypt, (<sup><0452></sup>Genesis 45:21,23).

*and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls*; which seems to disagree with the account of Moses, who says, that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten", (<sup><0457></sup>Genesis 46:27). But there is no contradiction; Moses and Stephen are speaking of different things; Moses speaks of the seed of Jacob, which came out of his loins, who came into Egypt, and so excludes his sons' wives; Stephen speaks of Jacob and all his kindred, among whom his sons' wives must be reckoned, whom Joseph called to him: according to Moses's account, the persons that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, and so exclusive of his sons' wives, were threescore and six; to which if we add Jacob himself, and Joseph who was before in Egypt, and who might be truly said to come into it, and his two sons that were born there, who came thither in his loins, as others in the account may be said to do, who were not yet born, when Jacob went

down, the total number is threescore and ten, (<sup><0465></sup>Genesis 46:26,27) out of which take the six following persons, Jacob, who was called by Joseph into Egypt, besides the threescore and fifteen souls, and Joseph and his two sons then in Egypt, who could not be said to be called by him, and Hezron and Hamul, the sons of Pharez not yet born, and this will reduce Moses's number to sixty four; to which sixty four, if you add the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, who were certainly part of the kindred called and invited into Egypt, (<sup><0450></sup>Genesis 45:10,19 45:5) it will make up completely threescore and fifteen persons: or the persons called by Joseph maybe reckoned thus; his eleven brethren and sister Dinah, fifty two brother's children, to which add his brethren's eleven wives, and the amount is threescore and fifteen: so that the Jew <sup>f284</sup> has no reason to charge Stephen with an error, as he does; nor was there any need to alter and corrupt the Septuagint version of (<sup><0457></sup>Genesis 45:27) to make it agree with Stephen's account; or to add five names in it, in (<sup><0470></sup>Acts 7:20) as Machir, Galaad, Sutalaam, Taam, and Edom, to make up the number seventy five: and it may be observed, that the number is not altered in the version of (<sup><0502></sup>Deuteronomy 10:22) which agrees with the Hebrew for seventy persons.

**Ver. 15.** *So Jacob went down into Egypt*, etc.] At the invitation of his son Joseph:

*and died, he, and our fathers*; both Jacob and his twelve sons died in Egypt, though we have no account of the death of any of them, but Jacob and Joseph, particularly; only in general, that Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation, (<sup><0483></sup>Genesis 49:33 50:26) (<sup><0006></sup>Exodus 1:6) the Syriac version adds "there", that is, in Egypt.

**Ver. 16.** *And were carried over into Sichem*, etc.] The Syriac version reads in the singular number, "and he was translated into Sichem, and laid", etc. as if this was said of Jacob only, whereas he is not spoken of at all, only the fathers, the twelve patriarchs; for Jacob, though he was carried out of Egypt, he was not buried in Sichem, but in the cave of Machpelah, (<sup><0493></sup>Genesis 50:13). But Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs, who died in Egypt, when the children of Israel came out from thence, they brought their bones along with them, and buried them in Sichem: of the burial of Joseph there, there is no doubt, since it is expressly affirmed in (<sup><0282></sup>Joshua 24:32) and that the rest of the patriarchs were buried there, and not in Hebron, as Josephus asserts <sup>f285</sup>, may be concluded from hence; because in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, there are never mentioned more in

Jewish writers <sup>f286</sup>, than these four couple; Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; from whence, they say, Hebron was called Kirjath Arba, the city of four; as also, because it is the general consent of the Jews; and if they had not agreed in it, or said nothing about it, the thing is natural to suppose, that the children of Israel brought the bones of all the patriarchs out of Egypt, along with Joseph's <sup>f287</sup>; and since they buried the bones of Joseph in Sichem, it is most reasonable to believe, that the rest were buried there likewise; though it must be owned, that there is an entire silence about them, even when the sepulchre of Joseph is taken notice of: so R. Benjamin speaking of the Samaritans says <sup>f288</sup>,

“among them is the sepulchre of Joseph the righteous, the son of Jacob our father, on whom be peace, as it is said, (<sup><0162></sup>Joshua 24:32).”

And says another of their writers <sup>f289</sup>,

“from Sichem about a sabbath day's journey, in a village, called Belata, there Joseph the just was buried;”

but of the rest, no mention is made:

*and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem*; the last clause, the father “of Sichem”, is left out in the Syriac version; and the Alexandrian copy reads it, “in Sichem”; as if it was the name of a place, and not of a man: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “the son of Sichem”; whereas it is certain, that Sichem was the son of Emmor, or Hamor, (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 33:19 34:6) unless it can be thought there were two Sichems, one that was the father of Emmor, and another that was his son: but the great difficulty is, how the sepulchre in which the fathers were laid at Sichem, can be said to be bought by Abraham of the sons of Emmor, when what Abraham bought was the field and cave of Machpelah; and that not of the sons of Emmor, but of the sons of Heth, and of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hitrite, (<sup><0216></sup>Genesis 23:16,17). Whereas the parcel of ground in Sichem, bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem, was bought by Jacob, (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 33:19) (<sup><0162></sup>Joshua 24:32). Various things are suggested, to reconcile this; some think the word Abraham is an interpolation, and that it should be read, which he (Jacob) bought; but to support this, no copy can be produced: others observe, that it may be read, which he bought for Abraham; that is, which Jacob bought for Abraham

and his seed, as a pledge of the inheritance of the whole land, promised unto him; others think that by Abraham is meant a son of Abraham, that is, Jacob; as children are sometimes called by their father's name; as the Messiah is called David, and the like; but what best seems to remove the difficulty is, that the words refer to both places and purchases; to the field of Machpelah bought by Abraham, and to the parcel of field is Sichem bought by Jacob, of the sons of Emmor; for the words with the repetition of the phrase, "in the sepulchre", may be read thus; "and were laid in the sepulchre, that Abraham bought for a sum of money", and in the sepulchre (bought by Jacob) "of the sons of Emmor", the father of Sichem; or the words may be rendered thus, "they were carried over into Sichem, and laid in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money, besides" that "of the sons of Emmor", the father "of Sichem"; namely, which Jacob bought, and in which Joseph was laid, (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 33:19, <sup><0242></sup>Joshua 24:32). And this agrees with Stephen's account and design, in the preceding verse; he observes, that Jacob died in Egypt, and all the twelve patriarchs; and here he tells us how they were disposed of, and where they were buried, both Jacob and his sons; they were removed from Egypt, and brought into the land of Canaan; Jacob, he was laid in the cave of Machpelah, in the sepulchre Abraham bought of the children of Heth; and Joseph and his brethren, they were laid in the sepulchre at Sichem, which Jacob bought of the sons of Emmor: upon the whole, the charge of several errors brought by the <sup>f290</sup> Jew against Stephen appears to be groundless; the sum this sepulchre was bought for was an hundred pieces of money, (<sup><0339></sup>Genesis 33:19).

**Ver. 17.** *But when the time of the promise drew nigh*, etc.] That is, the time of the four hundred years; when God promised to deliver the seed of Abraham out of their affliction and servitude, and bring them into the land of Canaan to inherit it:

*which God had sworn to Abraham*; in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13,14) for though there is no express mention made of an oath, yet there is a most solemn affirmation, which is equivalent to one; the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

*which God promised unto Abraham; the people grew and multiplied in Egypt*; (see <sup><0107></sup>Exodus 1:7) insomuch, that though their number were but threescore and ten when they went down to Egypt, and though various methods were taken to destroy them, and lessen their numbers, yet in little

more than two hundred years, their number was increased to six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men, besides old men, women, and children, and besides two and twenty thousand Levites, (<sup>(-00146)</sup>Numbers 1:46, 3:39). And it seems, that they multiplied the more towards the time when the promise of deliverance drew nigh to be accomplished, and even when they were the most afflicted, (<sup>(-00112)</sup>Exodus 1:12,20).

**Ver. 18.** *Till another king arose*, etc.] In, or over Egypt, as the Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; in (<sup>(-0008)</sup>Exodus 1:8) it is a new king; the Jewish writers are divided about him, whether he was a different king from the former; or only so called, because he made new edicts <sup>f291</sup>:

“Rab and Samuel, one says a new one absolutely: and the other says, because his decrees were renewed; he that says a new one absolutely, (thinks so) because it is written a new one; and he who says, because his decrees are renewed (or he makes new decrees, he thinks so) from hence, because it is not written, and he died, and there reigned; and (it makes) for him that says, because his decrees are renewed, what is written, “who knew not Joseph”; what is the meaning of that, “who knew not Joseph?” that he was like one who knew not Joseph at all.”

The Septuagint version of (<sup>(-0008)</sup>Exodus 1:8) renders it “another” king, as does Stephen here; another king from the Pharaoh of Joseph: the name of this was Ramesses Miamun; and one of the treasure cities built for him seems to be called after his name, Raamses, (<sup>(-00111)</sup>Exodus 1:11). The Jews call him Talma <sup>f292</sup> and by Theophilus of Antioch <sup>f293</sup> he is called Tethmosis; and by Artapanus <sup>f294</sup>, Palmanotha: “which knew not Joseph”; nor what great things he had done, to the advantage of the Egyptian nation; he was acquainted with the history of him, and of his worthy deeds, and therefore had no regard to his people, as the other Pharaoh had Josephus <sup>f295</sup> says, the kingdom was translated to another family; which might be the reason why he was not known, nor his friends taken notice of: Aben Ezra says, he was not of the seed royal; wherefore it is written, “and there arose”; he the kingdom, and had not a just right and title so that being a stranger, it is no wonder that he should not know Joseph; Jarchi’s note is,

“he made himself as if he did not know him”

he dissembled, he pretended ignorance of him, because he would show no respect unto his people. Beza's ancient copy, and another in the Bodleian library, read, "which remembered not Joseph".

