

Acts of the Apostles 7:55-8:4 __ Lesson 19

Stoning Stephen, Persecution and Scattering

1. Acts 7:51-54 – Stephen’s Indictment of Israel

- a. Zacharias: “*ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath forsaken you*” - 2 Chron 24:18-22
- b. Jesus: “*All these things shall come upon this generation*” - Mt 23:29-38
- c. Stephen: “*ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised*” – This is a legal condemnation
 - i. Here unbelieving Israel is called uncircumcised (helpful in Gal 2:7-9)
 - ii. “*as your fathers did, so do ye*” – Stephen explains the shadows of time past
- d. Stephen is NOT the first martyr of a new thing, but the last straw in the old thing

2. Acts 7:55-60 – Stephen’s Vision and Stoning

- a. 7:55- The first time the Lord is seen since his ascension, and in glory
- b. Stephen saw a vision like Jesus predicted in Mark 14:57-64
- c. “*right hand of God*” – The position of blessing, authority, power, inheritance, judgment – Exo 15:6, 12; Ps 16:8; 1 Pet 3:22; Mark 16:19?; Heb 8:1; Ps 80:17
- d. “*Son of Man*” – that they may know that Jesus is Messiah – Dan 7:13-14
- e. “*standing...*” – An interesting study of the details - Ps 7:6, 9:19, 110:1; Isa 3:13-14
- f. “*calling upon God*” – removed in other Bibles affecting the deity of Christ here
- g. “*lay not this sin to their charge*” – They knew what they were doing.
- h. Peter preached a condemnation and thousands believed, but Stephen is killed

3. Acts 8:1-4 - The Great Persecution

- a. Saul is associated with the persecution 3x here – Acts 7:58, 8:1, 8:3
- b. He compelled them to blaspheme - Acts 26:10-11
- c. Stephen says they resisted the Holy Ghost (Ac 7:51); Jesus warned Matt 12:31-32
- d. Saul was the chief (leader) of sinners because of this work – 1 Tim 1:15
- e. “*church at Jerusalem*” – in a temple, made of Jews, kingdom miracles - Acts 2:47
- f. Not the church in the wilderness (Ac 7:38), nor the Body of Christ (Co 1:18)
- g. Knowing the different churches helps with 1 Cor 15:9 and Gal 1:13
- h. The church here is not the one body, but Jews only - Acts 11:19

4. Acts 8:1-4 - The Scattering

- a. The scattered people here are the same we find in James 1:1 and 1 Pet 1:1
- b. “*Judaea and Samaria*” – Ch. 8:1 is taught as the fulfillment of Acts 1:8... not so!
- c. They could not establish the kingdom w/o Jerusalem – Matt 23:39
- d. They did not scatter by instruction from the Lord or expansion, but of safety
- e. “*except the apostles*” - The apostles stayed behind in obedience to Luke 24:47