



PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Understanding Acts - Part 3 - Acts 5-7 - Jim Staley 2024

Hello everyone, Jim Staley with [Passion for Truth Ministries](#), and welcome to today's broadcast. Wherever you may be, from sea to shining sea or over the seas, I'm glad that you are taking a few minutes out of your day to spend with us. We're going to dive into and continually explore the book of Acts. We're examining the foundation of the early church and what it was comprised of. Are we sure we've got it right, my friends? Because I believe for the last almost 1800 years, we've been reading into the book of Acts from a 21st century Western Greco-Roman perspective, rather than extracting exactly what these Hebrew Jewish authors truly meant. So that's what we're going to do: we're going to place the Hebraic context and the backdrop of first-century Judaism back into the book of Acts. And incredibly, what emerges may not be what we currently believe. We're going to let the Scriptures be our guide—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. That's what we're after. We'll be back to do it right after this.

Passion for Tabernacles is about to happen again, my friends. In 2024, from October 16 to 25, it's going to be eight full days of absolute incredible connection with the Creator, your family, and new friends. So go to passionfortabernacles.com right now and reserve your 2024 Sukkot memory.

Alright, we're back. Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. Thank you again for joining us. Would you do us a favor right now and hit subscribe if you're not subscribed to this channel? If you want to learn more about the Word of God from the original Hebraic Christian roots perspective that the Bible was written in, then this is your channel. We're going to uncover and unpack the depth of the book of Acts like never before. Here at Passion for Truth, we're after the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. To do that, we have to go beyond today's 21st century Greco-Roman perspective. We have to go past Protestantism, past Catholicism, and even past the early church fathers who were virtually all Gentiles and pagan in origin from their background, and go back to the early Hebraic roots of our faith found in first-century Judaism from which Christianity sprung. If we don't know the foundation and the backdrop, we're simply going to read into it whatever our denominational bias is. So that's what we're after: we want to know the truth. By the time we work our way through the book of Acts, which is the foundational book of *all* Christianity, this is where the early church was not born because that was all the way back in ancient Israel. But this is when the congregation of Israel, the ecclesia, was illuminated and given power by the Holy Spirit, we saw this in chapter two.

We're moving through, now we are in chapter five. We just left off last week with Ananias and Sapphira. The whole church was coming together, selling everything that they owned, and everyone was taken care of. Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property and lied not just to

the early church but to the Holy Spirit, and God killed them right on the spot. We left off with the concept that it wasn't just God killing Ananias and Sapphira in great judgment, but it was exposing the enemy in the process. God was not just interested in exercising His power and flexing His muscles over life and death. That's not what it was all about. He was trying to bring purity and a fear of Him—more importantly, the fear of the truth—into the early church so that the early church would stay pure as long as possible. If they were allowed to get away with lying to God, the disciples, and the Holy Spirit that early, that leaven would leaven the entire lump. Unfortunately, eventually, the leaven would creep in anyway. But God saw it necessary to keep it as pure as possible for as long as possible.

The very last verse we read was **verse 11**, which said, **"*11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.*"** The fear of God is incredibly important, ladies and gentlemen. We've been taught that it's to revere God, but I'm telling you the word there is fear. It's absolutely terrifying fear that we would fall into the hands of an angry God like Jonathan Edwards said. It is fearful. We need to have the fear of God in our life. He has the capability of dropping us dead. Now, we don't serve Him out of fear, but we have the awe and reverence that this is a King. You don't just waltz into a King's chamber unprepared and have disrespect, or it might be off with your head. That kind of fear needs to prevail in our life today. If we knew that we had that kind of fear, we would have a very difficult time choosing to sin, recognizing that the consequences are absolutely potentially deadly and dire. That's where we want to be. Now you might disagree with that, and that's okay. I happen to believe that the fear of God is what's so important and so missing in the church today. I believe that's why God, Yahweh, introduced Himself on Mount Sinai with all the trembling of the mountain, the thunder and the lightning, and the incredible voice. Why go through all that theatrics? He's trying to show He is the Creator of the universe, He is not to be trifled with. He wanted to instill in His people the understanding that He is a powerful God, for two reasons: not so that we would necessarily just fear Him for ourselves, but that we would understand that when we come face to face with danger or our enemies, we've got a great and awesome and terribly fearful God behind us. That is part of the main reason why God wants us to fear Him: to recognize that the enemy will ultimately fear God the most. We've got a God that is incredible behind us. Amen.

