

“Problems Within,
Problems Without”

[illegible]

What is the greatest threat
to the church, internal or
external problems?



Fundamental Christianity— Caring for widows and orphans

Isaiah 1:17

¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek
justice.

Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the
fatherless;
plead the case of the
widow.

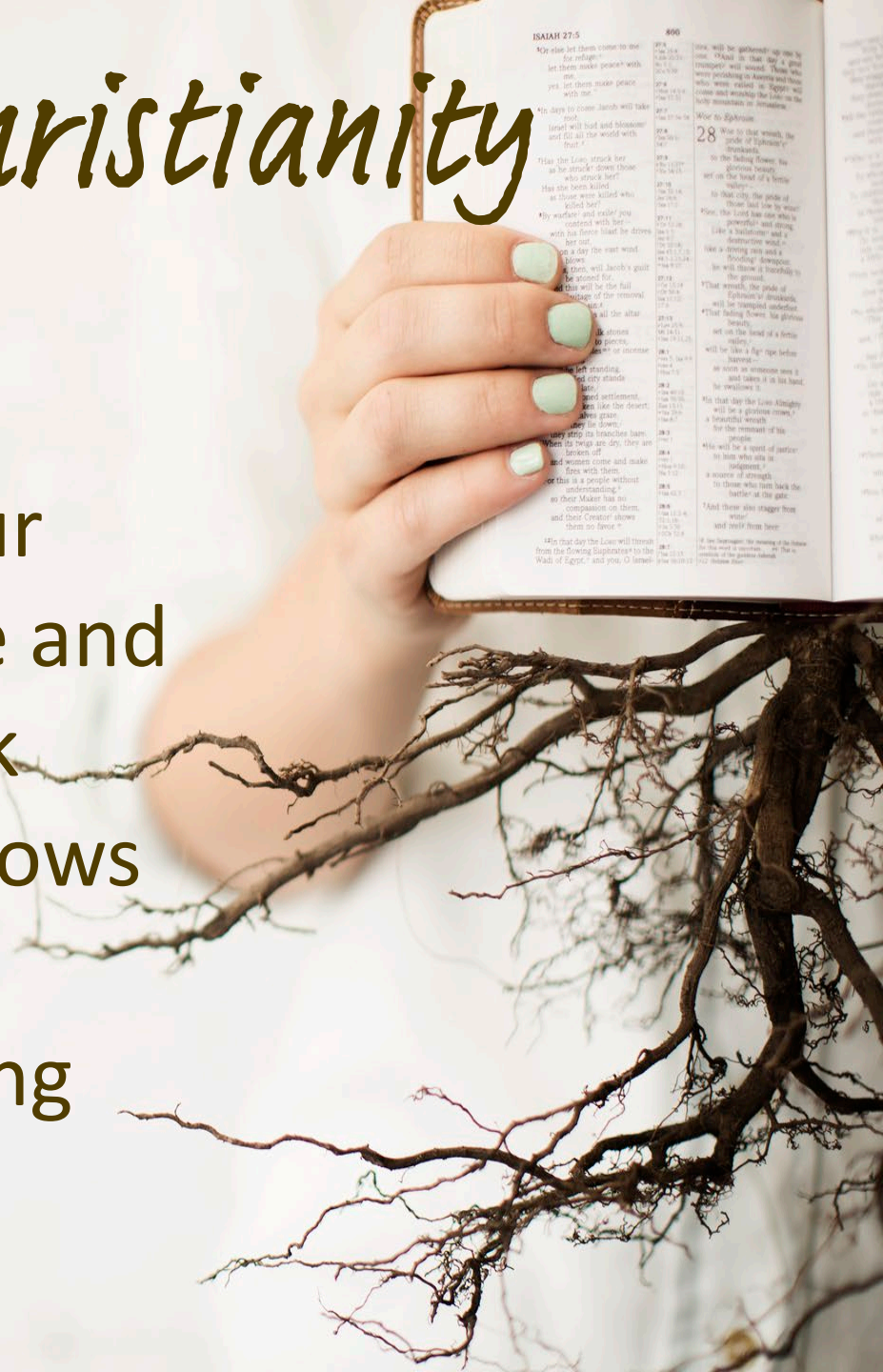


Fundamental Christianity

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our

Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.



