

VIRAL

HOW THE GOSPEL SPREAD THEN AND NOW

Pastor Lance Ainsworth

Acts 6:8-7:60

MESSAGE NOTES

Thursday, Oct 2

Sunday, Oct 5

Introduction

Acts 6:8-7:60

notes

⁸And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. ¹¹Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹²And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, ¹³and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." ¹⁵And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

#1. The Holy Spirit works through ordinary people.

Acts 7:1-50 Stephen's Response.

"In this discourse, three ideas run like cords through its fabric:

- 1. There is progress and change in God's program.*
- 2. The blessings of God are not limited to the land of Israel and the temple area.*
- 3. Israel, in its past, always evidenced a pattern of opposition to God's plans and His men."*

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Dr. John F Walvoord and Dr. Roy B. Zuck, Cook Publishing, 1983

⁵¹"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Stiff-necked -- stubborn, resistant to change.

Uncircumcised in heart and ears -- a hard heart towards the Holy Spirit and deaf to God's truth.

#2 The Holy Spirit and the law (scripture) point us to our need for Jesus.

⁵⁴Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸Then 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. ⁵⁹And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰And 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.

#3 The Holy Spirit gives us strength to endure persecution and to forgive our persecutors.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Viral: How the Gospel Spread Then and Now.

GateWay Church of Visalia, Pastor Lance Ainsworth, Acts 6:8-7:60

October 2nd & 5th, 2025

A man full of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Requests:

Group Discussion: Do you have any unique/hidden talents?

Read Aloud: Acts 6:8 - 7:60

1. v.8 “And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.” Why does Luke inform us that someone other than the apostles is performing signs and wonders? What does it mean to be full of grace and power?
2. v.51 “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.” How do we resist the Holy Spirit? Why is there a gap in knowledge of scripture and application? The Israelites idolized the law instead of worshiping the God of the law. Why is that? What can we learn from them?
3. v. 59-60 “ 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.” Do you struggle to forgive your enemies? In what ways did Stephen follow in Jesus footsteps? The name Stephen means “crown”, symbolizing victory. Does that definition fit his life?