



North Christian Church

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Self-Guided Study

Topic

The Book of Acts – Chapters 7-9

Background

- See previous Self-Guided Study outlines for additional details
- Stephen: one of first 7 deacons; given a unique designation (**Acts 6:5,8**)
- Molek: an Ammonite god; associated with a propitiatory child sacrifice by parents; Phoenician and Canaanite idol
- Rephan: a heathen idol/god
- Eunuch: a castrated man; celibate
- Hellenistic Jews: Jews of Greek culture

Critical Thinking Questions

- Why was Stephen described as having a “face like an angel” in **Acts 6:15**? Angel (angelos in the Greek = messenger) (cp **Acts 7**)
- Why were the religious powers (eg: the Sanhedrin) so offended by Stephen’s message? (**Acts 7**) Wasn’t he telling the truth?
- Was Stephen a type of Christ? How so? What did he have in common with other types of Christ (eg: Adam, David, Jonah, etc.)?
- What is the significance of Paul’s background before his conversion? How might this assist or detract from his commission?
- Was water baptism a regular occurrence? Why might some nowadays choose not to celebrate water baptism?
- How important is encouragement in the Bible?...in our own lives?
- How were miracles used? What did they establish? How were the receivers and the onlookers effected?

Reading Outline

- Read chapters 7-9 in the Book of Acts

- Read more deliberately, but never stalling, than you would if you were reading the whole book for big-picture
- Don't lose sight of the overall purpose of the book, the "big-picture" themes, and any sweeping concepts
- Have FUN while reading and do not get frustrated...EVER!
- ALWAYS keep the Gospel reality at the forefront of your mind (eg: remember God's ultimate purpose for authoring the Bible – to reveal His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ)

Post-Reading Questions/Conclusions

- **v7:1** – is it possible that the priest already had his mind made up? How much integrity can we see in the religious leaders in view?
- **v7:2-50** – how well versed was Stephen in the OT? Might we consider this passage as "cliff notes"? Might we be impressed with Stephen's recount of events?
- **v7:22** – re: "action", how telling is this word for one of God's greatest instruments? How does this compare to our own lessons from the pulpit lately?
- **v7:26-29** – did Moses have a different heart for his brethren than for the Egyptians? How so? Why did he flee?
- **v7:30** – is 40 years a long time? How might we compare in our own callings? Might we consider this time an example of patience/rest? If "yes", is the patience attributed to Moses or God?
- **v7:51** – what did Stephen mean by "resisting the Holy Spirit"? How was the Holy Spirit's ministry different in the OT than the NT?
- **v7:53** – how might the religious leaders receive this accusation?
- **v7:59-60** – is this a type of Christ? (cp **Luke 23:46**)
- **v8:1-3** – who is this Saul? (cp **Acts 9, 13:9**)
- **v8:6-8** – why was Philip commissioned and enabled to perform miracles? How might we consider the reaction of the people? Where was their joy placed?
- **v8:9-11** – is Simon's boasting consistent with true miracle workers from God? How might we consider those with spiritual gifts that boast even today? Might we suspect something awry?
- **v8:12-13** – was Simon's baptism legitimate? (cp **v8:20-23**) What arguments are there to support it or are there against it being legitimate?
- **v8:14-17** – is this separation of baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit a solid basis for water baptism even today? How so? (cp **v8:38**)
- **v8:24** – what does this mean? Why does Simon ask this in this way?
- **v9:1** – how vigorous was Paul? Do you think his personality is an attribute that the Lord used in the future?
- **v9:5** – what is the significance that Paul responded, "Lord"?
- **v9:9** – how does Paul's 3 days compare to other 3-day intervals in the Bible (eg: Jonah, Jesus)?

- **V9:15** – how significant is this account of Paul’s choosing (compared to say a self-elected individual, such as Joseph Smith (Mormons))?
- **v9:26** – is this to be expected?
- **v9:27** – might this be the start of a long and fruitful relationship?

Useful Resources (furnished upon request)

- Maps: Paul’s, Philip’s, and Peter’s journeys; geographic reach of Acts
- Timelines: harmony of the Gospels, Acts, and remaining books of NT; Paul’s life
- Pictures: of places mentioned in Acts (eg: Rome); the Temple at Jerusalem