



Acts Book Study Chapters 7-8
Sunday June 23, 2024

ACTS CHAPTER SEVEN

Stephen's Response (Acts 7:1-53)

Stephen like the Lord Jesus was falsely accused of speaking against the Law and the Temple for which he could be accused of blasphemy, as serious offence to the Jews. When questioned about the accusations Stephen, anointed by the Spirit, preached an amazing message pointing to Jesus Christ, starting from Abraham, and tracing God's dealings with His people through Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and on to Jesus Christ.

We are pointing now to a few insights and applications from Stephen's sermon:

God's Promise to Abraham (Acts 7:5)

"...But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him."

God's promise comes to us, when it seems most unlikely to be fulfilled! We either believe it or we don't.

The Covenant of Circumcision (Acts 7:8)

"Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision..."

God's covenant to Abraham is referred to as the covenant of circumcision. This was given before the Mosaic covenant. The New Covenant includes the covenant of circumcision spiritually, because we are circumcised in our hearts (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 5:6; Colossians 2:11-13; Colossians 3:11).

Joseph – God Was With Him (Acts 7:9-10)

"...But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom..."

The same God is with us and will deliver us from all our troubles and give us favor and wisdom.



Timing – Chronos and Kairos (Acts 7:17, 20, 23, 30)

"But when the time (chronos) of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham..." (Acts 7:17)

"At this time (kairos) Moses was born..." (Acts 7:20)

"Now when he was forty years old (chronos), it came into his heart..." (Acts 7:23)

"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush...." (Acts 7:30)

When we follow this sequence of events, we learn how the chronos (duration of time, passing of calendar time) and the Kairos (the right time, the opportune time, the perfect time) interweave in God's workings in the fulfillment of His promises and the unfolding of His purposes.

When the 400 years (chronos) God had spoken of, about His people being slaves in Egypt, was coming to an end, at the perfect time (kairos), a baby was born. This baby was Moses. In this baby's life, 40 years (chronos) had to pass, before God would move on his heart to help him recognized God's purpose. Moses' life took a detour because of his actions. But God's purposes still remained. Then after another 40 years (chronos), God called Moses to enter in his life's assignment. Moses obeyed. The rest is indelibly written as part of Israel's history.

We must understand the *chronos* and the *kairos* for the promises of God.

We must understand the *chronos* and the *kairos* for the purposes of God in our personal lives.

Moses – Not Everyone Understands (Acts 7:23-25,35)

Acts 7:23-25,35

23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian.

25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

35 "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.



At 40 years of age Moses understood divine purpose. This filled his heart. He thought his people, the Hebrews would understand the call of God on his life – but they did not understand. Not everyone will understand the call or work of God in our hearts. Like the apostle Paul wrote later: *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood"* (Galatians 1:15-16).

Moses Experienced A Burning Within, Before He Saw The Burning Bush (Acts 7:23,30)

Sometimes, we tend to look for God's call, direction and assignment for our lives in something spectacular. We go looking for a burning bush and the voice of an angel. However, we must understand that God normally speaks to us deep within, in our hearts. Consider Moses. At 40 years, he knew his call and assignment in his heart. For the next 40 years though he was taking care of sheep in Midian and Horeb, far away (about 700 miles, over a month's journey on foot) from his place of assignment in Egypt. At 80 years of age, God spoke to him through the burning bush. The burning bush came as a reminder and confirmation of what was already burning within him now for 40 years.

Stephen reminded the Jewish Council on what Moses had spoken:

Moses foretold the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 7:37).

Moses led the Church in the Wilderness (Acts 7:38) 'ekklesia', called out ones, called together for a purpose.

Moses was the one who received the living oracles to give to us.

In Their Hearts They Turned Back (Acts 7:39)

And yet, after all that God had spoken and done through Moses, the people turned back to Egypt in their hearts. What a sad commentary!

What is the posture of your heart?

The Tabernacle of Witness (Acts 7:44)

Stephen pointed to the Tabernacle of Moses, referring to it as the "Tabernacle of Witness" (Numbers 17:7-8; Numbers 18:2; 2 Chronicles 24:6). This Tabernacle was a witness to God's presence among His people, and His hand upon the priests whom He had called and appointed.



The Most High Does Not Dwell in Temples (Acts 7:48)

Though Solomon had built this physical Temple, Stephen pointed out that God is bigger than the Temple and is not confined to a physical building.

