

STEPHEN: A MAN OF GOD - Acts 6:1-8:8

1. Stephen was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.

They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit... ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6:5b-7 NIV

2. Stephen was full of God's grace and power.

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Acts 6:8 NIV

3. Stephen was full of God's wisdom.

Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue...¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. Acts 6:9-10 NIV See also Acts 6:3.

4. Stephen's face was like the face of an angel.

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹³They produced false witnesses...¹⁵ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Acts 6:11-13a, 15 NIV

5. Stephen knew the Scripture and proclaimed its truth.

Acts 7:1-50

"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

⁵²Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it." Acts 7:51-53 NIV

6. Stephen saw the glory of God and Jesus.

When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." Acts 7:54-56 NIV

7. Stephen prayed for and forgave his murderers.

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:57-60 NIV

8. Stephen was martyred for a redemptive purpose.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. ⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. ⁶When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. ⁷For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸So there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:1-8 NIV

You planned evil against me, but God planned it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20 CAT

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV