

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

"Stephen the Victor"

Acts 7:51-60

Stephen's history lesson reveals the truth of how Israel has rejected the truth and again doing so right before his eyes. Stephen continues to stand for the truth and remains faithful to the end. He stares death with boldness as he looks forward to being with Jesus and going to heaven.

Truth Revealed

⁵¹ "You stiff-necked 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*."

Remaining Faithful for the Truth

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.

1. Read v.51-53. What accusations does Stephen make towards the Sanhedrin?
2. Read Exodus 32:9, Jeremiah 9:26 and Deuteronomy 10:16. What does it mean to be "stiff-necked" and "uncircumcised"?
3. How does the Sanhedrin take these accusations? How are they "betrayers and murderers"?
4. What does it mean that they were "*cut to the heart*"? If you should be "*cut to the heart*" how do you respond? What type of response will cause a person to eventually become "stiff-necked"?
5. The temple was a gift from God. How did this "*house of God*" become a *bad* thing?
 - a. Was there an overemphasis in a place/location of worship? Did it become an idol?
 - b. Where/How do you worship? Is it a place or an attitude?
6. Stephen faced his death with boldness. How would you change how you live today if you knew your days are numbered? What is preventing you from making these changes?
7. How was the Lord merciful to Stephen while he was being stoned? How did Stephen respond?