

“ARE THESE THINGS SO?”

INTRODUCTION

- I. The title of our lesson at this time comes from a question a high priest once asked Stephen after he was wrongfully accused by some who had been around Stephen, and the high priest asked, “Are These Things So,” and gave him an opportunity to answer the charges.
 - A. Acts 7 contains one of the great recorded sermons of the New Testament, along with Jesus’ sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, and Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill, found in Acts 17.
 - B. All 3 of these sermons had unusual reactions.
 1. The Sermon on the Mount resulted in astonishment. Matt. 7:28-30
 2. The Sermon on the Unknown God resulted in mixed reactions. Acts 17:32-34
 - a. Now Paul **always** endeavored to speak **all** of God’s will. Acts 20:17-20, 26-28, 31-32
 - 1) Paul taught God’s will **explicitly**, when there was a clear statement of right and wrong.
 - 2) Paul also taught **implicitly**, by giving principles to help us to determine right or wrong, when matters under consideration are not specifically named in God’s word.
 - a) For instance, “Bootlegging” of liquor is not specifically named in scripture, but is condemned in principle.
 - b) Also, having “church buildings” is not specifically stated in the word of God, but are authorized by principle.
 - b. Paul realized that he was serving God, and must please **Him**—even if people got upset. Gal. 1:10; 4:16
 - II. Now let’s give special attention to Stephen’s Sermon of Acts 7, noting especially the question by the High Priest, “Are these things so?”, which has become the title of our lesson today.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let’s look at the BACKGROUND OF THE SERMON.

- A. Stephen was a special “table’ server in the Jerusalem church. (Acts 6:1-5)
 1. Stephen was miraculously endowed by the apostles. Acts 6:6
 2. Stephen did great wonders and signs. v. 8
- B. Stephen also aroused opposition by what he taught. vs. 9-10
 1. The enemies hired some to turn the people against Stephen. vs. 11-14
 2. As a result, they **all** beheld a strange sight. v. 15; cf ;7:1

II. 2nd, let’s look at the HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SERMON.

- A. Stephen first talked about Abraham, and God’s promise to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. (vs. 2-17)
- B. Stephen then talked about Moses, who led the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. (vs. 18-36)
 1. Moses foretold the coming of the Messiah. v. 37
 2. Moses also foretold the coming of God’s house, which is the church. Exo. 25:40; Acts 7:44-50; 1 Tim. 3:15

III. 3Rd;, let’s look at the RESULTS OF STEPHEN’S SERMON.

- A. Stephen **accused** his audience of being disobedient. vs. 51-53
 1. Had he held back the truth, he would have been a moral coward.
 2. By warning them, he delivered his own soul. Cf Ezek. 2:1,5; 3:19-20
- B. Then, there was a 3-fold reaction to Stephen’s sermon.

1. First, they (being the audience) were “cut to the heart”, and gnashed on Stephen with their teeth. v. 54
2. Second, they “stopped up their ears”, having heard too much. v. 57
3. Third, they “stoned” Stephen to death, to get him out of the way. v. 58
 - a. This “stoning” was NOT with mere words.
 - b. Neither was this “stoning” an invitation to move on and forget what he said..
 - c. It was a LITERAL “stoning” which took his life.

CONCLUSION

- I. Now, there were good reasons for Stephen doing what he did.
 - A. 1st, he did what God wanted him to do by preaching the truth, whether the people liked it or not. Cf 2 Tim. 4:2-4
 - B. 2nd, Stephen was blessed with a vision of Christ at God’s right hand, signifying divine love for this great sermon. vs. 55-56
 - C. 3rd, Stephen entered eternity—prepared to be with Jesus. vs. 59-60
- II. How do YOU react when truth is revealed?
 - A. Are you willing to obey it’s terms of salvation to believe and be baptized? Mark 16:16
 - B. Are you willing to faithfully serve God until death?