

STEPHEN'S ACCUSATION OF ISRAEL AND HIS VIOLENT DEATH
Acts 7:51-60

Introduction:

- A. Stephen has been brought before the council for teaching the truth
6:14
 - 1) The temple would be destroyed
 - 2) The law of Moses was fulfilled

- B. He had given a brief history of Israel and he concluded that the temple was not the "place of God's rest" Vs. 49
 - 1) "Heaven is my throne"
 - 2) "Hath not my hand made all these things?"

- C. Why had Israel rejected Jesus?
 - 1) "He came unto His own"
 - 2) "His own (race) received Him not"

- I. The Reasons They Rejected Jesus Acts 7:51
 - A. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" 51a
 - 1) "Stiff-necked" = sklerotrachelos = "Hard-necked", used in the Septuagint to describe the rebellious nature of Israel, Ex. 33:3,5 Deut. 9:6,13
 - 2) They were circumcised in the flesh, but they were in rebellion in their heart and mind.
 - 3) Something like being baptized yet disobedient

 - B. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost"
 - 1) "resist" = antipito = "to fall against or upon in a hostile manner", "to strive against"
 - 2) They actively rejected truth

 - C. "as your fathers did, so do ye"
 - 1) They followed in the tradition of Israel

II. Those Who Prophesied of Jesus Were Persecuted Vs. 52

A. "which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?"

- 1) "persecuted" = dioko = "to pursue"
- 2) They "hounded" the Prophets

B. "and have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One:

- 1) "slain" = apokteino = "to kill"
- 2) "shewed before" = prokatoggello = "to announce before hand"

C. These men had done the same 52b

- 1) "betrayers" = prodotes = "a traitor", from prodidomi, "to give up to the enemy"
- 2) "murders" = phoneus = "a murder"

III. These Men Should Have Known Him Vs. 53

A. "who have received the law by the disposition of angels"

- 1) "received" = lambano = "to take or receive from another", God gave it, they took it.
- 2) "disposition" = diatage = "a disposing in order, as of troops", "arrangement"
- 3) Romans 3:1-4
 - a. "advantage" = perissos = "very much", "exceedingly", "what is over and above"

B. "and have not kept it"

- 1) "kept" = phulasso = "to keep watch", "guard", "defend", "protect", "to preserve", "maintain"
- 2) We also have "the faith". Do we "keep" it?
- 3) Those who have access to the truth and refuse to hear it with open and refuse to hear it with open and a receptive heart, "have not kept it"

IV. The Council's Response to the Truth Vs. 54

A. "And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart"

- 1) "heard" = akouo = "to be informed"
- 2) "cut" = diaprio = "to saw through or in two pieces", [with the teeth] = "rage"

B. "and they gnashed on him with their teeth"

- 1) "gnashed" = brucho = "to roar", "howl", "the death cry of a wounded hero", "to grind or bite with a loud noise"
- 2) These men lost all composure, and angered by the truth of his accusation, they used the weapons at hand, their teeth!

V. The Death of Stephen Vs. 55-60

A. He came to death full of the Holy Spirit Vs. 55

- 1) He looked steadfastly into heaven
- 2) He saw the glory of God
- 3) He saw Jesus STANDING on the right hand of God

B. He came to death full of witness Vs. 56

- 1) Stephen spoke of what he was
- 2) Perhaps he had said enough

C. The council could stand no more

- 1) "They cried out with a loud voice"
- 2) "and stopped their ears"
- 3) "and ran upon him with one accord"
- 4) "and cast him out of the city"
- 5) "and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul"
- 6) "and they stoned Stephen"

D. Stephen prayed for himself

- 1) "calling upon God"
- 2) "and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit"

E. Stephen prayed for others

- 1) "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice"
- 2) "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"
 - a. "lay not this charge" = histemi = "to make to stand", "set", "place", "put in the balance", "weight"

F. Stephen died in peace

- 1) "And when he had said this, he fell asleep"
- 2) To die in peace, at peace with one's self and with God is a great victory!
- 3) Asleep in Jesus, resting in Him for all things