

**The Lightning Rod of Ministry**  
Stephen is confronted, arrested, and put on trial.  
**The Empowered Church Series - Part 12**  
Acts 6:8-15  
4/15/23-4/16/23

**Introduction**

- **The Bigger Picture of Who We Struggle Against (Spiritual Warfare)**
  - 2 Co 10:3–5 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”
  - **It’s Bigger Than What We Can See** – It is such a struggle to remember that what we see is not the deepest reality. Behind our reality is one more real. It is a spiritual one. It is one that exerts far more influence on our lives than anything we can engage with using our 5 senses. Within that dimension is a war being waged. It’s not a war which we are wondering who will win, but more of a refusing-to-give-up-rebellion that is currently being allowed to exist. The big decisions of victor have already been made a long time ago. But this is still a nasty battle and one that constantly drives the world in which we live.
  - **World, Flesh, & Devil – 3 enemies; 3 problems; 3 sources of resistance** – Why isn’t the Christian life and ministry easier? If we are on God’s side, who is the King of all things, then why aren’t we always in a winning position? Why is there so much resistance? Well, the Bible spells it out very clearly. We have 3 sources of resistance: Flesh, Devil, World.
    1. **Flesh** – We are a problem to ourselves. The flesh is the part that is not yet submitted to God and is pulling us in the wrong direction.
      - **Aspects of the Battle of the Flesh**
        - Temptation
        - Distraction
        - Self-Advancement (Selfishness)
        - Apathy
    2. **Devil** – This is the personal active agent against God in this world. He has a whole organized team on his side bent on causing distraction, disruption, and destruction.
      - **We didn’t start this fight** – We came on the scene far after it started. It started before the Garden of Eden. Lucifer thought that he could take God, he failed and was cast down here to earth and notified of his ultimate destruction. He’s not okay with his sentencing. He’s mad.
      - **His team hates God-stuff** – that’s us. We are ‘guilty by association’. Anything that God loves, Satan’s team seeks to harm. God puts significant limits on what they can and can’t do, but they will do their best to steal, kill and destroy.<sup>1</sup>
      - **Jesus ruined Satan’s stuff** – The Bible says that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. How did He do that? By ruining the tactics of the devil. How did He do that? Here are a couple examples.
        - 1 Jn 3:8 – “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”
      - **A.) Giving the Ability to resist and fight back** – when we surrender to Jesus Christ and are made children of God, we take on a new identity and receive

---

<sup>1</sup> John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

new resources. One of the key elements is that we are able to withstand the attacks of the enemy and in fact not only fight back but we are given the role and ability to storm the gates of hell. **We are given both defenses (armor of God) as well as weapons (Word of God and prayer).**

- Mt 16:18–19 – “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”<sup>2</sup>
- Eph 6:11 – “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- Eph 6:16 – “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;...”
- 2 Ti 2:24–26 – “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”
- Jas 4:7 – “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- 1 Pe 5:8–10 – “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”
- **B.) Binding the Strongman** – In **Matthew chapter 12** Jesus is challenged by the religious leaders of His day regarding His method and source of power for casting demons out. They said that it must be demonic in nature. He rejected that outright. In His further explanation, He explained that in coming **Jesus was binding the devil**, like a man binds a strong man so that he can plunder his house. In the same way as Jesus hinders the work of the devil, **He allows His followers to do further damage to the demonic kingdom at work on earth.**
  - Mt 12:28–29 – “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup> Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.”
- **C.) Removing the Death Threat** – The major move that Jesus did when it comes to dismantling the devil’s kingdom and attacks is **removing Satan’s greatest bullying tool: The threat of eternal death.** As long as a bully can convince his prey that he is most powerful and can hurt them in the worst way, they will succumb to his influence (Christians have been set free from bondage<sup>3</sup>). The devil was doing that with the threat of sin leading to eternal death. But when Jesus went to the cross He ruined all of that for Satan because He made His followers eternally alive and thriving. Physical death is now the only difficulty, and that being a doorway to glory, but eternal death has no hold on us. It doesn’t apply to us. Therefore we are able to walk more freely and with confidence.
  - Heb 2:14–15 – “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Mt 16:18–19). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 2:15

- Jn 5:24 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”
- Jn 8:51 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”
- Ro 6:8–11 – “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
- Ro 8:1–2 – “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”
- 1 Co 15:24–26 – “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
- 1 Co 15:52–57 – “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” <sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 2 Ti 1:9–10 – “...his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,...”

