

THE HIGH ROAD OF OBEDIENCE

Acts 6:8-7:60

1. It costs a lot to live, no matter which way you choose.

It all depends on what you're willing to do without...

- A. It costs dearly to succeed in most professions.
- B. It costs a great deal to live without Christ.

Many persons who insist on quality in their automobiles, clothing, homes, and leisure time, settle for absolute poverty when it comes to their spiritual lives.

- C. It costs dearly to follow Christ.
(Let's bury the concept of cheap grace.)

- 1. "Take up your cross and follow me."
Luke 17:7-9
- 2. We no longer live for ourselves, but for Him.
2 Corinthians 5:15

2. Let's compare Stephen with those who opposed him.

A. Opponents: who were they?

- Jews of Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia
- Argumentative, and mad when they could not win
- Lied about Stephen in order to incite a riot
- Produced false witnesses
- Stoned Stephen to death.

B. Stephen

- No credentials other than "full of God's grace and power, full of faith and the Holy Spirit."
- Worked signs and wonders among the people
- Irrevocably committed to Jesus Christ
- Unwilling to back down from the truth.

C. What did they keep?

Opponents	Stephen
Their lives (for the time being)	His soul
Their pride	His gentle forgiving spirit
Hatred of Christ and his disciples	His integrity
	His character
	Truth
	Relationship to God

D. What did they give up?

Opponents	Stephen
Their integrity	A life he could not

	keep, anyway
Obedience to their own law which commands, "Do not testify falsely against your neighbor"	
God: they resisted His voice	

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." --Jim Elliot

3. The book of Acts separates persons into two camps:

- Those who resist the Holy Spirit; and
- Those who obey Him.

A. A history of Hebrew resistance manifested itself again (Stephen's sermon outline from Acts 7:2-53))

- Even though God promised he would send a deliverer, they were reluctant to accept Moses.
- They were disloyal to Moses once they were past the Red Sea. "Their hearts turned back to Egypt."
- When the Temple was finally constructed, it became a matter of national pride rather than a house of prayer.
- All of the prophets who had predicted the coming of the Messiah had been persecuted.
- When Christ came, they crucified him.

The problem: disobedience. They received the law but they had not obeyed it.

B. Stephen and the N.T. Christians were marching to a different drummer.

N.T. Jews	Christians
A vision of the past	A vision for the future
A taste for tradition	A taste for truth
A love for the law	A love for the Master
A heart for resistance	A heart for obedience

They worshiped tradition and the laws God sent but they did not worship Christ. They became idolaters.

C. The concept of a lifelong bond-servant

Deut. 15:12, 16-17

A voluntary wound

Jesus Christ is quoted in Psalm 40:6

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
But my ears you have pierced. (NIV)

Hebrews 10:5

"You did not want animal sacrifices and grain offerings.
But you have given me a body so that I may obey you."

The words differ. The sense is the same. That Christ might become God's lifelong bond-servant (signified by boring of the ear), God the Father, by his Spirit, furnished Jesus with a human body so he could be obedient even to death.

All of us are bond-servants to Jesus Christ by choice.