

BIBLE STUDY – ACTS Chapter 7 – Leader Notes

1. Stephen's lengthy review of Old Testament history, is intended to convince his fellow members of God's chosen people that they had killed the Messiah, whom Stephen identifies as "the Righteous One" (v 52).

2. Jealousy (v. 9); misunderstanding (v. 25); arrogance (v. 27); rejection (v. 35). All of these behaviors were suffered by the prophets and other spiritual leaders of Israel.

3. They covered their ears (v. 57). The physical gesture is wonderfully expressive of Stephen's charge that they are "uncircumcised in ears." They do everything to keep from hearing the prophet's proclamation that Jesus is the one raised to the presence of God. (Sacra)

They yelled at the top of their voices (v. 57). They wanted to and did keep hearing any more of his message.

They dragged him outside the city (v. 58). The person to be stoned should be taken outside the court (city). (Sacra)

The stoned him (v. 58). It was illegal to carry out the death penalty without permission of the Roman governor, but did not seem to matter when a mob action resulted in murder. (PBC)

4. Driven to his knees by the blows from the stones, at the very moment of his death, Stephen made one last attempt to reach his enemies and the crowd. At the top of his voice, so that all in the crowd heard, Stephen prayed his final prayer: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them". This prayer for his enemies he had learned from his Savior. Stephen's prayer had one most notable answer, the young man named Saul. (LL) 3. They ground their teeth (v. 54). The "grinding the teeth" was a sign of hostility and rage, especially of the wicked against the righteous. The phrase is also used for those excluded from the kingdom in Mt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30 and Luke 13:28. (Sacra)