

Grace That Goes Before

Description

[RG AUDIO 083111](#)

Acts 7:9-19

Stephen stood falsely accused of “blasphemy against Moses and against God” (6:11**b**). He reminded his accusers of God’s faithfulness to their ancestors, including Joseph. His brother’s rabid jealousy led him to be sold as a slave into Egypt. Later Joseph reflected, “But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance” (Gen. 45:7). Jacob’s family was preserved through severe famine by God’s advance provision of a place of safety.

Time upon time God’s grace runs ahead of people’s willful disbelief. Stephen’s hearers were complicit in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Soon they would stain their hands with Stephen’s blood as well. Why would God grant deliverance to such murderous and unbelieving people?

Saul guarded the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen. Later he would write, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

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