Alright, let's continue and work through the Scriptures. Going back to the Scriptures, in **verse 12**, it says, **"*12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.*"** Why is this so important? The reason this is so important is that it says, "Yet none of the rest dared join them", because Solomon's porch was right there at the opening of the temple. It's the covered portico of Herod's temple at the time of Yeshua, that he built, was an extension of the original Solomon's porch. This is where the rabbis taught. So this is right in the face of the Sadducees and the Pharisees. This is where Yeshua got in trouble for teaching what He was teaching. They were just literally putting it all right out there in public. Nobody else wanted to join them. They were scared out of their minds to be there and be seen doing these things, but they esteemed them highly. Of course, they did. The disciples were out on the steps of the portico doing exactly what their rabbi taught them: teaching the people of Israel, the children of Israel, right in front of the Pharisees. They did that, and the power of God moved because of that faith.

Many people brought their sick men, women, and children to them, just wanting the shadow of Peter to touch them to be healed. That's the kind of power that was flowing through the early church. Even the shadow of Peter was healing them. Let me give you a little bit of Hebrew to show you why that's so important. Okay, **the word "shadow" and the word "image" in Hebrew come from the same root word, צֶלֶם (tzelem). That word literally means "image."**

So, when it says that they were made in the image of God, they were made in the shadow of God. Adam and Eve, in the same way, the reason why the shadow of Peter has power is not the lack of light that's coming from the actual science of a shadow. No, of course not. It is the power of Peter's image. Because Peter's image was so replicating the image of Christ, which was in the direct representation of Yahweh Himself, that the power flows through the image. It's flowing through his shadow. What's coming out of Peter is the image of God. It's the mind, will, and emotions of God the Creator. It's the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—a faith like no one has ever seen.

Peter went through an enormous amount in his lifetime. And in the three years when he was with Yeshua, he had learned what it meant to deny the Messiah three times. He knew what it meant to feel the guilt and the shame and the horrible feelings that go along with denying the very Messiah that he said he was going to build his church on. The rock of Messiah, on the shoulders of Peter, that Peter was going to be that leader to take the torch over. And Peter was never going to make that mistake again.

My friends, the image of God is what He's trying to produce inside of each and every one of us. That is why we study the Word of God. It's not to learn when the Messiah is coming back necessarily. It's not to learn all the nuances—although that's great. But in all your study, if the image of God is not growing inside of you, more and more likeness of Him, then you are a man that is like the former Paul, who is persuasive in words, but with no power. Paul says, "Look, I didn't come with persuasiveness. I came with the power, the demonstration of power." The demonstration of power is found in the shadow of God.

When you are under the shadow of His wings, you strip yourself of your own mind, will, and emotions, your own shadow, your own image, and you take on the תְּזֵלֶם (tzelem) of God. You take on the image, the shadow of the Almighty, and *that* is what the enemy is afraid of. That's why sin exists.

Ladies and gentlemen, sin introduces another grafting of another. It's a grafting of another kind of tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, into the tree of life. When you do that, you dim the light of God, you dim the shadow of God, you dim the image of God, and thus dim the power of God in the earth realm. That's the only reason why Satan does what he does. He knows if you're a believer, he can't get you back, right? It's very, very difficult. But he can dim the power. And that's what happened.

If I could just speak directly right now into traditional Christianity, his interpretation of the book of Acts is that we've divorced the book from its origin that's very, very Jewish. And so we read into the scriptures a Western Christian mindset, and we pull out of theology, and that theology doesn't match the Apostle Peter, doesn't match what the Apostle Paul believed, and therefore, we create a different belief system. And belief system creates a different due system, because we do what we believe. Therefore, the pipes get disconnected again. The power of God only flows through the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

That's what we're seeing here in the book of Acts. Is we want to find out what did they believe? What did they do? Because the power was there in the first century. I'm telling you, it all has to do with the image of God. And the image of God is shown through those who obey Him. First John, chapter 5, 1 through 3 says, ***"Here are those who love God, those who keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome."***

So there is a direct correlation between loving God, keeping His commandments, and the power of God. And we're going to see that even more as we walk through it. Okay, no more bloviating for now, no more commentary, let's walk through the Scriptures themselves.

