

Monday 7:30pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by doughnut/vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by Pastor Chuck Smith, David Hocking, John Stott, Vernon McGee, Warren Wiersbe and others.

THE REASONS BEHIND HIS ABILITY TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:8

Act 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith

and power,

did great wonders and signs among the people.

THE REACTIONS THAT FORCED HIM TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:9- 14

Act 6:9 Then there arose some from what is (disputing with Stephen)

called the Synagogue of the Freedmen

(Cyrenians, Alexandrians,

and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.

FAITH – the ability to trust God in the midst of difficult circumstances – cf - Hebrews 11:32-40

THE REASONS BEHIND HIS ABILITY TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:8

v.8 “full of faith” – Stephen’s faith was because of the SUFFICIENCY of God’s grace - “full of grace” - cf - 2 Corinthians 9:8; 12:7-10; 1 Peter 5:10

v. 8 “full of faith and power, - “full... of power” - The STRENGTH of God’s power - cf - Acts 6:5 – “full ...of the Holy Spirit” - cf - Acts 4:31, 33 and Acts 1:8; Philippians 4:13

v. 8 “great wonders and signs (miracles)” - Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4

THE REACTIONS THAT FORCED HIM TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:9- 14

v. 9 “arose, disputing with Stephen”. - Continual ARGUMENTS – Acts 6:9-10 -Stephen was also a Hellenist – cf - Acts 6:1, 5

v. 9 “synagogue of the Freedmen” – The SOURCE of these arguments – descendants of Jewish slaves – Pompey in 61 B.C. and others “from Cilicia (Saul of Tarsus) and Asia”

v. 9 “Cyrenians” – Simon – Luke 23:26; Acts 2:10; 11:20; The Talmud speaks of 480 synagogues in Jerusalem. Are there two synagogues or one or five? The decree of Tiberius in 19 A.D. expelled Jews from Rome. They returned to Jerusalem in great numbers – 4000 in Sardinia.

v. 9 “from Cilicia” - (Tarsus was the capital city) – cf. Acts 7:58; 8:1-3 - Note Saul’s presence and probable involvement in the stoning of Stephen.

“STEPHEN: FULL OF FAITH” - Acts 6:8-15

- **THE REASONS BEHIND HIS ABILITY TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:8**
- **THE REACTIONS THAT FORCED HIM TO TRUST GOD – Acts 6:9- 14**
- **THE RESULT FROM ONE WHO TRUSTS GOD IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES – Acts 6:15**

After the coming of the Holy Spirit and the counter attack of Satan, the church is almost ready to initiate its world-wide mission. So far it has been composed only of Jews and restricted to Jerusalem.

Now, however, the Holy Spirit is about to thrust His people out into the wider world, and the apostle Paul is to be God’s chosen instrument to pioneer this development.

But first, in the next six chapter of the Acts, Luke will explain how the foundations of the Gentile missions were laid by two remarkable men (Stephen, the martyr and Philip the evangelist), followed by two remarkable conversions (Saul, the Pharisee and Cornelius the centurion).

These four men, each in his own way, together with Peter, through whose ministry Cornelius was converted, made an indispensable contribution to the global expansion of the church.

Notice here the attacks, the disputes came from Stephen’s own kind of people-those speaking the Grecian language

“STEPHEN; FULL OF FAITH” -- ACTS 6:8-15

OBSERVATION

Act 6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

Act 6:11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words

against Moses and God."

Act 6:12 And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council.

Act 6:13 They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;

Act 6:14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

INTERPRETATION

v. 10 “they were not able to resist” - The SUCCESS of these arguments – cf - Luke 20:26 – there were over 100,000 Jews in Alexandria

v. 11 "they secretly induced men to say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words”– False ACCUSATIONS – Acts 6:11-14 - cf - Matthew 5:10-12

v. 11 “against Moses and God.” Concerning his words about Moses and God – Blasphemy – a capital crime – Deuteronomy 13:6-10

v. 12 “seized him, and brought him to the council.” Having been thwarted in an open debate, Stephen’s detractors resorted to a smear campaign and here they seize him and bring him before the Sanhedrin

v. 13 “also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;” - Concerning his words about the temple and the Law cf - John 2:19-22; Matthew 26:61; 27:40

v. 14 “we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” – They now circulate a rumor that Stephen had blasphemed against Moses and against God!

