

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles

NT Survey Lesson 57--Acts 7

Introduction: Stephen's sermon in this chapter is not as much a defense of his own conduct as it is a stinging indictment of his enemies who were acting like their stubborn and hard-hearted ancestors. Stephen made his own interests subservient to the gospel's with the cost of his life!

Stephen relates the history of the Hebrew people--Ac. 7:1-50

1. What question did the high priest ask Stephen? Did Stephen ever answer this question? Why or why not?
2. Critics charge Stephen with several "errors" in his speech. Can you answer each of these supposed "errors" of Stephen?
 - A. Stephen erred in attributing the words of v. 3 to the time before Abram left Ur of Chaldea rather than afterward as Gen. 12 implies.
 - B. Stephen erred in saying Abram left Haran after his father Terah died. It is asserted that Terah was 70 years old (Gen. 11:32) when Abram was born. Abram was 75 when he left Haran (Gen. 12:4). This then would make Terah only 145 years old when Abram left Haran. Yet Gen. 11:32 indicates that Terah died at age 205.
 - C. Stephen erred in counting the souls going to Egypt as 75. Compare Gen. 46:27.
 - D. Stephen errs in saying Jacob was buried in Shechem.
 - E. Stephen errs in saying Abraham bought a tomb from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.
3. Who are principle characters discussed by Stephen as he tells the story of the Hebrew people? Why do you think Stephen tells this story?

Stephen applies the lesson to his hearers--Ac. 7:51-53

1. Does Stephen's sermon seem to have an abrupt ending? Why do you think he ended the sermon as he did?

2. What accusations did Stephen make against his hearers? Who were they imitating? How?

Stephen is stoned to death--Ac. 7:54-60

1. How did the Council respond to the words of Stephen?
2. How did Stephen respond to their actions?
3. What was the source of Stephen's sermon? What other event suggests that his message was given from God by the Holy Spirit?
4. What young man is witness to the stoning of Stephen?
5. What was Stephen's attitude toward his murderers?