

STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM WITH SAUL'S CONSENT

(Acts 7:54-8:1a)

I. THE INFANCY AND THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (3-7)

A. A Problem Arises that has the Potential to be Very Divisive in the Church (6:1)

B. The Apostles Appoint the First Deacons in A Local Church (6:2-7)

C. Stephen's Spirit Empowered Ministry (6:8-11)

D. Stephen's Arrest and the False Accusations by the Sanhedrin (6:12-7:1)

E. Some Preliminary Observations Regarding Stephen's Message (7:2-53)

F. Stephen's Prosecuting Message to the Sanhedrin (7:2-53)

1. In Stephen's convicting message he demonstrated how Israel had repeatedly _____ God's appointed deliverers in the past, patriarchs like _____ and _____ and the prophets. (vv. 2-50)

2. In his closing remarks, Stephen delivered his biblical indictment on the entire Sanhedrin for the _____ crime- murdering their own Messiah; they sat there _____ as _____ in the eyes of God. (vv. 51-53)

G. The Sanhedrin's Violent Reaction to the Truth (7:54-60)

1. The members of the Sanhedrin were "*cut to the heart*" (Acts 2:37), i.e., they were _____. (v. 54a)

2. Rather than repent, "*they gnashed their teeth at him*" i.e., they were beside themselves with _____ and _____. (v. 54b)

3. By contrast, Stephen was "*full of the Holy Spirit,*" and as he looked up into the heavens, he actually saw _____ at the right hand of God. (v. 55)

* What is significant about this?

4. By Stephen declaring that he was visibly seeing Jesus and proclaiming that He was the _____ of _____ at God's right hand, he was repeating the Messianic _____ given by Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14). (v. 56)

* Who else quoted this prophecy and applied it to Jesus? (Matt. 24:30; 26:63-65; Mark 14:61-62)

5. These religious leaders who were supposed to be dignified, _____ Stephen with one impulse as an _____ of _____ incensed, wicked mob. (v. 57)

6. The Sanhedrin did not have the authority to execute someone without _____ sanction, and _____ law forbade executing a person on the same day as his trial; but they _____ Stephen outside the city just the same in violation of both. (v. 58a)

7. As these _____ sinners stoned this _____ man Stephen to death, there stood by a _____ man by the name of Saul who looked after the coats of the witnesses. (v. 58b)

* Is it wrong to address Jesus Christ directly in prayer? (v. 59, cf. Acts 2:21; 9:14; Rom. 10:12-14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 16:22; Rev. 22:20)

8. For Stephen the whole dreadful turmoil finished in a strange peace; his _____, _____ his _____, "*fell asleep*" to await resurrection. (v. 60, cf. 8:1; 13:36; John 11:11-15; 1 Thess. 4:13, 15)

* How is Stephen similar to the Lord Jesus?

* How can you apply Stephen's testimony and example in your own life?