Stephen's heart would have been awakened to the truth taught by the apostles: *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:23-24)

You Always Resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51)

Stubborn and unwilling in heart and ears

Resist – counter, oppose - what the Holy Spirit wanted to do in them and for them.

Stephen laid the challenge right at the heart of the Jewish Council – they are the ones resisting the Holy Spirit. They were unwilling to listen and unwilling to change.

Do we resist the Holy Spirit in our lives?

The Holy Spirit is gentle like a dove. He will not force His way into our lives or any area of our lives.

Betrayers and Murderers of the Just One (Acts 7:52)

Just like their fathers who persecuted and killed the prophets, these Jewish leaders were responsible for betraying and murdering the Just One Jesus Christ.

They were cut to the heart (Acts 7:54).

The Triune God (Acts 7:55-56)

At this crucial moment, when the Jewish council were furious, and about ready to stone Stephen, God gave Stephen an open vision, the ability to see directly to heaven.

We see the Triune God at work here:

The Holy Spirit filled Stephen (God the Spirit). Jesus, the Son of Man (God the Son), standing at the right hand of God (God the Father).

This picture is so similar to Daniel 7:13.



Stephen’s Final Prayer (Acts 7:59-60)

Cast out and stoned. Young Saul stood as witness.

ACTS CHAPTER EIGHT

This is about 8 years from the Day of Pentecost.

Great Persecution Against the Church (Acts 8:1-4)

Initially Peter and John were held. Then the 12 apostles. Not the entire church community, all believers were being targeted. And Saul, a Pharisee from Tarsus, was leading this charge against the believers in Jesus Christ.

Believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. The church at Jerusalem became a ‘sending’ church because of the persecution. The apostles remained at the church at Jerusalem.

Into Judea and Samaria and Beyond (Acts 8:4)

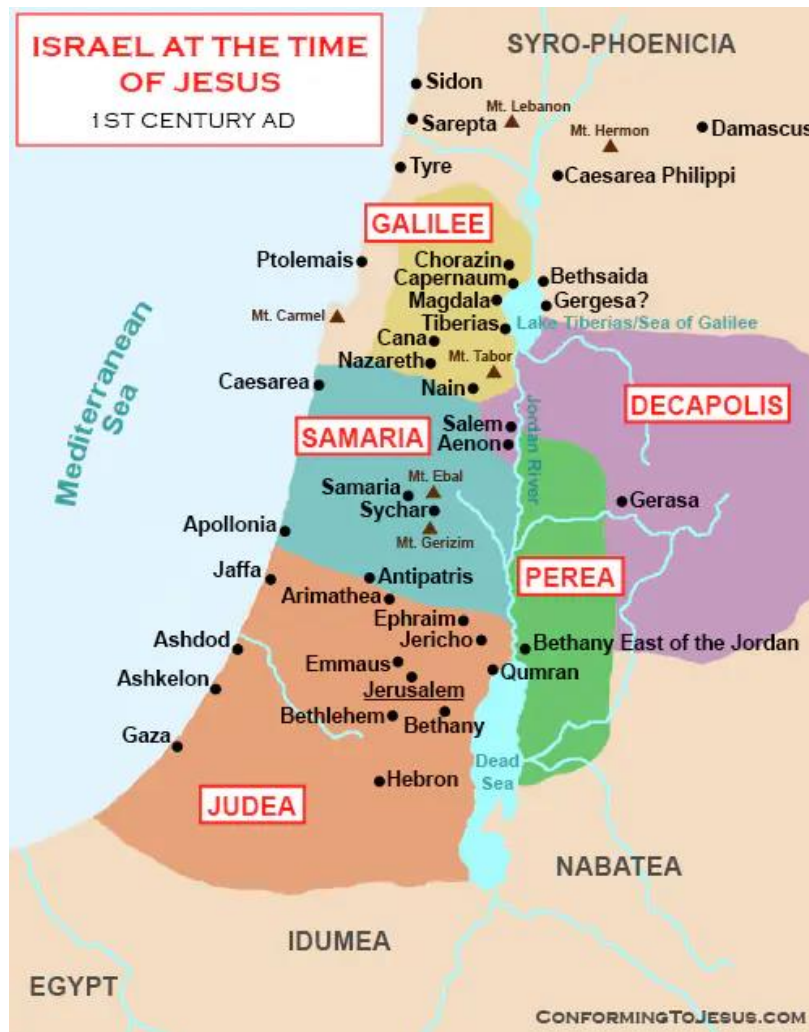
Believers went preaching and planting churches.

