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Psalm 100:3

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Morgan County Today
Your Community. Your News.

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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

I Them a Fright

Did I ever tell you about the time that Mimi and Pap were asleep and I gave Mimi a fright?

Well, it all started when we were staying at the RV. Mimi and Pap were all snuggled in for the night and were snoozing away, dreaming of what ever they dream about.

Any-woof, I got afraid and decided to jump up in their bed. I then proceeded to try to get under the covers.

Then, it happened. I touched Mimi and it jerked her awake then she let out a scream! She woke up to me standing over her looking all confused. Pap said, "What's wrong?!" Mimi said, "Avery scared me half to death!"

Can you imagine: Me, little Ms Avery Pearl startled her like that.

I for one still think it is funny. Mimi however, not so much.

Now, you guys know why I always jump up on Paps side of the bed to sneak under the covers.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.



WEEKLY WEATHER

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Sat 06	76°/53°	
Sun 07	78°/54°	
Mon 08	79°/57°	

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Deer Lodge Abner Ross Center meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 PM.

Coalfield Genealogical and Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Senior Citizens Building at 6:00 PM.

Morgan County Republican Party meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the American Legion in Wartburg.

USDA FOODS DISTRIBUTION

East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA) will distribute USDA Foods, Thursday, September 11, 8 am to 12 pm, at the Wartburg Civic Center. You may pick up for 3 households only. Please bring a box for your commodities. For more information, call 423-346-6651 or 865-312-7741, option 5. This program is funded under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

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— In Loving Memory —

Shirley Jean Jones, 77



Shirley Jean Jones, born August 11, 1947, passed away August 7, 2025. She was the daughter of the late Curtis and Beulah Anderson Owens and wife of the late Charlie Jones. Mother to Charles Edward "Eddie" (Jolene) and Dirk Wayne Jones, baby Eric (dec). Grandmother to Samantha (Logan Reagon), Kimberly (Dakota Mayse) and Victoria and step grandmother to Brittany (Tyler Seabolt). Great Grandmother to River and Paisley, step great grandmother to Bentley Kennedy, Riley, and Conley Seabolt.

Sister to Susie (Bill) Kries, Azalee (Chester) Jones, Claudia Owens, Allen Owens, and Patty Newport. Sister-in-law to Barbara Goodman and Vickie (Tom) Swint.

She was preceded in death by family members: brother and sister Winford and Phyllis Owens, brothers-in-law; Brad Newport, Carl (Freda) Jones, Dwayne Scott, and David Goodman.

Shirley was a loving aunt to many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and a few great-great nieces and nephews. She was a cousin to many and a devoted friend to more than you can imagine.

She was a great asset to the Deer Lodge Community, where she spent numerous years volunteering in the school system, community center and historical society. One of her greatest joys, aside from her family, was being

able to be part of the planning of the July 4th Parade and Celebration for many, many years.

Shirley wanted to slip away quietly, she asked to have nothing long and drawn out, nothing fancy, that was typical Shirley, but the family wanted to give her a glorious send off, so we compromised.

Friends and family are asked to gather at Mount Hope Cemetery in Deer Lodge at 2 pm on Sunday, August 10, 2025. We will spend time together honoring her by remembering and telling our story of the very loved lady. Please join us in this celebration of Shirley in Shirley's Way.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Mount Hope Cemetery Association.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Shirley Jean Jones.



Psalm 123:1

**Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**

Wanda Josephine Bowling, 94



Wanda Josephine Bowling, age 94 passed on to Heaven, Thursday, August 28, 2025.

Wanda was a loving wife, and mother to David and four daughters, Paula Padilla of Mobile, Alabama, Janet Kilgore of Chickamauga Georgia, Vickie Smith of Hixon, TN., and Lynn Perruso of Hixson, TN; who meant everything to her. She was a kind and giving person who loved the Lord.

Wanda loved music, singing, and celebrating Christmas. She extremely enjoyed singing gospel songs with her church's quartet in her younger years. People from everywhere looked forward to her outdoor Christmas decorating. Her two-story white house off hwy 27 would be

fully lite with its yard displaying a hill full of lite Christmas paraphernalia. She also delighted in the act of Christmas giving to family members and friends.

