

"But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking."

^{ESV} **Luke 21:12** But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers¹ and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name's sake.

(6:11-14)

"Then they secretly **instigated** men who said..."

'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.'

"And 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, and they

...**set up** false witnesses who said..."

^{ESV} **Matthew 26:59** Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'" ⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" (Mark 14:55-59)

See also, Acts 6:13 with Acts 7:58 = Stephen was a faithful (true) witness.

'This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law...'

'...for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.'

(6:15-7:1)

"And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

"And the high priest said, 'Are these things so?'"

- He followed after his Lord, entrusting himself to him.
- He embraced the ministry of the apostles, functioning in ways similar to them.
- He walked by the Spirit, demonstrating his fullness.
- He knew the word, speaking it soundly and with boldness.

Sunday, September 13, 2026
Danny Capon, *Pastor*

ACTS—The Confident Witness of Jesus Christ
No. 16 | Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 8

Acts 6:8-7:1

Review

Acts depicts the *continuing* ministry of Jesus Christ. Though he has ascended, the witness of Jesus continues by the power of the Spirit through the spread of the gospel for the growth of the church. Those who hear and believe the witness of Jesus Christ can and should be confident following his way.

(1:1-26) Waiting for the Spirit—Confirming the Twelve Apostles

(2:1-47) Receiving of the Spirit—Birthing the Church

What then do we see in Acts 3 and following?

The witness of Jesus Christ goes from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth

How does the witness of Jesus Christ *go*?

What did the witness (and witnesses) of Jesus Christ encounter?

How did the witness (and witnesses) of Jesus Christ prevail?

Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 8

6:8-7:1

Overview

(3:1-8:3) Witnessing in Jerusalem

(3:1-4:31) Boldness in Opposition

(4:32-5:16) Esteem in Community

(5:17-42) Obedience in Suffering – What will you do when your resolve for speaking the word of God with boldness is tested? See 3:1-4:31

(6:1-7) Wisdom in Decision-making – What will you do when your resolve for being together as a local church in unity is tested? See 4:32-5:16

(6:8-8:3) Faithfulness in Death

Stephen demonstrates that a believer who isn't an apostle can faithfully minister among the disciples and speak the word of God with boldness.

Summary

(6:8-7:1) Stephen faithfully proclaimed Jesus and was opposed.

(7:2-53) Stephen faithfully defended Scripture and challenged his opposition.

(7:54-8:3) Stephen faithfully endured death and motivated the spread of the word.

What leads in to this passage?

Twin Realities in Acts:

- **witnessing** the truth and significance of Jesus the Christ to unbelievers
2:14-41 > 3:11-26
- **gathering** together as believers for encouragement and growth in Christ
2:42-47 > 4:23-37

Stephen the Wise:

How did Stephen become a believer? Was he one of the 120 “brothers” (1:15; forty days after Christ’s resurrection)? Was he “saved” on the day of Pentecost (2:41; the fiftieth day after Passover)? Was he “added to the Lord” following Peter and John’s healing of the lame man (4:4) or after Ananias and Sapphira’s deaths (5:14)?

- he had at some point “received” from the witnessing ministry of the apostles (1:8)
- he had come to hear and understand the truth of Jesus the Christ (2:22-36; 3:11-26)

ESV **Acts 2:21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

ESV **Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

ESV **Acts 2:40** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

ESV **Acts 2:41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls....⁴⁷...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (See also, 3:16, 19, 22, 26)

- he had “obeyed” and believed in the name of Jesus for his salvation (4:12)
- he had been added to the other believers and “devoted” himself along with them to the church (5:11)
- he had been supporting the ministry of the word from the apostles and walking by the Spirit within the church (6:3)

How did Stephen faithfully minister?

Who could I become if I genuinely obeyed the Lord and followed him?

What could God do if I diligently grew up in Jesus and walked by the Spirit?

ESV **Acts 6:8** And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then 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. ¹⁰ But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. ¹¹ Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” ¹² And 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, ¹³ and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” ¹⁵ And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. ^{7:1} And the high priest said, “Are these things so?”

Stephen faithfully proclaimed Jesus and was opposed (6:8-7:1)

(6:8)

“And Stephen...”

...full of grace and power

ESV **Acts 6:3** Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, **full of the Spirit and of wisdom**, whom we will appoint to this duty.

ESV **Acts 6:5** And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man **full of faith and of the Holy Spirit**

“These terms describe Stephen as a mature believer who continues to experience the transforming and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.” (Schnabel, p. 344)

...was doing great wonders and signs among the people

Jesus’s identity and message was “attested” by wonders and signs (2:22)

The apostles’ ministry and witness was affirmed by signs and wonders (2:43)

(6:9-10)

“Then some of those...rose up and disputed with Stephen.”

Stephen must not have *just* been managing the distribution to the Hellenist widows (6:3); nor was he *simply* doing wonders and signs (6:8)...

...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