

To the Ends of the Earth: Session 11

Stoned

Acts 6:8-7:60

Questions

1. We are introduced to Stephen in Acts 6. What do we learn about Stephen from verses 6 and 8?

Stephen had a good reputation. Stephen was full of faith, wisdom, power, and the Holy Spirit. He performed great wonders and signs among the people.

2. When the Jews could not get the best of Stephen in debates at the local synagogues, what false accusation did they make against Stephen in verses 13-14?

Stephen speaks blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. Jesus will destroy this holy place and change the customs of Moses.

3. What does the holy place refer to in verse 13?

The Temple

4. Besides the temple and law, what else was important to the Jews?

The Promised Land (Jerusalem) and their heritage

5. According to verse 15, who did Stephen appear before for his trial?

The Sanhedrin

6. Chapter 7 is Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin. Stephen's defense is a masterpiece. Let's look carefully at Stephen's defense. Stephen starts with Abraham. Where was Abraham when God first spoke to him? What subtle message is this sending to Jewish leaders?

Mesopotamia

God speaks in other places besides Jerusalem.

7. Verse 5 makes it clear that Abraham lived as a pilgrim in the Promised Land. But according to Hebrews 11:10, what inheritance was Abraham looking forward to?

Heaven ... Again this is a subtle message to the Jews. They were backward thinking not forward thinking like Abraham.

8. Next Stephen moves to Joseph. What is the message that Stephen sent to the Jewish leaders when talking about Joseph? See verses 9-16.

Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and rejected him. But God had a plan for Joseph to bring salvation to his family. The Jewish leaders were jealous of and rejected Jesus even though God used Him to bring salvation to the world.

9. Stephen then moves on to Moses. What does Stephen emphasize about Moses, and what is the message for the Jewish leaders? See verses 20-29.

Moses was raised and trained in the ways of the Egyptians. Moses rejected the Egyptians and stood with the Jews seeing himself as an instrument of salvation from God. But the people rejected Moses. Jesus was an instrument of salvation that the Jews rejected.

10. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, God told Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on Holy Ground. What subtle message is Stephen saying about the Jewish temple?

Holy ground is not about a place. Holy ground is about the presence of God. The presence of God had departed the Jewish temple in the Old Testament.

11. Moses was rejected a second time when the Jews turned to idolatry by worshipping the golden calves. Stephen then turned his attention to the tabernacle and the temple. But what did Stephen say in verse 48? If God doesn't dwell in the temple, where does He dwell?

God doesn't dwell in houses made by hands. God dwells in Heaven and in the hearts of believers like Stephen.

12. In verses 51-53, Stephen is no longer subtle in his defense. He directly confronts the Jewish leaders with their sin. What did Stephen say to the Jewish leaders?

You stiff-necked people. You are still rejecting God.

You are uncircumcised in heart. That's where it counts.

You resisted the Holy Spirit, killed God's righteous one, and not obeyed the law.

13. What is the Jewish leader's response to Stephen, and what did they do to him?

The Jewish leaders were enraged. They stoned Stephen.

14. Who are we introduced to in verse 58?

Saul