

7. Stephen (Acts chapters 6 and 7)

Prison, perseverance and pain

When they had called for the apostles and **beaten them**, they **commanded that they should not speak** in the name of **Jesus**, and let them go.

So they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.**

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease **teaching** and **preaching Jesus as the Christ.**

(Acts 5:40-42)



A Problem

**Our widows
are being
neglected!**

Greek speaking Jews complained.



They felt the local Hebrew speaking Jews
were discriminating against the Greek speakers

The Solution

“Choose 7 men to oversee this matter”

 **The Twelve**
(apostles)

**...and when they had prayed,
they laid hands on them.**

All Greek speaking...



We ... entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven...
(Acts 21:8)

So they chose:

1. Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,
2. Philip,
3. Prochorus,
4. Nicanor,
5. Timon,
6. Parmenas,
7. Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch

(See Acts 6:5)

Stephen

What sort of man was he?

Acts 6:5 - A man **full of faith and the Holy Spirit**

Acts 6:8 - **Full of grace and power** [he] did great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 6:10 - They could not withstand **the wisdom and the Spirit** with which he spoke

Stephen

They could not withstand the **wisdom and the Spirit** with which he spoke

This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.

(Acts 6:13-14)

**False
witnesses**

And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like **the face of an angel.**

(Acts 6:15)

What had Stephen said?

... Jesus of Nazareth
will destroy this place
and change the customs
which Moses delivered to us.

False witnesses

*“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will make **a new covenant**
with the house of Israel ...”*

In that He says, “**A new covenant,**”
He has made the first obsolete.

Now what is becoming obsolete
and growing old is ready to vanish away.

(see Hebrews 8:7-13)

Stephen's response

JESUS said:

*Beware of men,
for **they will deliver you up to councils**
and **scourge** you in their synagogues...*

*When they deliver you up,
do not worry about how or what you should speak.*

*For **it will be given to you** in that hour what you should speak;
for it is not you who speak,
but **the Spirit of your Father** who speaks in you.*

(See Matthew 10:17-20)



Stephen's response

ABRAHAM

- Abraham was called by “*the God of Glory*” to leave his homeland
- He had no inheritance in the land of Canaan
- God made a covenant that his descendants would inherit it
- They would be oppressed 400 years and delivered
- That nation (Egypt) would be judged
- Abraham ⇔ Isaac ⇔ Jacob ⇔ 12 sons – the patriarchs...

Stephen's response

JOSEPH

- The sons of Jacob, because of envy, **sold Joseph** into Egypt
- **BUT GOD** was with him
- He became ruler of all of Egypt
- A famine came and Jacob's family moved to Egypt
- **God saved Israel by Joseph** who had been sold by his brothers

Stephen's response

MOSES

- Moses was born, rescued, and raised in Pharaoh's palace
- Israel **did not recognise him** as their deliverer
- He fled Egypt after being **rejected by his own people**
- **BUT GOD** delivered Israel from slavery by Moses
- Moses spoke of **the coming Prophet** who must be heard
- **Israel rebelled** against Moses, making the golden calf
- They offered sacrifices to God AND to idols in the wilderness

Stephen's response

THE TABERNACLE

- Israel had the Tabernacle, made according to the given pattern
- They brought the tabernacle into Canaan with Joshua
- God drove out their enemies
- David was favoured by God, and Solomon built the Temple
- **BUT GOD** *“does not dwell in temples made with hands” ...*

Stephen's response

BUT GOD *“does not dwell in temples made with hands” ...*

Isaiah 66:1-2

*Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.*

What house will you build for Me? *says the LORD,*
Or what is the place of My rest?
Has My hand not made all these things?

(Acts 7:49-50)

Stephen's response

You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.”

Which of the prophets did your fathers NOT persecute?

And they killed those who foretold the coming of **the Just One,
of whom YOU now have become **the betrayers and murderers...**”**

(See Acts 7:51-53)

The court's response

When they heard these things
they were **ENRAGED!**

*Behold, I see the heavens opened,
and the Son of Man **standing**
at the right hand of God.*

(See Acts 7:56)

*Lord Jesus,
receive my spirit.*

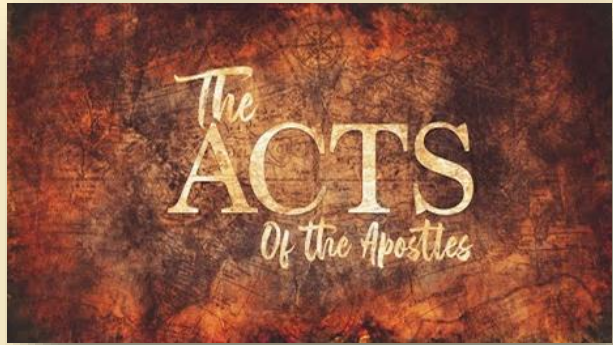
*Lord, do not charge
them with this sin.*



And the witnesses laid
down their clothes
at the feet of
a young man
named Saul.

(Acts 7:58)

Satan's defeat...



Next: **Phillip...**