Wanda is preceded in death by her mother Effie Thomas; father Rufus Thomas; eight sisters and two brothers.

She leaves behind husband, David; four daughters; six grandchildren; great grandchildren and a host of nephews and nieces and extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 1:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 2:00 p.m. with Bro. Calvin Sexton officiating. Interment will follow in the Kilbeck Cemetery in Robbins.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Wanda Josephine Bowling.

Freda Jo. "Gunter" Johnston, 84



Freda Jo. "Gunter" Johnston Passed away peacefully at the age of 84 on August 25, 2025.

Freda was born on June 15, 1941, to Lee and Betty Gunter. She was a graduate of WCHS, Class of 1959. In 1966 she was one of the first women hired by Caterpillar where she retired after 35 years of service.

To Freda, God was not distant – He was her comfort, her guide and her closest friend. Known for her warm heart, quick wit and loving devotion to her family. She was the thread that held it all together. She cherished time spent with her children, grandchildren, greatgrandchildren and family.

Left to cherish her memory is her loving daughters Gwen (Bob) Wilkins, Denise (Larry) Ross, Sheila (Kirk) Wilkins and Leila (Colin) Conner. Grandchildren Bobby (Jen) Wilkins, Amanda (Sean) Denny, Heather (Justin) Whyte, Adam (Marianna)

Ross, Nikki (Tim) Freel, Lorne (Chrissy) Wilkins, Brook (Justin) Loock, Kyle (Megan) Huckaby and Faith Conner. From those grandchildren she was blessed with 28 great-grandchildren. Also surviving are her brothers David (Astrid) Gunter, Wayne Gunter and numerous nieces and nephews whom she loved dearly. Also a very special friend Ed Kapp.

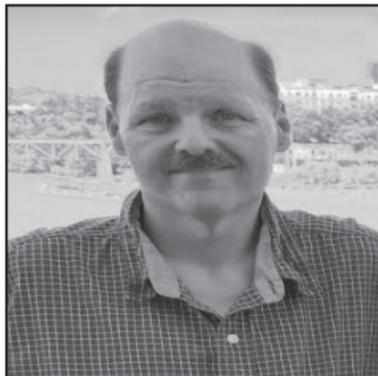
Freda is preceded in death by her husband Earl "Butch" Johnston, grandchildren Daniel Disney and Mollie Conner plus numerous loved ones that met her at the pearly gates with open arms.

The family will receive friends on Saturday August 30th from 5-7 with services at 7 officiated by Pastor Jim Disney at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg. Interment will be on Sunday August 31st at 1pm at Mossy Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Harriman.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Freda Jo. "Gunter" Johnston.

— In Loving Memory —

Kelly Jones



Kelly is survived by his brother-in-law, Bobby Hembree; nieces, Jeannie Basler and husband Nathan, and Joanie Hammock and husband Brandon; nephew, Brandon Hembree; great-nieces and nephews, Brooke Basler, Brylie Basler, Tyler Hammock and wife Emily with daughter Ivy, Ethan Hammock and son Baby B, Ian Hammock, and Trevor Hembree; along with a host of extended family and friends who will miss him dearly.

Kelly Jones, of Wartburg, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Wednesday, August 20, 2025.

Kelly was a generous man who dearly loved his family, University of Tennessee football, wrestling, his late cat Izzy, and especially his many friends and coworkers. He took great pride in his career at the Life Care Center, where he often spoke of his deep respect and affection for the colleagues and friends he made there.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Bobby and Wilma Jones; his sister, Sheila Kay Hembree; his brother, Kim Jones; his grandparents, Stanley and Allie Jones of Glades, and Ray and Rose Brown of Jamestown; and his beloved pet Izzy.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, August 24, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg. Funeral services will follow with Bro. Nathan Basler officiating. Graveside services will be held immediately afterward at Union Grove Cemetery in Sunbright.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you honor Kelly's generous nature by making a donation to any charity or group of your choice

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Kelly Jones.

