

# *The Greatest Story Ever Retold*

David Baumgartner

Acts 6:8–7:60

July 24, 2011



---

## SETTING THE SCENE

- » What was your favorite story growing up as a kid? What made it your favorite? How many times did you read it (or have it read to you)? Why didn't you ever get tired of hearing it? What's your favorite movie now? Do you still watch it over and over again? Why or why not?
- » Think of something you thought was true (either as a kid or even more recently) that you eventually found out wasn't true (don't limit yourself to Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny...try thinking outside the box). How did you eventually find out the truth? How did you react when you found out the "real story"?

---

## THE STUDY

- » Share your overall thoughts and impressions from the sermon this morning. What things stand out to you? What did you learn? Where did God most challenge you? What questions do you still have about the passage or the sermon?
- » If you have the time, read **ACTS 6:8-7:60** out loud as a group (take turns so that one person doesn't have to read it all). What is your initial reaction to this story and how the events unfolded? What do we as a church need to learn from this passage? What specifically do you need to put into practice?
- » What was it that got Stephen in trouble in the first place? What were the key issues they were arguing about? Why did everyone get so frustrated with Stephen and how did they handle their frustration? Why do you think they took Stephen to the High Council instead of letting it go?
- » What was the primary accusation against Stephen according to Acts 6:13-14? Why were these issues so important? What do you think Stephen might have said on these topics to upset them so much? What do you think are our "hot buttons" today? Are they really that important? Explain your answer.
- » Stephen's speech is the longest recorded in the book of Acts. Why do you think Luke included such a long discourse (what was so important that he would be sure to record it here)?
- » What were the key arguments Stephen made against the Promised Land being so important? Who did he use as illustrations to make his point? How do you think the Council viewed his argument? What are the important elements in his argument for us today? What represents the "Promised Land" for modern Christians? Discuss your answer and how we should put our own "Promised Land" into proper perspective.
- » What were Stephen's key arguments against the importance of the Law? Why was the Law so important? What modern equivalent do we have for the Law today? Do we ever place our "Law" above a relationship with God? Explain your answer.
- » What did Stephen say about the Tabernacle and the Temple? Why was the Temple so important during Stephen's time? Do we have a modern example of the Temple and do we place too much importance on it? Again, explain your answer and discuss how we can put into proper perspective.
- » Stephen never states that the Land, the Law, and the Temple are bad...simply that the Israelites had made them more important than a relationship with God. How do we do that today? How do you do that personally? How do we ensure that we keep our relationship in the right place in our lives?
- » Why was the Council so upset with Stephen's vision at the end of this story? (See Mark 14:62). Do you think they calculated their stoning of Stephen or was it just an outburst or mob mentality?
- » Why was it important for Luke to note that Saul was part of this event? What happened to the church after Stephen's stoning? If you were part of the church then, how would you have responded to Stephen's death?

# APPLICATION

- » Share any decision that you may have made this morning...or anything that God is specifically directing you to do in your daily and/or spiritual life to focus more on your relationship with Him.
- » In what ways do you find yourself drawn away from God toward “idols” (which could be anything from religion to television and everything in between)? How can you begin the process of turning from your idols back toward God? What do you think that might entail...what things will you need to do and give up in order to focus more on God? What things do you need to start doing that you’re not doing now?
- » Share with the group how you’re sharing your relationship with God with others. If you can’t think of any, talk together about who and how you can start sharing God with those around you. Talk about what keeps you from sharing your relationship with Him and how you can start to overcome those barriers.
- » Share with the group one specific thing God is asking you to do in your spiritual life that is proving difficult for you to do. Why do you think it’s so hard? How can the group help you?
- » Share any unanswered questions or comments you have as a result of the group discussion or sermon...

---

## PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- » Next week we delve deeper into the persecution of the church as it continues to expand in **ACTS 8:1-25**. Read this passage over and share your initial thoughts and reactions to what was happening to the early church. How did the church respond to the persecution?
- » Do you think the fact that the church hadn’t yet spread beyond Jerusalem was a factor in the persecution (specifically because they hadn’t obeyed Jesus’ full command in Acts 1:8)? Discuss and explain your answer. What are the implications for us today?
- » Read this passage a few times this week and journal your thoughts and questions. Ask God to show you what you need to learn and put into practice from this part of the story.

---

## CARING COMMUNITY

- » **SHARE** with the group how God has been speaking into your life or challenging you this past week (this may be as a result of the sermon or something in your personal journey). Is there anything from this week’s LifeGroup discussion you need to work on?
- » Are there any **NEEDS** you have coming up in your life that the group can help you with (this may include spiritual needs, life needs, pretty much anything...)
- » **PRAY** for one another. Share your requests and praises with one another. Write them down here. If you commit to praying, please be sure you do it...