

# Resisting the Word of God

## All Scripture is KJV: Acts 7:50-60

### INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Stephen is recorded in Acts 6:8ff, as one of the 1st deacons at the church in Jerusalem.

- The scriptures in Acts 6:8 tell us that he did great things for God.
- He also did great wonders and miracles.
- The Jews could not deny the miracles he did.

As Stephen continued to spread the Word of the Lord, the Jews sought to stop him.

### Acts 6:9-11

<sup>9</sup>Then there **arose certain of the synagogue**, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

<sup>10</sup>And **they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit** by which he spake.

<sup>11</sup>Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

- They then brought false accusations against him as mentioned in Acts 6:11-13.
- They then began to stir up a crowd against Stephen.

### Acts 6:12-13

<sup>12</sup>And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

<sup>13</sup>And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

- What were the false blasphemy charges they were to make against Stephen?

<sup>14</sup>For we have heard him say, that **this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us**.

1. That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place.
  2. And shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.
- These were the primary charges being brought against Stephen.

This in fact was the truth. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus had said he would do in Matthew 24:1-2.

1. The greatest of Stephen's defense was that he could masterfully recall the scriptures of the OT.
2. It was not a prepared defense, but he could recall the Lords Word, in order to frame his argument.
3. The answer did not seem to be an answer at all in regards to the charges brought against him.

✓ Stephen was only quoting what Jesus had said he would do.

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>1</sup>And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

<sup>2</sup>And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

✓ Remember how in John 5:18 they were going to kill Jesus for apparent blasphemy?

### **John 5:18**

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, **but said also that God was his Father**, making himself **equal with God**.

### **OUR TEXT THIS MORNING IS Acts 7: 51-60**

1. And now as we examine our text for this morning it is outlining Stephen's defense for their accusations against him.
  2. But Stephen did not and does not hold back on what God requires for worship as he preaches to them Jesus.
- ✓ He disproves their arguments by stating the scriptures in his defense.  
 ✓ This is what Stephen preached to them in Acts 7:51-60.

### **Acts 7:51-60**

<sup>51</sup>Ye **stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears**, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

1. This statement was in direct contrast to the preceding 50 verses in Acts 7.
2. They had resisted Gods word and instruction, and had built temples with the hands as if to worship him.
3. They had forgotten that 400 years before that God calls for righteousness which is not made with hands. Abraham was right with God, even as he served God, and obeying him. But now the Jews had forgotten all that.
4. There weren't temples in those days, only altars and later the tabernacle (tent).
5. In the wilderness they had the tabernacle where Moses worshipped
6. Only later did the stone temple come into existence.

❖ **Stephens's recollection of scripture is amazing.**

He begins with Abraham (verses 2-8) and elevates him as right in God's eyes, and acknowledges Abraham as his spiritual father. He recounts the events that God had spoken to Abraham and all his promises to him. (Genesis 15:1-7 & Romans 4:3).

### **Romans 4:3**

**For what saith the scripture?** Abraham believed God, and it was **counted unto him for righteousness.**

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>1</sup>After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

<sup>2</sup>And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

<sup>3</sup>And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

<sup>4</sup>And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

<sup>5</sup>And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

<sup>6</sup>And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

<sup>7</sup>And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

➤ **As Stephen recited the OT, they were cut to their heart.**

**<sup>52</sup>Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:**

- ✓ The Jews were always ready to overthrow the Christian movement to gain self worth. This was evident in Jesus' day as well.
- ✓ The Jews are not believers in Jesus, and they killed their own prophets who told them that the "Just One" was coming.
- ✓ They did not like what Stephen was telling them which was the truth.

### **Matthew 23:30-32**

**<sup>30</sup>And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.** <sup>31</sup>Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that **ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.** <sup>32</sup>Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

- ✓ Stephen reminds them of God's law.

<sup>53</sup>Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

<sup>54</sup>When they heard these things, **they were cut to the heart**, and **they gnashed on him with their teeth**.

- When the people had heard these things, they were cut to the heart.

### **Hebrews 4:12**

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and **sharper than any twoedged sword**, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- They had begun to show the tell-tale signs of unbelievers who would be one day cast into hell.