Emma Lou Bingham-Meunier, 73



Her ex-spouse Gary Meunier. Her cousins, Donnie Norris, Jeanie Bingham, Patricia Brown, Cindy Kernea, Nancy Wright, David Terry, Steve Terry, Ronnie Bingham, Allison Bingham, Paula Tollett, and numerous other cousins and family friends.

Emma Lou Bingham-Meunier went to be with the Lord on Monday, August 25, 2025 after a battle with dementia. She was a member of White Oak Baptist Church where she was the church pianist. A role she had for 73 years. She began playing at age 11. Up until the end Miss Emmie maintained her love for her family, friends and God. Right until the end she would still sit at the piano and play a hymn especially Child of the King and Oh What a Savior. Miss Emmie was also a lifelong Tennessee Vols and Saint Louis Cardinals fan.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Richard and Myrtle Bingham and her lifelong best friend Jean Ruppe.

As you know, Miss Emmie taught school for 41 years and influenced so many. I hope all her former students and colleagues know how much she cared for them and how much she loved teaching.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday, August 28 at White Oak Church in Oakdale, receiving of friends 11:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral immediately following and lastly a private burial. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made for funeral expenses and a future scholarship in Miss Emmie's name..

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Emma Lou Bingham-Meunier.

Miss Emmie's life can be summed up easily. She lived what she sang about. She sang about a loving God and his promises and now she's where she sang about all those years.

Miss Emmie is survived by her daughter, Kathryn Zachary, her son-in-law Richard Zachary.

Skyler Raylen Lester, 15



made will last a lifetime. We will carry her smile, her laughter and the love she gave in our hearts forever.

Skyler Raylen Lester, age 15 passed away August 24, 2025 at her home. She was born May 5, 2010.

She is survived by her parents Ronald Lester and Summer Shelton; siblings Johnathan Lesters, Tristan Shelton, Taylynn Shelton, Taya Terrell, and Teara Denton and a host of family and friends who will forever cherish her memory.

Skyler was a light I the lives of everyone who knew her. She brought joy, laughter, and love to everyone she met. Skyler was beautiful, and smart, with a kind heart and a energetic spirit was beyond her years. Though her time with us was far too short the impact she

The family will receive friends Saturday, August 30, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 2:00-3:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 3:00 p.m.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Skyler Raylen Lester.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.





Arion Carter (7) celebrates a Tennessee defensive touchdown during a game against Syracuse at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Saturday, Aug. 30, 2025.

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Historically Speaking

Mike Taylor Part One

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Benita Albert welcomes the new Executive Director of the Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation.

Welcome Home Mike.

Mike Taylor is a 1991 Oak Ridge High School (ORHS) graduate with deep family roots in Oak Ridge. After his ORHS and University of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK) graduations, Mike embarked on a variety of professional assignments in East Tennessee and Virginia before accepting the position of Executive Director for the Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation (ORPSEF) in July 2025.

Mike brings an exceptional resume of more than 30 years of nonprofit leadership, with 17 of those years in education foundation work. He also serves as the interim CEO of the National Association of Education Foundations. More of his career journey, his leadership in education foundation initiatives, and his dreams for ORPSEF and his Oak Ridge hometown will be featured in a Part Two installment of his story.

Let's first explore his multi-generational Oak Ridge roots in this Part One feature.

Mike's paternal grandparents, Hobert and Virginia Taylor, moved from Kingsport, TN, in 1944, telling their relatives that Hobert would be working "somewhere near Clinton, TN." Hobert was told by military recruiters that he was being assigned to his new job due to his experience in construction with Tennessee Eastman Corporation. Hobert later spent his career at K-25. Their son, Ron, was enrolled in third grade at Pine Valley School when they arrived. He matriculated through Robertsville Jr. High and ORHS, and graduated with the Class of 1953. Ron made a name for himself in ORHS track and subsequently signed a scholarship at UTK that offered \$52 per quarter to support his undergraduate studies and to participate in the Volunteer Track and Field program.

