

So What?
A Template
Acts 6:8 – 8:4

I. Post-Resurrection: So What? (Acts 1:1-6:7)

Points of Emphasis

- Rejoicing (5:41)
- Suffering (5:41)
- Proclaiming (5:42)
- Growth (6:7)

II. The Life and Character of Stephen: So What? (Acts 6:8-15)

Profile

- Full of faith & Holy Spirit (6:5; cf Rom 8:9-11; Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16-25)
- Full of grace & power (6:8)
- Wisdom (6:10)
- Glory of God/Messenger of God (6:15; cf Ex 34:29-35)

III. The Message of Stephen: So What? (Acts 7:1-53)

Pattern

- Answered charges
- Points to Jesus Christ & New Covenant
- Progression in God's plan
 - Blessings not limited to land of Israel and/or temple
 - Israel's history of opposition to God's plan
 - Same approach as Jesus (cf Luke 24:27)

IV. The Death of Stephen: So What? (Acts 7:54-8:3)

Perspectives

- Contrast between opponents & Stephen (cf 1 Pet 4:14)
- Kept eyes fixed on Jesus/Things Above (cf Gal 3:1)
- Results
 - Immediate escalation of persecution (8:1,3)
 - Scattering of Christians & spread of gospel into Judea & Samaria (8:1; cf 1:8)

V. 2010: So What? (Acts 8:4)

Pursuits

- “Therefore” (8:4) = Natural response to persecution is proclamation
- Continuing expansion; environment of opposition
- The template still applies
 - *SO WHAT* about our new life in Jesus Christ?
 - *SO WHAT* about our proclamation/message?
 - *SO WHAT* about preparing to die? (cf 2 Cor 4:7-14)

Life Response

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on Acts 8:4, *Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.*
 - a. Consider the original conditions in which the scattering and preaching took place. How do you view persecution today? Are you willing to “move out” for the sake of the Gospel?
 - b. Reflect on the following passages related to the previous points: John 15:18-16:4; Acts 1:8; 4:18-20; 5:27-42; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 2 Timothy 3:10-12; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 4:12-19
2. Consider what it must have meant that Stephen was “full...of the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 6:5). If you are a Christian, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). What then does it mean to be full of the Holy Spirit in light of the following passages: Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16-25? Why and how do you think being full of the Holy Spirit made such a difference in Stephen’s life and death?
3. After having reflected on the passages above for a few days, prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you those things that are holding you back from living a life of complete faith, grace and power.