



PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Understanding Acts - Acts 5-7

~ Jim Staley 2024 ~

"Understanding Acts - Acts 5-7" by Jim Staley is a deep dive into the early chapters of the Book of Acts, focusing on chapters 5 through 7.

Introduction

Jim Staley, director of Passion for Truth Ministries, emphasizes the need to understand the **Book of Acts** from its original Hebraic context rather than a modern Western perspective. He believes this approach will reveal a more accurate understanding of the early church's foundation.

Acts Chapter 5:

Ananias and Sapphira

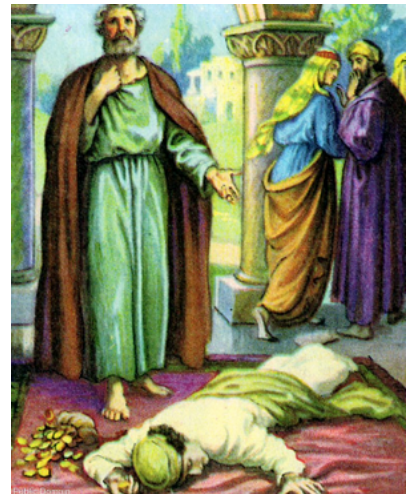
Summary of Events: Ananias and Sapphira sold property but lied about the proceeds to the Holy Spirit, leading to their deaths. This event instilled a great fear of God within the early church.

Importance of Fear of God: Jim stresses the significance of having a fear of God, which includes recognizing His power and authority. He suggests that this fear helps maintain purity and reverence within the church.

Apostolic Miracles and Persecution

Signs and Wonders: The apostles performed many miracles, and people highly esteemed them despite fear of association.

Peter's Shadow: Pastor Staley explains that Peter's shadow healing people is a manifestation of **God's image and power** flowing through him.



Conflict with Sadducees: The Sadducees, who did **not** believe in the resurrection, were threatened by the apostles' teachings and had them imprisoned. However, an angel miraculously freed them, instructing them to continue preaching.

Apostolic Boldness

Confrontation with Religious Leaders: The apostles boldly preached in the temple, despite previous warnings and imprisonment.

Obedience to God Over Man: This obedience highlights the apostles' declaration to obey God rather than human authorities, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing God's commands over societal or peer pressures.

The Role of Gamaliel

Introduction to Gamaliel: Pastor Staley discusses Gamaliel, a *highly respected rabbi* in the first century, known for his wisdom and being the grandson of Hillel. Gamaliel's teachings influenced both Paul and the broader Jewish community.

Schools of Thought: The two main Jewish schools, **Shammai and Hillel**, are compared. Shammai's followers were strict and literal in their interpretation of the law, while Hillel's followers were more liberal and accepting of Gentiles.

Impact on New Testament: Understanding these schools of thought is crucial for interpreting debates in the New Testament, especially regarding issues like circumcision.

Chapter 6:

The Seven Deacons

Selection of Deacons: The disciples chose seven deacons to focus on serving the community, allowing the apostles to dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry.

Importance of Prayer: Pastor Staley emphasizes the power of prayer, suggesting that the power of God comes through prayer or pain, and encourages listeners to commit to **daily prayer**.

Stephen's Ministry: Stephen, one of the deacons, performed great wonders and signs, attracting opposition from various Jewish groups, leading to his eventual martyrdom.

Choosing the Seven

Appointment of Seven Deacons: To address the needs of the growing church, seven men full of the Spirit and wisdom were appointed to oversee the distribution of food.

Stephen's Ministry: Among the seven, Stephen performed *great wonders and signs*, leading to his arrest and false accusations from religious leaders.

Chapter 7:

Stephen's Address and Martyrdom



Stephen's Speech: Stephen addresses the history of Israel, from Abraham to Moses, highlighting the recurring theme of Israel rejecting God's messengers.

Critique of Religious Leaders: Stephen criticizes the religious leaders for their continual rebellion against God and their rejection of the prophets, including Jesus.

Temple Debate: He asserts that God does not dwell in temples made by hands but in the hearts of believers, challenging the pride the Sadducees and Pharisees took in the physical temple.

Stephen's Martyrdom: His bold statements lead to his stoning, making him the first Christian martyr. The event introduces Saul (later Paul), who witnesses Stephen's death.

Stephen's Speech and Martyrdom

Stephen's Defense: Stephen recounted Israel's history, highlighting their repeated rejection of God's messengers. He accused the *religious leaders* of resisting the Holy Spirit and betraying and murdering the Righteous One.

Martyrdom of Stephen: Stephen was stoned to death, becoming the first Christian martyr. His last words mirrored those of Jesus, asking for forgiveness for his killers.

Key Themes and Messages

Prayer and Power: The centrality of prayer in empowering believers.

Integrity and Slander: The destructive nature of gossip and slander within the community.

Cleanliness of the Heart: The necessity for believers to maintain **purity** in their **thoughts** and **actions** to be worthy temples for God's presence.

Historical Context: Insight into the Jewish thought and divisions of the time, providing a deeper understanding of the early Christian movement.

Conclusion and Application

Jim Staley's teaching on Acts chapters 5-7 provides a *detailed examination* of early Christian history, the importance of prayer, and the dynamics within the Jewish community. He encourages believers to maintain a life of prayer and purity, while also understanding the historical context of the New Testament to fully grasp its teachings.

Relevance Today: Pastor Staley urges believers to return to the original Hebraic roots of their faith to understand and embody the early church's power and purity.

Fear and Reverence for God: He emphasizes the need for a genuine fear of God, not just reverence, to maintain a faithful and obedient walk with God.

Obedience and Witness: Believers are called to obey God above all else and to be bold witnesses of the truth, regardless of opposition or persecution.

Passion For Truth Ministries

P.O. Box 365 ❖ 5323 Highway N
Cottleville, MO 63338-9998
Email: info@passionfortruth.com
❖ www.passionfortruth.com ❖