Mike's maternal grandparents, H. K. and Christina Blair, also came to Oak Ridge with the Manhattan Project in 1944. They moved from Etowah, TN, where H. K. had been employed with TVA clearing rights of way for power lines. Their daughter Carol later spoke of her great fear for all their household furnishings and the family's safety when they had to take a small ferry across a river to arrive in Oak Ridge. But she bragged about the fine accommodations at the Guest House (later known as the Alexander Inn) where the family resided while their home was still being built. Carol was amazed that their room had its own shower, a luxury both she and her younger sister, Marlene, had never dreamed of. Carol remembered her father taking her to see a new school, still under construction, Cedar Hill Elementary.

The Blairs chose to make Oak Ridge their lifetime home. H. K. ultimately became a purchasing agent for government projects. Christina worked as a nurse for several years in the birthing wing and nursery, caring for and helping with delivering new babies at Oak Ridge Hospital. Their daughter Carol, like Ron Taylor, attended Pine Valley, Robertsville Junior High, and ORHS and graduated in 1954. Carol had no way of knowing that the Cedar Hill School she first saw under construction as a child would become her first teaching assignment with the Oak Ridge Schools after her graduation from UTK in 1958.

Carol and Ron met for the first time in the summer of 1956 at the Oak Ridge pool where Carol worked. Son Mike said his dad still loves

to tell the story of his proposal to Carol which coincided with another special event highly valued by his dad. Mike said, "My dad proposed to my mother after the state track meet in 1958. He was helping to coach the ORHS team at the state tournament and told the boys that if they won, he would propose to my mother. In fact, they did win the state championship in 1958. At the end of the meet, dad had his good friend Bob McNees (who later became a long-term Oak Ridge City judge) escort my mother from the stands to the field. All the track boys circled around them, and dad got down on one knee and proposed."

Mike laughed when telling this and related that his dad often wryly observes that he felt certain Carol would not turn him down in front of that winning group and super-charged moment. Mike added, "The team included Oak Ridge legends such as Jackie Pope and Winston Russell."

Ron and Carol were married at First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge in June of 1959, and they later raised their children, Cathy and Mike, in the Oak Ridge Schools. Importantly, Carol and Ron served as exceptional role models for their children in their civic service and strong support for education. After graduation from UTK in 1958, Carol taught in the Oak Ridge Schools at Cedar Hill, Willow Brook, and Linden Elementary.

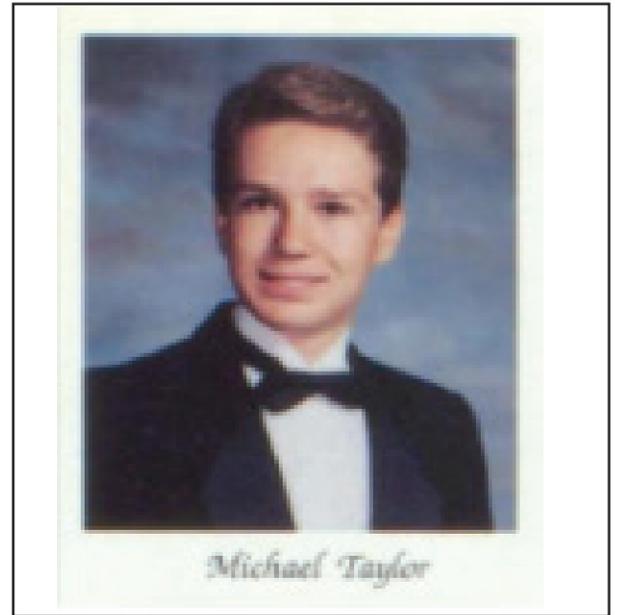
Ron worked at Y-12 and K-25, before accepting leadership for an advanced computing program for DOE/Martin Marietta in the first half of the 1990s. He subsequently worked with government subcontractors until 2000, retiring one year before Carol's retirement from the Oak Ridge Schools. Ron served on the Oak Ridge School Board including serving as the Chairman of the Board from 1973-77. He kept his fond regard for the ORHS Wildcat track program alive by volunteering as a sideline coach for many years.

