

## The Acts of the Apostles

[ Wed. Jun. 11, 2014] Acts Series, Acts 6:8-15 - Craig A. Thurman  
Chapter 6

8 *And Stephen, full of faith*

πίστεως, genitive sing;

Most contemporary versions of the Bible at this place translate from the Greek word χάριτος and therefore have *grace*. There is only one instance in all of Scripture that I could find that states one full of grace, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jn.1.14)

*Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

*Joh 1:16 And of ἐκ his fulness have all we received, and grace for ἀντὶ grace. (What He had we received; like an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, evil for evil, railing for railing ... grace for grace. The same in kind.)*

ἀντὶ, contrasted to Mt.2.22; 20.28; Lk.11.11; answering or against Mt.5.38;

And to be fair, there is only one man stated to be full of faith, and this is Stephen, and it is said of him twice in this part of our chapter. And therefore I would, in light of other Scriptures, say that he was filled to the extent that a the people of God can be filled. We should be increased in knowledge and grow in grace. (2Pe.3.18) No doubt that we should increase in our fruit of the Spirit, which includes the facet of faith. (Gal.5.22; 2Pe.1.5) And that we should grow in grace. (2Pe.1.2) But never is one said to be full of grace, but our Lord. We might be increased, but our Lord is full. We receive of His and it is incomprehensible that any of God's finite creatures can ever be said to be full in the sense that our Lord Jesus Christ is. We simply receive of His. Like drawing water from a good well. Our vessel might be filled from that source and drawn up thousands of times, but the well is always the same; it is always full.

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*and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

*power, δυνάμειος, gen sing of δυνάμις, KJV mighty work, power, ability, virtue, miracles, workers, strength, violence, might, abundance.*

In verse 5 it reads, *Stephen, a man full of faith and **of the Holy Ghost***

The power by which this man operated in his service, even before being called as a deacon, as one of the seven (Acts 21.8), was by the power of the Holy Ghost, and not human charisma, intellect, or physical strength. None of those things were noted of this man. Rather, he was a holy man, used for a holy service by the Holy Ghost.

*Ac 1:8 **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:** and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

*Ro 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the **power of the Holy Ghost.***

He was full of faith and power, or the Holy Ghost. In other words Stephen had a plenteous supply of faith and power by the Holy Spirit in his daily life. That was who this man was.

9 ¶ *Then there arose*

ἀνέστησαν δέ, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, pl, aor 1, ind; But there arose (again? Some 15 times in the N.T. of 97 times this verb is translated with the sense of *again*. Those instances where *again* is used is in reference to the death of the one *standing up* or *arising*, perhaps to emphasize the unusual act.), ἀνά from above, re- again +, ἵστημι stand;

This verb might indicate another resistance is raised against the church. The conflict never ceases. There might be periods of temporal reprieve,

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but always be prepared, because the battle continues. (Eph.6.11 *Put on the whole armor ...*)

*certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

We note the use of the word synagogue συναγωγή here. The Temple and synagogues are differing places of meeting.

*Joh 18:20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the **synagogue**, and in the **temple**, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.*

There was only one Temple, but many synagogues.

*Mt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their **synagogues**, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

Evidently, synagogues became instituted **since** the Jewish return from Babylon,

*Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, William Smith, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, vol.4, p.3134, ' (3) During the exile, in the abeyance of the Temple – worship, the meetings of devout Jews probably became more systematic ... and must have helped forward the change which appears so conspicuously at the time of the Return.'*

*A Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, Hendrickson Publishers, vol. 4, p.636, 'In all probability, the germs of the future institution of the synagogue should be sought during the Babylonian exile.*

...

Hence we may confidently place the origin of the synagogue in Palestine at the period of the Persian domination. There is indeed no express and unmistakable mention of the synagogue either in the

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Persian or in the first two centuries of the Greek era. Even the narratives about the religious persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes are silent as to synagogues.'

and they were salted throughout the nation of Israel,

*Mt.1.21 Capernaum; Mk.1.39 all Galilee; Nazareth Lk.4.16;*

and among the nations.

