

Lesson 9 (Acts 6:8-7:60)

Stephen, Full of Grace and Power

Luke has already described Stephen as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). Now, in Acts 6:8, he is described as "full of grace and power."

- 1. What do you make of these descriptions? What does Luke want us to understand about Stephen?**
- 2. "But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking" (Acts 6:10). The question is why?**
- 3. What were the charges brought by these men against Stephen (Acts 6:11-14)? What did they hope to gain with these charges? And do the charges sound familiar? Who else had been falsely charged in much the same way?**
- 4. First of all, chart below the basic flow and progression of Stephen's response. What major story lines from the Old Testament does he bring to the forefront of his audience's minds?**
- 5. In your own words, what is Stephen's point? What connections is he seeking to make between the past and the present?**
- 6. Go back and review the charges against Stephen in Acts 6:11-14. What is his implied response to the charge of:
A: "Blasphemous words against Moses and God"
B: "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law"
C: "For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us"**
- 7. What does Stephen want his audience to grasp concerning the latest and most profound manifestation of the "glory" of God?
Perhaps John 1:14-18 would be helpful.**
- 8. In Acts 7:51-53, Stephen concludes his address with a number of scathing rebukes. In fact, they are rebukes with roots in the Old Testament. Take the time to go back and read these Old Testament passages. What is Stephen saying about the men on the receiving end of these rebukes?**
- 9. What about the description of Jesus as "the Righteous One" (Isa 53:11)? What is Stephen communicating? "You always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51). Is it possible for us to do the very same thing today? If so, in what way? How can I be guilty of this serious offense?**
- 10. What is unusual is that Jesus is described in Acts 7: 55 as standing, not sitting. A variety of explanations have been suggested:**

