

“Behold, I See the Son of Man . . . Standing!”: A Revelation above the Wreckage

Introduction

The Text

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he [Stephen], full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:54–60)

One More Week

- A. I wanted to spend one more week with Stephen here. I just didn’t feel right passing by so quickly.
- B. This morning, in particular, I really just want to focus in with you on [v. 56](#). I think it’s a simply stunning verse, full of rich implication for us.
 - 1. Last week, when we took all of [Acts 7](#) in a single sermon, that was my attempt to help us see more of the forest than the trees.
 - 2. But this week, I’m just saying: I don’t want to miss this tree. There are a lot of other trees, I guess we’ll have to pass by those. But I don’t want to miss this one.
- C. So as we come now to consider [v. 56](#)—which really outlines for us this vision that Stephen is given just moments before his brutal end—I’m going to organize my thoughts under two headings: (1) What He Sees; and (2) What It Means (for us).

(1) What He Sees

A Quick Reminder

- A. If you are joining us today for the first time, and perhaps you missed the last couple of weeks, let me at least quickly remind you of what we’ve seen to this point:
 - 1. Stephen—a man full of the Spirit and of wisdom, full of grace and of power—had been preaching Christ in and around Jerusalem.
 - 2. And the Jewish powers that be there were not pleased—it was a threat to their place and prominence in the culture.

- a. So they grabbed hold of him, dragged him before the council—the Sanhedrin, the highest court for the Jews—and they began drumming up false charges against him: saying that he was standing against both the law of Moses and the temple of God.
3. But then Stephen is given opportunity to make a defense. And he shows, through a long recounting of Israel’s history, that the law and the temple were both meant by God, ultimately, to prepare us for and point us towards Jesus. He is the goal and fulfillment of such things.
- a. And, therefore, ironically, (and here’s the punchline) Stephen is not the one truly standing against the law and the temple . . . they are. Stephen is not the one resisting God’s word and ways . . . they are. Stephen is not the blasphemer . . . they are.
4. Perhaps you see now why, by the end of his speech, they’re not applauding, they’re not coming up and asking him for autographs or something like this . . . “they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him” (v. 54).

A Revelation above the Wreckage

- A. But all of this fury and foam from them becomes the context for one of most splendid visions given in all of Scripture. Stephen is given a “revelation above the wreckage,” we could say.
- 1. These guys are circling like a pack of hyenas—snapping their jaws, drooling in the dust.
 - 2. But he seems strangely unmoved, even at peace, it would seem. In fact, his face, we were told in Acts 6:15, “was like the face of an angel.”
 - a. These Jews are looking more and more like animals.
 - b. He’s looking more and more like the angels.
 - i. How? Well, his eyes are lifted up and, above it all, he sees God!
- B. Some of us need a vision of God like this today, don’t we?
- 1. I’ve been praying God would give it to you—that God would fill you with the Spirit, and open the eyes of your heart, so you see something of what Stephen sees here.
- C. But, now, what exactly does he see?
- 1. It seems to me, there really are two essential parts to this vision of his. Let’s consider them one at a time . . .

Part #1: “The Son of Man”

- A. So he begins: “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man . . .” (Acts 7:56).
- B. Notice Jesus is here called the “Son of Man,” by Stephen. This is quite an intriguing observation.

1. Of course, you may know, throughout the Gospels “Son of Man” really is Jesus’ favorite self-designation. He calls himself by this title more than any other. And I think he did so because it allowed him to both conceal and reveal something of his identity at the same time.
 2. But here’s the interesting thing: There are only three other instances outside of the Gospels in the NT where this term “son of man” even shows up. And Stephen is the only person outside of Jesus himself who applies this specific title directly to him (although John seems to come close in [Rev. 1:13](#) and [Rev. 14:14](#)).
- C. But why? Why Stephen? Why here with regard to this vision?
1. Luke tells us in [v. 55](#) that Stephen “gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus . . .”
 2. So why, when Stephen himself describes what he sees, does he refer to Jesus as the “Son of Man”?
- D. While there are perhaps many reasons for this, two reasons come to the forefront, I think . . .

