

WITNESSES

WITNESSING LEADERSHIP

Acts 6-7 (pg. 972)

The background is a textured, yellowish-gold surface with various black arrows and dots scattered across it. The arrows point in different directions: some straight, some curved, some with dotted lines trailing behind them. There are also clusters of dots. A large, white, jagged shape resembling a lightning bolt or a torn piece of paper is on the right side. The overall aesthetic is abstract and artistic.

1) GROWING PAINS (6:1-7)

¹In those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

²The Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables.

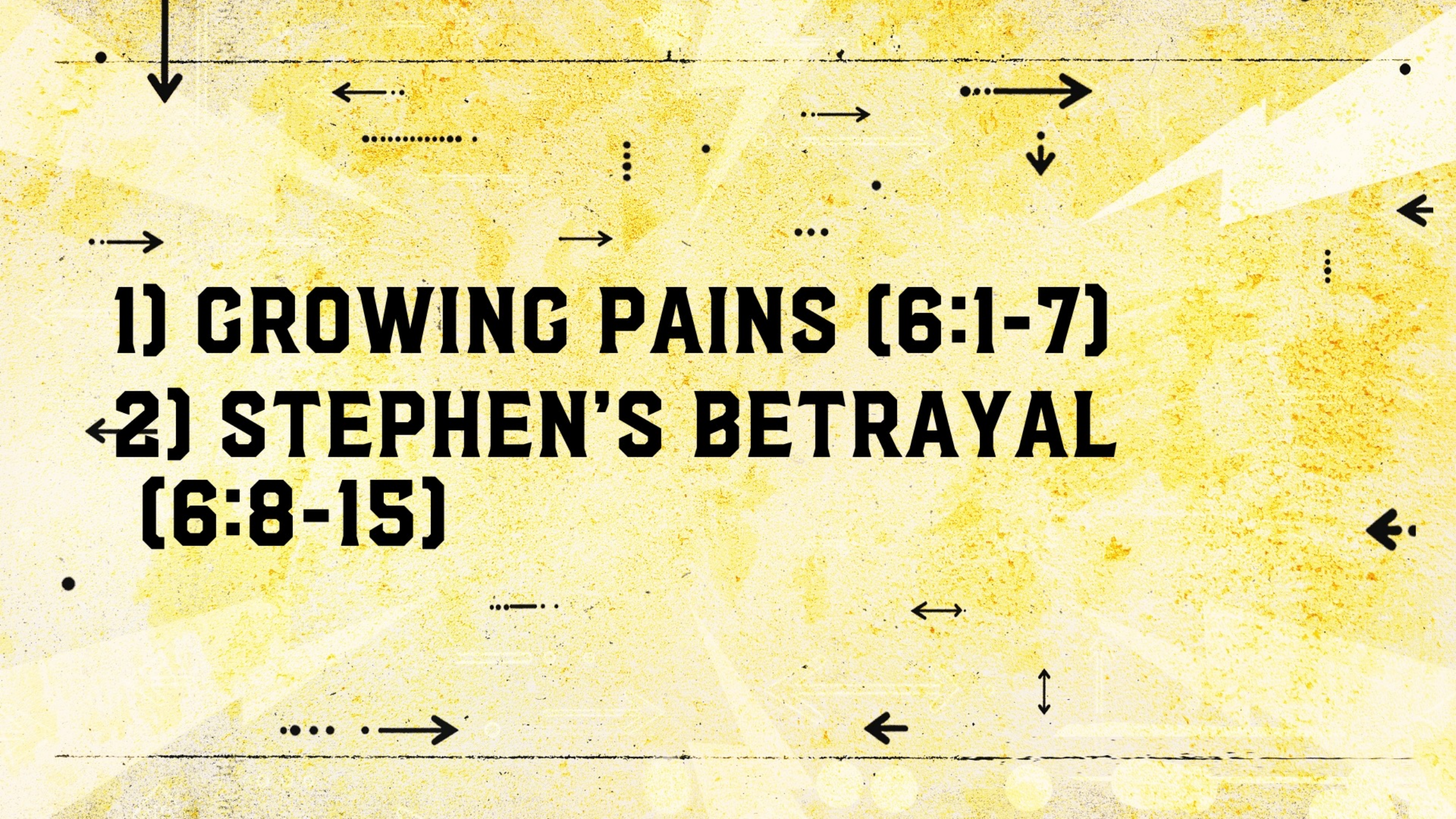
³Brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

