



Wisdom & The Spirit

A C T S 6 : 8 - 1 5

Acts So Far

- Acts 1-3: Birth of the early church (coming of Holy Spirit, early expansion)
- Acts 4-6:7: Complications begin arising both within and outside the church (persecution by the Jewish authority, early church corruption, cultural conflicts, conversion of Jewish priests)



[⁸] And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. [⁹] Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. [¹⁰] But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. [¹¹] Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”

Acts 6:8-15

[12] And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, [13] and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, [14] for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” [15] And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Acts 6:8-15

The Ancient Jewish Diaspora

- The First Exile: 730 BC Assyria dismantled and expelled Jews from the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- The Second Exile: 600 BC Babylon dismantled and expelled Jews from the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- The Return: 530 BC Some Jews returned to Israel, rebuilt the temple, and re-established an Israeli Nation. Many Jews did not return.
- Diaspora Jews in Jesus' Time: Many Jews continued to live across the ancient world, adopting their home cultures languages and some cultural practices, but still maintained their Jewish faith and identity.



Acts 6:8–10: The Pre-Eminence of the Word

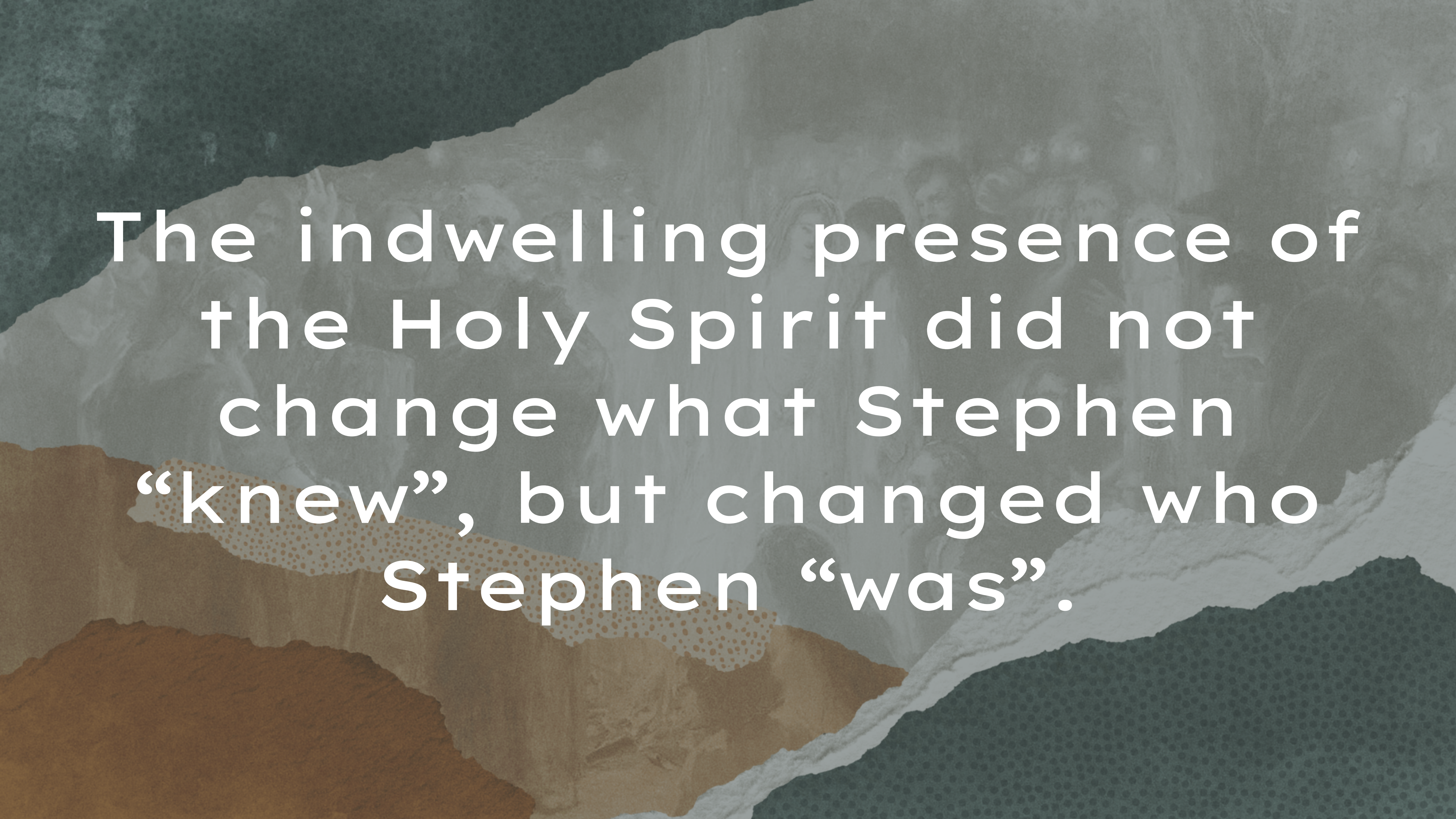
- [8] Though Stephen was tasked with meeting material needs, proclaiming the gospel became an equal (if not more important) component of his ministry.
- [9] Other Diaspora Jews became hostile towards him and his message, perhaps fearing their own status.
- [10] It was not “Signs and Wonders” that silenced his Diaspora critics, but the presence of the Holy Spirit and a wise understanding of Scripture.

**A study of scripture does not offer us
answers to difficult questions,
but intimate closeness with the Triune God.**

Acts 6:11–15: The Spark that Ignited The World

- [11] Unable to properly debate Stephen, the Diaspora Jews began manipulating his words to trigger a public outcry.
- [12-14] The Diaspora Jews framed Stephens words as an attack on The Jews, which enraged the Jewish public.
- [15] Not only did this attack not faze Stephen, it provided him his most public stage yet to proclaim his transformed relationship with God.

Our kinship in Christ must be our primary identity else we also become enraged by the Gospel.



The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit did not change what Stephen “knew”, but changed who Stephen “was”.

How then shall we live?

- Practice the presence of the Holy Spirit through personal, meaningful times of prayer.
- Study the Word that we might know and be shaped by who God is.
- Glorify God through sharing your faith, for you were created for no higher purpose than that.
- Choose to dwell on your identity in Christ in order to find peace in a world of confusing and conflicting identities.

Christ's death
purchased for us the
indwelling presence of
the Holy Spirit granting
us a final identity.