



Lesson 9 – The First Christian Martyr

Based on Acts 6:5-17; 7

- 1) What effect did the early church have in embracing organization?
Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples _____ in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
- 2) Who specifically is mentioned as a Deacon in the Book of Acts?
Acts 6:8 And _____, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.
- 3) What incredible testimony did they say about him?
Acts 6:10 And they were not able to _____ the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.
- 4) Did those that heard him repent?
6:11-12 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against _____, and against _____. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and _____ him, and brought him to the council,

Stephen, the foremost of the seven deacons, was a man of deep piety and broad faith. Though a Jew by birth, he spoke the Greek language and was familiar with the customs and manners of the Greeks. He therefore found opportunity to preach the gospel in the synagogues of the Greek Jews. He was very active in the cause of Christ and boldly proclaimed his faith. Learned rabbis and doctors of the law engaged in public discussion with him, confidently expecting an easy victory.

- 5) What promise of Jesus did he fulfill?
Luke 21:14-15 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall _____: For I will give you a _____ and _____, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Not only did he speak in the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was plain that he was a student of the prophecies and learned in all matters of the law. He ably defended the truths that he advocated and utterly defeated his opponents.

As the priests and rulers saw the power that attended the preaching of Stephen, they were filled with bitter hatred. Instead of yielding to the evidence that he presented, they determined to silence his voice by putting him to death.

- 6) What did they do at his trial?
Acts 6:13-14 And set up false _____, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall _____ this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.
- 7) Was Stephen troubled by the events of that day?
Acts 6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an _____.



As Stephen stood face to face with his judges to answer to the charge of blasphemy, a holy radiance shone upon his countenance. Many who beheld this light trembled and veiled their faces, but the stubborn unbelief and prejudice of the rulers did not waver.

8) Stephen gave them a history lesson, where did he begin?

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father _____, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

9) Who did he speak of next?

Acts 7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10) And then?

Acts 7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

11) What REALLY made the Council's blood boil?

Acts 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; _____ shall ye _____.

When Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges against him, he began his defense in a clear, thrilling voice, which rang through the council hall. In words that held the assembly spellbound, he proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people of God. He showed a thorough knowledge of the Jewish economy and the spiritual interpretation of it now made manifest through Christ.

12) What aggravated them even more?

Acts 7:48-49 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with _____; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my _____?

When Stephen reached this point, there was a tumult among the people. When he connected Christ with the prophecies and spoke as he did of the temple, the priest, pretending to be horror-stricken, rent his robe. To Stephen this act was a signal that his voice would soon be silenced forever. He saw the resistance that met his words and knew that he was giving his last testimony.

13) What direct rebuke did he give to those evil men?

Acts 7:51-53 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always _____ the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have _____ them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and _____: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

At this, priests and rulers were beside themselves with anger. Acting more like beasts of prey than human beings, they rushed upon Stephen.

14) How does Scripture record it?

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the _____, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.



In the cruel faces about him the prisoner read his fate; but he did not waver. For him the fear of death was gone. For him the enraged priests and the excited mob had no terror. The scene before him faded from his vision.

15) What did God show him?

Acts 7:55-56 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus _____ on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens _____, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

As he described the glorious scene upon which his eyes were gazing, it was more than his persecutors could endure. He was declaring to them that Jesus was pronouncing judgment upon them. And whether they knew it or not, the 70 Weeks Prophecy of Daniel was coming to it's prophetic end.

16) What did they do with him?

Acts 7:57-58 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And _____ him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their _____ at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

17) What was the final act of Stephen?

Acts 7:59-60 And they stoned Stephen, _____ upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their _____. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. The memory of the signet of God upon his face; his words, which touched the very souls of those who heard them, remained in the minds of the beholders, and testified to the truth of that which he had proclaimed.

18) Did Saul convert and become a Christian because of this?

Acts 8:1 And Saul was _____ unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made _____ of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Stephen's death was a sore trial to the church, but it resulted in the conviction of Saul, who could not efface from his memory the faith and constancy of the martyr, and the glory that had rested on his countenance.

At the scene of Stephen's trial and death, Saul had seemed to be imbued with a frenzied zeal. Afterward he was angered by his own secret conviction that Stephen had been honored by God at the very time when he was dishonored by men. Saul continued to persecute the church of God, hunting them down, seizing them in their houses, and delivering them up to the priests and rulers for imprisonment and death. His zeal in carrying forward this persecution brought terror to the Christians at Jerusalem.



19) Was God done with Saul?

Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a _____ from heaven:

This relentless persecutor was to be employed in building up the church that he was now tearing down. A Mightier than Satan had chosen Saul to take the place of the martyred Stephen, to preach and suffer for His name, and to spread far and wide the tidings of salvation through His blood.

Can you see you are not stuck where you are?

Do you want to be put on the right course?

When is the time to seek forgiveness and walk in the right direction?