All right. So then it says here in **verse 17**, **"Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees),"** we learned last week that the Sadducees were the aristocrats. They were the ones that were the wealthy rulers of the calendar. They were in charge of the entire temple, and they did not believe in a resurrection. So this notion, or this new message about Jesus raising from the dead, was threatening to their very existence because their theology said that can't happen, and the people were believing it. Therefore, the Sadducees were losing people left and right who maybe used to believe like the Sadducees, that there was no resurrection. Now, the Sadducees have no way to save face. So the only thing that happens to their face is it gets red, and they're very, very angry. As a matter of fact, it says they're filled with indignation and they laid hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

Okay, so they're so upset, they throw them in the prison. But watch this: **"But at night, an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, 'Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.'"** Now, I love this, my friends, because it's at this point in the timeline where they are doing exactly what Yeshua did. They're standing on the steps of Solomon's porch, they're preaching the good news, and the Sadducees hear about this resurrection, throw them in jail, and then all of a sudden, God just immediately shows up with an angel that lets them out of prison. Now, here's the incredible part: The guards don't even know it.

Let's scoot down here because this is incredible. We talked about the angel. Most people have heard about the angel that opens up the gate for Peter and them to walk out, but watch this. They go back in verse 21. Let's go back to the scriptures here in **verse 21**. They go back in the morning and they start teaching again in the very place where they were arrested. Okay, now watch this: **"But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying, 'Indeed, we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.'"** No one!

Ladies and gentlemen, think of this: It is one thing for an angel to show up like it did opening up the prison door for Yeshua, Jesus, on that incredible morning on the third day to let Him go free and resurrect. But it's a whole other thing to open up the gates, and the guards have no idea that the gates are open. To their knowledge, Peter and the disciples that were arrested are still in the prison cell. Think of the supernatural level here. They walk out of prison right past the guards, and no one even sees it. No one knows it's even happening.

Listen, in the same way, this is a principle, that God has the ability in your situation, whatever it might be, no matter how dire, how difficult, no matter what you think the enemy has that's constricting you. Do you feel constricted right now? If you feel constricted in anything, I want you to write it in the comments. And I want you to declare that God has the capability of opening up the prison door and breaking the shackles and unrestricting you right now. Whether it's in your marriage, be specific, because this is before God. These are not just comments; I don't believe that. I believe that it's like scripture. You have to speak it, you have to write it down and declare it publicly: By faith, I will not be restricted. God has the capability of showing up miraculously in your situation at the worst part of what you've been scared of the most.

Now remember, the disciples watched Yeshua get killed over a similar sermon, and now they're arrested and have no idea what's about to happen. And within hours, God rescues them. Can I just encourage you, my friend, that no matter what you're going through, reach out to the Most High God and don't allow doubt to creep in at any time. Doubt prevents the angel of the Lord from ever showing up in your life. What happens is you begin to think, "Oh, well, yeah, I guess God didn't come through." No, it was your doubt that prevented the angel of the Lord from coming and giving you the keys that you need for your own redemption and your own breaking out of prison.

Okay, so they did hear these things. Let's go back to the scriptures. The high priest found out and the temple guards found out about these things, and they wondered what the outcome was going to be. In other words, they're like, "What in the world is going on right now? We just arrested these guys." But nothing stops the enemy. These high priests, these priests, don't even care that there are supernatural things going on right now that they can't explain. They are so upset, they are going to find these guys and bring them down. They finally bring them before the council. And here's what they say, **"Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us."**

Now, why is this so important? Because this is what they did to begin with. They were attempting to send Yeshua to Rome to have Him killed so that their hands were free from the blood of Christ. They didn't want the people, who loved Jesus, to be mad at the Sadducees or the religious leaders of the day. So they creatively got out of it by handing Him over to Rome. And then these guys, the disciples, show up and say, "Look, you're the ones that killed the Messiah, you're the ones that killed the Holy One of Israel," and the people were starting to believe it. That's why they said, "You're trying to put this blood on us." And Peter and the other apostles said, "That's exactly what's going on." They finally answered the priests, and the other apostles said, **"²⁹ We ought to obey God rather than men."**

My friends, I cannot tell you how many believers in Christ seek to please man instead of God. There are so many teenagers out there, and I have teenagers, and they will come home from school and tell me that their friends are so influenced by their friends. They don't want to be leaders; they just want to be followers. And you know why? It's the insecurity and the gap and the void in their hearts from being left out of something. No one wants to be left out. I'm here to tell you that when Yeshua says, "I will never, never leave you or forsake you," it's for a reason. Everything that happens in life is a test. God doesn't want you to obey man. When you obey man, you are disobeying God. So God says, "Look, don't care what men think. They're not the ones that are going to help you on Judgment Day. Care what I think." Amen.

