

**What Does it Look
Like to Follow In
Jesus' Footsteps?**

Background Leading Up to Acts 7:51

- Jesus ascends to His throne. The Spirit's ministry continues.
- The Christians (known as "The Way") grow to over 5,000, they share with the needy, & the apostles perform many miracles.
- After the apostles are arrested a few times by the Sadducees, Stephen is arrested, falsely accused, & brought to the Sanhedrin.
- Stephen speaks on the Abrahamic Covenant, Joseph's slavery & of Israel's deliverance from famine, of Moses & his prophecy of the Christ, & of David's temple plans and how Solomon built it. Stephen recognizes that the crowd is hard-hearted.

Acts 7:51-53 (ESV) ⁵¹ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

⁵² 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, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Regularly resisting the Holy Spirit creates a heart unwilling to hear the truth & a will that is self-serving.

The Old Testament's angelic & human messengers told the people of the blessings & curses that result from obedience or disobedience. Then, when the prophesied Messiah came, they put Him to death.

Their ancestors' pattern of unfaithfulness is memorialized in scripture repeatedly.

In what areas in your life are you resisting the Holy Spirit?

Acts 7:54-57 (NKJV) ⁵⁴ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

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

There have been two responses when the Spirit's word has 'cut to the heart'. In Acts 2, the message led to belief and repentance. Not in this case.

Most of the elders were listening to Satan's voice rather than the Holy Spirit. When Jesus receives honor, Satan's role is to stomp that out by any means necessary.

Jesus rises to stand as Stephen gives all honor, praise, & glory to Him.

Do you recognize the crafty voice of Satan?

Acts 7:58-60 (NASB₁₉₉₅) ⁵⁸ When they had driven him out of the city, they *began stoning him*; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

Stoning was a brutal act as they would throw the accused off a ledge usually 10 to 12 feet high. Saul of Tarsus stood in approval of this act, and though he was forgiven of all his sins, he would remember his acts against faithful believers all his life.

Stephen walked by the Spirit as a true example of following Christ. His actions mimicked his Lord.

Jesus gave everything for us.
Are you willing to be a living sacrifice for Him?