

Sermon Discussion Questions

"A SERMON TO THE STUBBORN"

Discuss

At the end of Acts, chapter 6, verse 7, we are told that "a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." For them, becoming obedient to the faith would have meant turning their backs on the fine linen clothing they wore as priests, the special food they were given, and the sacred and important work of making sacrifices in the Jewish temple, which at that time was truly one of the wonders of the world. (For more on priestly duties, see Leviticus 6-8, and Numbers 3:5-10.) These priests undoubtedly cherished the law and the Temple, but they did not wrongly value either. They chose to follow Jesus, the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The mob facing Stephen, of course, was possessed with a completely different point of view.

- 1) Everyone who was a part of the stories told in Acts 6 and 7 came from a Jewish background, whether they were Hebraic or Grecian Jews. They were not just somewhat familiar with the history of Israel that Stephen so painstakingly recounted. They knew those stories deeply, in a way that is hard for us in our distracted, social media-driven society to really even imagine.
 - Why did the Jews in the mob have such a different perspective than Stephen did on the law and the Temple and the important stories of their faith?
 - What had they failed to understand despite knowing so much about the history of Israel and the teachings of the law? What did Stephen try to help them see?
 - Do you think there is anything to which we stubbornly cling (the way that the mob clung to their beliefs about the law and the Temple) that prevents us from being more obedient followers of Jesus?
- 2) Stephen is described as being "full of God's grace and power." (v. 8)
 - What is gracious about his speech? What is powerful?
 - What knowledge and/or experience will make us humble and gracious, yet bold in our life and conversations?
- 3) The ancient writer and influential preacher, John Chrysostom (c. 349-407 A.D.) summed up one of Stephen's primary points in this way: "The holy place is wherever God may be."¹ (See chapter 7, vv. 2, 9, 30-32, 48-50)
 - Do we ever think that certain places (like a sanctuary) are more filled with God's presence than others? Is this right or wrong thinking?
 - How is this different from the beliefs of many modern-day non-Christians who are quick to see the divine everywhere (Oprah once tweeted: "We're all pieces of God coming from the same Source") but reject the exclusive claims of Jesus?



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: November 3, 2019

SPEAKER: Brian/Chad

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 6:8-7:53

Pray

O Jehovah, hear my words, to my thoughts attentive be;
hear my cry, my King, my God, I will make my prayer to thee.
With the morning light, O Lord, thou shalt hear my voice arise, and expectant I will bring prayer as morning sacrifice.
Thou, Jehovah, art a God who delightest not in sin;
evil shall not dwell with thee, nor the proud thy favor win.
Evildoers thou dost hate, lying tongues thou wilt defeat;
God abhors the man who loves violence and base deceit.
O let all that trust thy care ever glad and joyful be;
let them joy who love thy name, safely guarded, Lord, by thee.
- taken from "O Jehovah, Hear My Words" The Psalter, 1912, Psalm 5

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

First Things First

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Champions United

¹Quoted in John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, p. 135