**Ver. 19.** *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred*, etc.] See (<sup><4010></sup>Exodus 1:10) he took crafty, and yet cruel methods, to diminish the children of Israel, and to humble them; weakening their strength by labour, that they might not be able to beget children; ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill all the males that were born; and charging all his people to drown such male children that should escape the hands of the midwives;

*and evil entreated our fathers*; keeping them to hard labour, in mortar and brick, and all rural service; in which he made them to serve with rigour, and thereby made their lives bitter to them; employing them in building cities, pyramids, walls, and towers; making ditches, throwing up trenches, cutting watercourses, and turning rivers, with other things; which he added, setting taskmasters over them, to afflict them with burdens:

*so that they cast out their young children*, or "by making their children cast out": or as the Arabic version renders it, "by making that their children should be cast out": that is, by ordering his people to expose them to ruin, and to cast them in the rivers; and so the Syriac version, "and he commanded that their children be cast out"; for this refers to Pharaoh, and his orders to his officers and people, to cast out the male children of the Israelites; and not to the parents of the children, which our version and the Vulgate Latin incline to: for though Moses's mother, after she had hid him three months, put him into an ark of bulrushes, and laid him among the flags by the river's side, yet that was in order to save his life: whereas the end of the casting out of these young children was as follows,

*to the end they might not live*: for this has not respect unto the parents of the children, that they might not increase or multiply their offspring, but to the young children, that they being cast into the waters, might perish, and not live and become men; the Ethiopic version is rather a paraphrase, "and he commanded that they should kill every male that was born".

**Ver. 20.** *In which time Moses was born*, etc.] The word Moses, is differently written in the New Testament; sometimes Moses, as here, sometimes Mo-yseus, as in (<sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:35,37) sometimes Mo-yseus, as in (<sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:1,5,21) and sometimes Moseus, as in (<sup><4154></sup>Romans 5:14). He had his name from the Hebrew word, **hçm**, which signifies "to draw",

(<sup>f295</sup>Psalm 18:16) according to the reason of it given by Pharaoh's daughter,

*she called his name Moses; and she said, because I drew him out of the water,* (<sup>f296</sup>Exodus 2:10) Though Josephus<sup>f296</sup>, Philo<sup>f297</sup>, and others<sup>f298</sup>, make it to be an Egyptian name; the former of which serves, that the Egyptians call water "Mo", and "yses", such who are saved from water; wherefore compounding the name of both, they gave it to him: though according to Aben Ezra<sup>f299</sup>, his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; his words are these,

"the name of Moses is interpreted out of the Egyptian language into the Hebrew language, for his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; and so it is written in a book of agriculture, translated out of the Egyptian language into the Arabic, and also in the books of some Greek writers."

Moses had many names, as a Jewish chronologer observes<sup>f300</sup>;

"Pharaoh's daughter called his name Moses; his father called him Chabar, or Heber; his mother called him Jekuthiel; and his sister called him Jether (perhaps Jared, since this was one of his names); and his brethren called him Abizanoah; and Kohath called him Abi Socos; and the Israelites called him Shemaiah ben Nathaneel, and sometimes Tobiah, sometimes Shemaiah, and sometimes Sopher; but the Egyptians called him Monios."

For "Mo", in the Egyptian language, signifies "water", and "Ni" is "out"; and so both together signify, "out of the water", which agrees with the Hebrew etymology of his name. Now he was born at the time that orders were given by Pharaoh to cast all the male children of the Israelites into the rivers, to drown them; Moses was born, whose parents were Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi; he was born, according to the Jews<sup>f301</sup>, on the seventh day of Adar, or February:

*and was exceeding fair*; or "fair to God"; divinely fair and beautiful; and so Pharaoh's daughter, according to Josephus, said to her father, that she had brought up a child that was *μορφη ψειον*<sup>f302</sup> "in form divine": and so the Jews say<sup>f303</sup>, that his form was as an angel of God; or he was fair in the sight of God, as the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version renders it, "he was dear to God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, grateful to God; was well-pleasing to him, in whom he delighted, having designed to do great things

by him: or “fair by God”: he had a peculiar beauty put upon him by God; partly to engage his parents the more to seek the preservation of him; and partly to engage the affection of Pharaoh’s daughter to him, when she should see him. Justin the historian <sup>f304</sup> makes mention of his extraordinary beauty, for which he was praised; but very wrongly makes him to be the son of Joseph; and the account Josephus gives of it, is very remarkable <sup>f305</sup>;

“as to beauty, says he, no man could be so out of love with it, as to see the goodly form of Moses, and not be amazed; it happened to many who met him, as he was carried along the way, that they would turn back at the sight of the child, and neglect their business, to indulge themselves with the sight of him; for such was the loveliness of the child, that it detained those that saw him.”

The Arabic version renders it, he “was consecrated by a vow to God”; but of this we have no account: the Jews say <sup>f306</sup>, that

“the Spirit of God came upon Miriam, and she prophesied; saying, behold a son shall be born to my father and to my mother at this time, who shall save Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians — and it is further said, that at the time of his birth, the whole house was filled with a great light, as the light of the sun and moon;”

upon which they had raised expectations of him: though this phrase, “fair to God”, may be only an Hebraism, just as Niniveh is said to be a city “great to God”, i.e. exceeding great, (Jon 3:3) it being usual with the Jews to join the word God to an adjective, to express the superlative degree; and so it is rightly rendered here, “exceeding fair: and nourished up in his father’s house three months”; so long he was hid by his mother there, which was a great instance of her faith; (see ~~<III>~~ Exodus 2:2, ~~<SI123>~~ Hebrews 11:23). The reason why he was kept no longer there was, because as the Jews say <sup>f307</sup>, the three months after Jochebed was delivered of a son, the thing was known in the house of Pharaoh, wherefore she could hide him no longer.

**Ver. 21.** *And when he was cast out*, etc.] Into the river, or by the river, as some copies read; the Syriac version adds, by his own people; by his father and mother and sister; who might be all concerned in it, and were privy to it; and which was done after this manner; his mother perceiving she could keep him no longer, made an ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and pitch, into which she put him; and then laid it in the flags, by the river’s side, and



set his sister Miriam at a proper distance, to observe what would be done to him, (<sup>4088</sup>Exodus 2:3,4).

*Pharaoh's daughter took him up*; her name, according to Josephus <sup>f308</sup>, was “Thermuthis”; she is commonly, by the Jews <sup>f309</sup>, called “Bithiah”; and by Artapanus in Eusebius <sup>f310</sup>, she is called “Merrhis”. This princess coming down to the river to wash, as she and her maidens were walking by the river side, spied the ark in which the child was laid, among the flags, and ordered one of her maids to go and fetch it; and which being done by her orders, is attributed to her; and opening the ark, she was struck at once with the loveliness of the babe, and being filled with compassion to it, which wept, she took him,

*and nourished him for her own son*: not that she took him to the king's palace, and brought him up there, but the case was this; Miriam the sister of Moses, observing what was done, and perceiving the inclination of Pharaoh's daughter to take care of the child, offered to call an Hebrew nurse, to nurse the child for her; to which she agreed, and accordingly went and fetched her own and the child's mother, who took it upon wages, and nursed it for her; and when it was grown, brought it to her, who adopted it for her son, (<sup>4088</sup>Exodus 2:5-10). According to Josephus <sup>f311</sup>, and some other Jewish writers <sup>f312</sup>, so it was, that when the child was taken out of the ark, the breast was offered it by several Egyptian women, one after another, and it refused to suck of either of them; and Miriam being present, as if she was only a bystander and common spectator, moved that an Hebrew woman might be sent for; which the princess approving of, she went and called her mother, whose breast the child very readily sucked; and at the request of the princess she took and nourished it for her: according to Philo the Jew <sup>f313</sup>, this princess was the king's only daughter, who had been a long time married, but had had no children, of which she was very desirous; and especially of a son, that might succeed in the kingdom, that so the crown might not pass into another family; and then relating how she came with her maidens to the river, and found the child; and how that the sister of it, by her orders, fetched an Hebrew nurse to her, which was the mother of the child, who agreed to nurse it for her; he suggests that from that time she gave out she was with child and feigned a big belly, that so the child might be thought to be *γνησιος αλλ μη υποβολιμαιος* “genuine, and not counterfeit”: but according to Josephus <sup>f314</sup>, she adopted him for her son, having no legitimate offspring, and brought him to her father, and told him how she had taken him out of the

river, and had nourished him; (Josephus uses the same word as here;) and that she counted of him to make him her son, and the successor of his kingdom; upon which Pharaoh took the child into his arms, and embraced him, and put his crown upon him; which Moses rolling off, cast to the ground, and trampled upon it with his feet: other Jewish writers say <sup>f315</sup>, that he took the crown from off the king's head, and put it on his own; upon which, the magicians that were present, and particularly Balaam, addressed the king, and put him in mind of a dream and prophecy concerning the kingdom being taken from him, and moved that the child might be put to death; upon which his daughter snatched it up, and saved it, the king not being forward to have it destroyed: and they also tell this story as a means of saving it, that Jethro who was sitting by, or Gabriel in the form of one of the king's princes, suggested that the action of the child was not to be regarded, since it had no knowledge of what it did; and as a proof of it, proposed that there might be brought in a dish, a coal of fire, and a piece of gold, or a precious stone; and that if he put out his hand and laid hold on the piece of gold, or precious stone, then it would appear that he had knowledge, and deserved death; but if he took the coal, it would be a plain case that he was ignorant, and should be free: the thing took with the king and his nobles, and trial was made, and as the child put out his hand to lay hold on the piece of gold or precious stone, the angel Gabriel pushed it away, and he took the coal, and put it to his lips, and to the end of his tongue; which was the cause of his being slow of speech, and of a slow tongue: by comparing Philo's account with this text, one would be tempted to think that Pharaoh's daughter did really give out, that Moses was her own son; and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to confirm this, (<sup><38124></sup>Hebrews 11:24) who says, "that Moses denied to be called, or that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter"; as the words may be rendered.

