

Reassembling Community Week 5 - Scripture Readings

Acts 7:51 to 8:3

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are uncircumcised! You always resist the holy spirit, just as your ancestors did before you! Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? And you killed those who announced in advance the coming of the Righteous One—and now you have betrayed him and murdered him. You received the law at the command of angels, but you didn’t keep it!”

What Stephen said was a blow right to the heart. When they heard it, they gnashed their teeth against him. He, however, was filled with the holy spirit, and looked steadily up into heaven. There he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God’s right hand.

“Look!” he said. “I can see heaven opened, and the son of man standing at God’s right hand!”

But they yelled at him at the tops of their voices, blocked their ears and made a concerted dash at him. They bundled him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.

So they stoned Stephen.

“Lord Jesus,” he cried out, “receive my spirit.”

Then he knelt down and shouted at the top of his voice, “Lord, don’t let this sin stand against them.” Once he had said this, he fell asleep.

Now Saul was giving his consent to Stephen’s death.

That very day a great persecution was started against the church in Jerusalem. Everyone except the apostles was scattered through the lands of Judaea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen, and made a great lamentation over him. But Saul was doing great damage to the church by going from one house to another, dragging off men and women and throwing them into prison.

Homework for next week:

Read Acts chapter 13

Bonus reading - Acts 8:4 up to Acts 13