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THE FALLEN HEROES OF FAITH – LESSON 4

PHILIP

On Saturday I wrote that Veteran's Day is in October. I was mistaken; it is in November. I extend thanks to our friendly fact checker.

We continue this series to memorialize the fallen heroes of the Lord's army who have given their lives for standing for Jesus. On Monday we wrote of Stephen who was one of the seven original deacons chosen by the people at the direction of the Apostles.

Let me pause here and speak of these deacons. They were godly men chosen to "serve tables" in the daily ministrations of the believers. This meant they were to see to the day to day needs of the believers, especially those who were needy. They did that, and so much more.

They had been among the seventy sent out by Jesus doing His works of healing sickness and disease, casting out devils, along with various miracles. As deacons, they did not just serve the local church. They went out, doing the same works Jesus had previously commissioned them to do. This is evident in Acts 6:8 where it says, "**Stephen...did great wonders and miracles among the (common) people,**" which caused his stoning a year later from the religious Jewish persecutors. However, a second deacon, Nicanor, one of the original seven, was also martyred about the same time as Stephen. I had failed to mention Nicanor. Now only five of the seven deacons remained.

Ten years later, James the Greater became the first of the Twelve Apostles to be martyred, although this was from government persecution by the Roman-appointed governor Herod Agrippa. Two more of the original seven deacons were martyred about that same time as they had left Jerusalem to evangelize in other lands. Timon was killed in Philippi which opened up the territory where Paul later preached and established a church. Parmenas was killed while preaching in Macedonia, the place to which Holy Spirit later sent Paul to preach. These two deacons were forerunners of the gospel for the Apostle Paul. That left only three of the original seven deacons.

Now, yet another ten years later, another deacon, Philip, was martyred in Phrygia. He was scourged (severely beaten and whipped), thrown into prison, and later was crucified. Phrygia was part of Asia Minor near Galatia. The region was travelled by Paul in all three of his missionary journeys. This deacon (who became an Evangelist) also opened the gateway for Paul as had Timon and Parmenas. Philip, Timon, and Parmenas all gave their lives as forerunners for Paul. Now only two of the original deacons remained.

We may often be used to also lay groundwork from which another may harvest. We never know who may be touched by our testimony until we reach the other side of life. We labor not

in vain, even if we never see the result. That is because God's word given out does not return void (empty).