

“JEWISH NATIONALISATION”

READING: **Isaiah 5:1-7**

“...For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting;”

INTRODUCTION:

The Jews were very proud of their origin and history (**Deuteronomy 4:32-40**) and listened attentively when Stephen related it. How could they forget, God commanded Moses to ensure that they would always remember (**Deuteronomy 31:19-22**)

However, the story had a twist in its tail, and it touched a nerve within their collective conscience. Stephen gave the reason for their reaction in **verse 51**. It was because they always resisted the Holy Spirit. And so, their response, however though similar to the response of the obedient ones on Pentecost, had a different result, because of their resistance to God’s commandments. No one in the audience, could claim not to have understood the message with which Stephen concluded, because it evoke an immediate and very harsh response...murder.

DISCUSSION:

The Jewish nation, indeed, had a very blessed journey with God. (**Psalms 147:19-20**). However, their disobedience cost them dearly, and as God had warned them, time and again, they were finally rejected as a favoured nation (**Matthew 23:37-38**)

The beginning and end of Stephen’s sermon, had a very definite intercessory tone. Stephen started off his message pleading with man (Jewish) on behalf of God (**verse 1**) and ended off by pleading with God, on behalf of man. (**verse 60**)

While the Jews murdered Stephen, he pleaded with God not to hold that sin (of disobedience, hardheartedness and murder) against them (the Jewish nation)

God still gave them approximately 40 years time for repentance, before finally destroying their temple, city and nation, with the aid of the Roman governor Titus and his army. (**Daniel 9:26; Luke 21:20; Matthew 23:37-38**) in 70 AD

CONCLUSION:

The Jewish nation, though endowed with multiple blessings from God, signed their own “death warrant” every time they practised idolatry or were disobedient to God. (**Nehemiah 9:26-30**)

Now at the end of the Jewish economy, they rejected God’s final and most gracious offer, by crucifying the Son of God (**Acts 3:17-26**)

How will you react when confronted with the gospel of Jesus Christ?