**Ver. 22.** *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, &c,]* Which was reckoned very considerable: (<sup><1060></sup>1 Kings 4:30) Philo the Jew says <sup>f316</sup> that he learned arithmetic, geometry, and every branch of music, the hieroglyphics, the Assyrian language, and the Chaldean knowledge of the heavens, and the mathematics; yet was not a magician, or skilled in unlawful arts, as Justin suggests <sup>f317</sup>:

*and was mighty in words*; he had a command of language, and a large flow of words, and could speak properly and pertinently upon any subject; for though he was slow of speech, and of tongue, and might have somewhat of

a stammering in speaking, yet he might have a just diction, a masculine style, and a powerful eloquence, and the matter he delivered might be very great and striking:

*and in deeds*; or in “his deeds”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he was a man of great abilities, and fit for business both in the cabinet and in the field. Josephus<sup>f318</sup> relates an expedition of his against the Ethiopians, whilst he was in Pharaoh’s court, in which he obtained victory over them, when the Egyptians had been greatly oppressed by them; in which his prudence and fortitude were highly commended.

**Ver. 23.** *And when he was full forty years old*, etc.] This Stephen had from tradition, and not from Scripture, which is silent about the age of Moses at this time, and only says, “it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown”, (<sup>(A21b)</sup>Exodus 2:11) but that he was at this time at such an age, is the general sense of the Jews. Upon the above mentioned passage they have this note<sup>f319</sup>

“twenty years old was Moses at that time; and there are that say, that he was forty years old. And<sup>f320</sup> elsewhere still more particularly; Moses was “forty” years in the palace of Pharaoh, forty years in Midian, (the Amsterdam edition reads, *rbdmb*, “in the wilderness”, wrongly,) and he served Israel forty years.”

Indeed, the fabulous history of his life makes him to be but fifteen years of age at this time<sup>f321</sup>; but Stephen’s account is undoubtedly right, and which is confirmed by the above testimonies.

*It came into his heart*; by the Spirit of God, under a more than ordinary impulse of which he now was:

*to visit his brethren, the children of Israel*; whom he knew to be his brethren, partly from the common report in Pharaoh’s court concerning him, and partly from the mark of circumcision in his flesh, and chiefly from divine revelation: for some years he had lived a courtly and military life, and had took no notice of the Israelites in their oppressions; but now the Lord laid it upon his heart to visit them, and observe how things were with them; and though he could not use any public and open authority, yet Philo the Jew says<sup>f322</sup>, that he exhorted the officers to use mildness and moderation with them, and comforted and encouraged the Israelites to bear

their burdens with patience and constancy, and not sink under them; suggesting, that things would take another turn, and would change for the better in time.

**Ver. 24.** *And seeing one of them suffer wrong*, etc.] Beza's Cambridge copy, and one of Stephens's, and one in the Bodleian library add, "of his own kindred": and so (<sup><0011></sup>Exodus 2:11) he is said to be "one of his brethren"; which Aben Ezra explains, **wtj pçmm**, "of his family", one of the tribe of Levi; and so another Jewish writer <sup>f323</sup> is very particular, and says,

"Moses went out to the camp of the Israelites, and saw an Egyptian smite one of the sons of Kohath, who was of his brethren of the tribe of Levi, as it is said, (<sup><0011></sup>Exodus 2:11)."

This man, according to some of the Jewish writers <sup>f324</sup>, was the husband of Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, (<sup><0341></sup>Leviticus 24:11) but, according to others, it was Dathan <sup>f325</sup>: the cause and manner of his suffering wrong was this, as they report <sup>f326</sup>; one of the taskmasters having set his eyes upon his wife, who was a beautiful woman, came early one morning, and got him out of his house to work, and then went into his wife, and lay with her; which when the man understood, he made some disturbance about it, for which he caused him to serve in very hard bondage, and beat him severely; who flying to Moses for protection,

*he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed*; he took his part, and screened him from the insults and blows of the officer, and avenged his cause:

*and smote the Egyptian*; and killed him: it is commonly said by the Jews <sup>f327</sup>, that he killed him by the sword of his mouth, by making use of the word Jehovah; though others <sup>f328</sup> say, he smote him with his fist, which is more likely; or rather with his sword; the Ethiopic version adds, "and buried him in the sand". Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's, add, "and he hid him in the sand", as it is in (<sup><0012></sup>Exodus 2:12) and which the Jews understand not literally of any sand pit, into which he might cast him, and cover him; or of the sand of the sea, near which he was, and which does not appear; but mystically of the people of Israel, comparable to the sand of the sea, among whom he hid him. So in one of their Midrashes <sup>f329</sup> it is observed on these words,

“and “he hid him in the sand”; though there were none there but the Israelites — -who are like to sand: he said unto them, ye are like the sand; take this man here and put him there, and his voice is not heard; so this thing will be hid among you, and not heard. And so you find that the thing was not heard but by the means of the Hebrews, as it is said, “and he went out on the second day, and two men of the Hebrews”, etc.”

And another of their <sup>f330</sup> writers, says, that when Moses saw the Egyptian smiting the Hebrew,

“he began to curse him, and took the sword of his lips, and killed him, and hid him in the camp of the Israelites, as it is said, (<sup><002></sup>Exodus 2:12) not in the sand, but among the Israelites: hence it is said, “the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea”, (<sup><010></sup>Hosea 1:10).”

To which may be added what one of their chronologers <sup>f331</sup> affirms, that

“Moses slew the Egyptian with the ineffable name of God, and hid him among the children of Israel, who are like to sand.”

This Egyptian is said, by Jarchi, to be one of the taskmasters who was appointed over the officers of Israel, who, from the cockcrowing, kept them to their work, which is very probable.

**Ver. 25.** *For he supposed his brethren would have understood him*, etc.] From his being an Hebrew in such high life; from his wonderful birth, and miraculous preservation in his infancy, and education in Pharaoh’s court; and from the promise of God that he would visit them and save them:

*how that God by his hand would deliver them*: wherefore he was the more emboldened to kill the Egyptian, believing that his brethren would make no advantage of it against him; but look upon it as a beginning and pledge of their deliverance by him:

*but they understood not*; or “him not”, as the Ethiopic version reads; they did not understand that he was to be their deliverer, or that this action of his was a token of it.

**Ver. 26.** *And the next day he showed himself to them, as they strove*, etc.]

To two men of the Hebrews, who were quarrelling and contending with one another: these are said by the Jews <sup>f332</sup> to be Dathan and Abiram; who

were disputing and litigating the point, and were very warm, and at high words. The occasion of their contention is <sup>f333</sup> said to be this,

“the Hebrew man (that had been abused) went to his house to divorce his wife, who was defiled, but she fled and told the affair to Abiram her brother: and on the morrow, Moses returned a second time to the Hebrew camp, and found Dathan and Abiram contending about the divorce.”

Though some think this is prophetically said, because they afterwards contended and divided in the business of Korah <sup>f334</sup> Moses came up to them, and let them know who he was; and this was the day after he had killed the Egyptian. So Stephen explains the “second day” in (<sup><0113></sup>Exodus 2:13) and to this agrees what a Jewish writer <sup>f335</sup> says, that in the morning, Moses returned a second time to the camp of the Hebrews:

*and would have set them at one again*; persuaded them to peace and concord, composed their difference, reconciled them, and made them good friends:

*saying, sirs, ye are brethren*; as Abraham said to Lot, when there was a strife between their herdsmen, (<sup><0113></sup>Genesis 13:8) and if these two were Dathan and Abiram, they were brethren in the strictest sense, (<sup><0113></sup>Numbers 16:1)

*why do ye wrong one to another?* by abusing each other, calling ill names, or striking one another; or by lifting up the hand to strike, as Jonathan the Targumist says Dathan did against Abiram.

