



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of February 9, 2025

Acts 6:8-15

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." 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.

1. Stephen was a man full of faith, grace, power and the Holy Spirit, doing great wonders and signs among the people and refuting the Jews with wisdom. And yet, very shortly, he will be martyred for his strong unwavering faith. Why do you think God would allow such a tragic end to someone who was so faithful? What do you think about a God like that?
2. In spite of Stephen's wisdom and demonstrations of power from the Holy Spirit, the "freedmen" refused to believe and instead spread lies about Stephen, seized him, and had him brought before the council. Why did these men hate Stephen so much? And why do you think they simply would not believe in Jesus, despite such overwhelming evidence? What does this teach us about our own evangelism?
3. In v.7 just prior to this week's passage, Luke says that many of the priests became obedient to the faith. In doing so, they gave up their titles, status, reputation and livelihood. Why do you think a Christian is willing to sacrifice so much to follow Jesus and what does this teach you about the transforming, life changing power of Christ? Have you experienced this in your own life? Explain.
4. In Luke 21:10-18, Jesus prophesied that His disciples would have to endure persecution and be delivered up to synagogues and brought before kings. In v.13-15 He said, "*This will be your opportunity to bear witness. 14 Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.*" What does this tell us about how God's church is going to be built and who it is that's going to build it? How should this motivate Christians to pray?
5. The Freedmen could not, and would not believe in a gospel of grace and forgiveness because they held fast to the Law and a works-based righteousness. Which begs the question, why can't people save

themselves? Why must our salvation come from outside ourselves? Why is it so hard for unbelievers to accept the grace, forgiveness, and salvation that comes only through Christ?

6. Try to imagine what Luke describes in verse 15 when he wrote that the council saw that Stephen's face was like the face of an angel. What do you think they might have seen? What do you think you would do if you saw this? What do you think the council did? What does this tell us about an unbeliever's unbelief? Is it rational?