“We have now seen the three tactics which the devil employed in his overall strategy to destroy the church. First, he tried through the Jewish authorities to suppress it by force; secondly through the married couple Ananias and Sapphira to corrupt it by hypocrisy; and thirdly through some squabbling widows to distract its leadership from prayer and preaching, and so expose it to error and evil. If he had succeeded in any of these attempts, the new community of Jesus would have been annihilated in its infancy.”

JOHN STOTT

⁵This proposal pleased the whole company. So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert from Antioch. ⁶They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

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- 1) GROWING PAINS (6:1-7)**
← 2) STEPHEN'S BETRAYAL
(6:8-15)

⁸Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Opposition arose, however, from some members of the Freedmen's Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, and they began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰But they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

¹¹Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹²They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; so they came, seized him, and took him to the Sanhedrin. ¹³They also presented false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the law." ¹⁴For we heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." ¹⁵And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

1) GROWING PAINS (6:1-7)

2) STEPHEN'S BETRAYAL
← (6:8-15)

3) STEPHEN'S SERMON
• (7:1-53)

“Stephen’s discourse can be understood as centering around one point: God’s transcendent presence will not be limited by any building, region, or even people group; it is found in the person of Jesus.”

PATRICK SCHREINER

²“Brothers and fathers,” he replied, “listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, ³and said to him: Leave your country and relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.

9“The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him ¹⁰and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household.

¹⁷“As the time was approaching to fulfill the promise that God had made to Abraham, the people flourished and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸until a different king who did not know Joseph ruled over Egypt. ¹⁹He dealt deceitfully with our race and oppressed our ancestors by making them abandon their infants outside so that they wouldn’t survive. ²⁰At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in God’s sight. He was cared for in his father’s home for three months. ²¹When he was put outside, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted and raised him as her own son. ²²So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions.

29“When he heard this, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. 30 After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush.

31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he was approaching to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: 32 **I am the God of your ancestors — the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.** Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look.

³⁵“This Moses, whom they rejected when they said, **Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?** — this one God sent as a ruler and a deliverer through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶This man led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years.

37“This is the Moses who said to the Israelites: **God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers.** **38**He is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors. He received living oracles to give to us. **39**Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him. Instead, they pushed him aside, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

⁴⁸but the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries
made with hands, as the prophet says:

⁴⁹**Heaven is my throne,
and the earth my footstool.**

**What sort of house will you build for me?
says the Lord,
or what will be my resting place?**

⁵⁰**Did not my hand make all these things?**

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit. As your ancestors did, you do also. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become. ⁵³You received the law under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it.”

1) GROWING PAINS (6:1-7)

2) STEPHEN'S BETRAYAL
(6:8-15)

3) STEPHEN'S SERMON
(7:1-53)

4) STEPHEN'S BETRAYAL,
PART 2 (7:54-60)

⁵⁴When they heard these things, they were enraged and gnashed their teeth at him.

⁵⁵Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶He said, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 They yelled at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed against him.

58 They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And after saying this, he fell asleep.

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." And they divided his clothes and cast lots

And Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, **into your hands I entrust my spirit.**" Saying this, he breathed his last.

LUKE 23:34, 46

“If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they **persecuted** me, they will also **persecute** you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But they will do all these things to you on account of **my name**, because they don’t know the one who sent me.”

JOHN 15:18-21



FAITHFUL
FRUITFUL
INTENTIONAL

WITNESSES

WITNESSING LEADERSHIP

Acts 6-7