

Acts 7:60

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Analysis

Stephen's dying prayer mirrors Christ's crucifixion prayer (Luke 23:34), demonstrating how deeply Jesus' teaching on loving enemies had transformed him. The Greek 'koimaō' (fell asleep) is Luke's euphemism for death, emphasizing Christian hope in resurrection. The phrase 'lay not this sin to their charge' uses accounting language - Stephen asks God not to 'reckon' or 'impute' this sin to his murderers. This radical forgiveness fulfills Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:44) and likely impacted Saul of Tarsus, who witnessed this martyrdom and later became Paul the apostle.

Historical Context

Stephen was stoned circa AD 34-35, becoming Christianity's first martyr (Greek: martyrs, witness). Among the witnesses holding the executioners' garments was Saul of Tarsus (Acts 7:58). The stoning occurred outside Jerusalem's walls, as Jewish law required. Stephen's martyrdom catalyzed severe persecution that scattered believers, paradoxically spreading the gospel throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-4).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Stephen's example challenge your response to those who oppose or harm you for your faith?
2. In what ways might your forgiveness of others serve as a witness that plants seeds for their eventual conversion?

Interlinear Text

θεὶς	δὲ	τὰ	γόνατα	ἔκραξεν	φωνῇ	μεγάλῃ	
he kneeled	down	And	G3588	G1119	and cried	voice	with a loud
G5087		G1161			G2896	G5456	G3173
Κύριε	μὴ	στήσῃς	αὐτοῖς	τὴν	ἀμαρτίαν	ταύτην	καὶ
Lord	not	lay	to their	G3588	sin	G3778	charge And
G2962	G3361	G2476	G846		G266		G2532
τοῦτο	εἰπὼν	ἔκοιμήθη					
this	when he had said	he fell asleep					
G5124	G2036						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:44 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Luke 23:34 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (Parallel theme): But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Acts 20:36 (Parallel theme): And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

Acts 9:40 (Parallel theme): But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

Luke 6:28 (Parallel theme): Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Acts 21:5 (Parallel theme): And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

Acts 13:36 (Parallel theme): For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

1 Corinthians 15:18 (Parallel theme): Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

Luke 22:41 (Parallel theme): And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,