

STONING OF STEPHEN — ACTS 7:54-60

EXTREME CONTRASTS

1 FULL OF ANGER vs FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

7:54-55

⁵⁴When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. ⁵⁵But he, being full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, (Ac.7:54-55)

- Stephen did not respond in the flesh. He responded in the Spirit. The Spirit was in control.
- It appears there is a special work of the Holy Spirit for a Christian in a crisis.
- "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified" (1Pe.4:14).
- You are blessed when the world oppresses you. There is some special divine intervention of the Spirit of God.
- The apostle Paul had so much going for him, and yet he knew this. He said, "It's when I am the weakest that I am truly strong."
- It is when we get into a situation, and we can't do anything about it, that God just pours His strength into us.



2 SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS vs SPIRITUAL SIGHT

7:55-57

⁵⁵But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; (Ac.7:55-57)

- The circumstances are pretty rough. The first thing you want to do in a tough situation is get your eyes off the tough situation. Look up!
- God pulled back the curtains and Stephen saw the glory of God and Jesus. Stephen had spiritual sight and they were stone blind.
- The Book of Hebrews says, "After Christ had accomplished redemption, He went to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father."
- He sat down in terms of redemption (it is accomplished), but He always gets up when His children get in trouble.
- He is standing in the sense of His sustaining high priestly work. That is still going on. He gets up to help His own.

3 DEATH vs LIFE

7:58-59

⁵⁸and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Ac.7:58-59)

- They thought they were killing him, but they were only giving him a direct line into eternal life.
- The man who witnessed had to be the executioner as well (Du.17:7). Wise law. People thought twice before they accused somebody.
- It was not just to kill him; it was to vent the fury that was in them.
- The Lord's standing up ready to receive him.

4 HATE vs LOVE

7:60

⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Ac.7:60)

- It was not Stephen they hated. It was Jesus. They were directing their hatred toward Stephen and Who he represented.
- They were still alive, but grinding their teeth, and would spend all eternity doing that.