

Crossword Puzzle

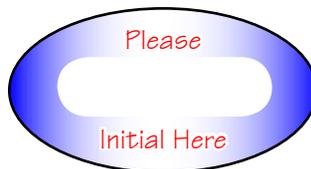


Across

Down

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The first martyr. | 1. The ___ Spirit. |
| 6. ...to stir up the Jewish _____. | 2. ...standing at the right hand of ___. |
| 7. Their ___ were full of anger... | 4. ...become a marvelous ___ for the Lord. |
| 9. ...Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish ___. | 5. ...just as stiff-___ as their fathers. |
| 10. The Sanhedrin condemned the Lord Jesus to _____. | 8. Stephen was serving the _____. |
| 12. They _____ him to death... | 9. They stoned him to death as he was _____ upon the Lord... |
| 13. Lord, do not hold this ___ against them. | 11. ...a ___ killed because of his faith. |
| 14. A person killed for his _____. | 15. ...just as ___-necked as their fathers. |
| 16. God called Israel out of _____. | 18. ..standing at the ___ hand of God. |
| 17. They became very ___ at Stephen. | 19. The Lord _____ Christ. |
| 20. Stephen's face was full of _____. | |
| 21. ...just as stiff-necked as their _____. | |

Parent's Initials:



God's Calling in the New Testament

- Lesson Thirteen -

In Acts –

Stephen, the Church's First Martyr

I. Overview.

While God was doing wondrous things through the apostles and the gospel was spreading quickly, many people were being added to the church. This rapid growth did not go without the notice of the Jewish leaders, and they began to oppose and persecute the church. In Acts chapter seven we see how their persecution resulted in the martyrdom of a disciple named Stephen.

The Jewish leaders despised the church because they were jealous of its growth. Because of this, Satan was able to use them



Stephen was the first martyr among the saints.

to attack the church. Stephen was one of the seven serving ones we read about last week. Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. He was also full of grace and power. Through Stephen, God did wonders and signs among the people. In this lesson we will see how the Jewish leaders killed Stephen, thus making him the first martyr, (a person killed for his faith), in the church.

II. Memory Verse.

“And they stoned Stephen as he called upon the name of the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

(Acts 7:59)

III. Lesson.

While Stephen was serving the church and the Lord was doing marvelous things through him, some from among the Jews rose up against him. They wanted to stop his speaking and spreading the Lord's work. They argued with him, but were unable to withstand his wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. They began to lie about him and to stir up the Jewish leaders against him. He was arrested and brought among the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish council. It was the Sanhedrin that condemned the Lord Jesus to death.

Stephen's Testimony

Before the council, false accusations were brought against Stephen. Then the High Priest gave Stephen an opportunity to speak. Stephen then addressed the people and boldly retold the history of the Jewish nation. He told them how God had called Israel out of Egypt and led them to the good land of Canaan. He told them about all the things that God did to care for His people, even desiring to have His dwelling place among them. He also showed them how Israel repeatedly rebelled against God and refused God's speaking through the prophets that He sent to them.



The fruit of life in our living becomes the seed of life to others.

Stephen then told them that they were being just as stiff-necked as their fathers and that they were opposing the Holy Spirit. They became very angry at Stephen. Then Stephen looked up into the heavens and saw the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He declared, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Stephen's Martyrdom

Suddenly, it seemed that they could take no more of Stephen's speaking. They rushed upon him and dragged him outside the city. They stoned him to death as he was calling up on the Lord and saying "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Their faces were full of anger and hatred, but Stephen's face was full of light.

As Stephen was being stoned, he cried out "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Then he died. Stephen was the first martyr, (a person killed because of his faith), among the believers. Throughout history there have been many more who have been martyred and become a marvelous testimony for the Lord.

--- Questions for Discussion ---

1. What is a martyr?

2. What caused the Jewish leaders to become so angry at Stephen?

3. What did Stephen see when he was being stoned?

4. What was the last thing that Stephen said?

