

Acts 6: 8-15

A Faithful Spirit Filled Man

- The transition between Peter's ministry and Paul's ministry is through Stephen, a faithful Spirit filled preacher. He was not a prophet but preached the word with power
 - Stephen is not an Apostle but he was given the power to work miracles as an affirmation that he was speaking for God
 - He was not a Deacon but he was selected with the seven by the church to serve the widows. The office of deacon would be delineated by Paul later to Timothy and Titus
 - Stephen is the first martyr and the catalyst which God used to spread the church out into all Judea and Samaria according to Christ's commission - Acts 8:1 -
- I. The Man and the Message - Acts 6:8 - Matthew 21:1-11 -
- A. The God given attributes of Stephen - Acts 6:5 - Faith and the Holy Spirit
1. Full of Faith - Stephen believed that God was in Sovereign control of his life which we see evidenced in his defense - Acts 7:1-51
 - a) Romans 14:7-8 - "For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."
 - b) Faith in Jesus as the Messiah - Acts 7:52-53 - The Righteous One
 - c) Faith in Jesus as the Risen Messiah now seated and the Father's right hand - Acts 7:55-56
 - d) Faith in Jesus as the Messiah who watches over His people - Acts 7:59-60
 - e) Faith in the Holy Spirit - Acts 7:51 - Mark 9:24 - Help my unbelief, daily
 2. Full of the Holy Spirit - Acts 7:55
 - a) The great truth of every believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit - Ephesians 5:18
Note - For every Christian to be full of faith and the Holy spirit is to trust and obey
 3. Full of Grace - Acts 6:8
 - a) Stephen not only received God's grace but he administered grace to others - Acts 7:59-60 - The words of Jesus on the cross - Luke 23:34
 4. Full of Power - Acts 6:8
 - a) Only the Apostles, Stephen, Philip, and Barnabas performed miracles, confirmation
 - b) A Christian is full of faith towards God, yielded to the Holy Spirit, taking the counsel of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), will administer grace to others, and manifest the power of the Holy Spirit. - Ephesians 1:13-23
 - c) Stephen is a model of God's grace and power for all Christians because he was filled with obedient faith and the Holy Spirit -
- B. A Joshua Man who is Bold and Courageous - Acts 6:9-14 - Joshua 1:5-6
1. Those who were enraged with Jesus Christ debated with Stephen - Saul of Tarsus which is in Cilicia might have been one who debated with Stephen - Acts 21:39

2. According to the Talmud there were 480 synagogues at this time
 - a) The Freedmen were descendants of the enslavement of Pompey in 63 BC. They were later freed and established a community in Rome.
 - b) Cyrenians and Alexandrians - Large cities in North Africa
 - c) Cilicia and Asia - Roman provinces in Asia Minor

3. The content of the debate is not stated but can be inferred by the charges in Acts 6:13-14 and Stephen's defense.
 - a) No doubt the debate revolved around Jesus being the Messiah, His death, burial and resurrection according to the Old Testament - 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
 - b) The debate would have included the inability of the Mosaic Law and the Temple sacrifices to save.

4. The debaters could not cope with the wisdom of God and the Spirit of God which Stephen was filled with so they resorted to false witnesses as with Christ.
 - a) Matthew 26:59-61
 - b) Blasphemy, speaking evil of something God had deemed sacred which was punishable by death, was the charge - Leviticus 24:16
 - c) The blasphemy was first addressed to Moses then to God which implies that they valued the Law more than God - Acts 6:11
 - d) The charge against the Temple would imply that Stephen had proclaimed the Jesus as the savior and Jesus's works had validated His Deity - John 10:30-38
 - e) The charge against the customs handed down by Moses - The proclamation of the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant
 - (1) Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - f) Stephen was courageous to rebuke his accusers - Acts 7:51-53

5. God's Visible Approval - Acts 6:15
 - a) Exodus 34:27-35
 - b) 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

6. Every believer should see Stephen as a man who "walked in a manner worthy of the calling of Christ" -