**3. World** – This is portion of people and systems that have bought into an agenda that is not in alignment with God.

- **A Battle for Self is a battle for the Enemy** – We mistakenly assume that our adversaries are only those who overtly take a stand against Christianity, but that’s not true at all. **Anything that promotes selfishness is a problem. Anything that promotes a different agenda other than God, is a challenge.**
- **Ignorant Puppets** – I am not trying to be insulting but the battle with the World is not really a battle with people. The significant majority of secular people on this planet are merely ignorant puppets being used by the devil and his team to advance an anti-Christ agenda. It’s the reason why sometimes you read in the Bible that Jesus goes after people and sometimes He mentions that something bigger is going on.<sup>4</sup> **It depends on their awareness of their allegiance to the enemy or their ignorance.**
- **Our Job: Dismantle the structures while loving the people.** We don’t want to lose the people who are currently running the anti-God structures because Jesus died for them too. Most of them don’t have a clue what they are doing. They are doing what they know.
  - **2 Ti 2:24–26** – “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

---

<sup>4</sup> Jesus was far more harsh with the religious leaders who should have known better. He called the Pharisees ‘sons of the devil.’ And yet was significantly softer with sinners and tax collectors and prostitutes. The level of accountability adjusted based on expectation of what they should know. In the same way God is going to hold aware people today (Satanists, Wiccans, Religious, Cult leaders, etc.) more harshly accountable than those who are clueless.

- **Christians are set free** – When the Bible says that Christians are free it means that **we have the potential to be free**. In other words, when Jesus rescues us, we are proverbially chained in a cage. Jesus breaks the door open and breaks the chains off our wrists. BUT we need to shake those off, climb out of the open cage and live as free. The Bible is clear that we are no longer in bondage to sin but it doesn't say that sin won't constantly chase us. We are given the ability to resist. We are given an escape from temptation. We are given freedom, but we must walk in it and not keep putting the chains back on.
  - Eph 2:1–6 – “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...”
- **Why Are Christians so Irritating?** – Why do Christians agitate the Devil and the World so much? What's their problem with us? Why don't they just ignore us? Because **we are advancing competitive kingdoms**. The Devil is trying to scramble for power through a bullying kingdom and we keep ruining his attempts. The world is trying to advance themselves (secularism, humanism) to have power, autonomy, gather luxury. **We keep getting in their way**. Why? Let me give you two sample reasons:
  - **1.) Team Association** – Jesus was super clear that **if the World system and the people who run those systems hated Him, they will certainly hate His disciples and followers**. We are those hated people. Of course the hatred is less if no one knows you are a Christian, which isn't good.
    - Jn 15:18–25 – “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’”
    - Mt 24:9 - “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.”
  - **2.) Agenda Conflict** – There's a story in **Acts 16** (that we will cover later) where Paul is doing ministry and a demon-possessed girl who worked as a fortune teller for some men starts following Paul's team. She is irritating so Paul casts out the spirit. In turn, it ruins the bad guys fortune telling business, so they get mad. That is a dramatic way of illustrating why the world and non-Christian people get so irritated by legitimate Christians (everyone gets irritated by illegitimate or immature Christians). **We keep ruining what they are trying to do**. For example, if we are preaching that money doesn't solve problems it's going to affect Wall Street. If we teach that all women have infinite value and purpose then the strip clubs are going to take a hit. If we preach that racism is wrong, then systems are going to get turned on their head. In other words, when self-gain is your agenda and a Christian comes up with a God-agenda, conflict happens.
  - **Simply Put** – the more we are like Jesus and the more we do stuff like Jesus for Jesus, the more we are going to mess up competing agendas. Therefore...

## **MINISTRY Makes Us a TARGET**

- **God's Plan and Solution**

- Eph 6:10–18 – “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”

- **Recap – Where we are at in the story**

- **Kickoff w/Power** - Young fledgling Christian Church launched by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit
- **Jesus Revolution agitates the religious leaders** – God sets up a guy in their midst who clears some space for the new Church.
- **Church thriving** – miracles happening – tons of people getting saved.
- **Church faces a major problem and possible split (Deacons)** – They solve it by getting a new layer of leadership whom we call deacons today. 2 of those 7 become famous: Stephen and Philip.
  - Ac 6:3–5 – “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom,... and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip,...”
    - **We begin learning about Stephen today and next week.**

### **Lesson**

- **Introducing...Stephen**

- **A Study in Deacon Stephen**

- **Acts 6:8** - “And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.”
- **Who's Stephen?** – in 1 chapter, 5 verses, Stephen's name is mentioned along with the phrase Full of the Holy Spirit and Power 3x's. He's not a normal guy. He is SUPER-Anointed. God's hand of favor was all over him. Everyone saw it and knew it. He may have had the title of Deacon/Helper-Guy, but this man was powerful in the Lord. And what's so stunning about him was his gentleness. He walked quietly and carried a big spiritual stick. That's my favorite supernatural style.
- **Not just the Apostles did miracles** – It's difficult to realize that the Apostles didn't have the corner market on miracles when we read passages like Acts 2:42-43 – “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.” It makes it sound like those big dogs were the only ones doing miracles, signs and wonders. They weren't. It was just that they did most of the public signs and since they had the leadership platform they were recognized more. But the Holy Spirit was flowing

through the whole church and specially through those gifted and assigned miracles as part of their ministry. Stephen and Philip happened to be two of those folks (but there were so many more).