One point of observation and a point of inference we can make here:

(a) Equipping of believers – the church in Jerusalem so nurtured, disciplined and equipped the community of believers, that when they were scattered, they could preach, proclaim and do works of faith. *What about our churches today? What kind of believers are we nurturing? What would believers do today, if they were scattered?*

(b) Believers can plant churches – local churches, communities of believers sprung up overnight in about 200+ villages and towns. These were all “planted” by believers who were scattered. These were not planted by apostles.

map of the districts of Judea and Samaria.



Philip at Samaria (Acts 8:5-25)

What Jesus had spoken of in Acts 1:8 was being fulfilled. They were being witnesses in Judea, Samaria and on to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Samaritans were a mixed race. After king Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom referred to as Israel with the city of Samaria as its capital, and the southern kingdom of Judah. Later in 721 B.C. the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom, captured Samaria, and forced the Israelites there to inter-marry with the Assyrians. So, the Samaritans were a mixed race, not pure-blooded Jews. Hence, there was strong animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans did acknowledge what Moses had foretold about a Prophet who was to come, as we see in John 4, when the Samaritan woman speaks to Jesus at the well.



Cross-cultural missions – just as a point of interest and information:

Hebrew Jews reaching Hebrew Jews: mono-cultural, same culture.

Hebrew Jews reaching Hellenist (Greek speaking) Jews: first level of cross-cultural missions.

Philip a Jew reaching Samaritans: second level of cross-cultural missions

Paul a Jew going into all the world: third level of cross-cultural missions

Proclaiming Jesus with Signs and Wonders (Acts 8:5-8)

Philip who has been one of the 7 responsible for overseeing the distribution of food at the church in Jerusalem, now was preaching the Gospel of the kingdom with signs and wonders. This is what we should also do as we go out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Two Distinct Experiences - Baptism in Water, Baptism in the Spirit (Acts 8:9-17)

The details recorded here of what happened in Samaria, reveals to us what we can refer to as “standard practice” in the Early Church:

- The Gospel is preached with demonstrations of power.
- People receive the Gospel and believe in Jesus Christ. They are born again. Born of the Spirit.
- They are led into water baptism.
- They are prayed for to receive the outpouring or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John came from Jerusalem and led this community of believers in this.
- All of the above could have taken place within a week or two. So, we do not see people “waiting” to be baptized in water or “waiting” to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The only requirement for water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism is for a person to be a believer in Jesus Christ.
- Also, we need to state here is that there is no particular order. Here people were first baptized in water and then in the Holy Spirit. Later we see in Acts 9:17-18 and Acts 10:44-48 people were baptized in the Spirit and then in water.

We must continue this practice. At APC, we regularly have water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism services.

Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:18-24)

We can make the obvious inference, though it is not stated in the text, that when the believers were prayed for to receive the Holy Spirit, supernatural things happened. These had to be powerful enough to get the attention of Simon, who formerly was a sorcerer. He recognized spiritual power. It is safe for us to infer based on Acts 2 (and



what we will see later in Acts) that when these new believers were prayed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, they all spoke with tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. There could have been other manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well.

Simon was hungry for spiritual power but did not know the right way to get it. Based on his past experience he thought he could purchase the power of the Holy Spirit for money. He was sternly rebuked by Peter.

**The work of the Holy Spirit is not for sale!
We do not make money out of the anointing and gifts of the Spirit!**

What is interesting is that even though Simon (the former sorcerer) was saved, baptized in water, and baptized in the Holy Spirit – we see some spiritual problems he carried:

- (a) His heart was not right before God – he wanted spiritual power at all costs.
- (b) He was poisoned by bitterness – perhaps he was jealous and bitter that Peter and John had power he did not have. But this bitterness/jealousy was a poison that could potentially destroy his life.
- (c) He was bound by sin - he was still held a slave to sin, perhaps in this case, a slave of wanting to control people through spiritual power, which could possibly have been his motivation to want to have this power.

Remember, Simon was a believer, and yet there were problems he carried.

Do we need to have our hearts made right before God? Are there spiritual problems that we are carrying that need to be dealt with?

Philip and the Chief Financial Officer of Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40)

We see an angel directing Philip (Acts 7:26). Philip was told to leave the city where a mighty work of God was happening and head down south towards Gaza, a desert. **Would we do this?**

Then the Holy Spirit instructed Philip with a very simple word to get into a chariot (Acts 7:29).

