

# **Stephen: A Man With a Face Like an Angel**

Acts 6:8-15

## **Introduction**

**"synagogue"**

**"disputed"**

**"secretly instigated"**

Unable to prevail publicly contending with truth, they withdraw privately to conspire to induce men to lie, to commit perjury.

*"and gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel"* (v15)

i.e., calm, peaceful, steady, unflinching, resolute, fearless.

Earlier, the apostles stood before the same council and spoke truth:

*"And they recognized that that they had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13).

*"you will recognize them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:16).

Compare the countenance of Stephen to his rage-filled murderous executors!

*How does one gain such a countenance as Stephen?*

**That which fills you, controls you.**

Stephen was **"full of"** [abundant, ample, complete] therefore, *controlled by five internal features*:

- 1) *the Spirit,*
- 2) *wisdom,*
- 3) *faith,*
- 4) *grace,*
- 5) *power* (Acts 6:3,5,8).

We can see the result: **calm, confident, courageous.**

Jesus said you can know what's *inside* someone's heart by observing what's being produced *outside*.

## **Five Controlling Characteristics of Courageous Christians**

### **1. Spirit-filled**

To be Spirit-filled is to seek God's will and obey it. This, all believers are called to:

*"...be filled with the Spirit"* (Ephesians 5:18). This is an *imperative*, a command.

That believers *were sealed* is an *indicative* – it is certain, realized (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22).

Being *Spirit-filled* is seeking to live consistently under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Barnabas “was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24).

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25

Romans 8:3-6

Galatians 5:16

## 2. Wisdom

Holy Spirit illuminated, biblical Truth accurately and diligently applied to life.

This is *wisdom from above*. This we are all promised if we sincerely seek it from God.

“A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.” Ecclesiastes 8:1

“Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.” Proverbs 4:8

“A wicked man puts on a bold face, but the upright gives thought to his ways.” Proverbs 21:29

It is God visiting His faithful saint seeking wisdom from above that receives the blessing of a glowing countenance.

“Light the candle within and the face without will shine.”

Ephesians 5:15-17

James 3:17-18

## 3. Faith

To be filled with faith is to trust God fully in any and every circumstance.

*When do we need faith the most?*

Jesus gives us 5 main examples of “little faith” all in Matthew:

- 1) When we are anxious about life (Matt 6:25-34).
- 2) When we are afraid of perishing (Matt 8:23-27).
- 3) When we ‘step out’ of our comfort zone (Matt 14:28-33).
- 4) When we see no visible means of provision (Matt 16:5-10).
- 5) When we attempt great things for Jesus (Matt 17:14-20).

## 4. Grace

This undeserved favor from God comes from walking by the Spirit in faith and obedience.

Stephen demonstrated grace *received* and grace *given*. He was kind, gentle, polite, and obliging.

## 5. Power

This is divine power. All believers possess the ability to harness divine power.

Acts 4:32-33

**Counterfeit Power** = that which is desired for selfish reasons that glorify man and not God.

"there was a man named Simon,..." Acts 8:9-10

Acts 8:18-20

Ephesians 3:16-21

"for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7

"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16

**The result of being full of the Spirit, wisdom, faith, grace, and power: *Calm, Confident, and Courageous.***

"let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16