After his UTK graduation, Ron served on active duty in the U. S. Army for a year at Ft. Knox. He followed that by serving in the Army Reserve for 40 years, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Mike's sister Cathy, ORHS Class of 1979, worked at K-25 and for several defense contractors in Oak Ridge until her untimely death in 2015. Mike's parents still retain his childhood home, and Mike is thrilled to be nearby to assist with their needs and to have their assistance in telling a part of this, his family's Oak Ridge story. Additional ORHS alumni in Mike's family lineage include his maternal aunt, Marlene (Blair) Streetman, ORHS Class of 1956, a beloved art teacher at Willow Brook Elementary. Also, Mike's paternal aunt, Norma Sue (Taylor) Ketola, graduated from ORHS in 1957 and now lives in Oklahoma City.

Mike smiled when recalling his school years and many favorite teachers: Linden School teacher McCord Carter's energetic spirit in first grade, Keys Fillauey's unforgettable Civics Community course, and Jane Grossbeck's 8th-grade English class at Robertsville Junior High. At ORHS, Mike praised his U. S. History teacher, Cassandra Osborne, and ORHS Band Director Tom Wade. They were only a few of the cadre of excellent teachers from whom he felt privileged to have learned.

In the ORHS band, Mike played in the percussion section, mainly the bass and snare drums. For his first two years at UTK, he played in the Pride of the Southland Band. He became a section leader in his sophomore year, which allowed him to travel to away games. He fondly remembered trips to Notre Dame, LSU, Univ. of Florida, and University of South Carolina as well as the final appearance of legendary UT Band Director W. J. Julian, for whom the band arranged a special, surprise halftime performance. Much later, both Mike and his son were thrilled to be back on Ney-



Mike Taylor as a senior at Oak Ridge High School (courtesy of Oak Ridge High School Yearbook)

land Field to play in an annual appearance of the Pride of the Southland alumni band.

Like his dad, Mike ran track at ORHS, his main events being the mile and two-mile runs. And he remembers limited theatre work: volunteering as a stagehand striker of sets for Masquers plays, playing pit music, and joining orchestra concerts requiring percussion instruments.

His favorite Oak Ridge community activity was being a member of Camp Fire Boys and Girls under the creative leadership of Mairzy Truex. He loved attending summer camp at Camp Tayani in Oak Ridge. He became a camp counselor, and while in college, a summer camp director. Camp Fire would also become a part of his early career work in 1996 when he accepted the Chattanooga-area District Director for Camp Fire Boys and Girls.

Mike met Julie Mills from Signal Mountain, TN, at UTK. They first bonded over their UTK student jobs as ID workers at the front desk of Andy Holt Apartments. The job was an eight-hour (10 p.m.- 6 a.m.), overnight watch with responsibilities for monitoring visitors, taking telephone calls, and responding to urgent needs. Mike said, "It paid \$5.02 an hour for every Thursday night I worked, after which I would grab a nap and head to class at 8 a.m. on Friday mornings. Julie worked the same job on Wednesday night, and she would often drop by to help me stay awake on my night." Those visits began a lifetime partnership, now almost three decades since their marriage in 1996.

I asked Mike what he thought as a teen that his future might be. He replied, "I thought I would end up working for the Lab in Oak Ridge." But life had a different plan for Mike when he graduated from UTK with a Business degree in 1995. As their marriage rewarded Julie and Mike with three young children, Mike became increasingly invested in their children's educational opportunities. That would become a major motivating factor in Mike's transition to education foundation work, a field begging for his innovative leadership.

Oak Ridge is fortunate to have Mike return to his hometown and to continue to promote the Oak Ridge Schools' mission of 'Excellence in Education' via his leadership as Executive Director of the Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation. Mike commented, "I feel blessed to return to the Oak Ridge community, a place that I know values public education."

Thank you, Benita, for introducing readers to Mike Taylor. Next, we will learn more about Mike's career journey, his leadership in education foundation initiatives, and his dreams for Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation and Oak Ridge.

Acts of the Apostle's Chapter 6-7



Melvin Howard

Acts 6:1-7 a problem in the Jerusalem church: in spite of the menacing threat of growing hostility, the religion of Jesus continued to flourish. It has been estimated that there may have been as many as twenty thousand disciples in Jerusalem at this time.

