



**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from Acts 6:11-15.

I.E. – Isaiah 3:9 states that a person’s face can reveal what they are like. All those who were observing Stephen could tell, just by his countenance, that he was a very pure of heart type of person.

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**2. Stephen preaches that Jesus is the fulfillment of the O.T.**

This is the supreme court of the nation he’s standing before. **7:1 “And the high priest said, ‘Are these things so?’”** Then, what you have in Acts 7, is one of the best courtroom scenes in the history of the world. In **7:2-50**, you see Stephen’s response, his defense, and it’s in the form of a sermon.

**If the story you are living for, does not have Jesus as the center and Lord of it, it is a misshaped and wrong story. It’s not the story to live for. It’s not the lord to live for.** One of the responsibilities we have as a community of faith is to actually encourage and exhort one another to keep Jesus as the Lord and center of our stories.

- **Stay-at-home moms, how is Jesus the story of your daily routine?**
- **Students, how does Jesus transform your high school or college narrative to something that’s more than being popular or partying to something significant and meaningful?**
- **Empty nesters, what does Jesus have to say about your finally quiet house?**
- **Retirees, what does it look like and mean for Jesus to be at the center of your retirement plan?**
- **For all of us who have jobs, how does Jesus connect to your vocation? How do your faith and your work integrate if you’re an entrepreneur, if you’re an athlete, if you’re an accountant, an artist, or a musician?**
- **Newlyweds, what does it look like?**
- **Singles, what does it look like? How does Jesus transform and dominate the storyline of your singleness?**

**Stephen’s appeal here does not lead his accusers to repentance. It doesn’t humble them to see that because they’ve rejected and murdered Jesus they’re living out of a misshaped story. It actually just enrages them all the more.**

**3. Stephen experiences a Christlike Death.**

**READ** Acts 7:54-60 **Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>54</sup> Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> 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. <sup>56</sup> And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” <sup>57</sup> But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. <sup>58</sup> 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. <sup>59</sup> And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> 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.

**[Continue to Page 3 to write your thoughts. →]**

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts & observations from Acts 7:54-60.

**[Suggestion: First describe this scene—in all of it’s ugliness. Then describe how you think you would feel and act as an observer.]**

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At this moment, we have a turning point in the book of Acts, because Stephen’s murder will be the catalyst for the church multiplying & scattering out as they become persecuted more and more. Because of Stephen and how the Lord used him and the persecution that followed, the gospel will go out to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Think about Stephen’s life and death and what it teaches us. What it teaches us is that there’s only one story, the gospel, and there’s only one Lord who’s really worth living and dying for. Is that the story you’re living out of? Is Jesus your Lord?

**CONCLUSION**

Jesus, Himself, once said it this way: **Luke 9:23-25 “If anyone would come come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”**

If Jesus isn’t your Lord, if you’re not living out of the story of His gospel, if you have a false lord or a false story, the invitation is to deny your other lords, to forsake that story, and to transfer your hope and trust in your salvation from whatever else you’re living for besides Jesus to Him.

**Consider 2 Corinthians 5:15 (below). Paraphrase it. [Put it into your own words.] ... and He [Jesus] died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him [Jesus] who for their sake died and was raised.**

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What does that mean to you in practical terms today – at this point in your life?

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