

The First Martyr

Introduction: Stephen, one of the seven chosen deacons, courageously confronts the religious leaders. He will become the _____ martyr for the cause of Christ.

- I. Stephen's _____ (Acts 7:1-53)
- A. "This is the _____ recorded message in Acts" (Bible Knowledge Commentary).
 - B. Stephen _____ Old Testament history very well.
 - C. Stephen takes them on a journey through the different men God _____ to work through in accomplishing His purpose.
 - D. Just as God chose men like Abraham and Moses for His special plans, so He also chose _____.
 - E. He wanted the religious leaders to see that God's program does involve _____ at times.
 - F. The religious leaders rejected Christianity simply because it went against their _____.
 - G. Stephen also wanted them to realize how God's _____ are not limited to just one location.
 - H. God blessed Joseph and Moses in _____.
 - I. Finally, he showed them how Israel has a history of _____ God's plan.
 - J. Israel initially rejected both Joseph and Moses before they finally _____ to God's plan.
 - K. "He proves that the nation of Israel is the guilty party—guilty of refusing this man of God's _____" (MacDonald).
 - L. "They sought to put Stephen on the _____. But he became the prosecutor and they the guilty defendants" (ibid.).
 - M. The Old Testament points towards the _____.
 - N. Stephen was not afraid to _____ the Word of God to his audience.
- II. Stephen's _____ (Acts 7:54-60)
- A. The Word of God brings _____.
 - B. People have to choose how they will _____ to Holy Spirit conviction.
 - C. Stephen was specially blessed with a _____ of the Lord Jesus in His glory.
 - D. Jesus was _____ to welcome Stephen into heaven.
 - E. The religious leaders could take no more and decided to _____ Stephen.
 - F. Saul was a part of this decision, and may have been the _____ of it.
 - G. Stephen was _____ to his last breath.
 - H. "The blood of the martyrs is the _____ of the church" (Tertullian).

Conclusion: Stephen had a short, but powerful ministry for the Lord. His death was not in vain. His testimony, even in the face of death, convicted a young man by the name of Saul, and ultimately lead to his conversion.