And that's why he says, **"³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him, God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior."** Guys, this is an amazing thing. Let me show you this Greek word here. **This Greek word "Prince" is the word that literally is the same word for the captain of the guard or the high priest.** This is such an incredible insult that's happening. The disciples are saying, "Look, God exalted Him to the right hand of God to be the high priest and Savior, the chief guard and Savior." Peter is standing right in front of the high priest and the chief guard when he says this. This is a radical onslaught in the face of the high priest. The one that you killed, this Yeshua, the Messiah, is sitting at the right hand of God as the high priest. Do you know what **the high priest was called in Judaism? The right hand of God.** Isn't that incredible? Peter is doing a play on words, saying exactly what he needs to say to insult them in the most creative way. "Jesus is

the high priest; you're illegitimate," especially since the high priests were chosen by Rome anyway.

All right. He says, ³² ***And we are His witnesses.*** "Do you know what this word **"witnesses"** is? This is **the same word for martyrs**. It literally is the Greek word martyr. We are His martyrs to these things. Also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him. They were literally blown out of their minds, ready to kill them over this statement because he just insulted them, saying that Yeshua is the high priest and chief, and we're the martyrs. Okay? Which, by the way, that word there means unto death. We are the witnesses, and we will go to our death with what we saw. And of course, they did. They prophesied their own death right here. He goes on to say that the Holy Spirit is also a witness and is given by God to those who obey Him. And that was the final straw. What Peter was saying was, "You guys don't obey God. You don't deserve the Holy Spirit."

Look what happens next. ³³ ***When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.*** ³⁴ ***Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.*** ³⁵ ***And he said to them: 'Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.*** ³⁶ ***For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.*** ³⁷ ***After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.***" And he says this in verse 38, this is very important. ³⁸ ***And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.***"

My friends, that is so important because this is so wise. Gamaliel is giving wisdom that all of us need to know. Because whenever we strongly disagree—and you know, religious people are the worst, right? I mean, they are literally the worst, maybe outside of politicians. Maybe it's a close neck-and-neck. Alright? Politicians and religious people can be the worst type of people because we get so passionate about what we believe that we will be "off with their head" for disagreeing with us. Many of us believe so strongly. Maybe something has totally changed your life, and your neighbor or your family member or your friend doesn't agree with you. You can so strongly disagree with them that you can destroy the relationship in the process. Gamaliel gives us great wisdom here, a top Pharisee, and he says, "Guys, don't do that. Don't fight these people just because they believe something that we don't. If it's of God, it'll stand. If it's not, it'll go by the wayside. Who are we to judge? Because if we're wrong, we could be fighting against God."

So let me just throw this out there, my friends. We're pretty passionate about what we believe. You're pretty passionate, I'm sure, about what you believe. But **what if there is a 1% chance that you could be wrong about something? Leave yourself a way out, lest you be fighting against God on Judgment Day. That goes for even arguments with your spouse, relationship conflicts. Leave yourself a way out. The humble position is to let God deal with that person, just pray for them, and let the Holy Spirit do what He does.** That's for somebody out there who's really been trying to control the issue. You've been trying to control your spouse, your child, or even your boss or employees. I'm telling you, the frustration that comes from not being able to be in control is not worth it. Take Gamaliel's position and just hand it over to Yahweh. Say right now in the comments, "Lord, I hand over to you my situation."

Because you can't handle it anyway, and He's waiting to do a miracle in your life if you'll just hand it over.

All right, now I want to share with you a few things here. Who is Gamaliel? This guy is so wise. He is the grandson of Hillel. Now, why is this so important? Gamaliel was literally one of *the* most important, if not *the* most revered rabbi in all of the first century. The reason why this is important is because Paul himself later is going to say that he sat at the feet of Gamaliel; he was the best student of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was the most brilliant rabbi, and we see it even right here. There were split into two schools of thought. It came from the School of Shammai or you came from the School of Hillel. Hillel was the grandfather of Gamaliel, which is why he was so famous and so wise. So these two schools of thought would be kind of like Democrats and Republicans today on a very loose level. One was more liberal, one was more conservative. The School of Shammai, these were Pharisees that taught in the years prior to Jesus's birth. And they believed in the literal interpretation of Scripture. They believed in all of the Oral Law and the traditions and the very strict keeping of the law of God that came from the School of Shammai. In stark contrast to the School of Shammai, you had the School of Hillel, which was a bit more liberal in their understanding of Torah. They were more accepting of Gentiles.