*Acts 9.2 Damascus; 13.5 Salamis; 13.14 Antioch, Pisidia; 14.1 Iconium; 17.1 Thessalonica; 17.10 Berea; 17.17 Ephesus; 18.4 Corinth; 18.19 Ephesus, etc.*

Our Lord Jesus had visited these during his earthly ministry.

*Mt 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

*Joh 18:20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.*

In them our Lord worshipped and did some of his mightiest works. (cf. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4, p.3133)

*Lk.4.16 And he came to Nazareth, **where he had been brought up:** and, **as his custom was,** he **went into the synagogue** on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

*Mk.1.21 And they (Christ and his disciples) went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and **taught.***

*22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*

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23 ¶ And there was **in their synagogue** a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

(cf. also Mt.12.9 teaching and healing of the outstretch hand instantly on the Sabbath day; Lk.13.11 teaching and healing a woman bowed over for 18 years.)

It was from the synagogue that our Lord made His first public announcement of His Messianic ministry to Israel:

*Lk.4.16 And he came to Nazareth, **where he had been brought up:** and, **as his custom was,** he **went into the synagogue** on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

*17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,*

***18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,***

***19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.***

***20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.***

***21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.***

There was a synagogue, among the many (estimates of upwards 480) in Jerusalem, which had in it a sect, a factional party. They attempted to do what the Sadducees and Pharisees count not. But instead of attacking the

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head, this time, in a sense, they went after the tail. All previous attempts to squelch the church had been focused on the apostles. Now they shall apply pressure to the church by assaulting one of its members. Stephen, a servant of the church withstood their disputing *συζητοῦντες* against him by the wisdom of the Word of God.

*Disputing, συζητοῦντες, nom, pl, masc, art, pres of συζητέω; Mk.1.27 questioned; Mk.12.28 reasoning together; Lk.22.23 enquire; Acts 9.29 disputed.*

*Word Pictures in the New Testament, A. T. Robertson, Baker Book House, vol. 3, p. 76, 'One of their synagogues has men from Celicia in it, making it practically certain that young **Saul of Tarsus**, the brilliant student of Gamaliel, was present and tried his wits with Stephen. His ignominious defeat may be one explanation of his zest in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8.1).' (my bolding)*

*Ac 21:39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in **Cilicia**, a citizen of no mean (ἀσημιος, a + semos, meaning of an unmarked, of an unsigned, but remember it is negated with οὐκ ... so that it is a notable ...) city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.*

*10 And they were not able*

*ἰσχοῦν with their greatest, human, intellectual vigor, (which would yield to their frustration)*

*to resist (ἀντιστῆναι, lit. to stand against) the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

*... the spirit by which he spoke: what do we perceive this to mean? This was a man full of the Holy Ghost, so we believe his speech, the manner in which he spoke and the content of his message, was guided by the Spirit of God to be like Christ's speech.*

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More often than not we superimpose upon the Scripture our personal interpretation of how men intoned the Word of God. But this, as far as I can recall, is never an issue brought into the forefront. The personal inflections that one interprets from the Word of God and the expression of it in their presentation to others is a matter that must be left to personal conviction. We are the Lord's servants and He uses us, even with our idiosyncrasies.

My personal background: my life was encompassed with, only because of the grace of God and His calling me into the ministry, from a number of great (in my estimation), fervent, powerful, loud, and faithful gospel preachers: my father, his father, three uncles, my father-in-law, his father, his uncle, all of whom were or are preachers of the Word of Truth. They were almost every one of them all strong in their presentation. I've known other preacher-friends who literally came off the floor from the power of their arms gripping the pulpit, shook pulpits, glowed red from the Spirit of God working in them; their voices thundered in the building and at times it seems as if it shook me to my very bones, and many times I was humbled by the Spirit of God for the lack of obedience and a desire to serve Him better. No doubt they did their utmost to express the truths of God, and if in some small way they might be used of God to affect a saving conversion in the hearers of that Word, to snatch a wayward soul from a froward walk. At times a visiting preacher would set me back by his mannerisms, but we got our senses back and tried to focus on the message instead of the man. How sad it is to me that we rarely see this brand of preacher today. There is a place for every kind of God-called preacher in the churches. It isn't the volume of the voice, high or low, but the content of the message that is of the greatest importance. But God uses human instrumentality, preacher-sinners saved by grace, growing in grace, and as long as the gospel is to be preached we will need to focus, not on the men, but the His Word. Pray for that man of God who has your soul to watch over.

