

ACTS 7

Main Point: Defense for the AUTHENTIC Gospel

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

1 Peter 3:14-17

Digging Deeper

Why do we believe?

Many people in this world can say that they are a "Christian" however, most of them can't tell you **WHY** they are a Christian or **what** they actually believe. One of the most terrifying verses in all of scripture for me is Matthew 7:21-23 where Jesus says:

"Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. 22 On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' 23 But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

This chilling piece of scripture shows us that there will in fact be MANY who confess to believing without actually putting faith in Christ, or they believe a false gospel that is close to the truth but still misses the mark, just as the religious elite did in Acts 7.

In reading Stephen's defense of the Gospel he was able to use the 'Life Giving' word of God written in the old testament to prove Jesus is the Messiah, as well as show why he believes in the Lord. If we had to use nothing but the old testament to show someone Christ, could we do it?

Discussion Questions

1. Read through Acts 7 together. What stands out as unique to you?
2. How is the history of the Old Testament vital to truly understanding the Gospel?
3. Even when Stephen was being stoned, he still offered love and forgiveness to his murderers. How can we show this kind of love to those who would make us suffer for our faith?
4. As scripture says to be prepared to make a defense for why you believe, let's put this into practice. Share your testimony and why you believe it.