

3-22-26 Message

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Right? And so leading into that, there's something, though it's been on my heart for a while, that I want to make sure that we touch on, because it fits with everything else we've been talking about this week. But I want us to think about this idea of significant deaths, right? We think about Scripture. We obviously know Christ, and we're going to be talking about that we've alluded to it, talked through it the last couple of weeks, and it obviously will be the focal point the next two weeks. But there are others in scriptures that are significant, not as but are significant, and have played a major role in who we are today and what we have for today, you know, and sometimes even, like movies. I remember when I was really little, watching Star Wars for the first time. And I was, like, blown away. I mean, now when I go back and look at it and I've let Chase watch a little bit of that, I'm sure he's like, man, that quality is terrible. They even got remastered copies of it now, but, but I'll never, kind of forget that whole scene, you know, where here's here's Obi Wan, here's Darth, right? And then Obi Wan has this one phrase, and many of you could probably quote this right. It's, if you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you could possibly imagine, you know, but through you could probably argue that his wasn't even the most significant death in the original trilogy, but it had such an impact. And then there's other times I think about, you know, movies. I'm kind of a movie buff, but, and I know Chuck Norris rip, but after Chuck Norris, there was a guy by name of Steven Seagal. I mean, now, like, nobody really knows anything about this guy, but when he came out, we were all like, yes, he's the next action star. And there's something about us men like watching men kick other men's butts and and, and it's fake, and nobody really got hurt. But, I mean, but we like to feel like, yeah, I could do that. But anyway, ponytail and all man. That day, he rocked man. Even there was a season of time where Steven Seagal, what a movie, came out with his I mean, today it's Jason Stan might get it, but back then it was Steven Seagal, and so we'd look forward to his next movies. And there was this one time that there was a preview he was going to be in this movie, and I was excited. Involved, like a, I think it involved, like a submarine or something, and he gets killed off in the first 10 minutes. And I'm like, Dude, I came here because this is a Steven Seagal film, and now he's dead. I just sit through the whole rest of that movie thinking, why did they spend so much money adding him to the film, putting him on all the trailers, and he just died, right? And sometimes, you know, we view other deaths in the Bible like that, you know, like they just kind of passing through. And this is all this, we just read this and And historically, but then we'll get to Christ, and that that is the death and and rightfully so. But I would argue today that there is one that holds immense impact in the church today, and much of his death is misunderstood, and so we're talking about death, sacrifice and resurrection. So it seems fitting that I find a way, and staff will tell you, I've been trying to find a way to include this guy for a while now. And so today, it is his day. His name is Stephen. We're going to be in Acts chapter seven, quite a bit today. Now, what we're going to do with this passage, we're not going to read his fiery sermon. We'll leave the last part of it, but I would encourage you, it's worth the read, but we're going to pick it up right in verse 51 I'm going to try to set this up as best I can. I'm going to tell you traditionally, how people view this passage, and then we are going to ask you to do something today. I'm going to ask you to take your preconceived ideas and put them aside. No ISO Jesus today, straight exegesis. And I want you to just try to see this through Scripture and the evidences that I'm going to provide. And I think you're going to see this death in a different way. And I think it could be argued that this death is key to understanding how we understand the Bible today, but he's very seldom talked about. Verse 51 of chapter seven, it says, You stiff necked actually, let's

pray first. I wanted to do it before Dear heavenly Father. Thank you for this day, Lord. Thank you for the opportunity to serve You, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for the music today and Phil singing. It is finished with a fantastic song. Lord, and I just pray that you just be with us now. Lord, we we know that there are those who are watching online, those who are ill that can't be with us today, those who are still mourning the loss of someone. Lord, those who are recovering from surgery. Lord, I pray that you would just know that each and every one of these. Lord, I pray that through the Holy Spirit, Lord, you would let them know how they're loved. We're praying for them, and Lord, help them to be encouraged today. And Lord, I just pray that Your Word would speak through me right now, Lord and we bring about change. It would change the way we think, Lord and we go back and see if these things are true. And Lord, we just promise to give you all honor and glory in Jesus name, Amen. So verse 51 now. Granted, he spent several chapters, like chapters two, or verses two through eight, talking about Abraham, right? Then he's talking about Joseph from verses nine through 16, Steven's giving this history of humanity, right? Especially Jewish humanity. And Moses 17 through 44 talks about David and Solomon in the temple in verses 45 through 47 and then he gets to this point this Jewish audience here, as he's kind of given an account, he says this in verse 51 probably not this is probably going to drive, I would say, if anybody starts a conversation out