### **Luke 13:28**

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, **and you yourselves thrust out.**

<sup>55</sup>But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, **and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,**

<sup>56</sup>And said, Behold, **I see the heavens opened**, and **the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.**

<sup>57</sup>**Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears**, and ran upon him with one accord,

- ✓ Again, we see the actions of the unbeliever. God's Word had divided them apart from the believer. Their reaction again was one of unbelief, and their motions would again be of what scripture records for us to hear.

### **Zechariah 7:11**

But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, **and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.**

1. Just as in the day of Zechariah they had plugged (stopped) their ears so that they could not hear the Word of God.
  2. When truth is heard, there is always a decision to be made, and that means people would have to make a choice to do good or evil. In this case the people chose to do evil against Stephen for preaching the truth.
- ✓ **The result of preaching the truth was to cast Stephen out of the city.....**

<sup>58</sup>**And cast him out of the city, and stoned him**: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

<sup>59</sup>**And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**

<sup>60</sup>And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

❖ He was the 1<sup>st</sup> Martyr of the church.

1. He was showing them the foolishness of their hands.
2. For that they were going to stone him for heresy about not following Moses and say that the Lord was going to destroy the temple.
3. Of course, the Jews did not even believe Moses, because Jesus said to them also in the scriptures for “Had you believed Moses you would have believed in me for he wrote of me”.

### **John 5:46**

**For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.**

1. They had enjoyed their own style of Religion and had favored their own customs and religion above that of Jesus Christ the Messiah.
2. They did not want to give up what they worshipped, even if it meant destroying Gods messengers in the process.
3. The Jews had resisted the Words of God. In doing so they did not get to believe in Jesus.

### **Acts 7:48-50**

**<sup>48</sup>Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet.**

<sup>49</sup>Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? <sup>50</sup>Hath not my hand made all these things?

1. In the closing discourse Stephen had reminded the Sanhedrin (the leaders of the Jews) and all those present around him that God does not dwell in manmade structures.
2. He reminds them that their fancy worship is nothing to God.
3. He reminds them that heaven is Gods throne, and the earth is his footstool.

### **Acts 7:60**

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, **lay not this sin** to their charge. And when he had said **this**, he fell asleep.

❖ **This is the right attitude of forgiveness by Stephen, to see others come to Christ despite their wrong doings to you in your life.**

✓ Jesus had the same attitude on the cross.

### **Luke 23:34**

**Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them;** for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

1. What kind of forgiveness do you have?
2. What kind of heart do you have to see others come to Christ?
3. Do we still harbor bitterness and resentment towards those who have wronged us?
4. God calls us to forgive others (Lords prayer Matthew 6)

One of the hardest things some people struggle with is that of forgiveness. And yet it is something that Jesus taught us about in how to pray.

### **Matthew 6:9-15 (King James Version)**

**9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven**, Hallowed be thy name. <sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

**12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. **Amen.**

**14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

**15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

1. This prayer is a model prayer coming direct from the lips of Jesus.
2. Notice what Jesus said afterwards about this prayer in verse 15, referring to forgiveness.

✚ **But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

✚ **Both Stephen and Jesus had the heart of forgiveness.**

3. Yet there are many believers who simply find it difficult or don't want to forgive others who have wronged them in the past. And this causes them to stay in bitterness and not have the joy of Jesus, besides also being a command from Jesus to show forgiveness.

✚ Resisting the Word of God does not only mean that it was the Jews who resisted God by not listening to Gods Word and doing what God said.

✚ But resisting Gods Word, is also for the believer who is not willing to listen to Gods Word, and to do what God has told us to do.

4. To forgive those who have done wrong against us is a command from God.
5. It is a command that Jesus told us to include in our prayer to the Father, so that we can be always reminded to have that heart of a servant.

- ✓ Resisting the word of God can be as deep as the sin that the Jews had towards Jesus,
- ✓ or it can be simply not listening to what Jesus said we must do.....and that is to forgive others also.

✚ Jesus never said, "forgive them if they forgive you first".

NO.. NO, It should be unconditional forgiveness.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:15, that if you don't forgive others then our heavenly Father will not forgive us. Remember, this is the prayer Jesus said to pray to "our Father in heaven.

**15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

 **May we all see how important it is not to resist Gods Word.**

PRAYER.....CLOSE