

Book of Acts - Lesson 6

Chapter 6:8 - 7:60

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ We are introduced to Stephen in Acts 6:5-10. What do we learn about him?
 - ▶ Acts 6:5 - One of the seven chosen
 - ▶ “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit”
 - ▶ Acts 6:8 - “full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people”
 - ▶ Acts 6:10 - “But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking”

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ Who is it that rose up and argued with Stephen?
 - ▶ Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ Who are these guys?
 - ▶ A synagogue composed of Jews freed from slavery.
 - ▶ Jews from the Dispersion, who share Stephen's identity as a Hellenist (A Greek speaking Jew).

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ Who are these guys?
 - ▶ Cyrene - a city on the coast of North Africa
 - ▶ Alexandria - A major city on the Mediterranean coast. Served as Egypt's capitol for many years.
 - ▶ Cilicia - A region on the southeastern coast of modern Turkey. City of Tarsus, home of Paul.
 - ▶ Asia - The Roman province of Asia, comprising the western half of modern Turkey.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ During this dispute with Stephen in verses 6:9-10, what occurred?
 - ▶ “They could not withstand (ESV) / unable of cope (NASB) the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.”
 - ▶ In verse 6:3, a requirement that those chosen should be ‘full of the Spirit and Wisdom’.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ What things did they do to get him charged?
 - ▶ They brought false witnesses against Stephen.
 - ▶ They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ What charges did they bring up against Stephen?
 - ▶ He spoke blasphemous words against Moses and God
 - ▶ He spoke against the holy place and the Law
 - ▶ They claimed he said Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the temple
 - ▶ The customs that Moses delivered to us would be changed

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ What did the false witnesses accuse Jesus of in the of in the following passages?
 - ▶ John 2:18-22
 - ▶ They said that Jesus was going to destroy the temple.
 - ▶ Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ What did the false witnesses accuse Jesus of in the of in the following passages?
 - ▶ Matthew 26:60-61
 - ▶ False witnesses against Jesus used this to accuse Him of saying He would destroy the temple.

Verses 6:5-15

- ▶ As the Sanhedrin gazed upon Stephen, what did they see?
 - ▶ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen.
 - ▶ His face looked like the face of an angel.
 - ▶ As one who was filled with his Spirit, he appeared to be Christ's authorized witness and messenger.

ACTS 7

- ▶ Where does chapter 6 end and 7 begin?
 - ▶ Stephen was before the Council (the Sanhedrin), the ones who had heard Jesus' witnesses at least twice.
 - ▶ The last time the apostles were before the Council they wanted to kill them.

Verses 7:1-16

- ▶ Who did Stephen begin his defense with? What did he say and why?
 - ▶ Abraham and the Jewish History.
 - ▶ To refute the false witnesses who accused him of blaspheming God.
 - ▶ The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham.

Verses 7:17-43

- ▶ Who and what are these verses about?
 - ▶ Moses
 - ▶ born, lovely / beautiful in God's sight
 - ▶ Stephen addressed the accusation that he spoke against Moses and the Law.

Verses 7:17-43

- ▶ What are the main points Stephen then makes about Moses and the Law?
 - ▶ The people of Israel didn't understand that Moses was their deliverer.
 - ▶ He was an educated and powerful / mighty man in Egypt for 40 years.
 - ▶ Then he was in Midian for another 40 years.
 - ▶ When he saw God in the burning bush, God sent him back to Egypt to deliver Israel.

Verses 7:17-43

- ▶ What was the prophecy referred to that Moses made in verse 37?
 - ▶ “God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.”

Verses 7:17-43

- ▶ Compare this with what Peter said in Acts 3:22-23; that prophet was Jesus.
 - ▶ “Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’”

Verses 7:44-50

- ▶ What did Stephen address in this part of his defense?
 - ▶ His accusers said he spoke against the holy place, the temple.
 - ▶ Moses built the tabernacle / tent according to the pattern God gave him. David wanted to find a permanent dwelling for God, but Solomon built the house in Jerusalem.

Verses 7:44-50

- ▶ What does Stephen say in 7:48?
 - ▶ “Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,”
 - ▶ However, Solomon’s prayer of dedication acknowledges that heaven is God’s dwelling place and that the temple cannot contain him (1 Ki. 8:27-30). Stephen echoes this point when he declares that ‘the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands’.

Verses 7:44-50

- ▶ Stephen then quoted what God said in Isaiah 66:1-2a. What does this verse say?
 - ▶ Heaven is my throne, earth is his footstool.
 - ▶ God created everything (including the temple) and lives in heaven.

Verses 7:44-50

- ▶ Why did Stephen quote this verse?
 - ▶ Stephen contrasts things made by human hands with the creation of all things by God's hand. Isaiah insists that no earthly building can contain the maker of all things, who rules in sovereign freedom from heaven. An earthly dwelling, where he chooses to manifest his presence and reveal his will, cannot be taken to be his permanent resting place.

Verses 7:51-53

- ▶ What was Stephen's point as he ended his defense?
- ▶ He told the Council they were just like their fathers in resisting the Holy Spirit.
 - ▶ The people were obstinate / stiff-necked, Exodus 32:9 and 33:3,5.
- ▶ The fathers persecuted and killed the prophets who announced Jesus' coming, and they murdered Jesus. They received the law but didn't keep it.

Verses 54-60

- ▶ How does this chapter end?
 - ▶ They killed Stephen; because he said he saw Jesus at God's right hand.
 - ▶ In Mark 14:61-62, Jesus had told the Council the same thing.
 - ▶ They covered their ears because they didn't want to hear—they were uncircumcised in heart and ears.

Verses 54-60

- ▶ How did Stephen's words compare with those of Jesus at his death?
 - ▶ They both spoke about forgiveness,
 - ▶ Luke 23:34, "And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
 - ▶ Acts 7:60, "And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'"

Verses 54-60

- ▶ How did Stephen's words compare with those of Jesus at his death?
 - ▶ They both committed their spirit to God.
 - ▶ Luke 23:46, "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"
 - ▶ Acts 7:53, "And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.""

Luke 9:23-26

²³ And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.