

Thought for the day – Wednesday 20th July 2022

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

Acts 6:8 – 7:60 – Stephen's stoning

Continuing the book of Acts, we come to the section that deals with Stephen's stoning, Acts 6:8-the end of chapter 7. You may remember that he was one of the seven who were anointed to serve food for widows in need.

We hear how Stephen begins to preach and perform wonders. As he does so, he encounters opposition by some influential people. They scheme with others to stir up the people and religious leaders, who put him in the dock. Stephen is accused of blasphemy and asked to give an account. Chapter 7 is mostly his powerful speech, in which he chronicles God's saving help to his people through their history and how they keep resisting the Holy Spirit. Like their ancestors, his current accusers are 'stiff necked people"! This enrages them and they proceed to stone him to death. As that happens, the Holy Spirit enables Stephen's to see the Lord Jesus, who is standing up to receive him into heaven. We are also introduced to a young man called Saul.

I am intrigued to know why Stephen was singled out. Perhaps he was too wise for his accusers as indicated. Perhaps they realised the truth, that they are stubbornly wrong. I wonder whether he was also marked out because he was helping the widows. Sadly, it is a truth, that anyone who tries to help others, to put into practice Jesus commandment to love our neighbour, will find that not everyone is happy about that, some of them fellow Christians. Like Stephen, it is understandable to feel angry and sometimes it's justified, in the face of that, but it is good to channel that anger into following Jesus more intently. Like He helped Stephen, the Holy Spirit enables us to keep focused on Jesus even when we face the utmost difficulty and danger.

You can read this account [here](#).