- **Full of Grace**<sup>5</sup> - The Greek word here is *charis*, which is usually translated Grace. It means a kindness done in such a way that it brings joy and happiness. It's a free gift by the giver. It's a, 'put a smile on your face, joy in your heart' kinda sweetness. Whether Stephen was FULL of it from God or demonstrating it to others, I'm not certain but it seems in context to mean that it flowed from God THROUGH him.
- **Full of Power**<sup>6</sup> - The Greek word here, *dunamis*, means supernatural ability to make it happen. It's the common word for miracle power. Stephen was FULL of the ability to make things happen by the Holy Spirit's power.
- **He DID Great Wonders<sup>7</sup> and Signs<sup>8</sup>** - This combo phrase 'signs and wonders' refers to the **same experience but to two different aspects** of it. The Wonder part is the big wow miracle that grabs people's attention. The sign part of it is that the experience is supposed to point to something greater than itself. For example when Jesus healed a mute demon possessed man it was shocking (because ancient Jews thought that was impossible – they believe that demons had to be verbally rejected to be removed, which the man could not do) – which was the wonder part – but then it pointed that the Messiah had arrived – which was the sign part.

- **La Resistance**

- **Jewish Resistance Rises Against Stephen**

- **Acts 6:9–10** - “Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. <sup>10</sup> But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.”
- **Synagogue of the Freedmen<sup>9</sup>** – What is this? It seems to be a synagogue that has a lot of people from all over the world. I can tell whether the people groups that

---

<sup>5</sup> 5485. **χάρις** *chárís*; gen. *cháritos*, fem. noun from *chairō* (5463), to rejoice. Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude. A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor. *Cháris* stands in direct antithesis to *érge* (2041), works, the two being mutually exclusive. God's grace affects man's sinfulness and not only forgives the repentant sinner, but brings joy and thankfulness to him. It changes the individual to a new creature without destroying his individuality (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:8, 9).” The Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>6</sup> 1411. **δύναμις** *dúnāmis*; gen. *dunámeōs*, fem. noun from *dúnamai* (1410), to be able. Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem *dúna-* have the meaning of being able, capable. It may even mean to will. Contrast *ischús* (2479) which stresses the factuality of the ability, not necessarily the accomplishment.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>7</sup> 5059. **τέρας** *téras*; gen. *tératos*, neut. noun. A wonder or omen. It is often associated with *sēmeion* (4592), sign, and is usually in the pl. translated “wonders” (Acts 2:19, 22 in the pl. *térata*; Sept.: Joel 2:30). Used of the miracles of Moses (Acts 7:36; Sept.: Ex. 7:3; Deut. 6:22; 7:19; Jer. 32:20); of Christ (John 4:48); of the Apostles and teachers (Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4); of false prophets or teachers (Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; 2 Thess. 2:9). These two words refer not to different classes of miracles, but to different aspects of the same miracle. *Téras* is derived from *tērēō* (5083), to keep, watch, connoting that which due to its extraordinary character is apt to be observed and kept in the memory. It is a miracle regarded as startling, imposing or amazing. **Syn:** *dúnāmis* (1411), mighty work, miracle; *megaleíos* (3167), something great; *thaumásios* (2297), a miracle; *sēmeion* (4592), sign; *thaúma* (2295), wonder.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>8</sup> 4592. **σημεῖον** *sēmeion*; gen. *sēmeiou*, neut. noun. Sign, mark, token, miracle with a spiritual end and purpose. In the pl., miracles which lead to something out of and beyond themselves; finger-marks of God, valuable not so much for what they are as for what they indicate of the grace and power of the Doer (Mark 16:20).” The Complete Word Study Dictionary.

<sup>9</sup> “Stephen expounded his distinctive teaching about the implications of the gospel in one of the synagogues of Jerusalem which was frequented by Jews from several lands of the dispersion, the “Synagogue of the Freedmen,” comprising worshipers from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia.”<sup>28</sup> There were several synagogues in Jerusalem, some of them (like this one) attended by Hellenistic Jews...One Hellenistic synagogue in Jerusalem from the period preceding A.D. 70 is known from a Greek inscription set up by its founder Theodotus and discovered on Ophel in 1913/14. It has



are mentioned afterward are those who went to this synagogue or other groups that came together to mess with Stephen.

