

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Wednesday Bible Study
Acts of The Apostles
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Chapters 6:8 thru 7:60 – Immediately following the selection and ordaining of deacons to resolve the problem identified in the early church, Luke focuses on one of the seven men, named Stephen.

I. Stephen the Servant

Acts 6:8 (KJV) *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

- A. Stephen went straight to work continuing to **serve** the people, but now with **supernatural** awareness and ability.
- B. As a **spiritual** servant Stephen had a special **message**.

II. Stephen the Witness

Acts 6:9 (KJV) *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

- A. Stephen has to **STOP** serving to deal with the people who were **NOT**.

Acts 6:10 (KJV) *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

- B. The Holy Spirit aids the believer in **recalling** God's Word and applying it confidently with **wisdom**.

John 14:25-26 (KJV) *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Acts 6:11-14 (KJV) *Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

- C. Stephen is subjected to **slander** for the sake of the Gospel.
- D. Remember the problem was the **message** he was **confirming** with the miracles!

III. Stephen the Historian

Summary of Stephen's address with the Holy Spirit driving the message.

- A. **Acts 7:1-8** They misunderstood their own historical foundation.
- B. **Acts 7:9-36** They first auto-rejected every deliverer God sent them throughout their history.
- C. **Acts 7:37-43** They disobeyed their own law that they try so piously to defend against Stephen.
- D. **Acts 7:44-50** They despised their own temple that they accused Stephen of "blaspheming" against.

IV. Stephen the Judge

Acts 7:51-53 (KJV) *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Stephen is on trial, but he indicts the council he stands before.

V. Stephen the Martyr

Acts 7:54-58 (KJV) *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. ...57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

- A. Stephen is murdered and this is the first we read in scripture after Jesus to die a martyr.

Acts 7:59-60 (KJV) *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

- B. The Holy Spirit gave confirmation of His presence as Stephen was being prosecuted (Acts 6:15), persecuted (Acts 7:55-56), and purged (Acts 7:59-60).

Luke 23:46 (KJV) *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

Luke 23:34 (KJV) *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

- C. Stephen echoed the same sentiments as Jesus:
 - a. Confidence to be with God after death, and
 - b. Forgiveness for those who wronged him.