

Patterns of Pentecost

Chapter Four

Audio lesson: New Testament 34



Objective: To understand the message of Stephen and to introduce the ministry of Saul, also known as Paul.



Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

—Acts 7:55-56

After the appointing of the first deacons in chapter six, we read about Stephen's arrest, his stunning sermon to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, and his death. After he masterfully summarized the Old Testament and accused the religious leaders of rejecting Moses, the prophets, and now Jesus, they stoned him to death.

Two important things occurred after the death of Stephen. God used the death of Stephen to impact Saul, a Pharisee who would later become the greatest missionary, apostle, and Christian teacher; and He used the persecution of Christians to scatter them and take the gospel to the regions beyond Jerusalem.

The book of Acts is really a "perpetual Pentecost" that results in the Great Commission being fulfilled through the early church's obedience. The gospel continued to spread through the Spirit's power as Christians scattered, taught, and followed His leading.



1. True or false? The book of Acts is a “perpetual Pentecost.”
2. True or false? Nearly everything in the book of Acts is somehow related to the Great Commission.
3. True or false? Stephen was very practical and had almost no pastoral gifts.
4. True or false? The power of the Spirit was on Stephen as he preached his sermon.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What is the primary power behind biblical preaching?
 - a. The years of study by the preacher
 - b. The professional skills of the preacher
 - c. The gift of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The size and interest of the audience
6. What did Stephen talk about in his sermon? (choose all that apply)
 - a. The story of the entire Old Testament
 - b. The importance of keeping all of the Old Testament laws
 - c. How the world will end and when Jesus is coming back
 - d. The fact that Jesus was the Messiah whom the religious leaders rejected
7. How did the religious leaders respond to Stephen’s message?
 - a. They were very angry and stoned him to death.
 - b. They laughed at him and walked away.
 - c. They put him in prison.
 - d. They agreed with him and repented of their sins.
8. What is Saul doing when he is introduced in the book of Acts?
 - a. Defending Stephen
 - b. Approving those who stoned Stephen and holding their coats
 - c. Listening to the teaching of the apostles
 - d. Sitting in a Roman prison for preaching the gospel
9. What did Saul do soon after Stephen was killed?
 - a. He repented of his sins and was baptized.
 - b. He had a meal with the apostles and discussed the Christian faith.
 - c. He blamed all of his friends for treating Stephen too harshly.
 - d. He zealously persecuted Christians.
10. What did Saul (or Paul) do soon after he met the risen Christ?
 - a. He immediately went to the apostles to explain what happened.
 - b. He hid in fear of the Jewish leaders.
 - c. He went to Arabia and spent time with Jesus.
 - d. He went on a mission trip to preach the good news and start churches.

11. How long did Paul spend preparing for his ministry?

- a. Three years
- b. Four years
- c. Fourteen years
- d. All of the above are possible. Scholars do not agree, but it was at least three years.



Stephen gave his life to preach the truth. How much would you give up to follow God? What sacrifices do you think God wants you to be willing to make as you serve Him?

Paul was a very unlikely convert to faith in Jesus. What does his conversion tell us about God's power to save? What does his ministry tell us about the kind of people God chooses to serve Him? What "unlikely" person can you be praying for?



Thank God for those who serve Him sacrificially and zealously. Thank Him for His power to save even the most unlikely people. Pray specifically for those who are opposed to Jesus and ask God to show them the truth and save them. Ask Him to stir up your zeal to serve Him sacrificially.



Going Deeper

1. How does the martyrdom of Stephen relate to the great verse written by the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:28), in which Paul writes that all things fit into a pattern for good if we love God and are called according to His plan? _____

2. How can you relate the Pentecost of Acts Chapter Two with the Pentecosts in Samaria (chapter 8), at the beginning of Paul's ministry in Ephesus (chapter 19), and in the ministry of Peter at the home of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius (chapter 10)? _____

3. Even though those Pentecosts may have been unique in details, how do they relate in principle to the Pentecosts that we need as we seek to spread the Gospel to the world? _____

4. Can we obey and implement the Great Commission without Pentecostal power? Explain.

5. Do you believe it is possible and in fact, absolutely necessary, for you to have a personal Pentecost? Explain. _____

6. In what ways did Jesus show us how to seek a personal Pentecost in Luke 11: 9-13? _____

7. Is it truly, actually possible for us to live out the life and ministry to which we are called as followers of Jesus Christ without a personal Pentecost? _____