All right, so let me give you an example of how the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel disagree with one another. One of the five tenets that they disagreed with was online. And it's kind of humorous, but it kind of gives you an idea. The School of Shammai believed in their literal interpretation, I mean, very legal, that you should never lie. And so there was a question of what would you do if you had a bride on her wedding day and she was ugly? And Shammai would say, "Well, you tell her the truth that she's ugly." Hillel, on the other hand, his perspective, their school of thought was, "It's okay to lie in that situation because a bride is always beautiful on her wedding day." And so that's kind of how they got around it. And on divorce, Shammai said, "You should only divorce your wife for very, very, very serious situations." Hillel, on the other hand, was far more liberal, and their school of thought was you could divorce your wife if she burns your meal. There were a lot of issues that were going on between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai.

Now, why is this so important? Well, Paul, for one, is under the teaching of Gamaliel, which comes from Hillel. But he also was very influenced by the School of Shammai. And so if you were not a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, people would kind of adopt different things. Knowing the differences is critical as you walk through the New Testament, especially the book of Acts, because these schools of thought show up, and understanding what they believed radically helps us understand the New Testament and what the debate was over and what the big hoopla was over on certain issues like circumcision that we'll get to a little bit later as we uncover what these schools believed about it. Because if we don't know what they believed, we don't know what the people were taught. If we don't know what the people taught, then we don't know what they believed. And they're the ones that are in the mix when we're dealing with Peter and Paul and their doctrine.

All right. Let's get back to the Scriptures here. So they agreed with Gamaliel that this was the right thing to do, was to leave them alone, at least for now. So they beat them and sent them out. And it says in **verse 41**, ***"⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."***

So they went right back to the stairs of the temple, teaching and preaching everywhere. And the Holy Spirit set Gamaliel, the head rabbi in the Sanhedrin, to tell them, "Leave them alone." Ladies and gentlemen, if that didn't happen, if God didn't infiltrate and speak through Gamaliel at that moment, the disciples are likely in jail, and most of the New Testament might not have ever been written. It is incredible how God uses unbelievers to protect believers.

All right, so then in **chapter 6**, we've got the seven. God impresses upon the disciples that they need to be about the Father's business of prayer and ministry, not waiting on tables. They come up with seven deacons and those deacons are there to help serve the widows, the orphans, and make sure everyone else has the daily distribution of food so that the disciples can focus on the most important thing, which is prayer and ministry.

Can I ask you a question, my friends? **If we're to be like the disciples and we want the power of God, how much time do we devote to prayer and ministry?** Now, most of us, you out there, you're not in full-time ministry like I am. And you are in full-time ministry if you're supporting this ministry, financially or through your prayers, you're in full-time ministry with us. That's the incredible part. You're paying it forward for other people to be in full-time ministry for you, on your behalf, that's part of your calling, right? But if you're out there and you're working in the civilian world, how in the world can you make a difference in ministry if you're not devoting yourself to prayer?

You know, I remember when I was in a prison cell, and God had sent me this little book by a rabbi from the 1940s. And he had this incredible saying in there that I wrote down. He said, *"The power of God can only come through two different things: prayer or pain. It's up to us which one we choose."* Now, never forget that, my friends. That power only comes through prayer or through pain. And most of us, unfortunately, choose pain because we don't choose enough prayer.

I encourage you right now, if you don't get anything else out of this broadcast today, I encourage you to take the time to pray and increase it daily. Put in the comments right now, make a commitment to pray. Say, "I'm going to make a commitment to pray every day. Prayer is what empowers you." Say that with me. "Prayer is my power." Put that in the comments. **"Prayer is my power."** It is. There's nothing else outside of the prayer that the apostles did that gave them the power to minister. The power of God flows through the pipe of prayer. Amen.

All right, so watch this. One of the deacons was named Stephen, and it says this in **verse 8**: ***"8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke."*** Ladies and gentlemen, the power of God flows through your tongue in the Spirit when you're in obedience, and no one will be able to dispute what you say when the Spirit of God comes over you.

