



Acts: Stephen is Stoned

March 8

INTRODUCTION: Acts: *Jesus' work, through the Apostles and disciples, by the Holy Spirit, to fulfil Acts 1:8.* In the Jerusalem Church the pattern of sign-sermon-**response**-picture repeats itself, this time centring around the stoning of Stephen.

KEY POINT: opposition, martyrdom

A.M. SERMON RECAP (Acts 7:1-53)

- How was this a sham trial, like Jesus'?
- How did Stephen, the accused, become the accuser?
- What three charges did he respond to?
- How did Stephen show how the leaders, and not himself, were the ones misrepresenting God?

P.M. SERMON RECAP (Continued 2)

- How had he not spoken against the Temple? (4 examples)
- How had Jesus fulfilled the Temple?
- How had he not spoken against the Law?
- How had Jesus fulfilled the Law?
- What were the take home messages of Stephen's defence?

READ: Acts 7:54-60

QUESTIONS:

1. *The leaders' response to Stephen's sermon is not positive, yet in God's providence it is used by Him to great missional effect (ch. 8). This is the greater emphasis by Luke though we often focus upon the martyrdom.*
2. *In Acts 1:8 the disciples are told to "be my witnesses" (martyr= witness). In being stoned Stephen becomes the first Christian to bear witness unto death.*
3. V. 54- What was the leaders' response to Stephen? Why?
4. V. 55- Why did God grant Stephen this grace and vision?
5. **How would you naturally feel if you faced such hostility? What encouragement do we find here?**

6. *Even after his sermon Christ continues to be on Stephen's lips.*

How many times does he speak of Him?

7. V. 55- If Christ is spoken of as seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33; Heb 1:3) (signifying co-equality, favour, authority) why is Jesus standing here?
8. **Vv. 54 and 57-58a- What three things do the Council members do that show their unwillingness to listen to Stephen? How is unreasonability ungodly (Ja 3:17)?**
9. *The Jews were prohibited by the Romans from exercising capital punishment (Jn 18:31) so this was more a mob lynching with the appearance of legitimacy (i.e. Sanhedrin, Dt 17:7).*
10. Consider the parallels between Stephen and Christ: 6:13 (Mt 26:63-64) v. 59 (Lk 23:46)- though not Stephen's last words; v. 60a (Lk 23:34). Ponder the significance (Jn 15:20).
11. *Jesus addressed his prayer to the Father; Stephen to Jesus.*

Ponder.

12. Though he is tragically murdered ("fell asleep" means 'he died') **what else does this phrase convey?** How is Stephen's death contrasted with Saul's life? (*This is the first time Saul appears in Acts. Read Acts 22:20 to read of Stephen's later impact on Paul.*)
13. **Have you ever experienced something difficult that the Lord actually used for good? (Ro 8:28).**
14. *There are many ministries that support the persecuted church, e.g. [Voice of the Martyrs](#); [Open Doors](#); [Barnabas](#) (UK). 360 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution. **Research one country, share and use your prayer time to pray for their needs.***

NEXT: March 15-Acts 8:26-40, Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch