

HOW IT STARTED

HOW IT'S GOING

WEEK 4- THE STONING OF STEPHEN

OVERVIEW

Simmering religious tensions overflow as Stephen, one of the first godly deacons serving the church, is falsely accused of blasphemy and is dragged before the high priest to answer for his "crimes." Instead, he gives an eloquent recounting of the biblical story of Israel and places Jesus squarely in the middle of the vision of Daniel 7. For this, he is stoned to death while the future apostle Saul watches and approves. Stephen's speech helps us understand what we in the Church are enacting and how our message fits with the story of Scripture.

He told them, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"

Acts 7:56

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are you breaking your world, or healing it?
2. Read Acts 7:51-8:1. Why do you think the Jewish leaders went from being infuriated by Stephen's accusation to actually executing Stephen?
3. For some, giving over the controls of our lives to the God of restoration and healing is harder than rule following. Why do you think that is?
4. **The path of life and the path of death.** Luke wants us to understand that there are two, very distinct ways to live. In today's culture, what might "walking a path of love" look like as opposed to "living like religious leaders" and standing in the way of God's purposes?
5. **Barry stated, "we all have a choice".** If you've made the choice to surrender your life to Jesus, share how you've seen or experienced the Holy Spirit, God's powerful, restoring presence at work within you.

RESOURCES

gracechurch.us