in this way, or if you end up turning your conversation this way, you're probably going to lose some friends. So this is what happened. He says, You stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you just heard a huge history lesson. And then he says that you understand why things change drastically in these last few verses, when, when that is the start. But he says, You do always. This is a key phrase here to understanding this. He says you do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did. So. Do you which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted and they have slain them, which showed before, of the coming of the Just One of whom you have been now, the betrayers and murderers who have received the law by the disposition, disposition of angels and have not kept it. Now, here's the response. Is, when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. True story. It's not, this is not symbolic. I mean, it's, it reminds me of, was it the Life of Brian? Because get back over here, I'll bite you to death, or whatever it's like. I mean, I don't, I don't know why it was gnashing on teeth, right? But, but this was a time of violence. It says that they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth, but, but he here's another key phrase, being full of the Holy Ghost looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. You God. This is the conundrum of the passage. Let's read through the rest, and let's get to it. And said, Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and they ran upon him with one accord, and they cast him out of the city, and they stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus received my spirit, and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Of course, that means that he died. He wasn't. He didn't wake up a few minutes later. Now, traditionally, this is seen as Jesus welcoming Stephen home as a well done thou, good and faithful servant. I mean, I've read everything from John Calvin on this to Matthew Henry, John MacArthur. It's just interesting to read the different opinion, and there's usually no scripture to support what they're saying. It's just an idea of trying to understand, why was Jesus standing at the right hand of the father when it's the only place in Scripture that he's seen standing at the right hand of the Father? And the explanation is, that he was welcoming His servant home. And it sounds good, and you might be like, what's the point? What are we really talking about here today? What if there was more? What if his death holds the key to understanding Scripture today, and this is where I'm going to need you to probably take your time, take some notes, maybe re watch this a second time, and you can exhaustively study this more than I'm going to be able to give you for 35 minutes today. But that is the question, since we can't really biblically support that's what's going on there. Then what could be going on that we can biblically support? Well, first of all, let's focus on the whole Jesus standing, because where we've seen him in the last couple of weeks is sitting right now, I know yesterday, I was at volleyball all day, same with

Friday, watching these games of my daughter, which I love doing, but my back does not love doing that. I had a hard time last night. It's been a while, but it was like, I it locked up on me, and I could not sleep last night. Everywhere that I turned I was like, Oh, I'm awake again. That hurts. We don't have the best mattress anyway, and so. I was like, I need to be standing. You know, it's funny. I just keep talking about the standing and sitting here, but right now I'm like, just sitting down there. I was like, this hurt me to get up. So I'm feeling pretty good right now when I'm standing, but I was just kind of filling you guys in if I start losing it up here, it's because the pain's there and I didn't take any narcotics. So anyway, we're going to keep moving through it, but we see Jesus standing, but elsewhere we hear this expression of sitting. Now let's just run through I'm going to take you through Old Testament. We're taking through the Gospels. We're going to show lots of different references here today. I'm not going to be able to do it exhaustive, but we're going to run through some of these right now. Psalm 110, one says the LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. This is a verse that's quoted multiple times in Scripture, but Sit thou at my right hand. Mark 16:19, then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up in, up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God Hebrews one, three, who being in the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when he had himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 12, two, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross despising the shame and is set down. We seeing a pattern here. When, when did he sit down after the work was done, after it was finished? Ephesians, 1:20 which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him up from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, you're finding all dispensations talking about after the work is done, that he will be sitting at the right hand of the Father. It's interesting this idea of work and rest. In the Bible, God did the work for six days, and what he do on the seventh day rested, right? Christ did the work on the cross, and then he rested. He sat down because the work was finished. It's important to understand that. But Hebrews 10:12, and Hebrews 11:3, are going to say something a little bit more. It's going to say, but this man, in verse 12 of chapter 10, this man, after he'd offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. Okay, we've covered that from henceforth, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Think about the word till and now in Hebrews 11:3 but to which of the angels said he, at any time, sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. So here's what we can understand from Scripture. And even those in the Jewish economy would have understood this right. They would have understand even if they didn't think Jesus was the Messiah, even from Psalms and everything, that there would be this sitting down until something else happened. This, something else that we see in these two verses deals with enemies. So let's talk about the standing if that's the sitting portion, what about the standing portion? Isaiah, 31:3, through 14, the Lord standeth up. Okay to do what to plead and standeth to judge the people the Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people and the princes thereof, for you have eaten up the vineyard and spoil of the poors in your houses. Psalm 82 one God standeth in the congregation of the mighty. He judgeth among the gods. Psalm 82 eight This is David understanding this principle. And he says, arise, oh God, judge the earth. Standing. Arise. Judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations. Psalm, 68 one, that's after 67 God talks about the kingdom and heavenly kingdom and heavenly kingdom that's going to come down. So it's going to be the money will rain, and how things are going to be. But in Psalm 68 one, it says, Let God arise, and then his enemies shall be scattered. Why would his enemies be scattered? If, if the Lord's going to arise, because it represents judgment. Let his enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate him flee before him. Now, just to recap, when we talked about the Great White Throne Judgment a few weeks ago, keeps talking about the Lord. It's about God rising, God judging, who of the Godhead is the judge? What Jesus right? Remember Second Timothy four one. We put this thing together on one side, and we're going to look at a parable that I think connects the rest of it. But Second Timothy four one, I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, talking about the Lord Jesus Christ comma, who shall judge the quick and the dead, who's doing the judging in that verse, Jesus, John 5:22, the Father judges no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, John

526, through 27 For as the Father hath life in himself so he shall so hath he given to His Son to have life in him himself. Then it says this, And hath given him, the son, authority to execute judgment, also because he is the Son of Man. Matthew, 2664 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said Nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven? So sitting and then coming, he has to get up to be coming right? Matthew, 2429 through 30 Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Mark 1326, through 27 then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. Matthew 2531 through 33 when the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall, then, shall he sit upon the throne of glory? So he will sit again? In fact, the only place you can see him, really, not in that position, is probably the rapture when he's coming to get them. But he's doing a work. There is something about Once the work is finished sitting, and work has to be done to stand the reason this is important is if acts seven ties into unlocking the rest of Scripture for us in a pivotal date in history that changed everything For especially everybody in this room here today, I think it's important that we understand why Jesus was standing and there is just not scriptural evidence that it was because he was welcoming Stephen home. Now let's start connecting more dots as we learn a little bit more about Stephen. So Acts, chapter six, verse three, Wherefore, brethren, look you out among seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. In Verse five, it says the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. You see a pattern with Stephen. Verse eight says Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. That's funny. We were told that that was what was going to happen. You know, Joel is kind of prophesying. That's what's going to happen when, basically, when the Holy Spirit's given. Verse 10, they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which Stephen spoke. Verse 15, all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as had been the face of an angel. Now remember verse 51 says to the audience, Stephen says, You always resist the Holy Ghost. Verse 55 said he was full of the Holy Ghost. All these references in Acts chapter six about the Holy Ghost and what Stephen was representing. He fully believe that what happened to Israel as a result of Acts Chapter Seven is tied into Matthew 1231, through 32 and it says, Wherefore I say unto you all manner of sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Whosoever speaketh the word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. And he can find the cross reference of that in both mark three. Luke, chapter 12. But remember, Stephen went down the list and he told him, you're stiff necked. What do you say? What do you say they did to the prophets? They killed him. What did he say that they did to the to Christ? They killed him because, see, here's the thing, they already blasphemed against God by killing the prophets. Really, some people even tied John the Baptist into that. They they blasphemed against the Son by crucifying Jesus and now in Acts chapter seven, as a nation, what I truly believe is they blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. I know not everybody agrees with that. That's fine. I'm going to give you something else here in a minute that I think will help tie it all together. Stephen represented the last chance we know that Acts chapter three, the kingdom is being offered. You can read that in verses 19 and 20, where Peter is still saying, Repent, right? That talks about the times of times of refreshing, that's that's coming, right? He's telling them, here's your chance, here's this. And they did not do it. They did not repent. In fact, you've got a Jewish mob talking to this man full of the Holy Ghost, and they end up stoning him and gnawing on him with their teeth. And up there, just saying, Welcome home, Stephen. We're supposed to believe that everywhere we look, that when he's standing, he's judging Israel right now is being judged. Fact, I believe this prayer at the end of Stephen similar to those Old Testament prayers that kept God from just going full wrath. Now, if you're saying I'm still not convinced, that's fine, always go

