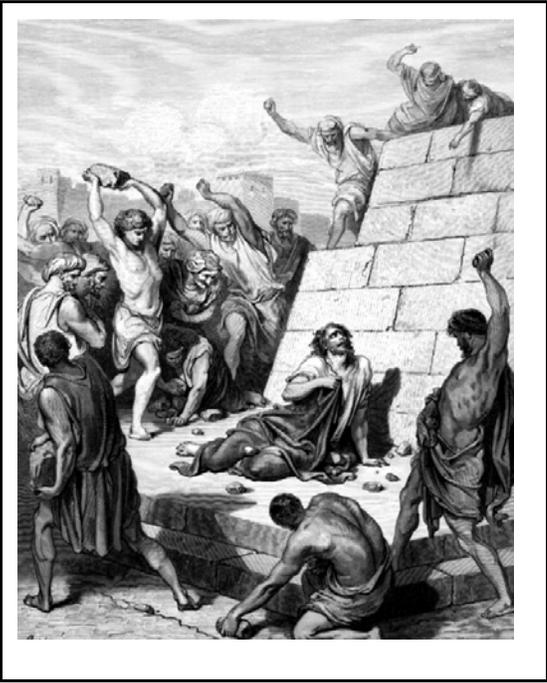


Stephen

Acts 6-7



What does it take to be a disciple of Christ?

Could I become a disciple?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father; As we review Your word and study the early Christian church, guide us to a better understanding of your will. Help us to understand what it takes to be your disciple and strengthen our love so that we may be Your children for life. Through Jesus Christ Your Son and our Savior. Amen.

The Story - Acts 6-7

6:1 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying..... 8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against

Moses and God." 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. 13 They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; 14 "for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." 15 And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.



7:1 Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

(From verse 2-50 Stephen delivers his defense before the high priest and the Jews. Using Scripture Stephen proves his defense namely ..that the Savior, Jesus, had come into the world, as promised. Stephen concludes his remarks by pointing to the Jews and telling them that they were ignoring the fulfillment of all of God's promises.)

51 "You stiffnecked and 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 foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

55 But he, being 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 said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Recalling Details

1. Why was Stephen chosen by the disciples? (vs. 5, 8)
2. Who accused Stephen of blasphemy?
3. Which other person had been falsely accused of blasphemy and put to death?
4. When the Jewish Council looked at Stephen what happened to his face?
5. What did Stephen use as his defense?

6. What type of people did Stephen say the members of the Jewish Council were, and what did he mean by those words?
7. Why was Stephen's defense interrupted by members of the council?
8. What type of death sentence did Stephen receive for confessing Jesus Christ?
9. For what did Stephen ask of the Lord as he was being stoned?
10. For what else did Stephen ask?

Outer Aim

Stephen was condemned and executed for preaching Jesus, His Savior, but Jesus came to his rescue.

Discussion Questions

1. Satan still does not want the word of God to be taught in its truth and purity. What can you do to become strong in the true teachings of God's Word?
2. Just like the Jewish Council, many people today do not want to hear the truth. Stephen did not stop pointing out the true word of God to the members of the council. What should we do when people want to go their own way and refuse to hear the word of God?

3. Stephen made two remarkable requests of the Lord before he died. What were they?

4. No one knows when death will come. We will all die. This is a result of sin and a fact of life. What will we want to do now to prepare ourselves for death?

Inner Aim

Just as God strengthened His early church, He strengthens us today by reminding us that we are to look to Him ALWAYS.

Passages

Luke 12:8 Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

I Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Hymn/Prayer

Read through all verses of Hymn 409 for the closing prayer.