

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

### Acts Chapter 6: The Persecution of Stephen (p. 1012) \*

1. Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to solve the problem of discrimination in the community of believers- local traditional Jews against the Greek speaking Jews from other cities. These are considered to be the first deacons (servants in the church responsible for practical tasks and physical needs of the community).
2. He and the others were chosen because they were considered honest and “full of the Spirit and wisdom.”
3. The apostles prayed and laid hands on him and the other six chosen men. (He was ordained- appointed or set aside for a specific role, usually used for the church leaders to recognize someone thought to be answering a call from God).
4. The characteristics which led to this recognition of Stephen were:
  - Full of the Spirit and wisdom (v. 3)
  - A man full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit (v. 5)
  - Full of God’s grace and power (v. 8)
  - Performer of great wonders and signs (v. 8)
5. Opposition came to Stephen because of:
  - The word of God spread and even some of the Jewish traditional priests were becoming “obedient to the faith.” (v 7)
  - This simple deacon or servant was performing signs and wonders. (v. 8)
  - Those who argued against him couldn’t stand up against the wisdom given to him by the Holy Spirit. (v. 10)
  - When they could not debate him truthfully, they gossiped against him, stirred people up with lies and false witnesses, and though they watched him intently they could still see the light of God in him. (v.15)
  - This is evidence of what Jesus told them about persecution before he was taken and crucified:  
Luke 21:12-15 (p. 976)- persecution provides an opportunity to bear testimony to Jesus (v. 14-15 promise that the Holy Spirit will give us “words and wisdom” that our enemies will not be able to contradict).

When someone is described as “having a face like the face of an angel,” it means that they reflect God’s glory and presence. This wasn’t new to the council. The same was said about Moses when he had been in God’s presence. Exodus 34:29-35 (p. 83)

See also Hebrews 1:3 (p. 1102), Psalm 34:5, and 2 Corinthians 4:6 (p. 1068)

\*All page numbers refer to the ESV Bible distributed during the church retreat.