

A PLACE OF REST

*“But
Solomon
built him
an house.
Howbeit
the most
High
dwelleth
not in
temples
made with
hands; as
saith the
prophet,
‘Heaven is
My throne
and earth
My
footstool :
What house
will ye
build Me?
saith the
Lord; or
what is the
place of My
rest ? Hath
not My
hand made
all these*

Stephen was stoned to death after he spoke these words! Why? (In what way did he offend the Jews?)

The Jews considered the Temple of Solomon to be the true temple of God. They were holding on to a ‘natural’ temple. But by the Holy Spirit of God, Stephen brought forth a totally new concept that didn’t make sense to the traditional mind. Stephen declared that the Almighty God dwelleth not in temples made with human hands. Further Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, declared the will of God. God was looking for a place of rest for Himself. And for this truth Stephen was put to death by

things”

*(Acts
7:47~50)*

stoning. The Jews thought that the temple they had built over the previous forty-six years was the true abode of God. They believed that God dwelt in their midst through His presence in the Most Holy Place of the natural temple.

The Jews couldn't understand what Stephen was speaking about. "And yet they were unable to cope with the wisdom and Spirit with which he was speaking" (Acts 6:10). They felt that Stephen was speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God (Acts 6:11). They felt that Stephen spoke against the holy place. They misunderstood Stephen when he said that Jesus would destroy this place and alter the customs (of the Temple), which Moses had handed down to them (Acts 6:13-14). Indeed the Jews were furious with Stephen because he did not honor their tradition (given to them from the days of Moses). They conveniently overlooked the fact that Isaiah had prophesied the very same thing and that Stephen was only quoting the prophet, (Isaiah 66:1). But Stephen continued to speak boldly about the will of God for that time

unmindful of their cries. The Lord Jesus Christ, the true dwelling place of the Father, had revealed Himself. He was the Temple not made with human hands. And Stephen pronounced that the Jews, who were always resisting the promptings of the Holy Spirit, were just a bunch of stiff-necked, unbelieving uncircumcised-in-heart and murderers (Acts 7:51-52) And for this reason they began stoning him. And a young man named Saul was a witness! (Acts 7.58)

This message of Stephen needs to be declared clearly, boldly, and uncompromisingly for we live today in similar circumstances. In the Christian domain, today, they are attempting to engage themselves in activities that seek to satisfy human needs. **There is a gospel that is circulating amongst Christians that caters to the welfare and well being of human beings rather than to that, which is pleasing to God. Much emphasis is being given to social Christianity and works that meet the needs of the multitudes.** There is 'selfishness' about the work of the church that encourage people to look to their own

interests. People are just not desirous of accomplishing God's purpose. They are more interested in finalizing and achieving their own plans and programs that will give them self-satisfaction, peace and rest. But, beloved, the Word of God is not centered on man's welfare.

The word of God is about God. He is the central theme. The Bible is not about man but about God and His ways. The Word of God talks of God, Himself - His plans and purposes - His goodness - His grace - His power - His pattern. Beloved, we have to see Him and His purposes. God wants His people to be concerned about Him. Today people are only interested in their own rest; their own honor; their own glory. *But God is looking for a place of rest for Himself.* God wants us to be involved in His plans, His desires, and His burdens. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39). We need to read the Scriptures, the Word of God, to see God for the Scriptures reveal His will and His purposes for us. Even though many people

are concerned with going to heaven to meet God, the Father, but He is looking for a place of rest upon this earth. Beloved, do not be taken up with going away (to heaven) in this hour. But rather be anxious to accomplish His desires and His purposes.

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