

The Church **IGNITED**

Stephen's Stand- Acts 6:8-7:60

STEPHEN'S STAND

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 6:5

They chose Stephen a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.

Who was Stephen?

- 1.) Full of faith
- 2.) Filled with the Holy Spirit
- 3.) Full of Grace and Power

Acts 6:9-14

Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.

Fair Trial?

In secret
Stirred up people
Produced false witness

Their claim

He speaks against Moses and God
Holy Place and the Law
Acts 6:15

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephens Speech

- 1.) The activity of God is not confined to the Jerusalem temple
- 2.) Worship accepted to God is not confined to the Jerusalem temple

Acts 7:48-50

However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord.

Or where will my resting place be?

Has not my hand made all these things?

- 3.) The Jewish people have constantly rejected God representatives

John 5:39-40; 45-47

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?

Their response

Acts 7:57-60

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 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. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 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.

Two important things

- 1.) Introduced to Saul (Paul)
- 2.) Very familiar words

A quick look at Acts 8:1-3

Persecution sends the church out of Jerusalem and into Judea and Samaria

What are we doing in our lives today that makes Jesus stand ?

LifeGroup Questions - Doing Life Together

Week of Week of Week of Oct 18-24, 2020



Stephen's Stand – Acts 6:8-7:60

PRAYER

Open in prayer and ask God to guide your time together.

MY STORY

Have you ever been falsely accused of doing something you did not do? Describe the incident and what happened.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. What principle, point, or insight from Sunday's message really caught your attention? Why?

Pastor Joel didn't have a lot of time to go through the entirety of Stephens speech before the Sanhedrin. These next questions will take you through that speech.

2. **Read Acts 7:9-19.** In recounting Jewish history, Stephen told Joseph's story and how his brothers wrongfully sold him into slavery, not realizing that Joseph would later save their entire family during a huge famine. Since Stephen's ultimate goal was to share the good news of Jesus with the religious leaders, why was telling the story of Joseph a great tactic?
3. **Read Acts 7:20-42.** Next, Stephen recounts Moses' story showing that Moses, too had been rejected (v35) by the Jewish leaders who refused to obey him (v39). How did this repudiate the accusation that Stephen had spoken blasphemy against Moses, and how was it also a great tactic for laying a foundation for Stephen to speak about Jesus?

4. **Read Acts 7:43-50.** Stephen spoke about the Tabernacle and Temple. How did this contradict the false accusation that he had spoken wrongfully about the temple?

5. **Read Acts 7:51-53.** What accusations did Stephen then make against the Jewish religious leaders? Put yourself in Stephen's place. How do you think you would have responded? Do you think that Stephen was too harsh or simply saying what the Spirit told him to say?

6. **Read Acts 7:54.** How did the religious leaders respond to Stephen's accusations? How do you tend to respond when someone says something negative about you?

TAKING IT HOME

7. What are two important take-aways for you from this passage? Is there something the Lord is prompting you to do this week in response? Share with your group.
8. What is the significance of Jesus standing next to the father? What have you seen done in ministry that would make Jesus stand?

PRAYING TOGETHER

Share prayer needs and pray for the members of your group. Pray and ask God for boldness in sharing with others.