

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Year A

Acts 7:55-60

This is the martyrdom of Stephen. You see, Stephen was really filled with the spirit and couldn't keep his mouth shut. First, he got into a dispute with the synagogue of the Freedmen, probably former slaves but who were not socially acceptable in other synagogues. His arguments were so cogent promoting Jesus as the Christ that they had no rational response. So, they "blew him in" to the Jewish authorities as a blasphemer. Hauled before the Great Sanhedrin, Stephen proves his bonifidies as a good Jew but he can't stop. Using scripture calls them out as "a stiff necked people whose ancestors killed the prophets and now they killed the Christ sent to save them. They had to kill Stephen.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

1. And who held the coats of the murderers? _____ who will become _____
2. And his last words were _____

Psalm 31:1-5,15-16

A psalm of David

1. Before reading, think of David and write down some words that come to mind when you think of David. _____

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness. | set for me, * for you are my tower of strength. |
| 2. Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me. | 5. Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth. |
| 3. Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me. | 15. My times are in your hand; *
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me. |
| 4. Take me out of the net that they have secretly | 16. Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me." |

2. What do you think it was like in the kingdom that David would write this? _____
-

I Peter 2:2-10

Remember, Peter was a fisherman and possibly a businessman (salted fish business) so he may have been somewhat literate and probably could cipher. It is highly unlikely that a rough hewn fisher/business man could have written the elegant Greek in I Peter. Lest you think the scholars are putting St. Peter down consider: Peter's message was so compelling it reached and converted an intellectual versed in fine Greek.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation-- if indeed

you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Isaiah 28:16

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,
"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner," and

Psalms 118:22

"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."

Isaiah 8:14-15

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

1. How these quotes make more sense since Jesus than before? _____

2. What do you think the last four lines are about? _____

John 14:1-14

The setting is the night of the Last Supper, Jesus has washed the disciples feet, Judas has gone off, Peter's denial has been predicted and there is a cloud of doom hanging over the room. Jesus is trying to encourage his little band,

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

1. Do the Apostles appear to “get it”? _____
 2. Does this look good for the new movement? _____
 3. Would you have bet much on the success of this movement back then? _____
 4. So What happened? _____
-
-