They secretly induced men to lie, to make up all kinds of stuff to slander him, and they ended up killing him. They stoned him. So he's the first person to be killed, right of the disciples, is Stephen, and he's not even an apostle. He's a deacon. My friends, this is amazing. They literally said, "Hey, we need seven deacons to take over the ministering of the widows and the orphans and the daily distribution of the food." And Stephen ends up being as powerful as the apostles. He's doing signs and wonders and miraculous things, so much so that the Sadducees wanted to kill him, and they did it through slander.

Have you ever been gossiped about? Have you ever been slandered? Have you ever slandered someone else? Have you ever said something negative about someone else's reputation behind their backs when you didn't even know all the facts, or maybe that you did? Slander destroys and kills. When you slander, when you make things up, or when you pass on information that you don't know to be true, or you pass on negative information that makes someone else look bad, you know what you're doing. You're taking on the sin of Ham, exposing someone for their sin. Maybe they are guilty, but you're exposing them. And that carries a major penalty in the Scriptures. Go back and read what happened in Genesis to Ham and his children, the curse that came upon them. And you're also taking on the position of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, these brood of vipers that were just literally slandering people, destroying, they ended up killing Stephen. And you know what it was out of? Jealousy. You know that most gossip and most slander comes from jealousy. People are so insecure in their walk with God, they can't handle it when someone else is anointed. They can't handle it when someone else is successful. They can't handle when someone else got a better job or got a pay raise. Instead of congratulating them and truly sincerely being excited for them, they get jealous. "Oh, he didn't deserve that," and they begin to process venom, spewing it into other people, fighting people with their own venom of jealousy. **There's nothing that will kill the power of God faster in your life than jealousy.** And there's nothing that will stop Him from removing the anointing from your life faster than not supporting someone else in the ministry of the Word. **Even if you disagree, you don't have to agree. But you don't slander, don't gossip, don't poke fun.** Simply allow God to be God. Amen.

You do what God has put in your heart to do. Let each and every one of us have the instrument of ministry where we do our part. There are leaders of tens, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens of thousands. The one who has been anointed for fifty should do his job, not be jealous of the one that God has given ten thousand. Because judgment comes down harder on the one that is leading ten thousand than the one over fifty. We're all the same at cross. Amen. We're all serving the same King. Play for an audience of one and God will promote you.

All right, moving into **chapter 7**, and then we will finish up if we can get that far. All right, he begins to go through, Stephen addresses the call of Abraham. This is what this chapter is titled. And let's move into it. He starts going through the *entire* message from the beginning of time all the way through Egypt, starts talking about how God delivered them through Egypt through Moses. In **verse 25**, it says, **"*25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.*"** In other words, Moses is going back to the Israelites, and he's saying, "Hey, why are you guys fighting among one another?" And they said, "Who are you? Are you going to kill us like you did the Egyptians yesterday?" And Moses is freaking out because he is totally believing that they're going to listen to him. That's why he says, "He supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand."

In the same way, okay, that's what's going on both in this first century and what's going on today. Brethren are fighting brethren, and we don't understand that God is the deliverer of all. We don't need to be fighting one another. You know, one of the greatest arrows that the enemy has in atheism and in paganism and the Gentile non-believing world today is they see so many religious people, so many Christians fighting one another. It doesn't say, you know, "You will know they are Christians by how much they fight." No, they'll know they're Christians by their love, is how it's supposed to go. It's our love for one another that's what attracts them because the world is good at hate. The world is good at fighting. We're supposed to be known by our love. Amen.

All right, and so he goes through all of this. And then in **verse 35**, he says this, ³⁵ ***'This Moses whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?" is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.'*** Stephen is making this incredible connection that just like Moses was rejected by the brothers that were fighting, there were two houses in the first century, there's the house of Shemaiah, there's the house of Hillel, they hated each other, and all they did was fight. And in the same way, Moses came to these two brothers that were fighting, that united to get rid of Moses. In the same way, he says, "Yeshua is your Moses, and He came to you guys as you are fighting, and you both rejected Him, and you killed Him. Even though you hate each other, you had no idea that you were standing before your deliverer when you killed Him." And they ran him off, just like they ran Moses off. And he went on to say, "You killed the prophets too, everybody that came to you from God, you spit in their face, and you killed them. And you rebelled against God in the process."

