

**Conflict Within & Outside The Church**  
**Acts 6:1 – 8:1 / February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**

- **Conflict Within: GRUMBLING Within The Church.**

*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.<sup>2</sup> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.* Acts 6:1-2

- **Conflict Within: Resolution Of Grumbling With STRATEGIC Structure.**

<sup>3</sup> *Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them<sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”<sup>5</sup> This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.<sup>6</sup> They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.<sup>7</sup> 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.* Acts 6:3-7

- **Conflict Outside: Stephen’s THEOLOGY Challenged.**

<sup>8</sup> *Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.<sup>9</sup> Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.<sup>10</sup> But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.<sup>11</sup> Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”* Acts 6:8-11

- **Conflict Outside: False “Blasphemy” Charges Brought Against Stephen.**

<sup>12</sup> *So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.<sup>13</sup> They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.<sup>14</sup> For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”<sup>15</sup> All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.* Acts 6:12-15

- **Conflict Outside: Stephen’s DEFENSE: Moses Was Israel’s Deliverer.**

<sup>1</sup> *Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these charges true?”*

<sup>2</sup> *To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran.<sup>3</sup> ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’* Acts 7:1-3

Acts 7:4-50 Stephen States that Moses was Israel’s chosen deliverer, and the Jews rejected Moses, just as they did Jesus.

- **Stephen To Accusers: You Disobeyed And KILLED Deliverer.**

<sup>51</sup> *“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—<sup>53</sup> you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”* Acts 7:51-53

- **The Sanhedrin REJECTS Stephens Message Jesus Is Messiah.**

<sup>54</sup> *When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.<sup>56</sup> “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”<sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,<sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.* Acts 7:54-58

- **Conflict Outside: Stephen’s Sentence: Death By STONING.**

<sup>59</sup> *While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”<sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.* 8:1 And Saul approved of their killing him. Acts 7:59-8:1