

Stephen's Masterful Defense of the Gospel

Acts 7

PART SIX

Introduction

Words of Truth always elicit a response: either *acceptance* or *rejection*.

Stephen's Glorious Vision: vv. 55-56

"Son of Man"

Luke 22:66-23:1

"And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God." Luke 12:8

This promise was fulfilled in Stephen as the Son of Man Himself stands up as witness for his vindication!

The Accusers' Blind Rage: vv. 57-58

John 18:31

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15

What was it exactly that caused Saul to become Paul?

It took a ***vision of Christ*** Himself to convert the spiritually blind, hate-filled, murderous Pharisee Saul.

Spiritual sight must be given; and it can only be given to those who are made to see that they are spiritually blind.

Peter was given the spiritual vision to see Jesus (Matthew 16:16); as was Martha (John 11:27).

Jesus heals a man born blind in John 9

Annoyed by the Pharisees asking him to recount his story for a second time the now sighted man sarcastically asks them,

John 9:27-31

The Pharisees interrogate him then "cast him out."

John 9:35-41

Saul was utterly convinced that he had perfect spiritual sight.

It is the unbowed will—the pride of man—that keeps the veil over his heart preventing him from *seeing* Jesus as the Christ.

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" Luke 23:46

Jesus, the Son of God, commits His spirit to the *Father*. Stephen, the martyr, offers his spirit to *Lord Jesus*. So too, in a very real sense the believer offers his life as a sacrifice after the example of his Redeemer.

Hebrews 2:9

Christians accept the necessity and eventuality of death and they do not fight it, or begrudge it when it comes; nor are they terrified of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34

Again Jesus appeals to the Father, Stephen appeals to His Lord Jesus. Both seek forgiveness for their killers. Like his Father in heaven, Stephen possessed a love for his enemies and a heart that was *ready to forgive*.

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:44-45

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive" (Psalm 86:5).

The Israelites returning from captivity confess their sins to God: Nehemiah 9:9, 13-19a; 26-31

Our Lord, rich in mercy, with a heart that remains *ready to forgive*, replied, "Seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).