That's why he says in **Verse 44**, and we're close to closing with this, ⁴⁴ ***'Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45 which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, 46 who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him a house. 48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 49 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest? 50 Has My hand not made all these things?'"'***

My friends, Stephen, just like Peter, is really upsetting the Sadducees and Pharisees because what's going on is he's simply saying that all the way I'm showing you guys from the very beginning, you've been rebellious from the very beginning, you've rejected prophets from God. And God Himself said that He does not dwell in temples. Now, guys, this is a very big statement that he's making. While they're looking at the temple, the Sadducees are the ones that are in charge of the temple, remember. These are the aristocrats that are so proud of their temple. And here, Stephen is saying, "Yeah, God doesn't dwell in there anymore. He never wanted to dwell in a temple. We are the temple." Imagine what the Sadducees are thinking and the Pharisees right behind them, who also loved the temple. They're just not in control of it. And these disciples are saying, "By the way, everything you all are doing there is invalid. God is not concerned about living in there. He never was. He wants to live here."

Can I ask you a question? Is your house worthy of living in? You know, in my house, my wife loves to have the house clean. There's one thing that will aggravate her to high heaven is when I invite someone over to the house and don't tell her and it's not totally clean, right? If any of you have a spouse out there that's like that, I don't blame you. I don't blame her. But guys, we don't really care. I don't really care if my house is clean, necessarily or not. I go to someone else's house. I don't ever pay attention whether it's clean or not. I'm not there to see the house. I'm there to see the person. But my wife's got a great point. She wants the house to be clean if someone's going to be invited in. If Yeshua is knocking at the door of your heart, is your house clean for Him to live in? Because He cannot live in an unclean house and unclean environment. This is why the enemy introduced sin — it's to defile the house. Because in the defiling of the house, he doesn't really care about you. He just doesn't want the power and the Holy Spirit to reside in you. And he knows how God's science works. He knows that God will not dwell in a defiled environment.

That's why it matters where you go, it matters who you go with, it matters what comes out of your mouth, whether it's saltwater or freshwater. It matters what you think, it matters what you watch, it matters what you listen to — every sense that God gave you is like a pipe, like a hose that is sucking up its environment. Whatever it is touching, it is bringing into your temple. And either it is cleansing it with the Word of God and you are around righteousness. Look, you'll be the average of the five people that you hang around the most. Is that a holy environment for the Spirit of God to live in? We need to make sure our house is clean, ladies and gentlemen. And that's what Stephen is saying, "We're the temple." So it doesn't matter what you say, it matters what you do, and it matters how you live your life, and how you keep the Torah, the instruction manual of God.

Like Jesus said, **"I didn't come to destroy the Law, I came to bring it more meaning," which is what the word "pleroo" means — to fill it up, to fulfill it.** Anyone that teaches that the Law of God has done away with, at least in my kingdom, because **"you love me, you keep my commandments." First John, chapter 5, verse 3 — "And My commandments are not burdensome."** It's *their* commandments that they added to it that's so burdensome, it's *their* traditions and doctrines that are choking out My word, not My word. I am the Word made flesh. Take My yoke upon you, and you will have life."

At the end, he literally says this: ⁵¹ ***"You stiff-necked[g] and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."*** Oh, my goodness. ⁵⁴ ***"When they heard these things they were [h]cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth."*** They did not want to hear that, ladies and gentlemen. There is nothing more upset than a Pharisee that just got dogged on by a fisherman or an uneducated man such as Stephen. They were angry, and they went to kill him. They cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. This is critical.

We're going to end with this — the end of chapter 7 introduces the next apostle, the Apostle Paul. And so we'll say this, I'm going to save this for next week, but I am going to dispel in the first five minutes one of the biggest wives' tales that has ever pervaded the Christian church. And that's the gods that God changed Saul's name to Paul; we're going to talk about that next week.

But in the meantime, the clothes of those who were stoning Stephen, they put them at the feet of Saul. Saul was one of the guards that were part of the temple guards. He was part of the temple army, the police, the temple police. They knew they didn't want to get their hands all dirty, their robes torn, bloody, so they took them off, and they put them at the feet of a police officer that they knew would protect them. So Saul is introduced for the first time in the Bible. And he is watching Stephen get stoned, does nothing, protecting the robes. Now, why are the robes so important? Because robes create status, the robe, all right — that's why the Bible talks about "You were taken off your robes, your filthy robes, and given robes of righteousness." Robes were a status symbol based on what they were wearing at the time. What they were made of showed your status. So everyone is taking their status and putting them at the feet of Paul. What's he going to do with this? As he watches them rip Stephen's status away, God is going to call this young man from looking and destroying the status and authority of one of

God's kids. And he's going to force Saul to now do the opposite — to take everyone's status that is in the status of the enemy and de-robe them and put them at the feet of the Messiah, Saul.