How Stephen might have expressed himself in answer to these men in their resistance to the truth isn't nearly as much of an issue as is the content of what he said. The wisdom of God will dictate to us how we should respond and what to say. (We gain much insight about *presentation* in the book of

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Proverbs.) These men understood Stephen's message carnally with their unspiritual, unregenerate minds, and they resorted to the only means they had available: human intellect and the power of the flesh; both of which are insufficient to affect any change whatsoever in the truth of the Word of the Eternal God of Glory.

Who gave Stephen the wisdom and the mouth to speak so effectively against these wicked men. The Holy Spirit of God. Preachers and saints cannot learn this in seminary. This instruction begins in every one of the saints of God who by **personal meditation upon the Word of God**, and **attending properly ordered gatherings of the church**. It is doubtful that we shall have the mouth of divine wisdom opened in a time of inquiry as this in our text, if we have not afforded ourselves to these most basic elements of Christian instruction. Just how interested in being like Christ are we? What we do is telling about how genuine our interest is. Let us chasten our minds to attend to everything that is being said during our gatherings. Sometimes our interest is clearly elsewhere.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said that He would give us what we needed in times like this that Stephen fell into.

*Lk.21.12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, **delivering you up to the synagogues**, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.*

*13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.*

*14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:*

*15 **For I will give you a mouth and wisdom**, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

And then we read that it is the Holy Spirit:

*Mk.13.9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.*

*10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.*



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*11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: **but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.***

The disputing of these men against Stephen must have gone on for some time or days. This gives the irritated, humiliated, angry religionists the opportunity to find some wicked men for them to slip in and falsely Stephen. The Scripture states ...

*11 Then they suborned (at this synagogue ...)*

ὑπέβαλον, 3p, pl, aor 2, ind act of ὑποβάλλω, ὑπο under + βάλλω to cast; so *suborn* is **sub** under, below, secret, up, near, close + **orn** to furnish or equip; this religious faction of a synagogue furnished men

*men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*

The gospel of Jesus Christ has always been blasphemous to the unregenerate of Israel and to an unregenerate world. (2Co.2.15-17) They cannot perceive the truth of Christ in the least. (1Co.2.14) These religionists in Israel perceived this movement as detrimental to their national perception of God and their religious practices, when in fact it defined who is the true God, and who His true worshippers are.

*Ac 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after **the way which they call heresy**, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:*

*15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

*16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

But one day they shall come to Christ!

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*Ro 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

*27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

*28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*

*29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

*30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: {believed: or, obeyed }*

*31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. {believed: or, obeyed }*

*32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

*Ez.20.33 ¶ As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:*

*34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.*

*35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.*

*36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.*

*37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: {bond: or, delivering }*

*38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

**12 And they stirred up (or, stirred together these various groups of people ... influenced)**

*συνεκίνησαν*, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, pl, aor 1, ind, act of *συνκινέω*, only used this once in Scripture; It is a compounded word *συν* or *συσ* + *κινέω* meaning *together*

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*moved; Mt.23.4 will not **move** them with one; Mt.27.39 reviled him, **wagging** their heads; Acts 17.28 in him we live, **move**, and have our being; Acts 21.30 all the city **was moved**; Acts 24.5 a **mover** of sedition; Re.2.5 and **will remove** they candlestick; Re.6.14 every mountain and island **were moved** out of their places.*

