

May 7, 2023 Acts 7:37-60 "Stephen's Prayers"

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Israel's past evidenced a pattern of opposition to God's plans and His men. This is the main point of Stephen's discourse, you are just like your fathers, you always resist the Holy Spirit! "Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things." **Romans 2:1**, CSB. Focus on what God is doing, not what people are doing & desiring.

They saw the implications of Steven's doctrine, Israel was guilty. They began to stone him. Stephen prayed for those killing him. Saul was there giving his approval. We are to pray for our enemies, Jesus did and so did Stephen, "But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!" **Matthew 5:44**, NLT.

Part of the sin of Israel was they valued their Temple far more than they valued the true worship of God by faith and obedience to Him. Examine your heart to see if you have any unwarranted hang-ups. "Man always wants to substitute a manmade institution for a living relationship with God." *John B. Polhill*

Here in lies the indictment, YOU STIFF-NECKED people, y'all do the same! The fathers had murdered God's prophets, they had murdered His Son, the Righteous One.

Filled with anger they were sawn in half, cut to the quick. Not broken nor repentant, instead, ready to kill. They had to execute Stephen or admit that he was right.

Application:

To live a godly life pleasing to God, go to His Word, see what He says you are to do. For every situation in life there is a biblical solution, "**12** Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. **13** But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived.

14 But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. **15** You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. **17** God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." **II Timothy 3:12-17**.