**Ver. 27.** *But he that did his neighbour wrong*, etc.] Who seems to be the same person whom Moses had defended the day before; and, according to the Jews, must be Dathan <sup>f336</sup>: the same

*thrust him away*; from them, when he went to part them, and persuade them to be good friends:

*saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?* which was very ungrateful, if he was the man he had delivered the day before; and very impertinent, since he did not take upon him to rule and judge, but only to exhort and persuade to peace and brotherly love: the language suits with the spirit of Dathan or Abiram; (<sup><0113></sup>Numbers 16:3,12,13) This is thought to be said to him by way of contempt of him, as being a very young man:

the words are thus commented on in one of the ancient commentaries of the Jews <sup>f337</sup>,

“R. Judah says, Moses was twenty years of age at that time: wherefore it was said to him, thou art not yet fit to be a prince and a judge over us, seeing one of forty years of age is a man of understanding. And R. Nehemiah says, he was forty years of age; (See Gill on “<sup>4073</sup>Acts 7:23”) and it was said to him, truly thou art a man, but thou art not fit to be a prince and a judge over us: and the Rabbans say, he said to him, art thou not the son of Jochebed, though they call thee the son of Bithiah? and dost thou seek to be a prince and a judge over us? it is known concerning thee what thou didst to the Egyptian.”

**Ver. 28.** *Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?*] That is, is it thy will? dost thou design to kill me? or, as in (<sup>4024</sup>Exodus 2:14) “intendest” thou to kill me? In the Hebrew text it is, “wilt thou kill me, dost thou say?” that is, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it, dost thou say so “in thine heart?” which is a much better observation than that of Jarchi’s;

“from hence we learn, says he, that he slew him by the ineffable name:”

though this is the sense of some of their ancient doctors <sup>f338</sup>;

““to kill me dost thou say?” it is not said, “dost thou seek?” but “dost thou say?” from whence you may learn, that the ineffable name was made mention of over the Egyptian, and he slew him.”

The word “yesterday” is added by Stephen, but with great truth and propriety, and is in the Septuagint version of (<sup>4024</sup>Exodus 2:14). The “as” here does not intend the manner of killing, whether by the fist or sword, or by pronouncing the word Jehovah, as Jarchi thinks, but killing itself, by whatsoever way; and the words were very spitefully said, on purpose to publish the thing, and to expose Moses to danger of life, as it did.

**Ver. 29.** *Then fled Moses at this saying,* etc.] For hereby the thing was known to Pharaoh, being presently carried to court, who sought to kill him for it, (<sup>4025</sup>Exodus 2:15) The Jews have a very fabulous story, that Moses was taken up upon it, and put in prison, and delivered into the hands of an executioner to be put to death; but that God wrought a miracle for him; he made his neck as hard as a pillar of marble, and the sword turned upon the

neck of the executioner, and he died; and God sent Michael, the prince, in the likeness of the executioner, who took Moses by the hand, and led him out of Egypt, and left him at the borders of it, the distance of three days' journey<sup>f339</sup> but the truth of the matter is, as Stephen relates, he fled directly, as soon as he heard the above words, for he knew his life was in the utmost danger:

*and was a stranger in the land of Madian*; which, as Josephus says<sup>f340</sup>, lay near the Red sea, and took its name from one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Philo the Jew<sup>f341</sup> says, it was on the borders of Arabia; and according to Jerom<sup>f342</sup>, it was near Arnon and Areopolis, the ruins of which only were shown in his days; here he sojourned many years with Jethro the priest of that place:

*where he begat two sons*; whose names were Gershom and Eliezer, having married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, (<sup><4012></sup>Exodus 18:2-4).

**Ver. 30.** *And when forty years were expired*, etc.] “Forty other years” the Arabic version reads; for so long the Jews<sup>f343</sup> say Moses kept Jethro's flock, and so many years he lived in Midian; and so the Syriac version, “when then he had filled up forty years”; which agrees exactly with the account of the Jewish writers observed on (<sup><4023></sup>Acts 7:23) who say, that he was forty years in Pharaoh's court, and forty years in Midian; so that he was now, as they<sup>f344</sup> elsewhere justly observe, fourscore years of age:

*there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*; the same with Horeb, (<sup><4011></sup>Exodus 3:1) where it is said, “Moses came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb”; where he saw the sight of the burning bush, and out of which the angel appeared to him: and Stephen is to be justified in calling it Mount Sinai; the account which Jerom<sup>f345</sup> gives of it is this;

“Horeb is the Mount of God in the land of Midian, by Mount Sinai, above Arabia, in the desert, to which is joined the mountain and desert of the Saracenes, called Pharan: but to me it seems, that the same mountain was called by two names, sometimes Sinai, and sometimes Horeb;”

and in which he was right. Some think the same mountain had two tops, and one went by one name, and the other by another; or one side of the mountain was called Horeb, from its being dry and desolate; and the other Sinai, from the bushes and brambles which grew upon it. So <sup>^</sup>nynys,



“Sinin”, in the Misna <sup>f346</sup>, signifies the thin barks of bramble bushes; and the bush hereafter mentioned, in the Hebrew language, is called *hns*, “Seneh”; from whence, with the Jews, it is said to have its name.

“Says <sup>f347</sup> R. Eliezer, from the day the heavens and the earth were created, the name of this mountain was called Horeb; but after the holy blessed God appeared to Moses out of the midst of the bush, from the name of the bush “(Seneh)”, Horeb was called Sinai.”

Some say the stones of this mountain, when broken, had the resemblance of bramble bushes <sup>f348</sup> in them. Add to this, that Josephus <sup>f349</sup> calls this mountain by the same name as Stephen does, when he is reciting the same history. Moses, he says,

“led the flock to the Sinaean mountain, as it is called: this is the highest mountain in that country, and best for pasture, abounding in good herbage; and because it was commonly believed the Divine Being dwelt there, it was not before fed upon, the shepherds not daring to go up to it.”

Here Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law; for to such a life did he condescend, who for forty years had been brought up in the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Here appeared to him

*an angel of the Lord*, and who was no other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as appears from (<sup>4173</sup>Acts 7:32) and was the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God, the angel of the divine presence, and of the covenant, an uncreated angel. And this is the sense of many of the Jewish writers, who interpret it of the angel the Redeemer, the God of Bethel <sup>f350</sup>; though Jonathan the paraphrast seems to understand it of a created angel, whose name he calls Zagnugael <sup>f351</sup>, and some say it was Michael, and some Gabriel <sup>f352</sup>.

*In a flame of fire in a bush*; and which yet was not consumed by it. This bush was a bramble bush, or thorn; so Aben Ezra <sup>f353</sup> says it was a kind of thorn, and observes, that in the Ishmaelitish or Turkish language, the word signifies a kind of dry thorn; and so Philo the Jew says <sup>f354</sup>, it was a thorny plant, and very weak; and therefore it was the more wonderful, that it should be on fire, and not consumed. Josephus <sup>f355</sup> affirms, that neither its verdure, nor its flowers were hurt, nor any of its fruitful branches

consumed, though the flame was exceeding fierce. The Jerusalem Targum of (<sup><1111></sup>Exodus 3:2) is,

“and he saw and beheld the bush burned with fire, and the bush **byj rm**: “became green”; or, as Buxtorf renders it, “emitted a moisture”, and was not burnt.”

This sight, the Arabic writers <sup>f356</sup> say, Moses saw at noon day. Artapanus <sup>f357</sup>, an ancient writer, makes mention of this burning, but takes no notice of the bush; yea, denies that there was anything woody in the place, and represents it only as a stream of fire issuing out of the earth: his words are,

“as he (Moses) was praying, suddenly fire broke out of the earth, and burned, when there was nothing woody, nor any matter fit for burning in the place.”

But Philo better describes it; speaking of the bush, he says <sup>f358</sup>,

“no one bringing fire to it, suddenly it burned, and was all in a flame from the root to the top, as if it was from a flowing fountain, and remained whole and unhurt, as if it was no fuel for the fire, but was nourished by it.”

The Jews allegorize this vision different ways: sometimes they say <sup>f359</sup>,

“the fire designs the Israelites, who are compared to fire, as it is said, (Obidiah 1:18) “the house of Jacob shall be a fire”; and the bush denotes the nations of the world, which are compared to thorns and thistles; so shall the Israelites be among the people, their fire shall not consume the people, who are like to thorns and briars; nor shall the nations of the world extinguish their flame, which is the words of the law: but in the world to come, the fire of the Israelites shall consume all people, who are compared to thorns and thistles, according to (<sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 33:12)”

But it is much better observed in the same place;

“the bush pricks, afflicts, and gives pain, why does he (the Lord) dwell in affliction and anguish? because he saw the Israelites in great affliction, he also dwelt with them in affliction, as it is said, (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 63:9) “in all their affliction he was afflicted””

And very appropriately is it remarked by Philo <sup>f360</sup>;

“the burning bush (says he) is a symbol of the oppressed, the flaming fire, of the oppressors; and whereas that which was burning was not burnt, it shows, that they that are oppressed shall not perish by those who attempt it; and that their attempt shall be in vain, and they shall escape safe.”

And so Aben Ezra has this note on (~~408D~~Exodus 3:2).

“the enemy is compared to fire, and Israel to the bush, wherefore it was not burnt:”

this may be very well considered as an emblem of the state of the Jewish people in fiery trials, and very severe afflictions; who were like a bush for the number of its twigs and branches, they being many, and for its weakness and liableness to be consumed by fire, and yet wonderfully preserved by the power and presence of God among them.

**Ver. 31.** *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight*, etc.] To see a bush on fire was no extraordinary thing; but to see a bush on fire, and yet not consumed by it, which was the case here, was wonderful indeed: and that an angel of the Lord, or the Lord himself, should appear in it, made it still more amazing; though, as yet, this was not observed by Moses, only the former; and which struck him with wonder, and excited his curiosity:

*and as he drew near to behold it*; to take a more exact view of it, and satisfy himself with the truth of it, and, if it was possible, to find out the reason why it was not burnt:

*the voice of the Lord came unto him*; to his ears, out of the bush, and expressed the following words.

