

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of December 22, 2013

This Week's Focus: Stephen's sermon about the Old Testament shows his accusers that he is not guilty of blasphemy, but rather his accusers are guilty of resisting God through out their history.

This Week's Text: Acts 7

"Stephen saw that the temple of his day had become something other than a house of prayer. It had become a symbol of Jewish exclusivism and a rallying place for Jewish nationalism." J. B Polhill

Only the love of the immutable can yield tranquility. Augustine

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:13-14

Related Texts: Daniel 7:13-14, John 4:7-24, Hebrews 10:11-12, 1 John 2:1-2

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- How has God spoken to you regarding the sermon and/or text?
- Why is Stephen defending himself? What were the accusations?
- How does Stephen's long sermon answer the accusations and the original question in verse 1?
- Read the sermon together and discuss the main characters and themes. Possible outline:
 - Verses 2-8 - Covers Abraham up to the Patriarchal Age.
 - Verses 9-19 - Covers Joseph up to the Exodus.
 - Verses 20-43 - Covers Moses and the wilderness wanderings.
 - Verses 44-50 - Covers the history of the tabernacle and temple from Moses to David and through Solomon.

- Land: The history of Israel bears out the fact that much of the life of the Jews was spent outside of the land of Israel.
- Law: Even though Israel has the Law they had always shown themselves to be rebels against Moses and against the Law, which was given through him.
- Lord: The presence of God cannot be contained in the Temple.
- In what ways did the Israelites misappropriate the use of the Temple? Reference verses 41 & 48.
 - In what ways is that relevant today?
- What other themes do you see as Stephen defends himself against these accusations?
 - What point is he making?
- How does Stephen close his speech? What charge does he bring against his audience? What were the final words that caused Stephen to be murdered?
- What happens to Stephen that prepares him so well for death? Why does it lead to boldness and compassion? Reference verses 51-53 & 60.
- In Daniel 7:13-14 the Son of Man will come to judge the world having all dominion, power, authority and is also worshipped.
 - What does that say about who Jesus is?
 - What do you think that meant to Stephen? To the Sanhedrin? To you?
- What is the implication of Jesus being the "righteous one"?
- What is the implication of Jesus "standing" at the right hand of God? Reference Hebrews 10:11-12 & 1 John 2:1-2.
- Who was the one who watched the clothes of Stephen's killers and consented to his death?
- Discuss one or two verses and/or ideas that Paul may have taken from this sermon to later use to declare the gospel.

Gospel Celebration:

- We have a new and better temple-Jesus.
- We have a new and better sacrifice-Jesus.
- Jesus is the righteous advocate, the propitiation for our sins.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for opportunities to witness to others concerning the person and work of Jesus with boldness and compassion.

Next Week's Text: Acts 8