



Saint Stephen

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Saint Stephen was the first martyr after the Lord Jesus Christ crucifixion. He was chosen along with six others to serve tables (to help feed the poor and take care of the widows) because the disciples could not preach the Word of God and serve the physical needs of the people at the same time. They chose these seven because they were wise and full of the Holy Spirit. Saint Stephen not only served poor and the hungry but he also did great signs and miracles among the people.

Then there came some people from the Synagogue of the Freedman and began to argue with **Saint Stephen** but they could not stand up to his wisdom or the Spirit by Whom he spoke. Then they secretly persuaded some men to say that they heard **Saint Stephen** say wrong things about Moses and God. And then they stirred up the people and they came and took **St. Stephen** to be tried for blasphemy.

They also set up false witnesses against him saying that they heard him say, *“This Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs, which Moses gave to us.” Acts 6:14*

All those who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at **St. Stephen** and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.



St. Stephen

The high priest then asked him if the things that were being said were true. **Saint Stephen** answered and told them about Abraham and Jacob and about Moses and how God helped the children of Israel in the wilderness. He told them about how their fathers brought Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles. **Saint Stephen** was telling them all of this because he wanted to show them that God is great and that He is the One that sent

Moses to them. He told the people that if God wanted to change any of the things that He told Moses or any of the old customs He could.

St. Stephen was full of courage and was able to stand up to the people who accused him of saying wrong things. He told those who accused him, *“You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit!”* (Acts 7:51)

St. Stephen knew that these people hated him because he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and that they had killed Him on the Holy Cross. He told them that they had received the Law from God but did not obey it.



When they heard this they became furious. But **St. Stephen** being full of the Holy Spirit looked up to Heaven and said to them, “*Look. I see the heaven opening up and I see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God.*” (Acts 7:56)

Then they rushed at him and dragged him out of the city and began to throw stones at him. Then the witnesses laid down their cloth at the feet of a man named Saul, who later became St. Paul.

While they were stoning him to death, **St. Stephen** prayed,

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Then he fell on his knees and cried, “Lord do not hold this sin against them.”

When he said this he fell asleep (Acts 7:59,60).

May **St. Stephen’s** prayers be with us forever. Amen.

