
Be Careful what you Say and Do!

The number of Bible allusions in **2 Tim 4:16-22** to the death of Stephen in **Acts 7** is truly astonishing. These were probably among the last thoughts recorded by Paul before his own execution during the reign of Nero.

➤ **Vs 16** .. Paul said: “At my first defence no one stood with me ... May it not be charged against them.”

Acts 7:60 .. Stephen said: “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.”

➤ **Vs 17** .. Paul said: “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me ...”

Acts 7:56 .. Stephen said: “I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

➤ **Vs18** .. Paul said: “And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever.”

Acts 7:55 .. Stephen “being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God ...”

➤ **vs 22** . Paul said: “The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen”

Acts 7:56 .. They stoned Stephen as he was calling on and saying: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

(Quotations from the NKJV)

It seems clear that Stephen’s Christ-like conduct, as he was being executed, made a lasting impression on Paul. It burned into his memory in such a way that he never forgot it to his dying day.

As one writer said: “Paul was being prepared for conversion, even before his Damascus Road experience. He was so moved by the things he saw and heard as Stephen was stoned to death.”

The exhortation for us: We never know to what extent others will be affected by the things they hear us saying and observe us doing. As ambassadors for God’s Kingdom we are on duty 24/7 and we need to do our utmost to ensure that, like Stephen, our words and actions are always beyond reproach.

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