**Ver. 32.** *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers*, etc.] Who made a covenant with them, promised the land of Canaan to them, and to their posterity, and to bring the children of Israel out of their servitude and bondage, and into the possession of the promised land:

*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; words which our Lord makes use of to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, since God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, (See Gill on ~~402C~~Matthew 22:32”)

*Then Moses trembled*; this Stephen had by tradition; in which way also the author of the epistle to the Hebrews had the account of his trembling and quaking at the same mount, when the law was given, (<sup><3821></sup>Hebrews 12:21)

*and durst not behold*; either “the sight” of the burning bush, and curiously consider and inquire into that, as the Syriac version reads; or him, as the Ethiopic version; that is, God, and which is expressed in (<sup><1006></sup>Exodus 3:6)

**Ver. 33.** *Then said the Lord to him*, etc.] To Moses, who through curiosity had made too near an approach:

*put off thy shoes from thy feet*; in token of humility, obedience, and reverence:

*for the place where thou standest is holy ground*; not really, but relatively, on account of the divine presence in it, and only so long as that continued.

**Ver. 34.** *I have seen, I have see the affliction of my people*, &c] The repetition of the phrase denotes the certainty of it, the exquisite and exact knowledge the Lord took of the affliction of his people, and how much his heart was affected with it:

*which is in Egypt*; from whence Moses had fled and had left them, he being now in the land of Midian, which was the place of his sojourning: and

*I have heard their groaning*; under their various oppressions and burdens, and by reason of the cruel usage of their taskmasters:

*and am come down to deliver them*; not by local motion, or change of place, God being omnipresent, who fills all places at all times; but by the effects of his grace and power.

*And now come, I will send thee into Egypt*; to Pharaoh, the king of it, (<sup><1000></sup>Exodus 3:10) to require of him to let the children of Israel go, and to deliver them out of their bondage.

**Ver. 35.** *This Moses, whom they refused*, etc.] That is, the Israelites; the Ethiopic version reads, “his kinsmen denied”; those of his own nation, and even of his family: “saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge?” as Dathan, or whoever said the words in (<sup><4077></sup>Acts 7:27).

*the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer*; or “a redeemer”; so the Jews often call Moses, saying <sup>f361</sup>

“as was the first redeemer, so shall be the last Redeemer.”

He was an eminent type of the Messiah; and the redemption of the people of Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, by him, was emblematical of redemption from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law by Jesus Christ; and as Moses had his mission and commission from God, so had Jesus Christ, as Mediator; and as Moses was despised by his brethren, and yet made the ruler and deliverer of them, so, though Jesus was set at nought by the Jews, yet he was made both Lord and Christ, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. Moses was sent “by the hands of the angel, which appeared to him in the bush”; and who was the second person in the Godhead; the Father sent him by the Son, not as an instrument, but as having the power and authority over him, to govern, direct, and assist him. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “with the hand of the angel”; he sent Moses along with him to be used by him as an instrument in his hand, to deliver the people of Israel; nor does this at all contradict what the Jews say<sup>f362</sup> at the time of the passover:

“and the Lord hath brought us out of Egypt, *Æal m ydy I [ al* ,  
 “not by the hands of an angel”, nor by the hands of a seraph, nor by the hands of a messenger, but the holy blessed God, by his own glory, by himself;”

for he did not deliver them by a created angel, but by an uncreated one.

**Ver. 36.** *He brought them out*, etc.] Of Egypt, and delivered them from all their oppressions in it:

*after that he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt*; by turning his rod into a serpent, and by his rod swallowing up the rods of the Egyptians, and by the ten plagues, which were inflicted on Pharaoh, and his people, for not letting the children of Israel go:

*and in the Red sea*; by dividing the waters of it, so that the people of Israel went through it as on dry ground, which Pharaoh and his army attempting to do, were drowned. This sea is called the Red sea, not from the natural colour of the water, which is the same with that of other seas; nor from the appearance of it through the rays of the sun upon it, or the shade of the red mountains near it; but from Erythrus, to whom it formerly belonged, and whose name signifies red; and is no other than Esau, whose name was Edom, which signifies the same; it lay near his country: it is called in the

Hebrew tongue the sea of Suph, from the weeds that grew in it; and so it is in the Syriac version here:

*and in the wilderness forty years*; where wonders were wrought for the people in providing food for them, and in preserving them from their enemies, when at last they were brought out of it into Canaan's land, by Joshua. This exactly agrees with what has been before observed on (<sup><4073></sup>Acts 7:23) from the Jewish writings, that Moses was forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years in Midian, and forty years in the wilderness.

**Ver. 37.** *This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel*, etc.] What is recorded in (<sup><6185></sup>Deuteronomy 18:15).

*a prophet*, etc. (See Gill on "<sup><4192></sup>Acts 3:22").

**Ver. 38.** *This is he that was in the church in the wilderness*, etc.] Which must be understood of the children of Israel, who were the then church of God, whom he had chosen and separated from the rest of the world, to be a peculiar people to himself, to whom were given the word and ordinances, the service of God, and the promises; and God always had, and will have a church, though that is sometimes in the wilderness; which has been the case under the Gospel dispensation, as well as before; (<sup><6116></sup>Revelation 12:6,14) and it was a peculiar honour to Moses, that he was in this church, though it was in the wilderness; even a greater honour than to be in Pharaoh's court. This has a particular respect to the time when all Israel were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, when Moses was not only in the midst of them, and at the head of them; but was

*with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina*: this is the same angel as before, in (<sup><4073></sup>Acts 7:30) and refers either to his speaking to him then, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, etc. which was at Mount Sinai; or rather to the time when the law was given on that mount; and it may be to both; it is true of each, though it, may more especially regard the latter; for it was the angel of the divine presence, the second person in the Trinity, the word of God, that bid Moses come up into the mount; and who spake all the ten words to him; and who is described in so grand and august a manner in (<sup><6312></sup>Deuteronomy 33:2)

*and with our fathers*; the Jewish ancestors, who came out of Egypt under Moses, with whom he was as their deliverer and ruler, their guide and governor:

*who received the lively oracles to give unto us*; he received from the angel which spake to him the law, to deliver to the children of Israel; which is called “the oracles”, because it came from God, and contained his mind and will, and was a sure and infallible declaration of it; and “lively” ones, because delivered “viva voce”, with an articulate voice, and in audible sounds, and because it is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, “the words of life”: not that the law gives life, or points out the way of life and salvation to sinful men; it is to them all the reverse; it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death: it is indeed a rule of life, or of walk and conversation to men, and it promises life in case of perfect obedience, (~~<818>~~ Leviticus 18:5, ~~<819>~~ Deuteronomy 30:19,20, 32:47) but this is impracticable by fallen men, and therefore there is no life nor righteousness by the law. Though these lively oracles may be considered in a larger extent, as including all the promises of God respecting the Messiah, delivered to Moses, and all the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which pointed out Christ, as the way of life, righteousness, and salvation, from whence they may very well take this name.

**Ver. 39.** *To whom our fathers would not obey*, etc.] But often murmured against him, and were disobedient to him, and to the oracles he delivered to them, and so to God, whose oracles they were:

*but thrust him from them*; as one of the two Hebrews did, when he interposed to make up the difference between them; and which was an emblem and presage of what that people would afterwards do; (~~<407>~~ Acts 7:27)

*and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt*; they wished themselves there again, they lusted after the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, leeks, onions, and garlic there; and went so far as to move for a captain, and even to appoint one to lead them back thither again.

**Ver. 40.** *Saying unto Aaron, make us gods to go before us*, etc.] This is a proof of their disobedience to the law of Moses, and of their rejection of him, and of the inclination of their hearts to the idolatry of the Egyptians; which shows the gross stupidity, as well as ingratitude of this people, to think that gods could be made; and that those that are made could go before them, be guides unto them, and protectors of them; when they have eyes, but see not, and hands, but handle not, and feet, but walk not:

*for as for this Moses*; whom they speak of with great contempt, and in a very irreverent way:

*which brought us out of the land of Egypt*; which they mention not with gratitude, but as reflecting upon him for doing it:

*we wot not what is become of him*; they thought he was dead, according to the Targum of Jonathan on (<sup>(0230)</sup>Exodus 32:1) they concluded he was consumed with fire on the mount which flamed with fire.<sup>f363</sup> The following story is told by the Jews;

“when Moses went up on high, he said to the Israelites, at the end of forty days, at the beginning of the sixth hour I will come; at the end of forty days came Satan, and disturbed the world; he said to them, where is Moses your master? they answered him, he is gone up on high: he said to them, the sixth hour is come; they took no notice of him; he is dead (says he); they had no regard to him; he showed them the likeness of his bier; then they said to Aaron, “as for this man Moses”, etc.”

**Ver. 41.** *And they made a calf in those days*, etc.] Whilst Moses was in the mount; this was done in imitation of the Egyptian idol Apis or Serapis, which was an ox or a bullock; and it was made of the golden earrings of the people, which were melted down, and cast into the form of a calf, and graved by Aaron with a graving tool, (<sup>(0230)</sup>Exodus 32:2-4) And so the Syriac version here reads in the singular number, “and he made them a calf”; this was a most shameful and scandalous piece of idolatry. The Jews themselves are so sensible of the horribleness of it, and of the guilt of it, and of the reproach that lies on them for it, that it is common for them to say<sup>f364</sup>,

“there is not a generation, or an age, in which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf.”