Reason #1: Because This Title Alludes to Jesus’ Vindication and Ultimate Triumph

- A. The title itself, as you may or may not know, is drawn from the OT vision God gave to Daniel back in [Dan. 7](#). There the prophet says: “¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (vv. 13–14).
1. Daniel sees a king who is above every other king. His is a kingdom that will overcome and outlast every other kingdom. Here is the one who will sit on the throne of David and reign forever, as God had promised.
 - a. It wasn’t Solomon or any of those other jokers that followed after.
 - b. It’s Jesus. But he’s here referred to as “one like a son of man” ([v. 13](#)).
- B. This is why, Jesus himself, during his earthly ministry, drafting on this vision in Daniel, uses the title to refer to his pending vindication and triumph:
1. So he says in [Luke 9:22](#): “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” “The glory of [Dan. 7](#) is coming, but only on the other side of my suffering and death.”
 2. He makes the connection even more clear for us later, when he himself is on trial before the Sanhedrin, much like Stephen is in our text.
 - a. There too, the false accusations are being tossed about.
 - b. And, there too, the high priest asks, somewhat bewildered: “Don’t you have anything to say for yourself about all this?”

c. And, there too, the connection is made between Jesus and this Son of Man . . .

- i. So he responds: “[F]rom now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64).
“You may see me hanging from a rugged cross at noonday tomorrow, but you will see me seated at the right hand of God thereafter.”

C. So why does Stephen say: “I see . . . the Son of Man . . .”?!

1. I’ve got to think part of it is to rub it in these guys’ faces. “What Jesus said to you on the night you sentenced him to death, with that hung jury of yours . . . it’s come true! He’s not in the tomb, he’s on the throne! ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man . . .’ at the Father’s right hand!”

a. As one commentator puts it: “His declaration of this vision confirms the resurrection and glorification of Jesus to those who were responsible for his death.”

- i. He’s like one of those trick candles you put on a birthday cake. Just when you thought you’ve blown it out, it reignites.
- ii. He’s like a grease fire. You try to put it out with water and you come to find you’ve only helped it spread. The fire’s not dwindling down, it’s burning hotter.

(1) What an infuriating thing, this must have been for them to hear. It’s no wonder they plug their ears at this point and rush at him with stones.

D. But there is yet a second reason Stephen may have wanted to identify Jesus by this title at this point, and it’s related to the first . . .

Reason #2: Because This Title Anticipates Our Vindication and Ultimate Triumph . . . in Him!

A. This bit, too, is evident all the way back in that original vision given to Daniel.

1. The Son of Man does what he does, not merely for himself, but for the Saints of the Most High, as they’re called—for God’s people, for us.
 - a. Jesus already had glory with his Father before the world ever was (cf. [John 17:5](#)). He didn’t step down into humanity, as a Son of Man, pass through death on that cross, rise up and ascend back to his Father in order to get glory for himself. He already had it. No!
 - b. He went through all of that because he wanted to share it with us as well.
 - i. To put it simply: Jesus didn’t come down to get glory. He came down to get us!

- B. The Son of Man's vindication and ultimate triumph, then, anticipates the vindication and ultimate triumph of all who trust in him.
 - 1. So in [Dan. 7:18](#), we're told that because of this Son of Man, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever."
 - 2. And later in [vv. 21-22](#), we see that it will be hard for the saints, they'll be opposed and oppressed, but "judgment [will be] given for the saints of the Most High, and the time [will come] when the saints [possess] the kingdom" (v. 22).
 - a. The whole picture here in Daniel's vision is that of a courtroom and he's shown how God will judge in favor of the saints because of the Son of Man and their relationship with him.
- C. This is precisely the sort of thing Jesus has in mind when, in [Luke 12](#), he says to his disciples: "I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God . . ." (v. 8).
 - 1. He goes on from there in [Luke 12](#), interestingly, to talk about how: "You're going to be dragged before earthly courts and condemned because of your association with me (like Stephen is here). But I don't care if you are condemned by the courts of this earth. If you confess me before men, you shall be commended by me in the courtroom of heaven. And there is no higher court in all the cosmos. If you're right there, you're right everywhere!"
- D. So when Stephen refers to Jesus as the "Son of Man", he's not just talking about Jesus' vindication and ultimate triumph . . . he's also talking about his own! Where the Son of Man goes, the saints of the Most High go!

One Last Thing . . .

