

*Beulah Baptist Church*  
*Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor*

*Sunday School Lesson*  
*October 9, 2022*  
*Rev. Mark A. Seals, M.Div., Instructor/Teacher*

## **Lesson—Stephen’s Arrest and Speech**

**Text: Acts 6:8—7:2a**

### **I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. *DISCUSS* the stand that Stephen took as a response to his faith;
2. *FEEL* motivated to confront principalities and powers of our day; and
3. *SEEK* the power and wisdom of the Spirit in our efforts to speak truth.

**Key Verse**— “*And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*” (Acts 6:8, KJV)

**Lesson Song of Praise and Worship:** “*Battlefield*” ...by Dr. Norman Hutchins

### **II. People Places and Times**

**Synagogue of the Libertines (Freedmen).** Jews who were born in the Holy Land and spent most of their lives there spoke Aramaic, which was a form of the ancient Hebrew in which our Old Testament is written. But there were other Jews born in other places who had returned to Palestine, and they did not know Aramaic or Hebrew. They only spoke Greek, which was the language of the educated people of the day. Pious Greek-speaking Jews attended the Synagogue of Libertines or Freedmen. Paul would have attended this synagogue, and Barnabas probably did also. Among all these Greek-speaking Jews were a few Christians, but the most outspoken was Stephen. The Holy Spirit spoke through him as he reasoned, discussed, and argued for Jesus Christ.

### **Background**

The apostles were among the Aramaic Jews and were the early Christian leaders. They were in charge of the distribution of gifts to the widows, yet they were forgetting the Greek speaking Christian widows. This could have been because of snobbery, because of language differences or because they just overlooked the Greek-speaking poor.

The godly solution of the apostles was to appoint Greek-speaking Jewish Christians to take charge of distributing food and money to the widows and other poor among them. The Greek-speaking Christians would know who was in need. The seven men chosen for this task were also chosen for their outstanding spirituality. Among them were Philip and Stephen, who is the focus of today’s lesson.

### ***III. The Lesson At-A-Glance...***

1. Introduction of Stephen (Acts 6:8–10)
2. Opposition to Stephen (vv. 11–14)
3. Stephen's Effect on the Sanhedrin (vv. 15–7:2a)

### ***V. In Depth with More Light on the Text***

**1. Introduction of Stephen (Acts 6:8–10)** Stephen did much more than hand out gifts to the needy. Scripture tells us the reason for Stephen's ability to perform miracles is that he is full of grace and power. We would expect to hear about the power in conjunction with miracles, but maybe we are surprised by the accompaniment of grace. Grace is always an unmerited gift of God. Therefore, we see that God working through Stephen, not because Stephen is so wonderful, but because God is wonderful and empowered him to do these amazing things. As Stephen, who attended this synagogue, performed miracles in the name of Jesus, other Jewish members who did not follow Christ opposed. They debated with Stephen, but their arguments did not stand up against him for two reasons. First of all, the Holy Spirit was enabling him to use great wisdom. Secondly, the things that Stephen said concerning Jesus Christ were true.

**2. Opposition to Stephen (vv. 11–14)** Opposition spread from the Synagogue of the Freeman to the great temple in Jerusalem and to the influential Jews who had also opposed Jesus. As a result, they seized Stephen and brought him before the great Jewish religious council, the Sanhedrin. They accused Stephen of speaking against the Temple in Jerusalem. In addition, they accused both Stephen and Jesus of trying to destroy the Old Testament Law, again twisting their words. Jesus said He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). And because they were accusing Stephen of speaking about the Temple and the Law, they were in essence accusing him of speaking against God.

**3. Stephen's Effect on the Sanhedrin (vv. 15–7:2a)** When Stephen's accusers finished what they had to say, they noticed his face looked like that of an angel. At that point, the high priest asked Stephen whether the charges of his accusers were true. This was probably Caiaphas, the very same man who had presided over the trial of Jesus. But that did not scare Stephen, who then launched into a history of the Jewish people, including their rejection of the prophets that God sent and finally the crucifixion of their Savior. The result of Stephen's sermon was that he was stoned and received by Jesus into heaven.

***Liberating Lesson— See Sunday School Book...***

***Application for Activation— See Sunday School Book...***

***Discuss the Meaning***

***Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration (from the Application for Activation)?***

1. What have we learned ( 😊 Charlie Brown)?
2. How far are you willing to go; what are you willing to do in the face of danger or persecution to show your commitment to the Lord?
3. Have you ever gotten in some good trouble for the Lord?

## **Vocabulary-New Words**

**A. Synagogue** (Acts 6:9) *sunagoge* (Gk.)—A place of worship for Jewish people

**B. Blasphemous** (vv. 11, 13) *blasphemos* (Gk.)—A disrespectful attitude expressed in an act directed against God's character

**C. Martyr** one who bears witness of the truth, and suffers death in the cause of Christ Ac 22:20; Re 2:13; 17:6 In this sense Stephen was the first martyr. The Greek word so rendered in all other cases is translated "witness." (1.) In a court of justice Mt 18:16; 26:65; Ac 6:13; 7:58; Heb 10:28; 1Ti 5:19 (2.) As of one bearing testimony to the truth of what he has seen or known Lu 24:48; Ac 1:8,22; Ro 1:9; 1Th 2:5,10; 1Jo 1:2

## **Daily Bible Readings For the Lesson of October 9<sup>th</sup>**

### **MONDAY**

Barriers between You and Your God (Isaiah 59:1–8)

### **TUESDAY**

Falsehood, Deceit, and Deception (Jeremiah 8:22–9:9)

### **WEDNESDAY**

These Things You Shall Do (Zechariah 8:14–19)

### **THURSDAY**

My Mouth Will Utter Truth (Proverbs 8:1–11)

### **FRIDAY**

Guided into All the Truth (John 16:12–15)

### **SATURDAY**

Full of Faith and the Spirit (Acts 6:1–7)

### **SUNDAY**

Full of Grace and Power (Acts 6:8–7:2a)