

Witnesses . . . to Judea and Samaria (Acts 6:8 – 8:40)

Introduction: The Establishment of a Witnessing Church (Acts 1-2)

Progress Report #1: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47).

Part I: The Expanding Witness to/through the Jewish world [PETER prominent] (3:1-12:24)

Segment A: The Expansion of the Church at Jerusalem and Judea (3:1-6:7)

1. The Challenge of *Persecution* – Round 1 (3:1-4:31) – Peter and John vs. Sanhedrin
2. The Challenge of *Moral Compromise* (4:32-5:10) – Ananias and Sapphira
3. The Challenge of *Persecution* – Round 2 (5:11-42) – Peter and John vs. Sanhedrin
4. The Challenge of *Division/Distracted* (6:1-7) – Care for the Grecian Widows

Progress Report #2: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7).

Segment B: The Expansion of the Church in all Judea and Samaria (6:7-9:31)

1. The Martyrdom of Stephen (6:8-8:3)
 - a. The Accusation of Stephen (6:8-15)
 - 1) Blasphemy against the Temple: that Jesus would destroy it.
 - 2) Blasphemy against the Law: that Jesus would change it.
 - b. The Accusation by Stephen (7:1-53)
 - 1) With respect to the Temple –
 - a) The presence of God is not restricted to any one land or any material building. Wherever _____, is holy.
 - b) The veneration of the temple as the literal residence of God is wrong-headed at best and _____ at worst.
 - 2) With respect to the Law
 - a) The people of Moses’ own generation rejected his leadership and broke the law with their idolatry. “You are just like _____.”
 - b) In their _____ of the One to whom the Law and temple point, they are the ones who did not obey the Law.
 - c. The Execution of Stephen (7:54-60): In his violent death at the hands of vengeful men, Stephen responded just like the _____ who welcomed him into heaven.
 - 1) “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God”
 - a) It is just as Jesus had said it would be (Mark 14:62)
 - b) But at the moment he is standing rather than sitting (Luke 12:8)

- 2) “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Jesus commended his spirit to his _____ (Luke 23:46); Stephen committed his spirit to _____.
 - 3) “Lord, Do not hold this sin against them.” This echoes the dying prayer of Jesus: “Father, forgive them . . .” (Luke 23:34).
 - 4) Summary: While the opponents of Peter and John recognized that they had _____ Jesus, Stephen appears to _____ Jesus!
- d. The Resultant Persecution and Scattering of the Church (8:1-4): The beginning of Phase 2 of the Great Commission (What was promised in 1:8 finds fulfillment in 8:1).
- 1) Stephen’s martyrdom brought a great _____ against the Jerusalem church.
 - 2) The persecution led to a great _____.
 - 3) The dispersion led to wide-spread _____.
2. The Ministries of Philip to Samaria and Ethiopia (8:4-40)
- a. The Ministry of Philip in Samaria (8:5-8)
 - b. The Authentication of Salvation for the Samaritans by the Apostles (8:14-17)
 - c. The Ministry of Philip to an Ethiopian Eunuch (8:25-40)
 - 1) Philip is dispatched to Gaza (8:25-28)
 - 2) Philip shares the Good News (8:29-35)
 - 3) Philip baptizes the Ethiopian (8:36-38)
 - 4) Philip and the Ethiopian are parted (8:39-40)
3. The Advancement of Luke’s Story of the Church
- a. The impetus behind the church’s mission is the _____ work of God.
 - 1) By virtue of the Jerusalem _____, the gospel was taken to Judea and Samaria.
 - 2) By virtue of God’s direct _____ to Philip, the gospel was taken to the “edge” of the world
 - b. In every case, the medium God uses to communicate the gospel is _____.

Lessons in Discipleship: Stephen and Philip

I. Philip: Characteristics of an Effective Witness

- A. _____ = a mentality that assumes that wherever I am, God has _____ for me with people who need to know Him.
- B. _____ = watching out for “_____”
- C. _____ = sometimes people just need to know we are _____ to talk about spiritual things.
- D. _____ = listening to find out where the other person is.
- E. _____ = knowing the _____; knowing the _____
- F. _____ = the ability to move the person from where they are to Jesus
- G. _____ = the conviction that God is at work in the heart of my friend.

- II. **Stephen: The Aspiration of a True Disciple:** to be so filled with the life of Jesus that I accurately convey his _____ and _____ to those who do not know him, leaving the _____ up to Him (see 2 Corinthians 2:14-17).