This presented a "good problem"

Acts 6:1

6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews^[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food



The threat was division

The answer was wisdom, prayer and delegation

Acts 6:2-4

² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."



And the Church THRIVED



Good Results invites big bullies

Acts 6:12-13

¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

¹³ They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.



Stephen was up for the task

One of the greatest sermons ever recorded

He began with common ground

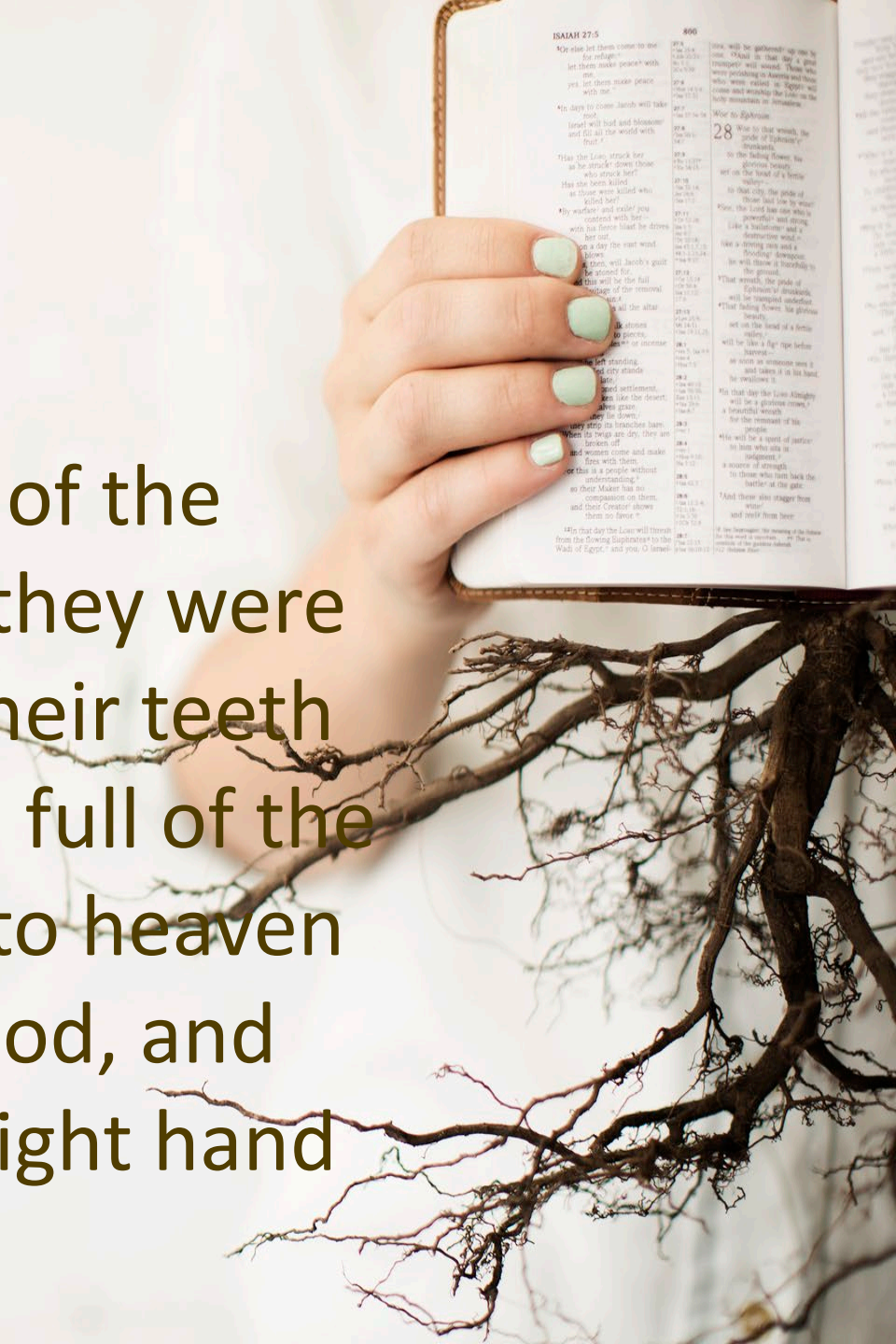
And led them straight to Jesus



The result

Acts 7:54-58

⁵⁴ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.



