INTRODUCTION:
A. Stephen has been brought before the council for teaching the truth 6:14
   1) The temple would be destroyed
   2) The law of Moses was fulfilled

B. He had given a brief history of Israel and he concluded that the temple was not the "place of God's rest" Vs. 49
   1) "Heaven is my throne"
   2) "Hath not my hand made all these things?"

C. Why had Israel rejected Jesus?
   1) "He came unto His own"
   2) "His own (race) received Him not"

I. The Reasons They Rejected Jesus Acts 7:51
A. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" 51a
   1) "Stiff-necked" = sklerotrachelos = "Hard-necked", used in the Septuagint to describe the rebellious nature of Israel, Ex. 33:3,5 Deut. 9:6,13
   2) They were circumcised in the flesh, but they were in rebellion in their heart and mind.
   3) Something like being baptized yet disobedient

B. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost"
   1) "resist" = antipito = "to fall against or upon in a hostile manner", "to strive against"
   2) They actively rejected truth

C. "as your fathers did, so do ye"
   1) They followed in the tradition of Israel
II. Those Who Prophesied of Jesus Were Persecuted   Vs. 52
   A. "which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?
      1) "persecuted" = dioko = "to pursue"
      2) They "hounded" the Prophets

   B. "and have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One:
      1) "slain" = apokteino = "to kill"
      2) "shewed before" = prokatagello = "to announce before hand"

   C. These men had done the same       52b
      1) "betrayers" = prodotes = "a traitor", form proidomi, "to give up to
         the enemy"
      2) "murders" = phoneus = "a murder"

III. These Men Should Have Known Him      Vs. 53
   A. "who have received the law by the disposition of angels"
      1) "received" = lambano = "to take or receive from another", God gave it,
         they took it.
      2) "disposition" = diatage = "a disposing in order, as of troops", "arrangement"
      3) Romans 3:1-4
         a. "advantage" = perissos = "very much", "exceedingly", "what is over
            and above"

   B. "and have not kept it"
      1) "kept" = phulasso = "to keep watch", "guard", "defend", "protect",
         "to preserve", "maintain"
      2) We also have "the faith". Do we "keep" it?
      3) Those who have access to the truth and refuse to hear it with open
         and refuse to hear it with open and a receptive heart, "have not
         kept it"
IV. The Council’s Response to the Truth     Vs. 54
   A. "And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart"
      1) "heard" = akouo = "to be informed"
      2) "cut" = diaprio = "to saw through or in two pieces", [with the teeth] = "rage"

   B. "and they gnashed on him with their teeth"
      1) "gnashed" = bruchao = "to roar", "howl", "the death cry of a wounded hero", "to grind or bite with a loud noise"
      2) These men lost all composure, and angered by the truth of his accusation, they used the weapons at hand, their teeth!

V. The Death of Stephen         Vs. 55-60
   A. He came to death full of the Holy Spirit     Vs. 55
      1) He looked steadfastly into heaven
      2) He saw the glory of God
      3) He saw Jesus STANDING on the right hand of God

   B. He came to death full of witness     Vs. 56
      1) Stephen spoke of what he was
      2) Perhaps he had said enough

   C. The council could stand no more
      1) "They cried out with a loud voice"
      2) "and stopped their ears"
      3) "and ran upon him with one accord"
      4) "and cast him out of the city"
      5) "and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul"
      6) "and they stoned Stephen"

   D. Stephen prayed for himself
      1) "calling upon God"
      2) "and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit"
E. Stephen prayed for others
   1) "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice"
   2) "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"
      a. "lay not this charge" = histemi = "to make to stand", "set", "place",
         "put in the balance", "weight"

F. Stephen died in peace
   1) "And when he had said this, he fell asleep"
   2) To die in peace, at peace with one's self and with God is a great victory!
   3) Asleep in Jesus, resting in Him for all things