Or, as elsewhere<sup>f365</sup> expressed,

“no punishment befalls thee, O Israel, in “which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf”.”

*And offered sacrifice unto the idol*; an altar was built, and proclamation made, that the next day would be the feast of the Lord; and accordingly early in the morning the people rose, and offered both burnt offerings and



peace offerings, (<sup><12315></sup>Exodus 32:5,6) and rejoiceth in the works of their own hands; for so the calf was; and which rejoicing they showed by eating, and drinking, and singing, and dancing.

**Ver. 42.** *Then God turned*, etc.] Away from them, withdrew his presence, and his favours from them:

*and gave them up to worship the host of heaven*; not angels, but the sun, moon, and stars; for since they liked not to retain the knowledge and worship of the true God, who made the heavens, and the earth, God in righteous judgment, in a judicial way, gave them up to a reprobate mind, to commit all the idolatry of the Gentiles, as a punishment of their former sin in making and worshipping the calf:

*as it is written in the book of the prophets*; of the twelve lesser prophets, which were all in one book; and which, as the Jews say <sup>f366</sup>, were put together, that a book of them might not be lost through the smallness of it; among which Amos stands, a passage in whose prophecy is here referred to; namely, in (<sup><3165></sup>Amos 5:25) “O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness”; no; they offered to devils, and not to God, (<sup><16217></sup>Deuteronomy 32:17) and though there were some few sacrifices offered up; yet since they were not frequently offered, nor freely, and with all the heart, and with faith, and without hypocrisy, they were looked upon by God as if they were not offered at all.

**Ver. 43.** *Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch*, etc.] Sometimes called Molech, and sometimes Milcorn; it was the god of the Ammonites, and the same with Baal: the one signifies king, and the other lord; and was, no doubt, the same with the Apis or Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites. Frequent mention is made of giving seed to Molech, and causing the children to pass through fire to him. The account the Jews give of this image, and of the barbarous worship of it, is this <sup>f367</sup>:

“though all idolatrous places were in Jerusalem, Molech was without Jerusalem; and it was made an hollow image, placed within seven chancels or chapels; and whoever offered fine flour, they opened to him the first; if turtle doves or two young pigeons, they opened the second; if a lamb, they opened the third; if a ram, they opened the fourth; if a calf, they opened the fifth; if an ox, they opened the sixth; but whoever offered his son, they opened the

seventh: his face was a calf's, and his hands were stretched out, as a man opens his hands to receive any thing from his friend; and they make him hot with fire, and the priests take the infant and put it into the hands of Molech, and the infant expires: and wherefore is it called Topher and Hinnom? Tophet, because they make a noise with drums, that its father may not hear the voice of the child, and have compassion on it, and return to it; and Hinnom, because the child roars, and the voice of its roaring ascends."

Others give a milder account of this matter, and say, that the service was after this manner<sup>f368</sup>; that

"the father delivered his son to the priests, who made two large fires, and caused the son to pass on his feet between the two fires,"

so that it was only a sort of a lustration or purification by fire; but the former account, which makes the child to be sacrificed, and put to death, seems best to agree with the scriptural one. Now this idol was included in chancels or chapels, as in the account given, or in shrines, in tabernacles, or portable temples, which might be taken up and carried; and such an one is here mentioned: by which is meant, not the tabernacle of the Lord made by Bezaleel; as if the sense was, that the idolatrous Israelites, though not openly, yet secretly, and in their hearts worshipped Moloch, as if he was included in the tabernacle; so that to take it up means no other, than in the heart to worship, and to consider him as if he had been shut up and carried in that tabernacle; nor is it to be thought that they publicly took up, and carried a tabernacle, in which was the image of Moloch, during their forty years' travels in the wilderness; for whatever they might do the few days they worshipped the golden calf, which is possible, it cannot be received, that Moses, who was so severe against idolatry, would ever have connived at such a practice: this therefore must have reference to after times, when they sacrificed their children to him, and took up and carried his image in little shrines and tabernacles.

*And the star of your god Remphan.* The Alexandrian copy reads "Raiphān"; some copies read "Raphān"; and so the Arabic version; others "Rephān"; the Syriac version reads "Rephon"; and the Ethiopic version "Rephom". Giants, with the Hebrews, were called "Rephaim"; and so Moloch, who is here meant, is called "Rephān", and with an epenthesis "Remphan", because of his gigantic form; which some have concluded from the massy crown on his head, which, with the precious stones,

weighed a talent of gold, which David took from thence, (~~1020~~2 Samuel 12:30) for not the then reigning king of the Ammonites, but Molech, or Milchom, their idol, is meant: this is generally thought to be the same with Chiun in Amos; but it does not stand in a place to answer to that; besides, that should not be left untranslated, it not being a proper name of an idol, but signifies a type or form; and the whole may be rendered thus, “but ye have borne the tabernacle of your king, and the type, or form of your images, the star of your god”; which version agrees with Stephens’s, who, from the Septuagint, adds the name of this their king, and their god Rephan, or Remphan. Drusius conjectures, that this is a fault of the Scribes writing Rephan for Cephane, or that the Septuagint interpreters mistook the letter **k** for **r**, and instead of Cephane read Revane; and Chiun is indeed, by Kimchi and Aben Ezra <sup>f369</sup>, said to be the same with Chevan, which, in the Ishmaelitish and Persian languages, signifies Saturn; and so does Rephan in the Egyptian language: and it is further to be observed, that the Egyptians had a king called Remphis, the same with Apis; and this may be the reason why the Septuagint interpreters, who interpreted for Ptolomy, king of Egypt, put Rephan, which Stephen calls Remphan, instead of Chiun, which they were better acquainted with, since they both signify the same deity, and the same star; and which also was the star of the Israelites, called by them **yatbc**, because supposed to have the government of the sabbath day, and therefore fitly called the “star of your god”. Upon the whole, Moloch, Chiun, Rephan, or Remphan, and Remphis, all are the same with the Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites; and which idolatry was introduced on account of Joseph, who interpreted the dream of Pharaoh’s kine, and provided for the Egyptians in the years of plenty against the years of famine, and was worshipped under the ox with a bushel on his head;

*figures which ye made to worship them*; in Amos it is said, “which you made for yourselves”: meaning both the image and the tabernacle in which it was, which they made for their own use, to worship their deity in and by:

*and I will carry you beyond Babylon*; in Amos it is beyond Damascus, and so some copies read here, which was in Babylon; and explains the sense of the prophet more fully, that they should not only be carried for their idolatry beyond Damascus, and into the furthest parts of Babylon, but beyond it, even into the cities of the Medea, Halah, and Habor, by the river Gozan; and here is no contradiction: how far beyond Damascus, the

prophet does not say; and if they were carried beyond Babylon, they must be carried beyond Damascus, and so the words of the prophet were fulfilled; and Stephen living after the fulfilment of the prophecy, by which it appeared that they were carried into Media, could say how far they were carried; wherefore the Jew <sup>f370</sup> has no reason to cavil at Stephen, as if he misrepresented the words of the prophet, and related things otherwise than they were; and so Kimchi interprets it, far beyond Damascus; and particularly mentions Halah and Habor, cities in Media, where the ten tribes were carried.

**Ver. 44.** *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “of Sinai”; there it was that the tabernacle was first ordered to be built, and there it was built, and set up; which was a sort of a portable temple, in which Jehovah took up his residence, and which was carried from place to place: of it, and its several parts and furniture, there is a large account in (<sup><0250></sup>Exodus 25:1-27:21). It is sometimes called Ohel Moed, or “the tabernacle of the congregation”, because there the people of Israel gathered together, and God met with them; and sometimes “the tabernacle of the testimony”, or “witness”, as here; (<sup><0282></sup>Exodus 38:21) (<sup><0450></sup>Numbers 1:50,53) because the law, called the tables of the testimony, and the testimony, it being a testification or declaration of the will of God, was put into an ark; which for that reason is called the ark of the testimony; and which ark was placed in the tabernacle; and hence that took the same name too. The Jewish writers say <sup>f371</sup>, it is so called,

“because it was a testimony that the Shekinah dwelt in Israel”;

or as another <sup>f372</sup> expresses it,

“it was a testimony to Israel that God had pardoned them concerning the affair of the calf, for, lo, his Shekinah dwelt among them.”

This tabernacle, in which was the testimony of the will of God, what he would have done, and how he would be worshipped, and which was a token of his presence, was among the Jewish fathers whilst they were in the wilderness; and is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, that they should now, or afterwards, take up and carry the tabernacle of Moloch. The Alexandrian copy reads, “your fathers”; the sense is the same.

*As he had appointed*; that is, as God appointed, ordered, and commanded:

*speaking unto Moses*, (<sup>10250</sup>Exodus 25:40)

*that he should make it according to the fashion he had seen*; when in the Mount with God; (<sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 8:5) for it was not a bare account of the tabernacle, and its vessels, which he hearing, might form an idea of in his mind; but there was a visible form represented to his eye, a pattern, exemplar, or archetype of the whole, according to which everything was to be made; which teaches us, that everything in matters of worship ought to be according to the rule which God has given, from which we should never swerve in the least.

