

CUT TO THE HEART

Why the anger?

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

Everyone reacts to the gospel, but not everyone reacts the same. In verse 51 Stephen makes a strong judgment about the people of Israel. When the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts we can admit the truth and repent or be angry.

Was Stephen a sinner?

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

It is a courageous act for a sinner to preach the truth. Some people will say he has a lot of nerve since he is guilty himself. Others will say he has no right to preach because he is not as good as they are, but Stephen was talking about Jesus.

Did Stephen speak the truth?

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

When Stephen stood for Jesus, Jesus stood for him. He did not seek the praise of men. **(John 12:4)** Sinners could get angry; righteous people could misunderstand; but God will bless those who stand for the truth.

Why the ears?

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

Words can be like bad music or a foul odor. **(2 Cor. 2:16)** What we hate tells a lot about us. **(Pr. 8:13)** Hate sin; love people; especially hate sin in ourselves.

There is always a "Saul."

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

The people that stone us might someday take up the same cause. God help us to pity the people that hate. Saul saw Jesus in Stephen, but it took a while to perceive.

Was Jesus God?

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

This statement is strong evidence that the original church believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

What's a charge?

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The last words of a true disciple is love for sinners, no charge; grace.