*the people λαόν, and the elders πρεσβυτέρους, and the scribes γραμματεῖς, and came upon him, (just as they had come upon the apostles in 4.1; a corporate, mass σύν assault or approach ἵστημι)*

*ἐπιστάντες, nom, pl, masc, part, aor 2 of ἐφίστημι, ἐπί upon + ἵστημι stand; approached; KJV assault 1 (**Acts 17.5**); be at hand 1 (2Ti.4.6), be instant 1 (**2Ti.4.2**), come 1, come in 1, come to 1 (Lk.2.38), come upon 7 (Lk.2.9; **Acts 4.1**), stand 1, stand by 3 (Lk.4.39; 24.2); et al.*

*him, and caught (a corporate σύν apprehension or seizure ἀρπάζω)*

*συνήρπασαν, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, pl, aor 1, ind, act of συναρπάζω, σύν + ἀρπάζω force, taking away, catching, plucking and pulling (All KJV uses of harpadzo); Lk.8.29 oftentimes it **had caught** him; Acts 19.29 and **having caught** Gaius and Aristarchus; Acts 27.15 And **when** the ship **was caught**, and could not bear up.*

*him, and brought him*

*ἤγαγον, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, pl, aor 2, ind, act of ἄγω, to bring, to lead, to keep, to carry to go.*

*to εἶς the council σανέδριον, (at the Temple)  
13 And set up*

*ἕστησαν, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, pl, aor 1, ind of ἵστημι; cf.prev. verse; generally meaning to stand.*

*false witnesses μάρτυρας ψευδεῖς, which said, This man ceaseth*

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παύεται, 3<sup>rd</sup> p, sing, pres, ind, mid of παύω, παύομαι; KJV *had left* (Lk.5.4), *ceased* (Acts 20.31), *refrain*;

*1Pe.3.8 ¶ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

*9 Not rendering evil for ἀντί evil, or railing for ἀντί railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

*10 For he that will love life, and see good days, **let him refrain** his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*

*11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

*not*

It is true that Stephen faithfully continued proclaiming the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:*

The lie is that Stephen's words were blasphemous.

*14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

Stephen's message, by their own admission, includes details about what our Lord had taught the disciples, and which we have preserved in the apocalyptic portions of the synoptic gospels (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17, 21).

How wonderful the works of God are. He alone can take the very enemies of His Son, using them to preserve an historical record of the acts and messages of the true churches of Jesus Christ. Samuel Moreland, John Fox(e), Johann Lorenze von Mosheim are examples of men who wrote unwittingly of the truth of Christ's N. T. church, who they are, what they taught, and how they lived in the face of severest persecution. And here,

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these enemies of Jesus Christ preserved for us some information about the content of Stephen's messages to them.

15 *And all*

ἅπαντες, 'α,' ἅ + πάς giving emphasis upon the 'all' or the 'whole'.

*that sat in the council* συναεδρίω, *looking stedfastly*

ἀτενίσαντες, nom, pl, masc, part, aor 1 of ἀτενίζω,

*Lk. 4.20 fastened; As the Lord Jesus delivered the book again to the minister the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.*

*Lk.22.56 earnestly looked ... and; Peter who was in the process of denying the Lord was examined by a certain maid, and [she] earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.*

*Acts 1.10 looked stedfastly; When our Lord ascended into heaven as the clouds received him out of their sight they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up ...*

*Acts 3.4 fastening ... eyes; Peter, about to go into the Temple at the hour prayer saw the lame man there asking for alms, said fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.*

*Acts 3.12 look ... earnestly; Acts 7.55 looked upon stedfastly ... and; Acts 10.4 when ... looked; Acts 11.6 when ... had fastened ... eyes; Acts 13.9 Then ... eyes; Acts 14.9 stedfastly beholding; Acts 23.1 earnestly beholding; 2Co.3.7 **stedfastly behold** the face of Moses; 2Co.3.13 **stedfastly look** to the end of that which is abolished.*

NITDNT, vol.3, p.520 ' ...seems to emphasize the intensity of the look.

