



Lessons from Stephen

Acts 6:1-15, Acts 7: 1-50, Acts 7:51-60, Acts 8: 1-5

Objectives



- ☞ - We will read the narrative of Stephen's in the Bible.
- ☞ - We will look at Stephen's qualities and characteristics that prepared him.
- ☞ - We will talk about Boldness, Peace, and Purpose.
- ☞ - We will compare piety and false piety.

Acts 6: 1-15

1Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. .

Acts 6: 1-15

4But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 6: 1-15

8And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. 10But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

Acts 6: 1-15

11Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” 15And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Acts 7

- ☞ Stephen is accused of blasphemy. Speaking against the law of Moses and of the Holy Temple.
- ☞ Stephen gives an eloquent speech that is historically based.
- ☞ It is the longest discourse in Acts which includes sections on Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Israel's apostasy.
- ☞ He uses historical argument of Israel's movement from Abraham to Solomon and how God was always with them.
- ☞ He also talks about Israel's rejection of God and the use of false idols and then parallels the past to the current in a strong rebuke.

Acts 7: 51-60

- 51 “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.
52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,
53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Acts 7: 51-60

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Background



- ✧ The Jesus had recently ascended into heaven.
- ✧ Pentecost took place and Jesus followers were preaching in Jerusalem
- ✧ Acts 5 the apostles were put into prison were freed by the and angel of the Lord and continued to preach.
- ✧ When they were found they listened to the authorities out of fear of being stoned.
- ✧ There is a dispute amongst the Hellenists and the Hebrew Jews.

Stephens Characteristics



- ☞ Good Repute
- ☞ Full of Wisdom
- ☞ Full of the Holy Spirit
- ☞ Full of Grace and Power
- ☞ Does signs and wonders
- ☞ Deacon Servant

Boldness

✧ Boldness is doing the right thing for Christ regardless of how other people might respond.



Peace

- ☞ Acts 6: 15 15And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.
- ☞ Visible manifestation of God
- ☞ Trusting in the Lord during difficult situations.



Peace in the midst of the storm

☞ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4: 7

☞ 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.
27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid. - John 14:27



Purpose

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Purpose

- ☞ Sometimes when we are going through it we don't know why.
- ☞ The Christian walk is not always easy.
- ☞ We have to deny ourselves.
- ☞ We make sacrifices to the glory of His name.



Purpose

- ☞ Acts 1: 8 When Jesus said 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 8: 1-2 1And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.



Piety vs. False Piety

The term **piety** usually refers to godliness or reverence for God. A person who shows great devotion to God through religious observance is said to be “pious.”



Stephen



Saul of Tarsus

Take Aways

- ☞ Are you filling yourself up with the Holy Spirit?
- ☞ Are you growing in your knowledge of God?
- ☞ Are you standing up in boldness to wrongs in the world?
- ☞ Do you have peace through the storm?
- ☞ Are you doing God's will in your life?
- ☞ Are you just playing church?