



100. Stephen's Defense

“Being full of the Holy Spirit, he [that’s Stephen] gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ But they [the crowd that wanted to stone him] cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him ... he called on the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep [died].” Acts 7:55-60

Stephen was full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit. The food server was *“full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people,”* Acts 6:8. Enemies of the Gospel tried to argue with Stephen but they were *“unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking,”* Acts 6:10. False witnesses got him dragged away to stand before the Council. Stephen’s defense in Acts 7:2-53 is the longest sermon in Acts. They executed Stephen at the end of his sermon.

Imagine being there listening to his sermon. Imagine following as the Council drove him out of the city. Imagine watching as they stoned him to death. The Gospel was authenticated by his sermon and by his final words, *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! ... Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”* His faith was real in life and real in death. Do you have that kind of real faith?