

THE FIRST MARTYR - STEPHEN!

WALKING IN JESUS' FOOTSTEPS.

Are we really supposed to walk in Jesus' footsteps? That is, can our lives really be patterned on the life of Jesus? The martyr Stephen's experience so closely parallels Jesus' experience that it may well be Holy Scripture's seal of example upon Jesus words to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. It appears that living the Jesus life can be taken more literally than is generally understood. Compare below the story of Stephen in Acts, Chapters 6 and 7, with sections of Jesus earthly walk, taking from the gospels:-

STEPHEN'S MINISTRY

6:8 "And Stephen, FULL OF GRACE AND POWER, did great WONDERS AND SIGNS among the people."

DEBATE

V9-10 "Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen.
10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke."

CHARGES AGAINST STEPHEN

v11 "Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and
12 God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council,
13 and set up FALSE WITNESSES who said, "THIS MAN NEVER CEASES TO SPEAK AGAINST THIS HOLY PLACE AND THE
14 LAW; FOR WE HAVE HEARD HIM SAY THAT THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH WILL DESTROY THIS PLACE, AND WILL CHANGE THE CUSTOMS WHICH MOSES DELIVERED TO US."

Compare V12 with ..

Z:1 "And the high priest said, "Is this so?"

JESUS MINISTRY

"And he went about all Galilee ... healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.."
- Matt 4:23-25 (c.f. Luke 5:17)

DEBATE

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord'... And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions." - Matt 22:41-46

CHARGES AGAINST JESUS

"For MANY bore FALSE WITNESS against him, and their witness DID NOT AGREE. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, "We heard him say, (Jesus) 'I WILL DESTROY THIS TEMPLE that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet NOT EVEN SO DID THEIR TESTIMONY AGREE."
- Mark 14:56-59

"Now the chief priests and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death; BUT THEY FOUND NONE."
- Mark 14:55

"And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" .. "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
.. Mark 14:60-61