- A. One last thing on this title. When you think about it, it really does fit Jesus—who he is and what he does—perfectly. It speaks both his deity and his humanity.
 - 1. On the one hand, as we've seen, the Son of Man in the OT is this divine figure coming in the clouds. So he's standing on the side of God.
 - 2. But, on the other hand, this idea of the Son of Man, literally refers to someone who is also human—he is a "son of man" after all. He is, therefore, standing on the side of man as well.
- B. And, of course, Jesus is both God and man in one person.
 - 1. He is, we could say, God's representative before man.
 - 2. But he is also, wonder of all wonders, man's representative before God.
 - a. If I have repented and placed my faith in him, and been united to him by the Spirit: his perfect righteousness counts as mine; his death for sin counts as mine; and his vindication and ultimate triumph, therefore, also anticipates and ensures my own.
- C. Built into the biblical notion of the Son of Man, then, is this mediatorial role that Jesus alone is fit to perform. He stands in the gap between God and man, as God and man.

1. As Paul puts it in 1 Tim. 2:5-6: “⁵ [T]here is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all”

a. This is, perhaps, why Stephen sees of him what he does next . . .

Part #2: “Standing”?!

- A. So his description of this vision continues: “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).

Not Sitting?

- A. Now, this might not immediately strike as you as odd—that the Son of Man is seen “standing” here—but, so far as I can tell, there is no other place in Scripture where he’s described in such a posture at the Father’s right hand.

1. Everywhere else, Jesus is described as sitting at the right hand of God. It’s intended to be a picture of his royal repose in view of his finished work of redemption.

a. He offered himself up for us on the cross, he atoned for sin once and for all, and when he was raised up and ascended to his Father’s right hand, he sat down. He was done. “It is finished” (John 19:30).

- B. So we read . . .

1. Heb. 1:3: “After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”
2. Or later in Heb. 10:11-12, when the author is contrasting the old and new covenants, he writes: “¹¹ [E]very priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God”
3. Or as he exhorts us in Heb. 12:2: “[Look] to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”
4. It’s no different, really, for Paul. So in Eph. 1:20-21, we read that God “²⁰ raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”
5. And, similarly, in Col. 3:1 he writes: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”
6. Jesus himself, as we saw, speaks of himself along similar lines. Matt. 26:64 again: “[F]rom now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power” (cf. Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69)
7. Or as he puts it in Rev. 3:21: “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

- C. The church through the ages, in her creeds, has always confessed the same.
1. Take the Apostles' Creed for example: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is [what?!] seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead."

But Standing!

- A. Everywhere you look in Scripture, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. And yet here, when Stephen looks, he is standing.
1. And I just want to know: Why?! What is the meaning of this?! It seems significant, does it not?
- B. Did Jesus somehow think he was done, but then suddenly realize there was something else to do? He got called into the office unexpectedly, last minute? So he's not sitting anymore, he's standing, poor guy.
1. Is that what this is?
- C. Certainly not. I'll tell you what I think is happening here—and it's related to all we've said thus far about the Son of Man and his mediatorial role in the courtroom of heaven.
1. Jesus is not here standing to redeem Stephen in some way. That work is done.
 2. But he is standing to intercede for him on the basis of that redemption. He is standing in Stephen's defense, as his advocate before God in heaven.
- D. Remember, Stephen sees the throne room of God—and, in ancient times, the throne room was also the courtroom.
1. They didn't have the division of power, the three branches of government, that we do now in America.
 2. The king was the judge. Therefore, the throne room was the courtroom.
 - a. And so here is the Father on the throne as judge.
 - b. And here come the accusations from this Jewish council against Stephen: "You're a blasphemer. You're against God and his law and his temple!"
 - c. But, then, there in the courtroom of heaven, Stephen has a representative—one who stands to plead his case, to ensure that the Father rules in his favor and his opponents get put back in their place.
 - i. As F.F. Bruce has so wonderfully puts it: "Stephen has been confessing Christ before men, and now he sees Christ confessing his servant before God." What a thought!

Even for Me?!

