

Book of Acts

Session 7: Acts 6-7

Introduction

1. The apostles rejoiced because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus. Give examples of how your flesh has tricked you into fearing disgrace for Jesus' name. Give examples of occasions when the Lord removed your fear of disgrace and gave you joy in witnessing boldly.

Responsibility is shared that the Word might be spread

2. Read Acts 6. The early church experienced growing pains. Widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. Why did the apostles feel that delegating this responsibility would be best?
3. After the responsibility was taken off the shoulders of the apostles, something wonderful happened. What was it?
4. The Lord used Stephen in special ways. In addition to helping with the food distribution, how did he serve his God?
5. After the Synagogue of the Freedmen had stirred up the people, they brought Stephen to the Sanhedrin and brought in false witnesses to testify against him. What was their charge?
6. How might you make sure that your shepherd can devote himself to prayer and the Word?

You are repeating the sins of your fathers

7. Read Acts 7:1–43. It was the Jewish people, not Jesus or Stephen, who rejected God and his representatives. Look at each section of Stephen's sermon, and tell whom the Jews' ancestors had rejected.
 - Verses 2–10 (note verse 9)
 - Verses 11–29 (note verses 27–29)
 - Verses 30–36 (note verse 35)
 - Verses 37–41 (note verses 39–41)
 - Verses 42–43

8. Give examples from Stephen's history lesson of how God was faithful and merciful.

9. Recall the incident of the golden calf (Exodus 32). Why did the Israelites feel justified in making the calf? How can we fall into the same sin? What is the antidote for this?

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit

10. Read Acts 7:44-60. Stephen was near the end of his sermon. He had defended himself against the second charge, that he was speaking against God's laws and changing the customs handed down by Moses. Now he brought up the issue of the temple. The Sanhedrin's false witnesses had accused Stephen of speaking against the temple and saying that Jesus would destroy it. Compare the Sanhedrin's accusation against Stephen in regard to the temple (Acts 6:13, 14) with their accusation against Christ (see John 2:19-22 and Mark 14:57, 58).
 - What does Stephen affirm about the Jews' practices in verses 44-47?

 - For what does he fault the Jews for in verses 49 and 50?

11. What was the conclusion of Stephen's sermon?

12. Pride leads sinners stung by the law to lash out mindlessly. How was this demonstrated here?

13. What comfort does the Lord give us by describing how Stephen died?

14. The Sanhedrin had a sinful understanding of the temple. They seem to have been more concerned about preserving a structure than they were about preserving the Lord's truth. Explain how we can fall into a similar trap. Then describe a God-pleasing attitude toward worship facilities.