Apparently there were many Grecian Jews living in the Jerusalem area. There were Jews born beyond the borders of Palestine and educated in Greek culture. It was the practice of many of these non-Palestinian Jews to return to the holy city in their declining years so as to die

at "home" and be buried there. Since they were not native to Jerusalem, the widows would have no means of regular sustenance. The Hellenists thus began to complain that their widows were neglected in their daily needs.

This dissension was not good for the church. It was not prudent that the apostles' teaching should be made subservient to physical needs when others could handle such a chore. With skilled diplomacy, the twelve instructed the Grecian disciples to select seven of their own men to assign to this task. They would need to have a "good report," a solid, spiritual reputation (1 Tim. 3:7), and be "full of the Spirit and of wisdom." The expression, "full of the Spirit," probably suggests that these men were rich students of the Old Testament Scriptures and that the influence of the Spirit, via that medium (Eph. 6:17), had made a dramatic impact in their lives.

The apostles would continue steadfastly in prayer and the "ministry of the word." The solution to the potential problem "pleased the whole multitude." Even in the face of stress, the disciples had a mind to be united. Seven were chosen to exercise this responsibility. Each brother had a Greek name, doubtless suggesting they were Hellenists. As a result, "the word of God increased," the number of disciples grew due to the influence of the "word" in many hearts. Curiously, a great number of priests became "obedient to the faith." It has been estimated that there were some eighteen thousand priests ministering in the Jewish temple.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? (a) The priesthood, by means of Old Testament typology, had been prepared for the coming Messiah. These may have been ripe for conversion (Lk. 1:15). (b) The priests were some of the first to learn of Jesus' resurrection (Mt. 28:11). Many of these may have been entertaining serious thoughts about Christ. The expression, "the faith," is a reference to the objective body of gospel truth. This involved obedience to certain commands (faith, repentance, immersion in water (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).

(Acts 6:8-15) the arrest of Stephen: Stephen, one of the seven (see above), was a powerful preacher who had been blessed with miraculous power to confirm his message (Mk. 16:20). However, members of various synagogues in Jerusalem rose up in opposition to Stephen. When they were unable to deal with the force of his arguments (and the disputes were ongoing), the opposition instigated men to bear false witness against God's preacher. The charge was blasphemy against Moses and God (v. 11).

Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. False witnesses testified that he spoke against the temple and the Law of Moses. The testimony of Jesus (that the "temple" of his body would be destroyed (Jn. 2:19-21; Mt. 26:59-61) was rehearsed and misrepresented. The truth is, however, Christ had indicated that the temple would be destroyed eventually (Mt. 22:7). Jesus' teaching was said to "change the customs of Moses". There were, in fact, numerous hints that the Mosaic system was temporary. As these charges were made, the council fastened their eyes on him---wondering what he would say. His face seems to have exhibited some sort of supernatural radiance.

(Acts 7:1) the high priest wanted to know if these charges had substance. Stephen would argue, based upon numerous examples from Hebrew history, that the presence and favor of God were not confined to the land of Israel--or the temple---throughout the preceding millennia. Rather, Jehovah had displayed his operation in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Sinai, etc. There is a subtle suggestion that the Lord is God of the whole earth, not merely a specific locale.

Second, he contends that from the dawn of Israel's history there had been an evolving inclination toward an ungrateful rebellion, a disposition which found its zenith in the men to whom he was speaking! Moreover, this arrogant stubbornness was the very antithesis of the attitude displayed by some of the nation's greatest historical heroes. Stephen's defense fits very well into the overall plan of Acts in that it shows that the Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached, had rejected it. This would clear the way for the church to focus on evangelism among the Gentiles. This is the longest speech in Acts.

Acts 7:2-7 the patriarchal period: God first appeared to Abraham, father of the Hebrew nation, in Mesopotamia---dispatching him to another "land". He moved northward (seven hundred miles) and lived in Haran for a time. Finally, the Lord brought the patriarch into Canaan (v. 2-4). Even then Abraham received no inheritance in the land. That would come later to his offspring. Abraham's "seed" would be required to live in a "strange land" (Egypt) for many years. Eventually, the sovereign God would judge that nation and bring his people into Canaan (5-7). The point is: all of these years, before

they came into Canaan, the Lord was blessing these people. Blessings were not dependent upon a certain parcel of real estate.