His job right here is called a "law." First precedent in biblical hermeneutics or biblical laws of interpretation is we see that Saul's real goal in authority is taking the robes, the authority, and the status of people and putting them on the ground in front of real authority. That's what he's going to do for the rest of his mission. Because he took the authority and the status of Stephen, he is now going to be in charge of taking everyone else's fleshly authority, fleshly status. He's going to de-robe them through his articulation and demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. And he's going to bring them to a place of the cross and he's going to help them lay their robes down so that they can be given new robes of righteousness.

My friends, we've come to the end of this broadcast, but I want you to catch that the shift is beginning to happen. It happens ironically in chapter 7, because number seven is perfection. We're perfecting and coming to a completion of the storyline of Peter. We're going to pick up in chapter 8 where the storyline of Saul is introduced, or Paul is introduced. And what happens from here is this dynamic duo begins, as the first half of Acts is all about Peter, and the second half is going to be all about Paul. This transition is going to be happening right now, moving into chapter 8 next week, as eight is the Hebrew number of new beginnings. So **if you need a new beginning, then here's your answer: Take your robe off, your comfortable status, your comfortable authority, and throw it down like King David did and dance naked before your God.** Don't be ashamed of de-robing before men.

That same Rabbi that I read in prison, that said, "You can only receive the power of God two ways — through prayer or through pain, and you get to choose," he also said this: "That the Holy Spirit only clothes the naked, those that He sees as having de-robed themselves of their own flesh and carnal desires." If He looks and the Holy Spirit sees, because He's masculine, He's the bridegroom, and He's going to clothe His bride. So when you hold the masculine perspective of robing yourself with your own mind, emotions, doing what you want to do, "I'll be darned, I'm going to win this argument, I'm going to do this, and I'm going to do that," and the Holy Spirit wants none of that, then you're not His bride. That's a masculine attribute. The feminine attribute is the characteristic of servanthood, of laying down what you want, and choosing to be naked before God. It's at that moment where God chooses to clothe you in His glory. Those who are least will become greatest, and those who are greatest, wearing the robe, will become released.

My friends, I'll leave you with the story of ancient Israel all the way back to the time of Joseph. Joseph was given a status in his robe of many colors. He wore it proudly. His father gave it to him, but his brothers despised him, out of what? Jealousy, like we talked about earlier. Jealousy led to slander, which led to Joseph being thrown into a well, and then eventually into prison in what was the first step to his glorification — the robe. Destroying a robe, the robe of our own mind and emotions, our soul, and giving our soul over to God. That's the moment that Joseph began, when he was nobody, is when he began to be somebody. I know that feeling deeply of becoming to be somebody when our ministry was at the height in 2015. Then becoming nobody, going into a prison cell, losing my robe, losing my reputation, losing my dignity, crying my eyes out every single night, and having to trust that God knew what He was doing as He de-robed me of my own pride, and then robed me in the righteousness, glory. My friends, never despise your low position. It's the very place that God places His glory on you. Don't look for status and fame, wealth. Rather, look to be glorified in Christ. And that means the death of yourself.

My friends, thank you for spending time with us, your Passion for Truth in this broadcast. Please share this, subscribe to this channel if you're not already, and consider [partnering](#) with us, being part of the solution, of paying it forward so we can bring this message to every tribe and tongue. We need your help, and we're so grateful if you are our prayer partner, our financial partner. If you partner with us, thank you so much for doing that. Less than 1% of those that are ministered to through this ministry actually say thank you by joining with us in a very, very small way financially. So thank you for that, and thank you for being a partner with God in spreading this message. Sharing it means more to us than anything. I can promise you that.

In the meantime, I want you to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. De-robe yourself and let the Holy Spirit do what He does. Miraculously will raise you from the dead and give you power over life and death itself. My friends, I'm Jim Staley with [Passion for Truth Ministries](#), and I'll see you in the next video. Shalom.

Passion For Truth Ministries

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