

“When Living Leads to Dying”

Acts 6:8-7:60, ESV

Introduction: All we know about Stephen in Holy Scripture is admirable. Stephen was known for his faith, wisdom, grace, power, and a Spirit-filled life. He was full throttle for Jesus; and yet, it cost him his life. Stephen is the church’s first martyr. In these extended verses, we read of Stephen’s dilemma, defense, and death.

Outline of the Text:

1). STEPHEN’S DILEMMA (6:8-15).

- ❖ The combined parties **conspire** and cook up a lie about Stephen and stir up trouble (v. 11-12).

Application: Righteous living will not necessarily **shield** you from motivated opposition.

2). STEPHEN’S DEFENSE (7:1-53).

- ❖ Stephen traces Israel’s **relationship** with God.
- ❖ Stephen draws attention to the fact that the Jews, throughout their history in the OT, had repeatedly **rejected** God’s message and His prophets.
- ❖ Stephen even defends his **respect** for the temple (v. 44-50).

Application: It is a dangerous stated to be into **resist** and **reject** the message and messengers of God. Rarely is the truth embraced; more often than not, the truth is reacted against.

3). STEPHEN’S DEATH (7:54-60).

- ❖ How was Stephen’s defense **received** by his audience? Look at verse 54.
- ❖ What was Stephen’s **personal** response? Look at verse 55.
- ❖ Stephen makes an **unprecedented** statement in verse 56.
- ❖ Stephen is dragged out of the city and **stoned**. First mention of Saul/Paul in verse 58.

Application: The early believers were glad to suffer as Jesus had suffered because it meant they were counted worthy (5:41). My question for you is: “Are you ready to LIVE for Jesus?” Are you making your one and only life count for Jesus?