home, be a good Berea and do your own research. But now let's read the parable the fig tree in Luke chapter 13, verses six through nine. Verse six, it says he spake all those also this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit. Well, that's interesting. Even John the Baptist, fruits of repentance, right? We see this idea of fruit. He says, sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser. So we have a man has a fig tree plant in a vineyard. We have a dresser of the vineyard. Listen to this part, especially since Luke wrote both of these accounts. And the thing about Luke is He's a historian, and it's going to help make a lot of sense here. Listen to what he says here, even though it's a parable. He says, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. This is Jesus's earthly ministry. He came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel in math, in Matthew 10 and Matthew 15. Right? He talks about that. He says this, three years, I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none cut it down. Okay? Why? Cumbereth it in the ground? Now check this out. And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone. This year also, the dresser comes along. You may know him as the comforter in John. We may know him as the Holy Spirit, as we're talking through this the Holy Spirit comes along and says, Give him one more year. One more year, okay, till I shall dig about it and dung it, if it bear fruit well and if it not. Then after that, after the one year, thou shalt cut it down. Now, Israel was not set aside at the cross. It was one year after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. Sometimes it's scripture that's going to give us the chronology. Instead of looking at all these commentaries and saying, Oh, well, they said the stoning of Stephen is three and a half years after this date. Blah, blah, blah, right? I'm like, how do they know that? We do know the day of Pentecost. We can chase that down. But how can they say it's, well, it's longer than one year? Well, it's because they don't want to state the obvious. But I'll help them. Luke wrote acts. So I went through, I went through again. I was like, slowly, I'm going to read these first seven chapters of Acts. So here's what we here's what we know. Listen to this. I'm going to run through these right. Listen to how meticulous Luke is. He'll mention in chapter one, verse 12, a Sabbath day's journey. 115, those days. Two, one day of Pentecost. 241, same day. Verse 46 continuing daily. 47 added to Church daily. Chapter three, verse 1/9, hour. Pretty meticulous. Chapter four, verse one, it says he's talking about the this was with the Sadducees coming in, actually. Verse five, it says on the morrow. Verse six, we know that Peter is at Caiaphas and and and Annas, and so he's given a defense. Verse 31 they prayed, the place was shaken. Chapter Five, Ananias and Sapphira. He goes so far. He's so meticulous with this time that he says, in a space of three hours, the wife comes home and she dies. 42 daily in the temple. Chapter six, verse one, we now have the Grecian widows, right? And then this is when Stephen comes aboard here. Now I'm asking this question just because I'm honest guy. I just want to know an answer, right? If we have three or four years worth of information between Acts chapter one and Acts chapter seven, then the 12 weren't going out and doing what God told them to do. They didn't do very much if that's three or four years, but if it were one year, it would line up with this parable, and it makes a lot of sense. Now here's what's crazy, because it's Luke writing Acts, chapter 19, verse 10. Guess what he says there? As he's chronologically, everything he's talking about Paul, he's talking about Ephesus, and he says this by the space of two years. Okay, Acts 20:31, by the space of three years. Doesn't it seem weird that these first few chapters of Acts, which supposedly take three or four years, that all we see from Luke is, oh, a few hours daily, but yet later, when something actually was two or three years, he says, two years, three years. Where do we come up with these numbers? Well, as you know, he got about three years after this and that, no, it was one year. And Scripture tells us that just like it was three years that Jesus ministered, and the Holy Spirit begged, the dresser said, give them one more year. And at the stoning of Stephen, Jesus was standing the one year was up and Israel was cut down. It's the only thing that makes sense, and maybe you've never heard that. Today, appreciate you not throwing anything, however, study to see if those things are true. Now here, I think, is one of the main proof texts too. We're at the very end of this thing, and unlike Jesus's prayer at the very end, which was, Father forgive them, they know not what they do. Notice Stephen didn't say they don't know what they're doing. He said, lay not this sin to their charge. That is a significant difference. Now here's why this matters. Romans, 16:25 which I think I gave you guys that maybe not, I flew through