- **Some Cyrenians<sup>10</sup>** – who are these guys? The term simply means they were from **Cyrene** (like Simon the guy who carried Jesus' cross as well as Lucius a Christian teacher in Antioch), which is a city on the coast of North Africa. It would be in **modern-day Libya**.
- **Some of the Alexandrians** – who are these guys? They are guys who were from or born in Alexandria. Today Alexandria is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in **Egypt**. It's ancient and was named after Alexander the Great.
- **Some from Cilicia<sup>11</sup> and Asia** – who are these guys? They are folks from the territory we know as **modern-day Turkey**. Cilicia is in modern-day Turkey. It's most commonly tied to **Paul the Apostle** who was born there. It could be that Paul once attended this synagogue although that is not for sure. When the New Testament talks about Asia usually they mean the Roman province of Asia which was the western half of modern-day Turkey.
- **What are they disputing with Stephen about?** – it has to be the gospel right? What's their problem with 'Good News'? It's that Good News is only Good if you accept the bad news that precedes it. **The Good News comes with ramifications that directly agitate other competing systems.** As I mentioned in the intro, when God's agenda is advanced it's going to clash with the world's agenda or competing religious agendas. It seems that this was a clash of traditional Judaism with Messianic Judaism.
- **They could not withstand...** - Wow, what a way to describe that. What does this mean? They couldn't win the argument/debate. Their side wasn't seen favorably when the facts were laid out in the conversation.
  - **They couldn't withstand the Wisdom with which Stephen was speaking** – Stephen was laying out Godly wisdom (as opposed to earthly wisdom<sup>12</sup>). This means he was able to articulately connect the dots of all the facts of the gospel and tie that through the Old Testament Scriptures and make his point. It was more convincing than their perspective.
  - **They couldn't withstand The Spirit with which Stephen was speaking** – When the Holy Spirit is full within us it's difficult to discern what part is us and which parts are Him. Therefore, it's difficult to know whether the author here is highlighting that Stephen was so powerful with a supernatural empowerment

---

been held that this was the very synagogue to which Luke refers here:<sup>30</sup> the identification, in the nature of the case, is incapable of proof. Freedmen were former slaves (or the children of former slaves) who had been emancipated by their owners; if their owners were Roman citizens, their freedmen were enrolled as members of their family. Many Jews who were taken captive to Rome at the time of Pompey's conquest of Judaea (63 B.C.) were subsequently emancipated and thenceforth had the status of freedmen." NICNT – New International Commentary of the New Testament – F.F. Bruce

<sup>10</sup> **CYRENIANS** (Κυρηναῖος, *Kyrēnaios*, *Kyrenaios*). The residents of **Cyrene**, a city on the coast of North Africa. Cyrenians were present in Jerusalem during **Peter's Pentecost** sermon (**Acts 2:10**). Among others, Cyrenian Jews argued with **Stephen** in Jerusalem and incited his arrest (**Acts 6:9–12**; see **Libertines**). Cyrenian Christians (perhaps from the same group that initially disputed with Stephen) began to preach the gospel in Antioch after the persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom (**Acts 11:20**). Two Cyrenians are mentioned by name in the New Testament: **Simon**, who was forced to carry Jesus' cross (**Matt 27:32**; **Mark 15:21**; **Luke 23:26**), and Lucius, a Christian teacher at Antioch (**Acts 13:1**). Lexham Bible Dictionary

<sup>11</sup> "The mention of Cilicia raises the possibility that this was the synagogue attended by Saul, otherwise called Paul, whose native Tarsus was the principal city of Cilicia. (On the other hand, "a Hebrew born of Hebrews," as he calls himself in Phil. 3:5, might have preferred to attend a synagogue where the service was conducted in Hebrew.)" NICNT, F.F. Bruce

**CILICIA** (Κιλικία, *Kilikias*). A region of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) on the Mediterranean coast, opposite the island of Cyprus; situated between Pamphylia in the west, Lyconia and Cappadocia in the north, and Syria in the east." Lexham Bible Dictionary

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 1 & 2 talks a lot about godly vs. earthly wisdom.

that was stunning the detractors, or was it that the Spirit so filled him that his nature was too winsome for them to withstand. It doesn't really matter which.

- **What Are You and I Disputing With?** – As Christians we love to think that any time someone debates with us that we are being persecuted due to Christ. Unfortunately the vast majority of our arguments have nothing to do with that. Usually we are arguing our opinion. Sometimes we are resisted by our nature and approach more than our content. So, we need to carefully assess if it's really Christ they take issue with and His views, or is it simply us? But notice that Stephen is highlighted by the Bible as being amazing and he debated with grace and the Holy Spirit. That is how we should be debating the viewpoints of this world. Christianity would go so much further if we did.

- **The Plot Thickens**

- **The Religious Leaders Falsely Accuse Stephen & Bring Him to Trial**

- **Acts 6:11–14** - *“Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”<sup>12</sup> And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council,<sup>13</sup> and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law,<sup>14</sup> for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.”*
- **Secret Instigation** – this gives the whole process an underground, nefarious vibe, right? They knew that they weren't going to win directly and they were going to find a way to circumvent the process. This suggests that they are more desperate in nature as they got shut down by Stephen. **If they didn't cheat they weren't going to win.**
- **The Initial Lies** – If you are going to try to turn Jews against someone you start with their heroes. They concocted a lie that Stephen was blaspheming against God and Moses. You don't more famous or bigger names to drop than that. If someone is against God or Moses, the Jews are automatically going to be against them.
  - **What's Blasphemy?**<sup>13</sup> – **[complete]**
  - **Was there any truth in their attack against Stephen?**<sup>14</sup> – Would he have blasphemed God? Absolutely not. Although if he argued with their view of God they may have taken it that way. Would he have blasphemed Moses? Again, no way. BUT, he looks through a different lens than the religious Jewish leaders. So it may have sounded like it. But I think that they were flat out lying on this stuff. They needed it to sound good but they were lying.
- **Stirred up the People and Arrested Stephen** – when it says they stirred up the people it means that they riled up a crowd. There were religious people around (likely in the Temple) who gathered to see the showdown between the Christian and the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders used inciting language to get a crowd on their side.