- A. But, now, up in the back of your mind at this point, there starts to rise a dreadful question and a shadow of a doubt, doesn't there?
1. Of course Jesus would stand in Stephen's defense here. Stephen's awesome. Look at him. What a valiant saint. He is being falsely accused. He didn't do anything wrong. Of course Jesus will advocate for him.
 2. But what about for me? What about when I blow it? Does Jesus only stand in our defense before the Father on our good days? Or does he stand just as firmly for us even on our worst of days? That's what I want to know. Because that's where I so often am.
 - a. Of course he may stand for me when I stand for him, but about when I don't?
 - i. What about when I just snapped at the kids again even though I promised myself I wouldn't be that kind of parent.
 - ii. What about when I just got on that website again even though I told my brothers and my wife I was done with that filth.
 - iii. What about when I'm struggling with gossip, or jealousy, or bitterness, or whatever it may be.
 - iv. What about the days when I'm not like Stephen here?
 - (1) Is the Son of Man still standing then?!
- B. Answer: Yes. Why? Because your strongest defense isn't built upon your own performance or righteousness. It's built upon his.
1. He doesn't stand in my defense because I'm worthy of it in and of myself.
 2. He stands in my defense because he's already purchased me in his blood. He's already atoned for my sin on that cross: "Father, don't exact from him that which you've already exacted from me. I've paid for his many sins. I've purchased his freedom. I've gone to hell for this brother. You aren't about to send him there anyways. That would be unjust."
- C. Just as the high priests of the old covenant would take the blood of the sacrifice into the Most Holy Place and with it plead for the forgiveness of the sins of God's people, so Jesus now brings his own blood before God and makes his case for us.
1. So the author of Hebrews says of him in [Heb. 7:23-25](#): "²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."
 - a. His redemptive work is done, so he sits down.
 - b. But his intercession carries on, so he stands on our behalf!

2. As John puts it in 1 John 2:1-2: “¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”
3. As Paul puts it in Rom. 8:31-34: “³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”
4. One of my favorite texts on this actually comes from the OT, Mic. 7:8-9: “⁸ Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.”
 - a. The wonder of the gospel is that the very one I’ve sinned against is also the very one who pleads for me. Micah gets it!
 - i. Jesus doesn’t just stand for us on our best of days, he stands for us on our worst!

- D. “Before the throne of God above / I have a strong and perfect plea / A great High Priest whose name is love / Who ever lives and pleads for me / My name is graven on His hands / My name is written on His heart / I know that while in heav’n He stands / No tongue can bid me thence depart
 When Satan tempts me to despair / And tells me of the guilt within / Upward I look and see Him there / Who made an end to all my sin / Because the sinless Savior died / My sinful soul is counted free / For God the Just is satisfied / To look on Him and pardon me
 Behold Him there, the risen Lamb / My perfect, spotless Righteousness / The great unchangeable I Am / The King of glory and of grace / One with Himself, I cannot die / My soul is purchased by His blood / My life is hid with Christ on high / With Christ my Savior and my God!”
1. We’re going to sing that in a moment, but I couldn’t help but quote it now. It perfectly sums up everything we had to say under this first heading.

(2) What It Means (for us)

- A. What does it mean for us that the Son of Man is standing in such a way on our behalf? I just want to draw out two quick implications . . .

Implication #1: We’re Free to Live

- A. We spend so much of our time, it seems to me, trying to prove ourselves. We have this deep-seated desire to show to the world and even to ourselves, that we’re worth something, that we matter, that we’re good enough, that we’re alright.

B. If you look at your own heart and life I think you'll see that's what drives a lot of what you do. I want to prove myself.

1. I want to show I'm a good mom, that I can keep my kids and home in order;
2. I want the boss to see I'm worthy of that raise;
3. I want my spouse to know I'm not as bad as they claim I am—"Look I did this, look I did that";
4. I study in school, not just to learn, but to get a better grade than that kid over there so that I can know I've got it;
5. I hit up the gym, not just to stay healthy and be a good steward of my body, but so I can feel a little better knowing I've got shredded abs, I can fit in those jeans, she can't.

C. We're trying to prove something. A lot of times it derives from insecurity, right? Deep down, we're not sure we're okay, so we're always trying to make a case for it, really.

1. We've got that voice in our head—maybe from our mama, maybe from our daddy, maybe from those kids on the playground, maybe from an ex, maybe from a boss, maybe from the devil, whoever, but we feel the need to argue with it, to prove them wrong.

D. I'm going to be going to Yosemite here in a little bit and it got me thinking again of that documentary [Free Solo](#) about the guy who free climbs the massive rock face of El Capitan. It's insane.

1. It's an interesting film, not just for the spectacle and thrill of it, but for the window you get into this guy's heart and life. You start to see what drives him, why he would even do such a thing.
2. And, at one point, there's this moment of utter clarity on the matter, and you come to realize he doesn't just do it because he loves it. He's doing all this because he feels deep down like he's not enough, like he has to prove himself, like he still has to make a case to the world that he matters, that he's okay, that he's worth something.

a. Here's what he says: "[Some] of my mom's favorite sayings are . . . 'almost doesn't count'—or 'good enough isn't.' No matter how well I ever do at anything, it's not that good. The bottomless pit of self-loathing. I mean, that's definitely the motivation for some soloing. . . . Look, I don't want to fall off and die . . . but there's a satisfaction to challenging yourself and doing something well. That feeling is heightened when you are for sure facing death. You can't make a mistake. If you're seeking perfection, free soloing is as close as you can get. And it does feel good to feel perfect, for a brief moment."

