

Acts 6:8-7:53

July 27, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

We're going to begin our time today with some small group study, breaking down Stephen's sermon in Acts 7.

Step 1: Begin by placing students in small groups.

Step 2: Assign each group a part of the passage of Stephen's sermon:

For five groups:

- Acts 7:1-8
- Acts 7:9-16
- Acts 7:17-35
- Acts 7:36-44
- Acts 7:44-50

For four groups:

- Acts 7:1-16
- Acts 7:17-35
- Acts 7:36-44
- Acts 7:44-50

Step 3: Explain what they will be reading. Stephen, a Holy-Spirit filled follower of Jesus, gave this sermon when he was brought before the Sanhedrin (the powerful governing body of the Jews) because of false charges brought against him.

Step 4: Instruct each group to read their passage and answer the following questions:

What was Stephen saying in this passage?

What point was he making before the Sanhedrin?

Step 5: After a set amount of time, invite a representative from each group to share their takeaways with the group.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 6:8-15; 7:51-53.

What stands out to you in these verses?

How was God using Stephen in these verses?

What was the response of the leaders?

What Old Testament events did Stephen recap in His sermon, including the passage we studied earlier?

What point was Stephen making in highlighting these events?

What message might be applied today from Stephen's words?

How did Stephen show godly boldness here?

How does this give evidence that he was acting for God's glory and not his own?

GOING DEEPER

What can we learn from this passage about the dangers of being driven by our own pride?

How can we apply Stephen's points from the verses today? What warning might his words hold for us?

APPLICATION

Stephen's sermon focused heavily on disbelief and unfaithfulness. In what ways do we deal with disbelief and unfaithfulness today?

How do we prepare now to respond in godly boldness when given opportunity?

How does living this way give us opportunity to shine a light for Jesus?

PRAYER

Thank God for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank Him for all you and your group are learning in your study of Acts and ask for His help as you seek to live with greater faith no matter what it costs you, as Stephen did.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

August 3, 2025 --- Acts 7:54-8:1

COMMENTARY

Acts 6:8–7:53

Stephen's Arrest and Trial (6:8–7:1). One of the seven was Stephen. Filled with “God’s grace and power,” he performed miracles and bore a powerful witness to Christ. In particular, he preached in the Greek-speaking Jewish synagogues comprised of Jews from various parts of the Roman empire who had come to live in Jerusalem. Stephen encountered considerable resistance in these synagogues, but no one could refute his persuasive arguments. So his opponents resorted to treachery. They “hatched a frame-up” and brought false accusations against him before the Sanhedrin. Two false charges were made: he spoke against the Jewish law (= Moses), and he spoke against God. Specifically, the charge of speaking against God maintained that he had threatened to destroy God’s house, the temple. In verse 15 Luke prepares us for Stephen’s martyrdom that is to follow. Stephen’s face shone with the radiance of divine inspiration for his testimony, a testimony which would lead to his death.

Stephen's Speech (7:2–53). On the surface Stephen’s speech, the longest in Acts, seems like a bare recital of selected events from Israel’s history. It does not appear to answer the charges against him. In actuality, it is a carefully chosen summary of Israel’s history which serves to turn the charges back on Stephen’s accusers. They, not he, were the resisters of God. They, not he, had blasphemed God’s temple. His speech can be divided into five main parts.

1. The Promises to Abraham (7:2–8). Stephen began with God’s covenant with Abraham. His main point was that Abraham never owned so much as a “foot of ground” in the holy land. The promises to Abraham all came outside the Holy Land. Stephen was beginning a critique of the narrow Jewish nationalism that confined God to the land of Israel and particularly to the temple.

2. The Deliverance through Joseph (7:9–16). Stephen continued his implicit critique of the “Holy Land” theology by pointing out how God had delivered Israel through Joseph, again outside the Holy Land. He also began a second theme. The sons of Jacob rejected Joseph, whom God had chosen. Israel always rejected its leaders. This is a major theme throughout the speech.

3. The Deliverance through Moses (7:17–34). The treatment of Moses is the longest of the speech. It falls into three sections, each covering forty years of Moses’ life. Verses 17–22 cover Moses’ early years, his birth and education in Pharaoh’s house. Verses 23–29 cover the forty years between Moses’s flight from Egypt and his vision of the burning bush. Verses 30–34 begin the final section of Moses’s life—the Exodus and wilderness wandering. Again, the same two themes are prominent: God was with Israel in a special way outside the Promised Land, and Israel continued to reject its leader whom God had sent.

4. The Apostasy of Israel (7:35–50). In this section Stephen’s polemic became more direct. Israel rejected Moses’ leadership. They turned from God to idolatry. In verses 44–47 he began a critique of the temple. He implied that Israel did a better job of worshipping God in the wilderness, when they had a tent of worship that could be moved from place to place. With Solomon God was tied down to a single holy place, the temple. Yet God cannot be confined to buildings made by human hands. Their charge against Stephen was not altogether erroneous. He did criticize the temple worship of his day. The temple was supposed to be a house of prayer, but it had become a place where Israel confined God, where it tied Him down exclusively to its own land and people.

5. The Rejection of the Messiah (7:51–53). Stephen launched into a frontal assault. Israel had always rejected its leaders—Joseph, Moses, and now Jesus, the “Righteous One.” Stephen’s accusers had heard enough. They abruptly ended his speech. Stephen’s speech is highly significant to the early Christian mission. He criticized the Jewish nationalism with its exclusive theology of temple and land. This critique provided the rationale for an inclusive worldwide mission. His martyrdom launched that mission.