

## Acts 7:59-60 – Lord Jesus, Receive My Spirit!

12/3/16 Sat Morn Prayer

PASS ME NOT O GENTLE SAVIOR – Frances. J. Crosby - Sung by Statler Brothers

*Trusting only in Thy merit Would I seek Thy face  
Heal my wounded broken spirit Save me by Thy grace*

*Savior Savior Hear my humble cry While on others Thou art calling Do not pass me by. (2X)*

**Acts 7:59-60** *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

### **Context/Biblical Background – Stephen Is Seized – Acts 6:8-7:3**

*Act 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. [9] Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. [10] And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. [11] Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." [12] And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. [13] They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; [14] for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." [15] And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel. [7:1] Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" [2] And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, [3] and said to him, 'GET OUT OF YOUR COUNTRY AND FROM YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME TO A LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.'*

### **STEPHEN'S LAST WORDS:**

**v. 59** *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."* His life ended in the same way it had been lived: **In complete trust in God, believing that Jesus would take care of him in the life to come.**

- It's been said that the fires in the olden days never made martyrs; they revealed them. No hurricane of persecution ever creates martyrs; it reveals them. Stephen was a martyr before they stoned him. He was the first martyr to seal his testimony with his blood.

**v. 60** *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep*

**Lord, do not charge them with this sin:** God answered Stephen's prayer, and used it to touch the heart of a man who energetically agreed with his stoning, though the man didn't know the prayer was being answered. When we get to heaven, make sure to look up Stephen and thank him for every blessing brought through the ministry of Saul of Tarsus.

- God heard Stephen's prayer, and Saul (Apostle Paul) is the evidence of it. Note how God can greatly use us in our times of suffering.
- "If Stephen had not prayed, the church would not have had Paul." (Augustine)
- **Cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not charge them with this sin:** Stephen displays the same **forgiving attitude that Jesus had on the cross** (*Luk\_23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*). He asked God to forgive His accusers, and He made the promises loudly and publicly.
- If the gospels contain that which Jesus *began* to do and to teach, they also only contain that which Jesus *began* to suffer. There is a sense in which Jesus suffers along with Stephen as he is martyred now.

- ***He fell asleep***: Tenderly, the text notes that Stephen did not “die.” Instead, he merely **fell asleep**, and woke up in a much better world.
- If Stephen ***fell asleep***, the church had to wake up. “If there had been any optimism about quickly winning the Jewish people to their Messiah, that was now gone. The Church could not expect triumph without a bloody battle.”
- Stephen wasn’t a super human being, but he was a man filled through all his being with the Holy Spirit. It is almost impossible to understand how greatly you can be used of God as you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **SUMMARY:**

- ❖ **Stephen died as he lived – in complete trust in God!**
- ❖ **Notice the last two things he said - "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" [60] Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "*Lord, do not charge them with this sin*"**
- ❖ **What a witness his death was.** The coats were laid at Saul’s feet. Could that have not made a mighty impression on him?
- ❖ **Also notice his last act – returning good for evil – so Christ like in asking for forgiveness for those who were stoning him to death!**
- ❖ **Are there any similarities to Stephen’s prayer to those of ours?**

**PRAY TODAY FOR:** (Name persons, name things, take direct aim at the objective of your supplications)

- **Our Church, Nationally and locally; Our Nation: Our leaders; for kings and those in authority**
- **Police officers/military. Supreme Ct. Justices: John Roberts, Jr., Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and the one VACANCY**
- **When in small groups - Personal Prayers:**
- **Our President and Vice President: Donald & Melania Trump; Mike & Karen Pence.**
- **The new administration being formed! Positions filled so far: Defense Sec. – Gen. James Mattis; Treasury Sec. – Steven Mnuchin; Transportation Sec. – Elaine Chou; Health & Human Services Sec. – Tom Price; Commerce Sec. – Wilbur Ross; Education Sec. – Betsy DeVos; U.N Ambassador – Nickey Haley; HUD Sec. (nearing announcement) – Ben Carson; C.I.A. Director – Mike Pompeo; Attorney General – Jeff Sessions; Nat’l Security Advisor – Michael Flynn; White House Chief of Staff – Reince Priebus; Chief Strategist – Stephen Bannon;**
- **Chairman - Vice President-elect and Indiana Gov. Mike Pence**

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS:**

#### **ALBANIA**

**President or Kryetari I Shqiperise: Bujar Nishani; He is the head of state of the Republic of Albania. The President of Albania is indirectly elected by the Assembly of Albania.**

**Area** 28,748 sq km. A mountainous Balkan state on the Adriatic Sea. **Population** Ann Gr **Density** 2010 3,169,087 0.37% 110/sq km  
**Religions Pop %** Muslim 62.40; Christian 30.47; Non-religious 6.98; Baha’i 0.14; Jewish 0.01

#### **Challenges for Prayer: (*Operations World*)**

Albania has a long road ahead to recover completely from the devastation of atheistic Communism. **The religious climate is very hazy. Islam is the largest religion in Albania** (some say up to 70% Muslim), but this normally extends to an inherited cultural affiliation and little more. **Evangelicals are in a transition phase. Leadership training** is the most vital need for prayer. **Evangelism and church planting. Holistic mission** is possibly the defining ministry of the young Albanian Church. **Missionaries from Albania. Evangelical mission agencies. The least-reached minorities: a) The Bektashi, b) The Vlach c) The Gorani, Golloborda and Cham d) The Rufai** The Albanian diaspora. Over half of all Albanians live outside Albania. Their spiritual need is now greater than that of Albania itself. Pray for these: **a) Kosovar Albanians. b) Albanians living in Macedonia (600,000 to 700,000) and Montenegro (40,000). c) Albanians further afield. d) Criminal activities seem sadly widespread among some segments of the diaspora.** Christian help ministries: **a) Scripture translation. Religious literature.**

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