

Sermon Date: October 13, 2013  
Acts 6:8-7:60 – Stephen - Part I  
Doug McBride

**Introduction:**

It is said that without the book of Acts the Epistles would not make sense. Acts is the historical framework and the Epistles are letters written by the Apostles to the newly developing churches. It can be helpful to look at Acts as the house and the Epistles as the rooms in the house.

***\*It is really cool to read Acts from a Chronological Bible with the different Epistles interspersed as they were written to the churches. Study it through the lens of the culture from which it was written, the culture it was written to, then to personally apply what it says to us today.***

Acts can be broken down to 6 Parts, also known as transitional shifts in the action. Each Part listed below represents significant growth AND persecution in the church. This is an overview only:

- *Part 1 - Acts 1:1-6:7 – Gospel within Jerusalem.*
- *Part 2 - Acts 6:8-9:31: Gospel beyond the borders of Jerusalem.*
- *Part 3 - Acts 9:32-12:25: Gospel extended to Gentiles.*
- *Part 4 - Acts 13:1-16:5: Gospel spreads to Cyprus & Asia Minor*
- *Part 5 - Acts 16:6-19:20: Gospel spreads out to Greece.*
- *Part 6 - Acts 19:21-28:31: Gospel spreads to Rome.*

1. Doug pointed out that where there's persecution, God expands His church. As it's pressed down it overflows. The verses listed below are the last verse of each of the Parts 1-6 (listed above). Reading the following verses what is the resounding theme?

- Acts 6:7
- Acts 9:31
- Acts 12:24
- Acts 16:5
- Acts 19:20
- Acts 28:30-31

2. Taking note of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3b, Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:46-47, where do we fit in as an extension of the "ends of the earth" this powerful history and story? What does that communicate to you personally?

**The Powerful Story of Stephen:**

Stephen was one of the seven chosen to take care of food distribution (6:5). We might see his role as that of a deacon. Today in the Western church, we might view a deacon as one who has more of an administrative role serving more practical needs in the body. Yet we cannot underestimate the spiritual requirement for those chosen as deacons (Acts 6:3).

3. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-10 in conjunction with Acts 6:3. What are the qualifications of a deacon?

- a. See Romans 16:1. Is there a gender distinction for deacons in the church?

4. What other work occupied Stephen (Acts 6:8-10)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How did Stephen's qualifications as a deacon equip him to face persecution?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What do Stephen's enemies accuse him of (v. 9-14)?
  - a. See Luke 21:12-17. How does what Jesus said tie in with what is happening in verses 9-14?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. As he listened to their accusations, Stephen's face "was like that of an angel" (6:15). What do you think that means?
  - a. **Don't miss this - Read John 17:22 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. What does this mean? What does it say about us? Personalize it - what does this say about you?**

*Personal Application:*

*Doug once said we don't have to continually ask to be filled by Spirit – we already are. It's a done deal. Write yourself into the continuing narrative of the faith. If you have placed your confidence in Jesus, 2 Corinthians 3:18 is your birthright. It is already a fact. It's who you are.  
Read Ephesians 3:14-21*