

Stephen

Bible Text: Acts chapters 6 and 7.

Memory Verse

Acts 5:29 - "But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." NKJV

Questions

In **Chapter 6** the apostles initiated the appointment of the first deacons. One of these is Stephen who received spiritual gifts when the apostles laid hands on him. He was preaching in the synagogue and some Jews started arguing with him. They lost the argument and then got some false witnesses to say Stephen was speaking against God. He was taken before the Jewish council.

1. Why did the apostles need deacons appointed? (Acts 6:1-4)
2. Were any of the Jewish leaders accepting Jesus? (Acts 6:7)
3. How did Stephen receive his power to perform great wonders? (Acts 6:8, Acts 6:6)
4. After the Synagoge of the Freedman (A Jewish group of Cyrenians and Alexandrians) could not cope with Stephens' wisdom (which was from God), what did they do? (Acts 6:9-14)
5. What miracle occurred right before the eyes of the Jewish council? (Acts 6:15)

In **Chapter 7** Stephen gives his defense to the council. His defense is more like a sermon. It is outlined below. After the sermon, the Jews were “cut to the quick” and stoned Stephen to death. Saul was there and gave his hearty approval to the stoning.

Stephen’s Defense - Acts 7:1-53

Abraham

- Left his home
- Wandered in a land that was not his own
- Land was promised to his descendents
- Had Isaac who had Jacob who had the 12 patriarchs including Joseph

Joseph

- Sold into bondage
- Became second in command in Egypt
- Jacob moved his family down to Egypt
- As time passed, the Israelites became slaves

Moses

- Raised in the house of Pharaoh
- Israelites did not recognize him as a deliverer
- Fled to Midian
- Called by God to lead his people from bondage
- He spoke of a coming prophet who would be like him
- The Israelites were not obedient to God’s laws

David

- Found favor in God’s eyes and wanted to build a house for God
- Solomon built the temple.

Stephen Makes His Point to the Council

- Their fathers had rejected the prophets as they are rejecting Christ
- The Prophets that your fathers killed showed the way to the Christ
- They had betrayed and murdered the Righteous One
- They had not kept the law

6. How did the council react after Stephen spoke? (Acts 7:54)
7. What did Stephen see? (Acts 7:55-56)
8. When Stephen described what he saw, what did the council do? (Acts 7:56-58)
9. How did Stephen's last words compare to Christ's last words? (Acts 7:59-60, Luke 23:34,46)
10. Pretend you are a Christian in the early church. How would you feel when you hear about the stoning of Stephen?