*on (εἰς upon) him, saw εἶδον his face πρόσωπον as it had been the face πρόσωπον of an angel ἀγγέλου.*

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Biblically, we are constrained in our understanding of this reference to the appearance of the face of an angel. We have no idea what the face of an angel looks like. Remember that the classification of angels to include Seraphs and Cherubs is incorrect. These are heavenly creatures, but they are never called angels. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, but that does not mean he is an angel.

2Co.11.14, μετασχηματίζεται, he alters his scheme or schematic to appear as an angel of light.

μετασχηματίζεται, μετασχηματίζω, 1Co.4.6 I **have in a figure transferred** to myself; 2Co. 11.13 **transforming themselves** into the apostles of Christ; 2Co.11.14 for Satan himself **is transformed** into an angel of light; 2Co.11.15 his ministers also **be transformed** as the ministers of righteousness; Phl.3.21 Who **shall change** our vile body ...

As far as we know angels appear as men.

*Gen.18.1 ¶ And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;  
2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, **three men** stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,  
3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:  
4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:  
5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And **they said**, So do, as thou hast said.*

...

*16 ¶ And **the men** rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.*

...

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22 And **the men** turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

...

Gen.19.1 ¶ And there came **two angels** to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 ¶ But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the **men** which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

...

12 ¶ And the **men** said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

...

15 ¶ And when the morning arose, then the **angels** hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the **men** laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

The elect angels are spiritual creatures, not having a permanent physical body as we possess.

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*Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

Yet there is no reason to believe that their physical appearance could be any more discernable than any other man's appearance. But there is one thing that might help understand how Stephen's fact had the appearance of the face of an angel. It was bright.

*Ac 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing ... (I doubt that any of us would disagree that this was an angel's appearance.)*

*Ac 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ...*

*Mt.28.22 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. {was: or, had been }*

*3 **His countenance was like lightning**, and his raiment white as snow...*

*Jud.13.3 And the **angel** of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.*

*4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:*

*5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

*6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and **his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God**, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name:*



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7 *But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.*

8 ¶ *Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.*

9 *And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the **angel** of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her.*

10 *And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the **man** hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.*

11 *And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.*

12 *And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?*

13 *And the **angel** of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.*

14 *She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.*

15 ¶ *And Manoah said unto the **angel** of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.*

16 *And the **angel** of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For **Manoah knew not that he was an angel** of the LORD.*

17 *And Manoah said unto the **angel** of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?*

18 *And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?*

19 *So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.*

## The Acts of the Apostles

20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. **Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD.**

22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, **because we have seen God.**

23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.

Moses' face shown when he came down from the mount of God in Sinai:

2Co 3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold **the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance**; which glory was to be done away:

...

2Co 3:13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished ...

Notice our Lord's physical appearance was altered before he death:

Lk.9.28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. {sayings: or, things }

29 And as he prayed, the **fashion of his countenance was altered**, and his raiment was white and glistering.

Mt 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and **his face did shine as the sun**, and his raiment was white as the light.

Then, notice our Lord's appearance in His glorification:

## The Acts of the Apostles

*Re.1.12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;*

*13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

*14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;*

*15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*

*16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and **his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.***

There are other references to angels' discernment and wisdom, but that doesn't seem to be the issue here. Stephen's countenance became as an angels, which must mean that he had a glow about him.

This must have presented to the onlookers such a contrast between the wicked, hypocritical religious leaders and the pure, faithful, sincere servant named Stephen. And though no other displays are necessarily manifested like this in Scripture, know this: this is the distinction between the people of God and those without Christ: His people are washed from all sin by the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, and all others are rejected being yet in the putrefaction of their own corruption. The singular difference between us and them is Christ.

Believe and be saved. Jesus Christ died for the sinner. Do you believe that as a sinner you justly warrant the punishment for your sins against God? Then believe in Jesus Christ, the sinner's sacrifice to God, and confess that he died for you and be washed from your sins. Christ died, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Make that profession of Christ's death for you, repent and be baptized, and walk in newness of life in one of His churches until He comes again.