

# BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

## 1. Name

Stephen, the Martyr

## 2. Scripture References

Acts 6:3-8:2

Acts 11:19

Acts 22:20

## 3. First Impressions and Observations

Stephen was an early Christian.

Stephen was trusted by the Apostles.

Stephen was trusted by other Christians.

Stephen was a powerful preacher.

Stephen was unashamed of his faith and willing to die for it.

Stephen was true to his convictions.

## 4. Outline of Person's Life

### A. Chosen to be a leader

1. To help resolve conflict (Acts 6:5)
2. On basis of godly characteristics (Acts 6:3,5,8)

### B. Had a wide ministry

1. Waited tables (Acts 6:2-5)
2. Performed miracles (Acts 6:8)

3. Preacher and Teacher (Acts 6:10)

C. He was persecuted

1. Opposed by Jews from “overseas” (Acts 6:9)
  2. Falsely Accused (Acts 6:11)
  3. Arrested and tried before Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12-14)
    - a. False witnesses testify
    - b. Rebutted with a masterful overview of OT Scripture (Acts 7:2-53)
    - c. Testified about Jesus (Acts 7:55-56)
    - d. Stoned to death by an angry mob (Acts 7:57-60)
- D. His death acted as a catalyst that increased persecution and caused the church to spread (Acts 8:2-4, 11:19)

## 5. General Insight

1) Why was he chosen to be a leader?

*Because he was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3)*

*Because he was full of Faith and the Spirit (Acts 6:5)*

*Because he was full of God’s grace and power (Acts 6:8)*

*Because he knew the Scriptures (Acts 7:2-53)*

2) How did he handle false accusations?

*He “kept his cool,” remained silent, and only answered when he was directed to speak by the high priest.*

3) Are there any parallels with Jesus?

*Yes. Just like Jesus, he was falsely accused, demonstrated love and concern for his accusers and died an “undeserved” death.*

4) What was his attitude toward his executioners?

*He was forgiving, even to the point of praying that God would forgive them for their sin.*

5) What were the long-term results of his life, ministry and death?

*His death caused the disciples to scatter and take the Gospel to other parts of Judea, Samaria, and regions beyond Israel in fulfillment of Acts 1:8.*

*His death sets a path by which Saul is brought to the Lord.*

#### 6. Character Qualities Identified

- Spirit-filled (6:3,5,10)
- Wise (6:3,10)
- Faithful (6:5)
- Available to God (6:8)
- Persistent (6:10)
- Holy (6:15)
- Knowledgeable (chapter 7)
- Bold (7:51-53)
- Brave (7:51-53)
- Forgiving (7:60)
- Respected by others (8:2)
- A witness to Jesus (22:20)

#### 7. Bible Truths Illustrated in Person's Life

The fruit of the Spirit can be discerned by others (Acts 6:3,5; Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:1-17)

During trials of life, the Holy Spirit will be present and comfort you (Acts 7:54-55; Hebrews 13:5-6; John 14:15-25)

False accusations and persecutions will come into our lives (Acts 6:11-8:4; John 15:18-27)

#### 8. Summary of Lessons Learned from Person's Life

The outstanding characteristic of Stephan was his commitment to the Lord and his willingness to do anything for him, including dying.

This commitment is seen in the fact that he was a man who walked with God (he was "full of the Spirit and

wisdom...faith...God's grace and power"). He had a great testimony before others in the church. He witnessed to people both \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ life \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ death.

Furthermore, he was a man of the Word. He really knew his scriptures.

### 9. Personal Application

I want to become a spiritual leader like Stephen. Stephen's life exemplified godly values and the fruit of the Spirit, so people trusted him to lead them. Stephen was also looked to because he knew the Word of God intimately and lived his life authentically in accordance with those scriptures. I think those two traits are not happenstance.

As a result of this study, I will commit myself to memorizing two scripture verses each week. If I fertilize my life with scripture, then I will produce the fruit of Spirit

### 10. Transferable Concepts

*(ways I can share this with others)*

The concepts of this study that are transferable:

1. The necessity of demonstrating the Activity of the Holy Spirit in my life.
2. The necessity of demonstrating the Activity of the Word of God in my life.
3. If I really exhibit these two traits, then I will be able to handle the trials of life.
- 4.

### 11. Someone with whom I Intend to Share this Study

- Andy (over lunch next week)
- Kevin (via email)
- My Sunday School Class ☺