---

<sup>13</sup> “According to the later formulation of rabbinical law, blasphemy involved the profane use of the ineffable name of Israel's God—and any utterance of that name apart from the high priest's pronouncing of it on the day of atonement was a profane use. But, as the narrative of our Lord's appearance before the Sanhedrin indicates, blasphemy was interpreted in a wider sense in the early decades of the first century A.D. (cf. Mark 14:61–64). Stephen is later reported as making a claim for Jesus quite similar to that which Jesus himself had made before the Sanhedrin (7:56), but at this stage the charge of blasphemy against God was evidently based on the allegation that he had used language about the temple similar to the language which Jesus was unsuccessfully accused of using about it.” NICNT

<sup>14</sup> They are called “false witnesses” because, although their reports had a basis of truth, anyone who testifies against a spokesman of God is ipso facto a false witness.” NICNT



- **How do you stir up people?** – there are a couple ways to stir people up but almost always it means you use **emotional language**. To stir someone up means that they become emotionally engaged and usually it means they become passionately involved.
- **Who are the elders?** - **Leaders in the synagogue** who helped guide people in the traditions of the religion.
- **Who are the scribes?** - who are these guys?<sup>15</sup> – They are the **experts in the Torah**. In a culture that bases their way of life around the books of Moses

---

<sup>15</sup> **Scribes in Postexilic Times.** With the restoration under Ezra-Nehemiah, the term scribe. begins to be associated more narrowly with those who gathered together, studied, and interpreted the Torah (Jewish Law). They became in essence a separate profession of teachers (although unpaid), able to preserve accurately the Law of Moses and interpret it to meet conditions in postexilic times. In this initial period, Ezra himself appears as the ideal scribe, “learned in matters of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes for Israel” (Ezr 7:11) because he had “set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances to Israel” (v 10). In Ecclesiasticus 38:24, 33, and 39:1–11, the scribe is portrayed as one who, because of his diligent study of the Law, the prophets, and writings (38:34; 39:1), is able to penetrate the hidden meanings of texts (39:2, 3) and thus is able to serve as judge and counsel for the affairs of the people and state (38:33; 39:4–8). Because of his absolutely invaluable place in a society governed by the Torah, the scribe is worthy of praise and veneration throughout succeeding generations (39:9). By the 2nd century BC. the scribes were a fairly distinct class in Jewish society. They appear as such during the Maccabean wars, acting as a negotiating body with the rival Syrians (1 Mc 7:12). It is also significant that from this time forward, the history of the scribe in Jewish life is closely linked with the rise of the Pharisees. Although there were apparently some scribes affiliated with the rival Sadducean party, the lay party of the Pharisees with its absolute devotion to the Law (including the oral law) became the primary religio-political affiliation for the scribes (see the close connection in the NT, Mt 5:20; 12:38; 15:1; Mk 7:5; Lk 6:7). **Training and Status Within the Community.** The training of scribes initially occurred within priestly family-based guilds which guaranteed the regulation and perpetuation of this now vital responsibility (1 Chr 2:55). Later, scribal training in the Law became open to members of all classes, with the eventual result, by Jesus’ time, of scribes from nonpriestly families being far more numerous and influential. Training in the Law began at an early age under the personal supervision of a teacher (rabbi), who instructed in all matters of the Law and its interpretation for present needs. Because the written Law of Moses could not possibly speak directly to conditions in postexilic times, the oral interpretation and application of the written law to meet such current needs was a significant contribution by the scribes. Such “oral law” promulgated by them was regarded as equal to the written and equally binding for those desiring to please God (see Mk 7:6–13). This important function, lying at the very heart of Jewish life, accounts for the participation of the scribes in the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin, in order to make legal decisions in keeping with the Law, obviously needed the presence of those most knowledgeable about the minutest details of the Torah and the principles governing its application to new circumstances. The scribes, consequently, were the only members outside the aristocratic high priests and elders to be represented in this Jewish supreme court (Mt 26:57; Mk 14:43, 53; Lk 22:66; Acts 23:9). Being the authoritative instructors of the Law both within the temple (Lk 2:46) and within the various synagogues of Judea and Galilee (Lk 5:17), as well as prominent members of the Sanhedrin, the scribes were greatly respected within the Jewish community. They wore special robes (Mk 12:38) with memorial fringes (Mt 23:5) at the bottom, pincases possibly from the girdle (Ez 9:2), and phylacteries or “prayer boxes” hanging from the arms (Mt 23:5). Such attire made their presence obvious and occasioned the rising or bowing of the common people when they passed (Mk 12:38). They were addressed with respect as “rabbi” or “master” (Mt 23:7) and were given the place of honor at worship as well as at social affairs (Mt 23:2; Mk 12:39; Lk 20:46). Indeed, the high regard the Jews held for their scribes is testified by the fact that such teachers of the Law were buried alongside the purported tombs of the patriarchs and prophets. **Jesus and the Scribes.