Acts 7:8-19 Egyptian bondage: the rite of circumcision was instituted to set the Hebrew people apart as Jehovah's own (v. 8). Rather than appreciating that gesture, the patriarchs revealed an unspiritual character. For example, Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery. But God was with the lad even in a foreign land, delivering him from danger and elevating him to a regal position (v. 9-10). Even in a time of famine, Joseph was used by the Lord for the preservation of the nation; eventually Jacob's entire family came into this land, and the aged patriarch died there, though his body was returned to Canaan (v. 11-16). In time, a new king arose in Egypt and the Israelites were treated harshly: the Egyptians even murdered Hebrew babies (v. 18-19).

Acts 7:20-29 Moses' early days: during this dangerous era, Moses was born. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and educated as an Egyptian prince (v. 20-22). All of this was part of a greater plan.

When he was about forty, Moses defended a Hebrew against an Egyptian, assuming his brethren would understand his role as a deliverer; but they did not understand---just as the Jews of Stephen's audience had rejected their own Deliverer (v. 23-28). Subtle points are being made. Moses was therefore forced to flee the land, migrating to Midian (v. 29).

(Acts 7:30-43) called of God, ignored by Israel: forty years later, God's Messenger (Ex. 3:2) appeared to Moses at the burning bush. Moses was told to remove his shoes, for he was on "holy ground" (thus, holy ground was not restricted to the Jewish temple)> He was commissioned to deliver the Israelites from Egypt by the help of the Messenger who had appeared to him, but the Israelites refused the deliverer. Again, this is a commentary on the rebellious nature of the current generation (v. 30-35). Moses led his people for forty years in the wilderness, but they "would not be obedient" (v. 39), and even sacrificed to a golden calf (v. 41). Accordingly, the Lord "gave them up", letting them go in their own rebellious ways, pledging to punish them for their sins via the Babylonian captivity (v. 43).

(Acts 7:44-50) the tabernacle and the temple: God commissioned Moses to make a tabernacle for worship in the wilderness; it was conveyed by Joshua when Canaan was entered, which land God substantially cleared of its pagan inhabitants to facilitate Israel. However, it was not the ideal will of God to dwell forever in "a house made with hands" (v. 48). This suggested to the Jews that their inordinate attitude toward the temple was misguided. It would be destroyed by the Romans in less than forty years.

(Acts 7:51-53) direct application: Stephen made the direct and personal application of his presentation. These Jews were "stiff-necked" (stubborn and unyielding) and "uncircumcised" in heart and ears (pagan in disposition). They resisted the Holy Spirit (personal deity) just like their fathers. This shows why Stephen had detailed Old Testament rebellion. "When the Old Testament prophets declared the coming of the Righteous One, they were persecuted by your fathers. You acted in like kind by murdering the Holy One. You received the divinely given law, but you kept it not".

(Acts 7:54-60) the rage that kills: that was enough! They were "cut to the heart" (contrast with Acts 2:37) and ground their teeth in anger. They were full of hate, but Stephen was "full of the Spirit, under the control of the Holy Spirit. He looked heavenward and saw God's glory and Jesus (designated till as the Son of Man) standing at his right hand (Mk. 14:62). When the mob heard this, they refused to listen further and rushed him en masse, thrusting him outside the city and stoning him to death. The witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of the young Saul of Tarsus.

They kept stoning Stephen (he did not die quickly) as he was calling (repeatedly), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". His prayer was soon answered. He kneeled, and following the example of his Savior, petitioned: "Lord, don't charge them with this sin." He was not praying for their unconditional pardon, but that they would change their rebellious ways and turn to Christ in his prescribed way. He then "fell asleep" (a figure used of the disposition of the body in death) to await the day of resurrection as his spirit was received by Jesus. The footnote is: Saul was consenting to this horrible and rebellious action (8:1). (For several so-called "problem" passages in Stephen's sermon.

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