APPLICATION

Synagogue of the Freedman:

There were in the city of Jerusalem a number of synagogues that had been formed by Greek-speaking Jews from various parts of the world. To these synagogues Stephen evidently went and preached in Greek, thus giving testimony to his faith in Jesus Christ. Dr. Luke records five of them. One was the synagogue of the Freedman. That sounds as if it would be something almost Christian in emphasis, but these were not spiritually freed men; they were physically freed. This synagogue was founded by Jews who had been slaves in the Roman empire and had later been set free. Then there were two groups from Africa: the synagogues of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians. Also there were two from what we presently call Asia Minor, or Turkey: Cilicia, and Asia, two of the Roman provinces of that day. Now it is interesting that the capital of Cilicia was Tarsus, and undoubtedly in this synagogue was a young man named Saul of Tarsus who was among those who disputed with Stephen when he came preaching Jesus Christ. Saul also was among those of whom it is said here, "But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he (Stephen) spoke." Here was this brilliant young Jew, Saul of Tarsus, later to become the Apostle Paul, who, as a Jew, was tremendously stirred by the things that he heard Stephen say about Jesus Christ. He arose and disputed, but he could not answer Stephen. That must have been a gall to this young man, a blow to his pride, that he could not answer him from the Scriptures, since Saul prided himself as an authority on the Scriptures because he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the great teacher.

**THE RESULT FROM ONE WHO TRUSTS
GOD IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES –
Acts 6:15**

**Act 6:15 And all who sat in the council,
looking steadfastly at him,**

saw his face as the face of an angel.

**THE RESULT FROM ONE WHO TRUSTS GOD IN
DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES – Acts 6:15**

**v. 15 “looking steadfastly at him, - The ATTENTION he received
- “fixing their gaze on him”**

**v. 15 “saw his face as the face of an angel” - “The
APPEARANCE he manifested “his face as (like) the face of an
angel” - cf - Matthew 28:2-3; Luke 2:9 - “glory of the Lord” – cf. 2
Corinthians 3:7-18**

**How did Luke know about all of this? His dearest friend, Paul,
was an eye witness! – cf - Acts 7:58; 8:1**

**If the result of the entire witness of your life
helped result in the salvation of another Saul,
Billy Graham, or some other person, totally used
by the Lord, how effective and successful would
your witness be or have been?**

**Can you envision yourself ever being a martyr
for Jesus Christ?**

Questions:

1. What, if any, effect do you think the witness/
martyrdom of Stephen have to do with Paul's
conversion? Why or why not?
2. When looking at this chapter, do you think the
following is true or false. “Faith in God is
primarily that of trusting Him in times or in the
midst of difficulties.”
3. Why do you think some prayers regarding the
asking for the ending of difficult circumstances
are answered and some aren't? Is it because lack
of faith?
4. Does Hebrews, chapter 11 teach that those saints
who were delivered from martyrdom, had more
faith than those that didn't?
5. Verse 8 – “*And Stephen, full of faith and power,
did great wonders and signs among the people.* Do
you think Stephen had superhuman ability to
endure the stoning? How would you have
handled the situation if you were Stephen?
6. Do you think you would have had the ability to do
what he did? The faith? Whose power was it?
Who is the enabler?
7. How do you be a witness for God in a difficult
place? Who do you have to rely upon?
8. Do you think God brings experiences into our
lives to force us to trust Him? Has this happened
to you?
9. Verse 9 indicates the beginning of a dispute
between Stephen and the crowd. Do you quit
witnessing for the sake of not arguing?
10. Do you think that Saul, himself, may have been
one of the Freedman arguing with Stephen? V. 9
11. Do you think verse 15 in describing Stephen
indicates that Stephen was a very good looking, an
attractive man?
12. Can you see how the presence of the Lord was
with Stephen in verse 15? Do you think the Lord
has Stephen where He wants him? For what
reason?