

Stephen's Prayer at His Death

Acts 7:59-60

Background

- **Acts 6:3,5-6** – Stephen chosen as one of the seven servants of the church at Jerusalem
 - “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit”
- **Acts 6:8-10** – Stephen works miracles and preaches
- **Acts 6:11-15** – False charges rallied against him by some of the Jews
 - Dragged before the Jewish Sanhedrin (vs. 12)

Stephen's Prayer at His Death

- **Acts 7:51-58** – The already hostile crowd becomes an frenzied, murderous mob
- “They went on stoning Stephen...” (NASU)
- “...as he prayed” (NIV)
 - **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”**
...and falling to his knees:
 - **“Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”**

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

- Practically a quotation → **Luke 23:47**
- There is no textual basis for “God” in the NKJV
- Note the certainty with which Stephen viewed the death of the body but life of the soul!
 - **Luke 16:22-23**
 - **Matt 10:28; Phil 1:23; I Cor 15:50-58**
- Note the irrefutable appropriateness of worship and prayer directed to Christ.
 - cf. I Cor 1:2; Acts 8:22 (Lord); Rev 22:20; II Cor 12:7ff; etc.

“Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”

- Practically a quotation → **Luke 23:47**
- Stephen clearly prays that God would not charge his murderers with *this* sin...just as Christ did (and later Paul, II Tim 4:16).
 - Not some conditional, “forgive them only if they do something” prayer!
- Could mortal man pray this prayer without instruction from a higher example?
 - Note the power of the gospel to truly *change* lives!
 - cf. Rom 1:16, 12:2; II Cor 3:18; etc.

“Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.”

– Exodus 18:11

- *This has always been the way of God: He proves Himself above those who contest Him.*
- **Moses** vs. all the “gods”, magicians, power of Egypt
- **Jesus** vs. all the conspiring nations
 - Luke 23:39ff (suffering), 47 (death); Acts 4:24ff (resurrection)
- **Stephen** vs. the insolent, arrogant Jews (Acts 7:60)
- **Christians** vs. any who blaspheme The Way
 - Titus 2:8; I Pet 3:16