** The scribes appear predominantly in the ministry of Jesus as those concerned with the circumspectness of legal observance. Luke refers to the scribes as “lawyers,” describing their chief function as interpreters of the Jewish Law in a way readily comprehensible to his gentile audience. It is often found, therefore, that the scribes were critical members of Jesus’ audience, accusing him of violating the Law on numerous occasions: in forgiving sins (Mt 9:1–3; Lk 5:17–26), in breaking their notion of sabbath observance through work (Lk 6:1, 2) and healing (Lk 6:6–11), in not following their accepted ceremonial washings (Mk 7:2–5), and in ignoring their practice of fasting (Lk 5:33–39). Not surprisingly, they especially disapproved of Jesus’ practice of mixing with the unclean and outcasts of Jewish society (Mk 2:16, 17; Lk 15:1, 2). In a similar light, they are not unfrequently found posing questions concerning the Law for the purpose of tricking Jesus (Mk 7:1; 12:28, 35; Lk 11:53; Jn 8:3). In a similar fashion, they demanded that Jesus make his identity clear (Mt 12:38) and reveal the source of his authority to perform miracles (Mk 3:22; Lk 20:1–4). Although there is evidence that a minority of the scribes accepted Jesus (Mt 8:19; 13:52; Mk 12:32; Jn 3:1), their primary attitude toward Jesus was one of hostility. As previously suggested, this was partly due to Jesus’ differing expression of fidelity to the Mosaic law and his openness toward the outcasts. It was also partly due to the rising popularity of Jesus among the people, which posed a threat to their own authority (Mt 7:29) and to the safety of the city (21:15; Mk 11:18). Certainly another major contributing factor of their opposition to Jesus was his open exposure of their hypocrisy and corruption. In his rebukes of the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus openly accused them of catering to public approval (Mt 23:5–7; Mk 12:38, 39; Lk 11:43) and, while appearing outwardly correct and holy, being inwardly utterly corrupt (Mt 23:25–28; Lk 11:39–41). Jesus also attacked the principle of oral law promulgated by the scribes, which they demanded the people to follow. Jesus charged that the oral law was a “heavy burden” which led the people astray and which the scribes themselves did not even bother to follow (Mt 23:2–4, 13–22; Lk 11:46). While emphasizing the minor points of the Law, the scribes were also guilty of ignoring the weightier concerns of justice, mercy, and faith (Mt 23:23, 24; Mk 12:40; Lk 11:42). Furthermore, contrary to being the descendants of the prophets, as the scribes held themselves to be, the scribes, Jesus claimed, would have killed the prophets if they had lived in their day (Mt 23:29–36; Lk 20:9–19). Those hoping to see the kingdom of heaven would, Jesus suggested, have to surpass this kind of “righteousness” practiced by the scribes (Mt 5:20). It is not surprising to find, therefore, the scribes anxious to get rid of Jesus (Mk 14:1; Lk 11:53). His more flexible interpretation of the Law posed a clear threat to their position and authority within the community. The scribes joined forces with their normal opponents (the high priesthood) to engineer Jesus’ arrest (Mk 14:43). When Jesus appeared before them and the rest of the Sanhedrin, they worked with the other leaders to construct a case against him

(Torah – 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the Bible, the Law) they were really important and influential.

- **What's the Council?** – This is the **Sanhedrin**, the quasi-Supreme Court of the Jews - It was the highest regulating body of the Jews. It was made up of various leaders, the high priests family, all the temple leaders, etc. It originally had 70 members. It was disbanded and redesigned after the fall of the Temple in AD70 (About 40 years after this story). They could make things happen. If we look back, it was this council that determined all the stuff against Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Some were for Him and some were against Him, but the majority won and they ordered Him to be handed over to the Roman authorities to be crucified.
- **False Witnesses** – What's a false witness?
  - **The Secondary Lies** – what were they saying about Stephen? That he 'never stops speaking' words against the **Temple and the Law**. Again if you want to rile up Jews talk about the Temple, or the Law and you'll automatically get attention.<sup>17</sup> Those are critical elements of Judaism that EVERYONE knew and loved and respected. To say that Stephen was against those things would get people to shift their view of him into something negative.
  - **Was there any truth to their claims?** – Obviously the Bible says they were 'false' witnesses so they were lying, but is there any truth that they could manipulate with? Perhaps.
  - **Their Argument about the Temple**<sup>18</sup> – They were citing that since Stephen was an ardent Jesus follower that the attacks on Jesus would easily transfer to him as well. What specifically about the Temple? Jesus said a cryptic phrase when He was in earthly ministry that they would destroy the temple and He could rebuild it in 3 days. He obviously meant His body, his temple of the Holy Spirit. And it was 3 days in the grave and He rose. But those opposing Him assumed He meant the real physical temple and started the rumor that Jesus said He could rebuild the actual temple in 3 days to suggest that He was a wacko. And

