

“THE POWER TO DIE”

Acts 1:8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Martus (Gk). The **witnesses** or martyrs are those who after His example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death.

1. It is Peter and John who first demonstrate the power to die (Acts 4:1-31).

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and [began] to speak the word of God with boldness. (NASB)

2. Then all of the Apostles had the opportunity to show the power to die (Acts 5).

Acts 5:20 "Go your way, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men. (NASB)

Acts 5:32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and [so is] the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (NASB)

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus [as] the Christ. (NASB)

3. Steven the very first martyr actually does die for the faith (Acts 7).

1. The Case of Abraham and the Patriarch's [emphasis on God] - vss.2-16.

a. Vs. 9 shows that the mob gathered there was no different than their fathers. Joseph was sold as was the Christ. God was with the innocent victim in both cases -- Gen. 45:5-7

b. God was not worshipped in Jerusalem only. He was worshipped in Mesopotamia, Haran, Canaan, and Egypt.

2. The Case of Moses in Egypt [emphasis on Moses] - vss.17-29.

a. In verse 29, Steven reverently rehearses the history of the Moses he is accused of blaspheming. Moses is still pointing to the Christ and they are still rejecting his leadership.

3. The Case of Israel in the Wilderness [emphasis on the Law] - vss.30-43.

a. Moses was their "ruler and deliverer" as was the Messiah. See. vs.35.

b. Verse 37. "...God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren."

4. The Case of the Tabernacle and Temple [emphasis on temple]. vss.44-50.

a. Verse 50. The point of Stephen's speech was that God had never been confined to one

5. The Stoning of Stephen Himself. vss.54-60

a. In verse 58, they began stoning Stephen and continued to do so.

b. In verse 59, they went right on stoning him by picking up the bloody stones and repeating it.

c. And Jesus, the Supreme King of the universe, stands to his feet!

4. James the first Apostle falls by the sword (Acts 12:1-2). See also Mk. 10:35-45

Acts 12:1-2 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword. (NASB)

5. Peter gets yet another chance to die for his witness (Acts 12:1-17).

Acts 12:6 And on the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison. (NASB)

6. Paul gets his first chance to witness himself to death (Acts 14:19-20).

Acts 14:19-20 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 But while the disciples stood around him, he arose and entered the city. And the next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

7. Paul and Silas get one more crack at dying for Jesus (Acts 16:19-34).

Acts 16:25-26 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened. (NASB). See also Rev. 6:9; 12:11; 20:4