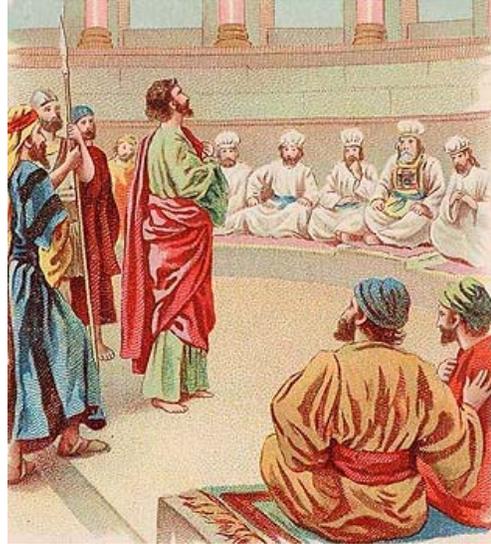


## An Arbitrary to Die For

***“Godly men buried STEPHEN and mourned deeply for him.” Acts 8:2***



## Stephen Was a Spirit Filled Person

**(1) The first thing we see about Stephen that would make Godly men mourn his passing is the fact that he was truly a SPIRIT-FILLED person.**

This fact is affirmed at least four times in the Bible.

Acts 6:3

3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.

## Stephen Was a Spirit Filled Person

Acts 6:8

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 6:10

10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

Acts 7:55

55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

## Stephen Was a Spirit Filled Person

What does it mean to be "Spirit-Filled"?

A Spirit-filled person is someone who literally makes Jesus LORD of his or her entire life—their thoughts, their actions, their reactions.

A Spirit-filled person is someone who allows the Spirit of God to LEAD them—to FILL them—they let our Lord literally use his or her flesh to do His will.

So—a Spirit-filled person is someone who welcomes the Spirit's leadership from within and allows that leadership to extend into all of life. His life is literally FULL of the Spirit of God.

## Stephen and Jesus

- The Bible says Jesus was full of grace. It says the same thing about Stephen.
- Jesus performed miracles. So did Stephen.
- Jesus boldly confronted the religious establishment of the day. So did Stephen.
- Jesus was convicted by lying witnesses. So was Stephen.
- Jesus was executed though innocent of any crime. So was Stephen.
- Both were accused of blasphemy.
- Both died outside the city and were buried by sympathizers.
- Both prayed for the salvation of their executioners.

*“My daughter Allison, was 5 years old when I became a follower of Jesus, and all she had known in those 5 years was a dad who was profane and angry. I remember I came home one night and kicked a hole in the living-room wall just out of anger with life. I am ashamed to think of the times Allison hid in her room to get away from me. Five months after I gave my life to Jesus Christ, that little girl went to my wife and said, ‘Mommy, I want God to do for me what he’s done for Daddy!’ At age five! What was she saying? She’d never studied the archeological evidence supporting the Biblical accounts like I had. All she knew was her dad used to be this way; hard to live with. But more and more her dad is becoming different. And if that is what God does to people, then sign her up. At age 5 she gave her life to Jesus.”*

Lee Strobel



**(2) Another thing that made people love Stephen was the fact that He took our Lord's Great Commission PERSONALLY.**

He took the Great Commission personally by going to his own peer group—that place—those people—where he knew he could have the most impact. He saw his people—his friends—his co-workers—as his responsibility, his mission field.

Eugen Romanovsky—who is a visual effects artist from Israel—really pushed the envelope in this principle of used car selling.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M P06gvFWW64>



You don't need to be a visual effects artist to share your faith. You don't need a dramatic presentation. You just need to be a friend on the journey who is willing to love people and point to Jesus—people on the street where you live—people you know.

Luke 19:10

10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Acts 6:9

9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.

**(3) —Stephen was a skilled STUDENT of the Scriptures.**

He was wise with the wisdom of God's Word.

Crisis shows what is inside us.

Overview of Acts 7:2-53

a. As you read his message you'll see that his first point was to counter their accusation that he had spoken against their beloved temple.

b. In the second part of his sermon he countered their accusation that he had maligned the law of God.

c. He said, "Not only does the Scripture record the fact that your forefathers disobeyed the law and rejected Moses, but you yourselves rejected and killed the very One Moses prophesied about!"

Acts 7:52

<sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—

#### **(4) Stephen was a person of great COURAGE.**

Why wasn't he afraid of what these men were doing to him?

Luke 12:5

<sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Christians like Stephen live to please our Lord. The only fear they have is not doing so.

No Christian has influenced the world as profoundly as Paul.

Acts 20:22 tells us that Saul never forgot Stephen's death.

Another thing—Acts 8 tells us that Stephen's death was the beginning of a time of wide-spread persecution of Christians. Acts 8:2 says, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." Acts 8:4-9 says that another deacon, Philip, fled to Samaria and took the gospel there.

We don't always know why things like this happen, but we do know that God only allows things to happen that are for our good or His glory and hindsight shows that to be the case here. Good—amazing good—came from Stephen's death.

Stephen received this wonderful epitaph because he was Spirit-filled, because he took the Great Commission personally, because he was a skilled student of God's Word—and because of his great courage.