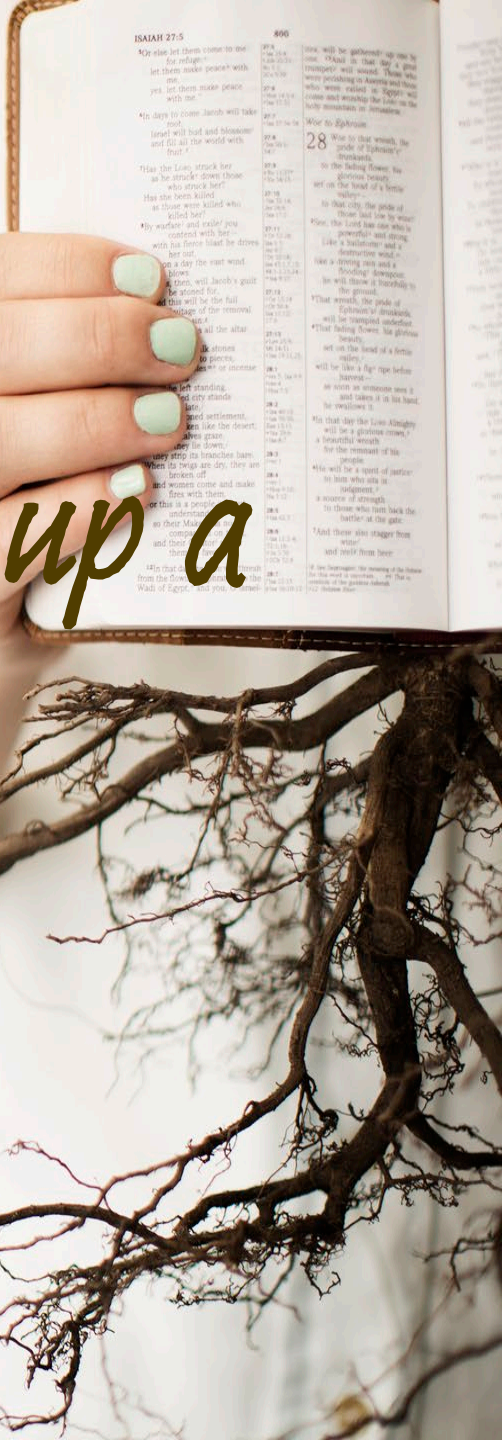
Acts 7:54-58 (cont)

⁵⁶ “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul



Stephen's death brings up a lot of "whys"



John 17:20-26

ISAIAH 27:5

He also let them come to me,
for eagles—
let them make peace—with me,
yet, let them make peace,
with me.

26 In days to come Jacob will take
root,
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill all the world with fruit.¹

27 As the Lion struck her
as he struck down those
who struck her!
As she been killed
as those were killed who
killed her!
My surface² and radiance you
contact with her—
with his force blast he drove
her out.
On a day the east wind
blow,
then, will Jacob's guilt
be atoned for,
as this will be the full
outage of the removal
of sin.³
All the altar
be destroyed,
as stones
be pieces,
as light of incense
be left standing,
and city stands
into,
and settlement,
men like the desert,
above grass
they lie down;
they strip its branches bare.
When its twigs are dry, they are
broken off,
and women come and make
fire with them,
or this is a people without
understanding,⁴
as their Maker has no
compassion on them,
and their Creator shows
them no favor.⁵

28 In that day the Lion will thresh
from the flowing Siphon⁶ to the
Wadi of Egypt,⁷ and you, O land,

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Remember the prayer of Jesus (cont.)

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25 “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you^[a] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

