

Daily Bible Readings

Our Read-Ahead for: 09 October 2022

Faith Requires Mutual Love

Monday: Barriers between You and Your God (**Isaiah 59:1–8**)

Tuesday: Falsehood, Deceit, and Deception (**Jeremiah 8:22–9:9**)

Wednesday: These Things You Shall Do (**Zechariah 8:14–19**)

Thursday: My Mouth Will Utter Truth (**Proverbs 8:1–11**)

Friday: Guided into All the Truth (**John 16:12–15**)

Saturday: Full of Faith and the Spirit (**Acts 6:1–7**)

Sunday: Full of Grace and Power (**Acts 6:8–7:2a**)

Stephen's Arrest and Speech

Bible Background: Acts 6:8–7:53

Printed Text: Acts 6:8–7:2A

Devotional Reading: Proverbs 8:1–11

Keep in Mind: “*Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*” (Acts 6:8, KJV).”

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: DISCUSS the stand that Stephen took as a response to his faith; FEEL motivated to confront principalities and powers of our day; and SEEK the power and wisdom of the Spirit in our efforts to speak truth.

In Focus

Today we will see how Stephen was able to witness with great power and grace.

Focal Verses

Acts 6:8-15

8 Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose 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.

10 They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 They stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, this man speaks blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

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

15 All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Acts 7:1-2

7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

2a He said, men, brethren, and fathers, hearken;

I. The People, Places and Times

Synagogue of the Libertines (Freedmen): The Synagogue of the Freedmen is called the Synagogue of the Libertines in the KJV. The word *libertine* is from Latin and originally referred to a man who had been a slave but had been set at liberty. Some scholars believe these people were freed Romans slaves who became proselytes of the Jewish religion, and had a synagogue in Jerusalem. Pious Greek-speaking Jews attended the Synagogue of Libertines or Freedmen. Among all these Greek-speaking Jews were a few Christians, but the most outspoken was Stephen. The Holy Spirit spoke through him as he reasoned, discussed, and argued for Jesus Christ.

Background: The apostles appointed Greek-speaking Jewish Christians to take charge of distributing food and money to the widows and other poor among them. The Greek-speaking Christians would know who were in need. The seven men chosen for this task were also chosen for their outstanding spirituality. Among them was Stephen, who is the focus of today's lesson.

At this time, Christians were converted Jews, and attended synagogues. The Christian Jews were a tiny minority among the other Jews. The Jews whose primary language was Greek attended the Synagogue of the Freedmen. Stephen, who attended this synagogue, performed miracles in the name of Jesus. Other Jewish members who did not follow Christ opposed him. They debated Stephen, but their arguments did not stand up against his dialogue for two reasons. The Holy Spirit was enabling him to use great wisdom. Secondly, the things that Stephen said concerning Jesus Christ were true.

II. In Depth

- a.** 1. Introduction of Stephen (Acts 6:8–10)
- b.** 2. Opposition to Stephen (Acts 6: 11–14)
- c.** 3. Stephen’s Effect on the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:15–7:2a)

III. Take Aways

IV. Announcements

V. Closing Prayer