

Acts

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OF THE APOSTLES

First

Stephen: The Power of A Life Poured Out

MODERN DAY MARTYRS: To learn more about the persecuted church globally visit Voice of the Martyrs, persecution.com or Open Door International, opendoors.org

These are Ordinary People, who pay an Extraordinary Price, and make an Extraordinary Impact!

The Story Of Stephen: Acts 6-7

Stephen the Man: An Ordinary Man... Living a _____ Life!

- Known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. (6:3)
- A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. (6:5)
- A man full of God's grace and power (6:8)
- Performed great wonders and signs among the people (6:8)
- They could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him (6:10)
- They saw that his face was like the face of an angel. (6:15)

Acts 6:3-15

The Accusation:

“ They produced false witnesses, who testified, ‘This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place (the Temple) and against the law.’”

ACTS 6:13 (NIV)

“ Then the high priest asked Stephen, ‘Are these charges true?’”

ACTS 7:1 (NIV)

Stephen's Defense:

Stephen does not defend himself, but does _____, and the Gospel.

Acts 7:2-50 – Stephen's Sermon Retells the History of Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David and argues:

“ Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

~ 1 Peter 3:15b

1 God does not live in a _____ built by _____.

2 They have always disrespected _____ by ignoring and persecuting the prophets... including _____.

“ You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

ACTS 7:51-53 (NIV)

Stephen's Death:

“ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’

⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.”

ACTS 7:54-60 (NIV)

Stephen lived like Jesus _____ ... and died like Jesus _____. (Acts 7:59-60)

Stephens Reward:

“ After he had provided purification for sins, **he sat down** at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

HEBREWS 1:3b (NIV)

Jesus is _____ to welcome and honor Stephen! (Acts 7:55-56)

Stephen's Impact:

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Tertullian, 2nd Century.

“ And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.”

ACTS 8:1-3 (NIV)

1 The Church is scattered away from _____ to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

2 Seeds of faith are planted in the life of _____.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY GROUP VIDEOS *now on the APP* |    

- 1 - Read Matthew 5:10-12. Jesus says we are blessed when we are persecuted. How could this be true? What do you think this meant in Jesus' day? What does it mean in our day?
- 2 - We are first introduced to Stephen in Acts 6:1-8. What do we learn about the character of Stephen in these verses?
- 3 - When the Jews could not win an argument with Stephen they decided to just falsely accuse him. Read Acts 6:12-14. Do you think Christians are still falsely accused these days? How should they respond?
- 4 - Read Acts 7:51-60. What stands out to you from these verses? Are there things we can learn from Stephen in these verses?
- 5 - The death of Stephen ushers in a whole new era in the spread of the Gospel. Why do you think this is? (see Acts 8:1-3)
- 6 - It has been suggested that for the church in America to really grow and mature it will require some persecution. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? How do you think you will handle this when (and if) it comes?

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