**Ver. 45.** *Which also our fathers that came after*, etc.] Who came after those that died in the wilderness, and never saw nor entered into the land of Canaan; the children of that generation whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, who sprung from them, came up in their room, and succeeded them:

*brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles*; that is, they having received the tabernacle from their fathers, brought it into the land of Canaan, which was possessed by the Gentiles, when they entered into it with Joshua their leader, and captain, at the head of them; who is here called Jesus, as he is in (<sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 4:8) for Joshua and Jesus are the same name, and signify a saviour; for such an one Joshua was to the people of Israel; and was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, in his bringing many sons to glory:

*whom God drove out before the face of our fathers*; the Gentiles, who before possessed the land of Canaan, were drove out by God before the Israelites, to make way for their settlement there; for to whom can the success of those victories over the Canaanites be ascribed, which the Israelites under Joshua obtained, but to God? The language on the “Tingitane”, or Hercules’s pillars, said to be set up by some of these Canaanites, agrees with this, on which they inscribed these words;

“we are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nave,”

or Nun:

*unto the days of David*; this clause must not be read in connection with the words immediately preceding, as if the sense was, that the inhabitants of Canaan were drove out of their land unto the times of David, and then

returned and resettled, as in the Ethiopic version; but with the beginning of the verse, and the meaning is, that the tabernacle which the Israelites received from their fathers, and brought into the land of Canaan with them, was there unto the times of David.

**Ver. 46.** *Who found favour before God*, etc.] That is, David, who had an interest in the free favour and love of God, was chosen of God, a man after his own heart, and raised up to do his will; and who had the grace of God implanted in him, and was acceptable, and well pleasing to God through Christ; the same is said of Noah, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Genesis 6:8)

*and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob*; from whom the Israelites descended: David having a deep sense of the love of God to him, and the grace of God wrought in his heart, was exceeding desirous of finding a place for the building of an house, or fixed habitation for God; for there was a tabernacle already, which had been from the time of Moses, and which the children of Israel brought with them into Canaan, and was moved from place to place; sometimes it was at Gilgal, sometimes at Shiloh, and then it was at Nob, and Gibeah, and at length it was brought by David into his own city; but he wanted to build a settled and stable house for the Lord, of which there was a hint given that the Lord would choose a place to put his name in, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Deuteronomy 16:2) but it seems, where that was to be was not known; and therefore David very anxiously sought after it; the reference is had to (<sup><ORIG></sup>Psalms 132:3-5) where David determines not to go to his house, nor up to his bed, nor give sleep, to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, till he had found out a place for the habitation of the God of Jacob.

**Ver. 47.** *But Solomon built him an house.*] Though David was so set upon it, and made such large provisions for it, he was not to be the man that should build it, he having been greatly concerned in wars, and in the effusion of blood; but Solomon his son, who enjoyed much peace, was the person designed for this work, and who did accomplish it; of which there is a large account in the (<sup><ORIG></sup>1 Kings 6:1-7:51).

**Ver. 48.** *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, etc.] Such an one as Solomon's was; he did indeed dwell in his temple, but he was not confined to it, nor included in it, or circumscribed by it; and so much Solomon himself suggests, when he expresses his wonder at his dwelling on earth, seeing the heaven of heavens could not contain him, and

still less the house which he had built, (<sup><1087></sup>1 Kings 8:27),  $\hat{w}yl$  [ , “the most High”, is one of the names of God, (<sup><0148></sup>Genesis 14:18,19,22) the Apostle Paul says the same of God as Stephen does here; (<sup><4172></sup>Acts 17:24) “as saith the prophet”; the prophet Isaiah, (<sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 66:1,2).

**Ver. 49.** *Heaven is my throne*, etc.] There is the seat of the divine Majesty; there his glory is most conspicuous; there he keeps his court, that is his palace; and there are his attendants, the angels; and from thence are the administrations of his regal power and government, over the whole world:

*and earth is my footstool*; which is under his feet, is subject to him, and at his dispose, and which he makes use of at his pleasure: these things are not to be literally understood, but are images and figures, representing the majesty, sovereignty, and immensity of God; who is the maker of all things, the governor of the universe, and is above all places, and not to be contained in any:

*what house will ye build me? saith the Lord*; or where can any be built for him, since he already takes up the heaven and the earth? what house can be built by men, or with hands, that can hold him, or is fit for him to dwell in?

*or what is the place of my rest?* not in any house made with hands, but in the church among his saints, who are the temples of the living God; and this is his rest for ever, and here will he dwell, because he has chosen and desired them, and built them up for an habitation for himself, (<sup><3213></sup>Psalms 132:13,14)

**Ver. 50.** *Hath not my hand made all these things?* The heaven, and the earth, and all that is in them; the Arabic version renders it, “all these creatures”; and therefore what can be made for God? or what house built for him? in Isaiah the words are read without an interrogation, and affirm that his hand had made all these things, and therefore nothing could be made for him suitable to him, by the hands of men.

**Ver. 51.** *Ye stiffnecked*, etc.] Or “hard necked”, the same with  $Prw$  [  $h\check{c}q$ , which is a character frequently given of this people, (<sup><0230></sup>Exodus 32:9, 33:3,5, 34:9) and elsewhere, and is expressive of their obstinacy, stubbornness and refractoriness; who would not submit their necks to the yoke of God’s law, and be obedient to his commands:

*and uncircumcised in heart and ears*; for though they had the mark of circumcision in their flesh, of which they boasted; yet they had not the true

circumcision of the heart; their hearts were not circumcised to fear and love the Lord, nor their ears to hear the word of the Lord and the Gospel of Christ; so that notwithstanding their confidence in carnal privileges, they were uncircumcised persons:

*ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*; the resistance made by these persons was not to the Spirit of God in them, of which they were destitute, but to the Spirit of God in his ministers, in his apostles, and particularly in Stephen; nor to any internal operation of his grace, but to the external ministry of the word, and to all that objective light, knowledge, evidence, and conviction that it gave of Jesus's being the Messiah: and such who resist Christ's ministers, resist him, and such who resist him, may be said to resist his Holy Spirit; and the word here used signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile way, and fitly expresses their ill treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death: which is the resistance here designed, as appears by the following verse: so that this passage is no proof of the resistance of the Holy Spirit, and the operations of his grace in conversion, when he is in men, and acts with a purpose and will to convert them; since it does not appear that he was in these persons, and was acting in them, with a design to convert them; and if he was, it will be difficult to prove that they so resisted, and continued to resist, as that they were not hereafter converted; since it is certain that one of them, Saul, was really and truly converted, and how many more we know not. Though it will be allowed, that the Holy Ghost in the operations of his grace upon the heart in conversion may be resisted, that is, opposed; but not so as to be overcome or be hindered in, or be obliged to cease from, the work of conversion, insomuch that may come to nothing:

*as your fathers did, so do ye*; or as "your fathers were, so are ye"; as they were stiffnecked, self-willed, obstinate, and inflexible, so are ye; as they were uncircumcised in heart and ears, so are ye; and as they resisted the Spirit of God in his prophets, so do ye resist him in the apostles and ministers of the Gospel.

**Ver. 52.** *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* etc.] Either by reviling and speaking all manner of evil of them, (<sup><A151></sup>Matthew 5:11,12) or by killing them, (<sup><A231></sup>Matthew 23:31,37) and they have slain them; as Isaiah, Zachariah, and others:



*which showed before of the coming of the just one*; of Jesus the Messiah, whose character in the prophecies of the Old Testament is righteous servant, righteous branch, just, and having salvation; and whom Stephen styles so partly on account of the holiness of his nature, and the innocence and harmlessness of his life; and partly because he is the author of righteousness, and the end of the law for it to all that believe; of whose coming in the flesh all the prophets more or less spoke: and this being good news, and glad tidings, made the sin of the Jewish fathers the greater, in putting them to death, as the innocent character of Christ was an aggravation of the Jews' sin, in murdering of him, as it follows:

*of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers*; Judas, one of their nation, betrayed him into the hands of the chief priests and elders; and they betrayed, or delivered him into the hands of Pontius Pilate to be condemned to death, which they greatly importuned, and would not be satisfied without; and therefore are rightly called the murderers, as well as the betrayers of him.

**Ver. 53.** *Who have received the law, by the disposition of angels*, etc.] Who attended the angel that spake to Moses on Mount Sinai, (~~4078~~ Acts 7:38) who is the head of all principality and power, and whom he might make use of in giving the law to Moses: hence the law is said to be ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator, and is called the word spoken by angels, (~~8619~~ Galatians 3:19, ~~8011~~ Hebrews 2:2) and certain it is, that there were great numbers of angels on Mount Sinai, when the law was given, (~~6631~~ Deuteronomy 33:2, ~~6687~~ Psalm 68:17) And so the Jews say <sup>f373</sup>, that

“when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, there came down with him many companies of angels, Michael and his company, and Gabriel and his company”

Indeed they often say <sup>f374</sup>,

“the law was not given to the ministering angels:”

their meaning is, it was not given to them to observe and keep, because there are some things in it, which do not concern angels; but then it might be given to them to deliver to Moses, who gave it to the Israelites, and so may be said to receive it by the ministration of angels, through the hands of Moses. And now the law being given and received in so grand a manner, was an aggravation of the sin of the Jews in violating it, as it follows:

*and have not kept it*; but broke it in innumerable instances, and scarce kept it in any; for no man can keep it perfectly.

**Ver. 54.** *When they heard these things*, etc.] How that Abraham, the father of them, was called before he was circumcised, or the law was given to Moses, or the temple was built, which they were so bigoted to, and charged with speaking blasphemously of; and how that Joseph and Moses were very ill treated by the Jewish fathers, which seemed to resemble the usage Christ and his apostles met with from them; and how their ancestors behaved in the wilderness when they had received the law, and what idolatry they fell into there, and in after times; and how that though there was a temple built by Solomon, yet the Lord was not confined to it, nor would he dwell in it always; and especially when they heard him calling them a stiffnecked people, and uncircumcised in heart and ears; saying, that they persecuted and slew the prophets, and were the betrayers and murderers of an innocent person; and notwithstanding all their zeal for the law, and even though it was ministered to them by angels, yet they did not observe it themselves:

*they were cut to the heart*; as if they had been sawn asunder; they were filled with anguish, with great pain and uneasiness; they were full of wrath and madness, and could neither bear themselves nor him:

*and they gnashed on him with their teeth*: being enraged at him, and full of fury and indignation against him.

**Ver. 55.** *But he being full of the Holy Ghost*, etc.] That is, Stephen, as Beza's ancient copy, and some others express it; and so the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version reads, "full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost", as in (~~4016~~ Acts 6:5) and so some copies; being under the influences of the Spirit of God, and filled with his divine comforts, and strong in the faith of Jesus Christ, and having a holy boldness, courage, and intrepidity of mind; instead of being discouraged and dejected, of being cast down in his spirits, and looking down upon the ground, he

*looked up steadfastly to heaven*; where he desired to be, and hoped and believed he should be; and from whence he knew his help came, and which he might now implore, as well as forgiveness for his enemies.

*And saw the glory of God*; not the essential glory of God, but some extraordinary light and brightness, which was a token and representation of him:

*and Jesus standing on the right hand of God*; of that glory which was a Symbol of him: Jesus being risen from the dead, and ascended on high, was set at the right hand of God, in human nature, and so was visible to the corporeal eye of Stephen; whose visual faculty was so extraordinarily enlarged and assisted, as to reach the body of Christ in the third heavens; where he was seen by him standing, to denote his readiness to assist him, and his indignation at his enemies.

**Ver. 56.** *And said, behold, I see the heavens opened*, etc.] As they were at the baptism of Christ, (See Gill on <sup>“41816”</sup>Matthew 3:16’):

*and the son of man standing at the right hand of God*; he calls Jesus “the son of man”; a name by which he often called himself in his state of humiliation; and that though he was now glorified, it being the name of the Messiah in (<sup>3807</sup>Psalm 80:17, <sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13) as was well known to the Jews; and this Stephen said to show that God was on his side, and to let them know what honour was done him, what divine supports and comforts he had, and that he was an eyewitness of Jesus, and of his being alive, and in glory.

**Ver. 57.** *Then they cried out with a loud voice*, etc.] These were not the sanhedrim, but the common people; the Ethiopic version reads, “the Jews cried out”; which, they did, in a very clamorous way, either through rage and madness, or in a show of zeal against blasphemy; and cried out, either to God to avenge the blasphemy, or rather to the sanhedrim to pass a sentence on him, or, it may be, to excite one another to rise up at once, and kill him, as they did:

*and stopped their ears*; with their fingers, pretending they could not bear the blasphemy that was uttered. This was their usual method; hence they say, <sup>f375</sup>

“if a man hears anything that is indecent, (or not fit to be heard,) let him put his fingers in his ears hence the whole ear is hard, and the tip of it soft, that when he hears anything that is not becoming, he may bend the tip of the ear within it.”

By either of these ways these men might stop their ears; either by putting in their fingers, or by turning the tip of the ear inward.

*And ran upon him with one accord*; without any leave of the sanhedrim, or waiting for their determination, in the manner the zealots did; (See Gill on “~~4004~~ Matthew 10:4”) (See Gill on “~~4102~~ John 16:2”).

**Ver. 58.** *And cast him out of the city*, etc.] Of Jerusalem; for the place of stoning was without the city. The process, when regular, according to the sentence of the court, was after this manner <sup>f376</sup>;

“judgment being finished, (or the trial over,) they brought him out (the person condemned) to stone him; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, (~~4344~~ Leviticus 24:14) “bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp”, when he was ten cubits distant from the place of stoning, they order him to confess and when four cubits from it, they take off his garments — the place of stoning was twice a man’s height.”

And elsewhere <sup>f377</sup> it is said, that the place of stoning was without three camps (the camp of the Shekinah, the camp of the Levites, and the camp of the Israelites): upon which the gloss has these words;

“the court is the camp of the Shekinah, and the mountain of the house the camp of the Levites, and every city the camp of the Israelites; and in the sanhedrim in every city, the place of stoning was without the city like to Jerusalem.”

And these men, though transported with rage and fury, yet were so far mindful of rule, as to have him out of the city before they stoned him:

*and they stoned him*; which was done after this manner, when in form <sup>f378</sup>:

“the wise men say, a man was stoned naked, but not a woman; and there was a place four cubits from the house of stoning, where they plucked off his clothes, only they covered his nakedness before. The place of stoning was two men’s heights, and there he went up with his hands bound, and one of the witnesses thrust him on his loins, that he might fall upon the earth; and if he died not at that push, the witnesses lifted up a stone, which lay there, the weight of two men, and one cast it with all his strength upon him; and if he died not, he was stoned by all Israel.”

*And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul*; for the witnesses, according to the above account, were

first concerned in the stoning; and this was agreeably to the rule in (<sup><4870></sup>Deuteronomy 17:7) and which they seem to have observed amidst all their hurry and fury: and that they might perform their work with more ease and expedition, they plucked off their upper garments, and committed them to the care of Saul of Tarsus; who was now at Jerusalem, and belonged to the synagogue of the Cilicians, that disputed with Stephen, and suborned false witnesses against him. He is called a young man; not that he was properly a youth, for he must be thirty years of age, or more; since about thirty years after this he calls himself Paul the aged, (<sup><5009></sup>Philemon 1:9) when he must be at least sixty years of age, if not more; besides, Ananias calls him a “man”, (<sup><4493></sup>Acts 9:13) nor would the high priests have given letters to a mere youth, investing him with so much power and authority as they did; but he is so called, because he was in the prime of his days, hale, strong, and active. The learned Altting has taken a great deal of pains to show, that this Saul, who was afterwards Paul the apostle, is the same with Samuel the little, who is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; he living at this time, and being a disciple of Rabban Gamaliel, and a bitter enemy of the heretics, or Christians; and who, at the instigation of his master, composed a prayer against them; and his name and character agreeing with him: but it is not likely that the Jews would have retained so high an opinion of him to the last, had he been the same person: for they say<sup>f379</sup>,

“that as the elders were sitting in Jabneh, Bath Kol came forth, and said, there is one among you fit to have the Holy Ghost, or the Shekinah, dwell upon him; and they set their eyes on Samuel the little; and when he died, they said, ah the holy, ah the meek disciple of Hillel!”

**Ver. 59.** *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God,* etc.] As he was praying, and putting up the following petition;

*and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit;* from whence we learn, that the spirit or soul of man sleeps not, nor dies with the body, but remains after death; that Jesus Christ is a fit person to commit and commend the care of the soul unto immediately upon its separation; and that he must be truly and properly God; not only because he is equal to such a charge, which none but God is, but because divine worship and adoration are here given him. This is so glaring a proof of prayer being made unto him, that some Socinians, perceiving the force of it, would read the word Jesus in the

genitive case, thus; “Lord of Jesus receive my Spirit”: as if the prayer was made to the Father of Christ, when it is Jesus he saw standing at the right hand of God, whom he invokes, and who is so frequently called Lord Jesus; whereas the Father is never called the Lord of Jesus; and besides, these words are used in like manner in the vocative case, in (<sup>f620</sup>Revelation 22:20) to which may be added, that the Syriac version reads, “our Lord Jesus”; and the Ethiopic version, “my Lord Jesus”.

**Ver. 60.** *And he kneeled down*, etc.] It seems as if he stood before while they were stoning him, and while he was commending his soul to Christ, but now he kneeled down; prayer may be performed either kneeling or standing:

*and cried with a loud voice*; not only to show that he was in good spirits, and not afraid to die, but chiefly to express his vehement and affectionate desire to have the following petition granted:

*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*: do not impute it to them, or place it to their account; let it not rise and stand in judgment against them, or they be condemned for it; grant them forgiveness for it, and for every other sin: there is a great deal of likeness between Christ and this first martyr of his at their deaths; Christ committed his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and Stephen commits his into the hands of Christ; both prayed for forgiveness for their enemies; and both cried with a loud voice before they expired; for so it follows here,

*and when he had said this, he fell asleep*; or died; for death, especially the death of the saints, or dying in Jesus, is expressed by sleep. This way of speaking is common with the Jews, who say <sup>f380</sup>, that Rabbi such an one *Æymd*, “slept”; i.e. “died”; and this they say is a pure and honourable way of speaking with respect to an holy body, whose death is no other than as it were a sleep: and elsewhere <sup>f381</sup> it is said, that one saw such an one *µnmnm*, “sleeping”; the gloss upon it is, *SSWG*, “expiring”: (See Gill on “<sup>f811</sup>John 11:11”), (See Gill on “<sup>f113</sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13”). The Vulgate Latin version adds, “in the Lord.”