---

worthy of death (Mt 26:57–66). When taking Jesus before Herod, they stood by and shouted their accusations with the others (Lk 23:10). Finally, they participated with other members of the Sanhedrin in mocking Jesus on the cross, demanding that Jesus save himself by coming down from the cross to “inspire their faith” (Mt 27:41–43). Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the scribes continued with the other elements of the Sanhedrin to oppose the early Christian church, and brought about Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 6:12–14).” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible  
<sup>16</sup> “Not many weeks had passed since these two men had taken a part in the arrest and condemnation of Jesus. If they hoped that they had got rid of him, their hope was short-lived; it looked now as if they were going to have as much trouble on his account as they had had before his death.” NICNT

<sup>17</sup> “The charge brought against Stephen was all the deadlier because it was one which would infuriate the people of Jerusalem. Any threat, real or imagined, to the temple was not only an offense to their religious feelings; it was also a threat to their livelihood. The economic life of the city and its residents depended on the temple. The chief-priestly party knew that they need have no fear of popular disapproval this time in prosecuting a leading member of the Nazarene community; on the contrary, the people would support and indeed demand the severest sanctions of the law against this man. Stephen was accordingly arrested and put on his trial before the Sanhedrin.” NICNT

<sup>18</sup> “As with the “false witnesses” who brought similar testimony against Jesus before the Sanhedrin, their charges were not baseless fabrications. Jesus had indeed said something about destroying the temple, and Stephen had evidently repeated his words. What Stephen meant (as appears in the sequel) was that the coming of Christ implied the end of the temple order. Jesus foretold the destruction of the material temple—“not one stone will be left standing on another,” he said; “all will be thrown down” (Mark 13:2)—but the charge brought against him at his trial was not based on this prediction. As the charge was worded, he had said, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands” (Mark 14:58); on this the witnesses seem to have agreed, although in other details their testimony involved such discrepancies that it had to be disallowed. That Jesus had indeed said something of the kind was apparently a matter of general knowledge in Jerusalem; it was recalled in mockery when he was exposed to public derision on the cross (Mark 15:29–30). But we search the Synoptic Gospels in vain for any information about the setting in which he uttered those words, or words like them. John, however, says that when he was challenged to justify his action in cleansing the temple, he said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). John explains these words as a reference to the raising up of “the temple of his body” on the third day (John 2:21). He does not report Jesus as using the terms “made with hands” and “not made with hands,” but the way in which those terms entered into the Christian vocabulary from an early date suggests strongly that they do indeed owe their origin to Jesus.” NICNT

yes, Jesus did prophesy that the temple would be destroyed soon (Matt 24:1-2<sup>19</sup>), but Jesus never said HE would destroy the Temple personally. No, no one, not Jesus nor Stephen said anything against the Temple. They respected what the Temple stood for and what God was using it for. Yes, Jesus did say that He was greater than the Temple, which was dicey but it's true so...not sure He could say otherwise.

- **When Jesus Said That** - Jn 2:18-22 – “So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup> When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.”
- **That argument was made against Jesus in His trial** – Mt 26:57-62 - “Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup> And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. <sup>59</sup> Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup> but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup> and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” <sup>62</sup> And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”
- **It was still a derogatory insult against Jesus while He hung on the cross** - Mt 27:39-40 – “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”
- **Their Argument about the Law** – So, what was their argument about the Law? They said, Jesus, whom Stephen followed and promoted, “will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.”
- **Is there truth to their claim?**<sup>20</sup> - Now, is this true? Kind of. Yes, Jesus did talk about, ‘you’ve heard Moses say, or the Law say, but I tell you this.’ (think Sermon on the Mount). But in any way did Jesus dishonor Moses? No. The author of Hebrews does say that He was worthy of greater glory than Moses (Heb 3:3), which is absolutely true, but Jesus didn’t dishonor Moses, nor did Jesus dishonor the Law. Now, He did say that it was going to pass away as He fulfilled it and a New Covenant and New Law would come<sup>21</sup>, which would be highly offensive to the Jewish leaders who relied solely on the Law. Jesus talked about the Law with fondness and appreciation,<sup>22</sup> but differently than the leaders.

- **The Face of an Angel**

- **Stephen’s Demeanor Stands in Judgment on the False Council**

- **Acts 6:15** - “And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.”

