

Acts

Lesson 4

Peter's 4th Sermon

Who is the intended audience?

The council and the high priest

*Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before **the council**. And **the high priest** questioned them,*

What information is provided in the sermon?

- The God of our fathers raised Jesus (Acts 5:30)
- You killed Jesus by hanging him on a tree (Acts 5:31)
- God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)
- We are witnesses to these things (Acts 5:32)
- So is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. (Acts 5:32)

How does Peter connect the gospel to the current events:

They killed Jesus... But God exalted Him... to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Act 5:30-31 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

What action does he require of his listeners?

Nothing given

Act 5:32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

What Old Testament scriptures does Peter use?

None specifically given

*Deu 21:23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, **for a hanged man is cursed** by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.*

What do the scriptures explain?

That Jesus received the curse of sin for our salvation.

Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"--

What surprises you about Peter's message?

- He connects the Holy Spirit with the rest of the those witnesses

Acts 5:32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

What were the results of the sermon?

They were enraged and wanted to kill them.

Acts 5:33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

Acts Lesson 4

Stephen's defense and subsequent martyrdom (Acts 6-7)

Stephen's defense and subsequent Martyrdom

1.) (Acts 6:8-22) Stephen is seized Why was Stephen seized?

He disputed with those belonging to diaspora synagogues (Freedmen, Cyrenian, Alexandrian, Cilicia, and Asia) They were possibly jealous.

Act 6:9-10 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

Who are these guys, anyway?

- Freedman – Uncertain, possible freed slaves or a place called Libertine
- Cyrenians, - people of Cyrene in Africa
- Alexandrians - Inhabitants of Alexandria in Egypt.
- Cilicia - This was a province of Asia Minor, the capital of which was Tarsus, the native place of Paul
- Asia – This was the region or province of Asia in modern day Turkey, the capital of which was Ephesus..



Diaspora Jews

What were the charges against Stephen?

- He speaks blasphemous words against Moses and God
- He speaks against this holy place (The Temple) and the law
- He says that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place
- He says Jesus will change the customs that Moses delivered to us

How is Jesus referred to by the accuser's?

Jesus of Nazareth

Act 6:14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."

Psa 69:11 When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.

2.) *(Acts 7:1-53) Stephen's defense*
Stephen's defense sounds like a
history lesson.

What are some key points in Israel's history that he refers to?

- God promise of a land to Abraham and a place to worship (Acts 7:1-8)
- Joseph sold into slavery and rescue of Jacobs family (Acts 7:9-19)
- Moses is raised up (Act 7:20-37)
- The giving of the Law (Acts 7:38-43)
- The establishment of the Temple (Act 7:44-50)

List some key parallels between Stephen's history lesson and Jesus

- Acts 7:35-37 "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'--this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.'

List some key parallels between Stephen's history lesson and Jesus

- Acts 7:51-53 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

3.) (Acts 7:54-60) Stephen's Martyrdom
What was the council's response to
Stephen's defense?

They were enraged

Act 7:54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

It what way did God reveal himself to Stephen prior to his martyrdom?

God showed him His glory, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Act 7:55-56 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

What is Stephen's concern during his martyrdom

Those killing him.

Act 7:59-60 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

4.) (Acts 8:1-3) Resulting persecution: Saul is introduced

What do we know about Saul's participation in Stephens martyrdom?

He watched their clothes and approved of the execution.

Act 7:58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

What was the benefit to the Kingdom of God of this persecution?

The Church gets spread out.

Act 8:1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Act 11:19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.



Region of scattering due to persecution

*What did Stephens martyrdom
embolden Paul to do?*

Ravage the church.

*Act 8:3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and
entering house after house, he dragged off men and
women and committed them to prison.*