

Acts 7 – 31 May 2020

“Finishing Stephen’s Testimony”

Introduction

Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended to be seated at the right-hand of the Father.

Jesus has ordained there to be an “Age of the Church” empowered by His HS where He pours His attention toward THE WHOLE WORLD

It’s the church’s mission to tell the world about Jesus

Acts 6 Stephen was appointed as deacon & was soon confronted by unbelieving Jews about his preaching.

He was preaching how Jesus fulfills the Law when he was arrested at the end of chap 6.

His testimony to these Jew is straight up Biblical evangelism.

Today, we see a 3 Step Evangelism, as we finish Stephen’s Testimony to see what he SAW of Jesus

1st Step of Biblical Evangelism – Support Your Concept (Chap 7:1-50)

Even before addressing the person, address the idea

1. Woman at the well – Jesus brings up the concept of water & the water of life, BEFORE addressing her situation
2. Rich, Young Ruler – Read Matt 19:16-17 – Jesus interrupts his question to address concept of ‘good’
3. Paul in Athens Act 17 wants to discuss concept of God, so he 1st supports the idea with something they already believed – the unknown God
4. Purpose of supporting the idea FIRST is to have their buy-in or acceptance by way of analogy
5. Let’s give it away now – Stephen wants to address the concept that the Jews always reject what God sends the 1st time...until the 2nd time!!

Vs 1-8 – *First he supports the concept by using Abraham*

Read Vs 1-5

1. Notice Stephen shows kindness, but doesn't address their immediate questions yet.
2. He's making point that 1st time Abraham was brought to Canaan, he didn't receive the inheritance of the land.

Read Vs 6-7

1. The point is – it's the 2nd time they're in the land that they gave the inheritance!

Read Vs 8

1. Stephen uses this to link this story to his next supporting point.

Vs 9-16 – *Second* he supports the concept by using Joseph

Read Vs 9-12

1. He's making the point that 1st time the sons of Jacob went to Egypt, they didn't recognize Joseph

Read Vs 13

1. The point is – it's the 2nd time they recognize Joseph as family, their own kin

Read Vs 14-16

1. Again, Stephen uses this to link this story to his next supporting point.

Vs 17-36 – *Third* he supports the concept by using Moses

Read Vs 17

1. Stephen is linking all these stories together from the time the promises were given to Abraham until the time of his speech, there's a pattern

Read Vs 18-22

1. Remember the point is for Stephen to say perfectly natural things that they would all be agreeing with. Getting them to side with him.

Read Vs 23-29

1. Stephen's making the point that 1st time Moses presented as their deliverer, they rejected him.

Read Vs 30-36

1. Vs 35 is the point – it's the 2nd time they recognize Moses as the deliverer of the nation.
2. They continue to refuse the very resources and blessing that God brings to them!

Vs 37-50 – *Fourth* he supports the concept by using the Law

Read Vs 37-38

1. The “lively oracles” is the Law of Moses – the 10 Commandments and all the Law
2. As Moses led the assembly in the wilderness, so to another Prophet would come and lead them into God’s perfect holy ways.

Read Vs 39-43

1. He’s making the point that the 1st time God’s perfect ways are presented to them (in the form of the written Law), they rejected it.
2. God wanted Israel to represent Him to the world, but instead they were punished in Babylon.

Read Vs 44-50

1. God established the tabernacle to be the place of meeting/interacting w/ God
 - a. Solomon changed it into a grand temple
 - b. The people idolized even the temple instead of God Himself.
2. Read Jer 7:3-4 – It was to point to God!
3. When they came back – the 2nd time into the land – after Babylon, then they were no longer idol-worshippers.

2nd Step of Biblical Evangelism – Apply It To The Hearer (Chap 7:51-53)

Read Vs 51-53

1. Stephen's form of evangelism didn't follow the soft modern model.
 - a. He followed John Baptist model – called religious men a brood of Vipers (Read Matt 3:7-8)
 - b. He followed Jesus's model – called religious men hypocrites (Read Matt 23:13)

- c. Calling them stiff-necked means unwilling to turn and change.
 - d. Calling them uncircumcised means they were closed, not open, to hear and believe.
2. Vs 52 he applies all 4 supporting concepts to them.
- a. First, as Abraham, Jesus had no part in this land till second time – then the kingdom
 - b. Second, as Joseph, Jesus was rejected of His family, the Jews, as their own kin till second time – then Zec 13:6
 - c. Third, as Moses, Jesus was rejected as their deliverer till second time – then all Israel shall be saved
 - d. Fourth, as the One who completes the Law, Jesus was rejected as the perfect representative of God till second time – then He'll be accepted as Emmanuel God Himself With Us
 - e. I see 4-fold ministry of Christ as seen in the Gospels here. (Messiah, Servant, Man, God)

3rd Step of Biblical Evangelism – Wait On The Lord To Work (Chap 7:54-60)

Read Vs 54-58

1. The Holy Spirit came along side these men and they rejected Him.
2. When the Word of God goes out, it does not return void, it does Its work.
 - a. Sometimes It quickens the hardening of a heart, like these men.
 - b. Sometimes It quickens repentance.
 - c. Sometimes It does both.
3. This man Saul, would become Apostle Paul.
 - a. Lord is planting seeds in his heart even now

Read Vs 59-60

1. It's not our job to convert the person, it's for us to testify to the person and the Lord converts.
2. Notice the compassion of Stephen.
3. Too many Christians are worried about winning the argument instead of winning the Arguer.

Conclusion

So, we've seen the 3 Step of Evangelism that Stephen used:

1. Support the concepts first

- a. Bring up background facts that everyone would agree with
 - i. Like the concept of 'what is sin'
- b. Use an analogy of someone else doing something wrong
 - i. Nathan - w/ King David to elicit repentance

2. Apply it to the hearers

- a. Once you have their buy in on the concept, spring the trap.
- b. Sin is easy to see on someone else, until it's applied to you

3. Wait on the Lord to work

- a. Once you've given, now it's between them and the Lord.
- b. *Is the Lord offering you a 2nd chance today?*