

No. 15 What They Risked; How They Were Rewarded (Symposium)
 -Stephen

[PLEASE NOTE: This talk includes an interview. Follow instructions in assignment letter]

WHAT DID HE RISK? (2 min.)

Stephen risked his life to spread the good news

He was accused of blasphemy, a capital offense [Read Acts 6:11, 12]
(bt 47 ¶6-7)

At a time when Christians were being persecuted, he witnessed
courageously, "full of divine favor and power" (Ac 6:8; bt 47 ¶5)

He witnessed even when on trial for his life! (bt 50 ¶19)

Stephen was unjustly killed by wicked opposers (Ac 7:57-60)

Jehovah does not always save his servants from death; nevertheless,
he still rewards them

HOW WAS HE REWARDED? (2 min.)

Jehovah rewarded Stephen with a glorious vision (Ac 7:55, 56)

Jehovah and Jesus were supporting him, so he had nothing to fear

Jehovah rewarded Stephen by answering his prayer on behalf of his
persecutors (Ac 7:60; w07 7/1 24 ¶11)

Jehovah rewarded Stephen with immortal life in the heavens

Imagine how the resurrected Stephen felt when he learned about the
conversion of Saul!

WHAT IS THE LESSON FOR US? (2 min.)

Persevere in sharing the good news despite opposition

By relying on holy spirit, you too can be "full of divine favor and
power" (Ac 4:29, 31)

Pray for those who persecute you or who persecute your brothers

Some of our persecutors may be moved to stop opposing us or even to
accept the truth

Focus on your hope

Instead of a vision like that received by Stephen, we read
descriptions of the new world in the Bible and see the artwork in
our publications

Use these gifts to secure "the hope of salvation" in your mind and
heart (1Th 5:8)

How has Jehovah rewarded zealous evangelizers in our area?

INTERVIEW (2 min.)

[Interview a publisher who acted courageously to spread the good
news. Perhaps he or she was opposed by unbelieving family members or
government officials. Or as a pioneer, he or she may have risked
employment or even lost a job because of refusing to take on work that
would have jeopardized his or her full-time service. Ask: (1) What
were you willing to risk? (2) What helped you to be courageous?
(3) How has Jehovah rewarded your action?]

IMITATE THEIR COURAGE! (3 min.)

In a vision fulfilled during the time of the end, Jehovah acted on
behalf of Stephen and other Christian martyrs (Re 6:9-11; w07 1/1 29
¶16)

Centuries after Stephen's death, Jehovah had not forgotten him
God likewise did not forget Aquila and Priscilla, who "risked their
own necks" for their brothers (Ro 16:4)

Nor has he forgotten Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah, who risked their
lives to stay faithful

As we learned in the first part of this symposium, Peter understandably asked: 'What will there be for us?' (Mt 19:27)

We may ask the same question about the risks we have taken and the sacrifices we have made

How did Jesus answer Peter? [Read Matthew 19:29]

Though we may risk much to please Jehovah, he will reward us with a hundredfold now, and soon, with everlasting life

TO BE COVERED IN 11 MINUTES

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