In both these instructions God never told Philip what was about to happen. It was only instructions on where to position himself. Go take the road to Gaza. Go, get into that chariot.



God had orchestrated all the rest of the details for Philip to preach Jesus to a very important man taking care of the finances for the queen of Ethiopia. The Gospel was now brought into Ethiopia, northern Africa.

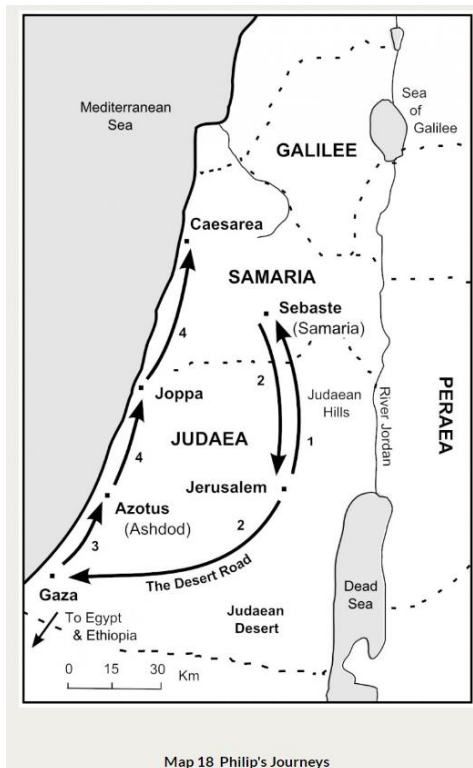
As we obey God in how to position ourselves, the purpose of God unfolds, affecting individuals, cities and nations.

The Ethiopian man gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized right away. A few points to note:

- A, Once we have believed in the Lord Jesus, we are ready to be baptized in water.
- B, Water baptism is by immersion, not sprinkling.

Supernatural Transportation (Acts 8:40-41)

After this time of ministry with the Ethiopian, the Holy Spirit supernaturally transported Philip from some place south of Jerusalem to Azotus (Ashdod), perhaps about 50 miles. Philip then continued his journey up north along the coastine preaching in all the cities till he reached Caesarea.



Source: <https://www.thebiblejourney.org/biblejourney1/7-journeys-of-jesus-followers/philips-journeys/>



Acts – Book Study – Chapters 7-8
Sermon Notes, Sermon Outline and Small Group Study Guide

SUMMARY

GOSPEL AND SALVATION CALL

SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY TIME

Minister as the Spirit leads



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Sermon Notes, Sermon Outline and Small Group Study Guide



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**Acts Book Study Chapters 7-8
Sunday June 23, 2024**

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full-length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at our [sermons page](#). Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship, and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture references: *Please request Life group members to read Acts 5-6, before the Life Group Meeting. This can help save time.*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Discuss what we learnt about chronos and kairos, in the unfolding of God's purposes in our lives.

2, Discuss the record of the Gospel being brought to the Samaritans. What would have moved Philip to preach to the Samaritans? How did the Early Church work with new believers in terms of water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit?



3, Discuss the spiritual problem of Simon, the former sorcerer? How do we relate some of these problems with believers in the church today? How can we help one another?

If time permits, each one can take a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for all details to go well as we plan and build our Bible college and church facilities to serve the Lord and people.

Close by thanking God together.



Acts – Book Study – Chapters 7-8 Sermon Notes, Sermon Outline and Small Group Study Guide



USEFUL RESOURCES

Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>

SERMON OUTLINE

The book of Acts records the first 40 years of the Early Church. This is a book study of the Acts of the apostles, or more correctly, the acts of the Holy Spirit through the early believers. As we study the book of Acts there are two compelling perspectives that we develop: (A) the Church's DNA – what a Spirit filled church would look like and (B) how the Church would go about fulfilling the Great Commission empowered by the Holy Spirit. We glean spiritual and practical insights from each chapter and share ways we can apply these in our lives. In this sermon we cover Acts chapters 7-8. We learn about how God the chronos and kairos are intertwined in the unfolding of God's purposes in our lives, and many other insights from the life and preaching of Stephen, one of the seven. We also draw insights from Philip's ministry at Samaria as the Gospel in preached and a believing community is established at Samaria.

KEYWORDS

Acts of the apostles, book study of Acts, Gospel preaching, Spirit filled church community, sermons, sermon notes, sermon outline, free sermon notes, free sermon outlines, Bible study resources



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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

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