

# THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

## *Acts 6:8-7:50*

According to popular culture, a martyr is a one who is killed or who \_\_\_\_\_ themselves for what they believe in Islamic radicals have added an element: a martyr also \_\_\_\_\_ as many of those who oppose his cause as he can Martyrdom is at the roots of Christianity: Jesus said, Whoever does not bear his cross cannot be my \_\_\_\_\_

### I. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM: THE OCCASION

#### A. Stephen Won the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Synagogue of the Freedmen

- 1) Even so, opposition to the gospel hardened and they dragged Stephen before the \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) The power of the gospel never leaves men unchanged, but that change is not always \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) The gospel results in some being saved but in others being more confirmed on the road to \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Stephen Was Charged with Blasphemy against the \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) He taught that Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the temple; it was no longer necessary, would be \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) In his defense, Stephen summarized Israel's history and emphasized at each step the theme that God was present with His people for thousands of years \_\_\_\_\_ the temple was ever built
- 3) Solomon dedicated the temple & said: God does not dwell in \_\_\_\_\_ made with human hands

### II. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM: THE EXAMPLE

#### A. Stephen's \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Stephen concluded his defense not with an invitation but an indictment: he spoke as a \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) It seems that Stephen's approach was counter-productive, but a) we do not determine how to act based on \_\_\_\_\_ b) Stephen's stand may have had a long-lasting impact thru its influence on \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Stephen's Intentional \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus

- 1) Stephen knelt down to \_\_\_\_\_ as Jesus did in Gethsemane
- 2) Stephen's prayer for God to receive his \_\_\_\_\_ parallels Jesus's prayer at his death
- 3) Stephen cried out in a \_\_\_\_\_ voice as he died as Jesus did on the cross
- 4) Stephen pled for the \_\_\_\_\_ of his killers as Jesus did

### III. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM: THE CONCLUSION

#### A. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ at God's Right Hand

- 1) Many verses teach the normal position of the Son of God is \_\_\_\_\_ at the right hand of the Father
- 2) Jesus stood to \_\_\_\_\_ him before the Father as he had just confessed Jesus before men
- 3) While Stephen was on trial for his life before a kangaroo court on earth, His \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ defended him before the bar of God in heaven where he was found righteous in Christ.

#### B. Stephen Falling \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Luke deliberately juxtaposes the violence of Stephen's death with the most \_\_\_\_\_ description
- 2) We must not be naïve: some who die as martyrs for Jesus endure long moments of great \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) But such a death ends in the peace, joy, contentment and rest found in being with \_\_\_\_\_