- i. You heard it, right? "I do this because it's fun on one level, sure. But also because, underneath it all, I hate myself and I feel like this is how I prove I still matter, that I'm okay."
- ii. It looks like freedom on the surface, right? I mean it's even called "free" soloing. No ropes attached.

iii. But, you dig a little deeper down, and you quickly realize: it's not freedom. It's slavery.

E. Here's the thing: If you don't see Jesus standing up for you, you will always feel like you have to be standing up for yourself. If you don't believe that he is making a case for you before the bench in heaven, you'll always be trying to make a case for yourself before anyone who will listen. You'll be terribly insecure and enslaved.

1. How will you ever know if you're worth anything? How will you ever know if it's enough?

a. The only way I know is because Jesus is enough. I don't have to be perfect . . . he is, for me. I don't have to make a case for myself . . . he is, for me.

i. He lived the life I should have lived and died the death I should have lived and rose again and ascended to the Father as my representative.

ii. I don't need to prove myself with how I parent or my numbers at the office or my grades or my six-pack abs. Who cares about that stuff.

(1) He's the proof that I'm okay. Don't look at me. Look at him!

F. When you get that he's standing for you it sets you free to truly live for him and for others. You're not so consumed with yourself anymore.

G. You realize that's what's going on with these guys who come against Stephen, right?

1. They were so wrapped up in their own sense of self-righteousness. They prided themselves on their religious pedigree. That's how they knew they were worth something.

2. So when Stephen points out that they're actually just a bunch of hypocrites, it threatens the very essence of who they are. It's too painful. They won't face it. They can't hear it. As we've said, they stop up their ears and they start yelling.

3. They're "enraged" (Acts 7:54). The words in the Greek there, it's very interesting, they actually literally read: they were "sawn through their hearts." It's a gruesome image but it gets at the sense that their very identity and self-worth were at stake in this. They weren't just frustrated, or annoyed, or convicted, by what Stephen says. They were destroyed by it. Because he was attacking the very thing they relied on to make their own case, to prove their worth. He was dismantling their case.

4. When that's not found in Jesus, we become a mess. And we have to fight back, get louder, and all this. If we don't see him standing for us, we'll always feel like we have to stand for ourselves. We'll get enslaved to it.

5. But if we have Jesus, we're free. We can hear what people say and we don't get all prickly. We can celebrate when someone does better than us. We don't lose hope when we fail or we don't get what we were working towards. Because he's standing. So we're free to truly live!

Implication #2: We're Free to Die

- A. If you think that this life is all there is, then you've got to fight with everything you have to get your own and stay safe and keep it all protected and together.
1. But if you know Jesus is standing for you, if you know that he's ready to welcome you into his arms, into the paradise of his presence, the fear of death doesn't control you. He's already overcome it on your behalf.
 - a. [Heb. 2:14–15](#): “¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”
 - i. You're free not just to live, but to die. Death is not the end, but a segue into something even better. “[T]o live is Christ, and to die is gain” ([Phil. 1:21](#)).
- B. This sort of thing is hinted at even in our text back in [Acts 7](#). Did you notice it?
1. Look at how the whole story ends there in [v. 60](#): [And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he \[What? Died? No. Yes, but no. He . . .\] fell asleep.](#)
 - a. It's crazy to me that Luke would speak of something so brutal and devastating with such tranquil and serene language.
 - i. He “[fell asleep](#)”?
 - ii. No, Luke, he got his face bashed in with rocks. He's lying dead in a pool of his own blood.
 - (1) He “[fell asleep](#)”? It would almost be disrespectful if wasn't biblical.
- C. All over the NT death is referred to as sleep (cf. [John 11:11-15](#); [1 Thess. 4:13-18](#); etc.), why? Because it's not the end.
1. These guys, they didn't kill Stephen, not really.
 2. They just tucked him in. And, because of Jesus, he's going to wake up in glory!

Conclusion

- A. So I don't know what you're going through right now. I don't know the kind of wreckage that you're dealing with in your life.
1. But I know what the revelation above the wreckage would be. I know what Jesus is doing for you even in these moments . . . and it changes everything: [“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” \(Acts 7:56\)](#).