some stuff really fast there, but Romans 16:25 says this, make sure I don't get the last part wrong. Now to him that has of a power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for the Lord. Sorry, it's supposed to be 11:25, 11:25, and it says in there, For I would not brethren that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits. That blindness in part, is happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles become in all throughout chapter 11, we see words like cut off, right? We see set aside. Okay, so I would ask you, if not the stoning of Stephen, where? Where did that happen? I've tried to look. I was like, Where are the obvious answers to this question? If we can get to Paul saying they were set aside, we see Paul's revealing a mystery that was kept secret before the world began. Paul starts this new work, the only place that makes sense. The stoning of Stephen. Now, whether you say between chapter seven and chapter 13, whether there's this middle part there, what mid acts is really what we're talking about here, but the event that I believe set Israel aside was the stoning of Stephen, and I think it was evidenced by Jesus standing in judgment against Israel. Now, does that change the way you read that passage? More importantly, this makes this death one of the more significant deaths in the Bible, because it unlocks everything. It ties Israel being set aside to let us understand what we have today in Scripture, Romans, through Philemon, in order to get our marching orders. And more importantly, it makes the gospel crystal clear, because the gospel is found in Paul's writings for us today, and it is found faith alone in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is what the book of Galatians all about, is when you try to mix the whole thing up, it will be confusion, and it becomes a different gospel when you try to connect things from different parts of Scripture. This death of Stephen was significant in a period of time that we look at today, when we're looking at deaths and sacrifice and resurrection and meaning. Stephen's death had meaning, and it affects us today. It makes it to where we understand that if we will realize that our sin has separated us from a holy God, and we have all sinned. We're all sinners. We've come short of the glory of God. Bible says we can never be good enough to get to him in Ephesians, two, eight and nine, and as a result of that, we're going to be separated in a real place called hell for all eternity, but God. Romans five, eight, says God committeth His love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. It is the gift of God that we just have to receive, and that that gift was Jesus dying on the cross and paying for our sin debt for us so that we don't have to pay it in a real place called hell. And main confusion that we have in mainstream Christianity today is we want to mix it all up, and we come up with all these different gospels. And there are people who think that, man, I've got to be dunked, I've got to join a church, I've got to repeat after the pastor. I've got to physically come forward all these things because they're tying all the stuff from other places in Scripture, the gospel is summarized in First Corinthians, 15, one through four. It's what I've just been talking about. I would say today that the significance of Stephen's death, he shows that this blindness, this judgment, did happen, but God will work again with Israel. One day, God will keep his promises, but now he's dealing with the body of Christ, and it is not Jew or Gentile, it is not male or female. It is not bond or free. It is all who believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, they're immediately in the body of Christ. So I think that having this covered during this time of year is important, and I hope that you're challenged with it. And hopefully, if you've never seen it before, you go home and you study it out, and you can do a lot more studying than I did in 30 some minutes today. But I'm had that for you guys today, and if you've today was the day that you've placed your faith in that death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we want to celebrate with you. Come forward, talk to us about it, and we'll try to help you out in your new walk and tell you you know different materials, or how to get involved in classes or the church. We'd love to be able to talk to you afterwards right now, though, Imma have everybody stand up, and I will have to keep you over a couple minutes today, but hope you're okay with that, but I'm going to pray for us right now. We'll have Stan sing a song, and then before we dismiss you, I got an announcement to make Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for this day, Lord. We thank You, Lord for this example in Scripture. We, thank you, Lord that it connects the dots of what happened to Israel and Lord. We just thank you that today for everybody in this room and everybody in this world, Lord, all we have to do is place our faith in the death, burial and

resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that shed blood was enough to wash away our sins, and because he rose again three days later, proving that He is God, Lord, you can look at that and say that sacrifice was sufficient. He can now sit down and I will not require another blood sacrifice. What my son did was sufficient. It was so sufficient Lord that faith alone in that puts his righteousness to our account, just as our sin went to his account. And Lord, you can now look at us as justified because of what Jesus did, and I'm thankful for that Lord. Lord, I pray that you just be with our people. I pray they would always be found studying the Word, and Lord, I pray that we would just go home and be more like you and try to say these things out for ourselves. But Lord, maybe this was what people were waiting for or needing to unlock. What happened with Paul, what happened with Israel and how there was so much more than just Jesus standing for the sake of standing, Lord, we thank you and praise you for the opportunity to serve you and worship together in Jesus name amen.