---

<sup>19</sup> Matt 24:1-2 - “Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

<sup>20</sup> “Stephen’s arguments constituted an attack on Moses, they said, because they implied the abrogation of Moses’ law; they constituted an attack on God because they threatened to undermine the temple order, the foundation of national worship, with which (it was believed) the glory of God was bound up.” NICNT

<sup>21</sup> Luke 16:16-17; John 13:34

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 5:17-18

- **His face was like the face of an angel**<sup>23</sup> – what does this mean? Is this like a proverbial saying like he was so wise that everyone was stunned at his demeanor or is this saying that he was supernaturally glowing like a literal heavenly host? Not sure. What it does seem to suggest is that they took note that something was different about this man and he resembled a heavenly spirit.
  - Jdg 13:6 – *“Then the woman came and told her husband, ‘A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name, ...’”*
  - Ec 8:1 – *“Who is like the wise? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.”*
- **Peaceful and Serene** – I would guess by the context that Stephen’s demeanor was peaceful and serene. He doesn’t seem to be rattled. He kept laying out truth after truth. He seems to be so connected to God that he’s not getting rattled.
- **Calm and Powerful** – Anytime I heard about angels I think of how they are powerful and so calm about things. They have a different perspective (a heavenly one). They aren’t worried about anything. They know the King and they know the plan and it’s all going according to plan. They are so strong but don’t seem to need to flex. I can imagine Stephen being like that.
  - 1 Co 15:58 – *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*
- **Where Stephen’s Demeanor Came From** – so how was Stephen like that? What was it about him that captured everyone’s attention? We’d all like to have the face like an angel, what can we do to get that? I’m not sure we can force it, but there are some things that will allow us to reflect heaven better. Let me give you 3 quick ones:
  - **1.) He spent time with God** – It’s hard to read this story and not think of Moses’ glowing face in the Old Testament after he would connect with God in conversation. Perhaps the time spent intimately with God caused Stephen’s face to glow too. But definitely his time with the Lord made a difference and so would ours.
  - **2.) He knows who He is (Identity)** – I truly believe that training Christian identity is the primary job of the local church. When we are made Children of God EVERYTHING changes. Our resources change. Our relationship with God changes. Our view of ourselves changes. Our meaning and purpose change. Stephen know that He is God’s kid and that means that it didn’t matter what mankind said or thought or did to him.
  - **3.) He knows who’s team he’s on (Confidence)** - Greater Is He in Us<sup>24</sup> - 1 Jn 4:4 – *“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he*

---

<sup>23</sup> *“But while his accusers pressed their charge against him, Stephen stood before the Sanhedrin with face aglow, as one who stood consciously in the presence of God. This was ‘not the mild, gentle look that is often seen in paintings of angels; not the fierce look of an avenging angel, but a look that told of inspiration within, clear eyes burning with the inner light.’”<sup>27</sup> Luke does not say explicitly at this stage that Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit as he faced his judges, although he says so of Peter when he made his defense before the same court a little earlier (4:8); he has no need to do so here, since his whole narrative implies it...With the description of Stephen’s face being “like the face of an angel” compare the pen-picture of Paul in the second-century Acts of Paul 3 (see p. 271 with 8): “full of grace, for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel.” NICNT*

<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 1:19-23 – *“...the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup>that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and*

who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” – Stephen is not ruled by fear in this passage. He is going head to head with the best and the brightest and the most manipulative. They have the ability to kill him (and they will) and yet he doesn’t wince, he doesn’t pull back. Fear doesn’t dictate his decisions. Awesome. Why? Because he is on God’s side.

- **He’s on the Lord’s side** – Do not fear is a common command that God gives His followers.
  - **Don’t Fear<sup>25</sup> - My life verse – 2 Tim 1:7** – “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”
  - **Don’t Fear - Heb 13:6** – “...we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?””
- **He’s on the side of truth<sup>26</sup>** – when you are on the side of Truth you can calmly talk because at the end of the day you have nothing to defend with fear. You have the truth. The other team will scramble to make an argument, you don’t have to panic. If they are seeking the truth they will eventually come into alignment with you. If they aren’t then the argument isn’t really about the truth at all. But there is a settled calm when you are on the side of truth.

## Conclusion

- **Wise as serpents, innocent as doves** – In Matthew 10 Jesus said to His disciples that he was sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so they needed to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. What does this mean? It means we need to **be pure hearted but super sharp**. We need to **do things with honor but not be stupid about it**. The serpent was known in the ancient Jewish world as the craftiest, smartest animal, so it means be smart about how you do ministry. Be wise about how you interact with people. But at the same time instead of using that wisdom for manipulation, we need to do so with absolute integrity. **This will both win souls for Jesus as well as be salt and light in a dark and dying world.**
  - Mt 10:16–25 - “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. <sup>17</sup> Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, <sup>18</sup> and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup> When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. <sup>20</sup> For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. <sup>21</sup> Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, <sup>22</sup> and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup> When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. <sup>24</sup> “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.””
- **Let’s pray for anointing in our spheres of influence.**

---

power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Luke 12:4; 1 Peter 3:14; Rev 2:10

<sup>26</sup> John 1:14-17; 5:33; 8:32; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17; Rom 1:18, 25; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Cor 13:8; Eph 1:13; 4:21; 1 Tim 2:4; 3:15; 1 John 2:21; 3 John 8.