

# \* ACTS

The Continuing Work of Jesus

## \* What the Grace of God Changes

Acts 6:8-15

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 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. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 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,

and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 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." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

(Acts 6:8-15)

### What's going on here?

"they rose up and disputed with Stephen" (v.9)

Wherever the Spirit of God is at work, the spiritual forces of darkness will do whatever they can to stop the spread of the gospel

### What's going on here?

What did Stephen say and why did it make the Jews so angry?

...they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." (v.11)

"This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 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." (vv.13-14)

### What's going on here?

An intentional contrast between Stephen and the Jews

Because their hearts had not been changed by the grace of God, they opposed the work of God.

The grace of God had changed Stephen's heart and so he responded with grace and courage.

### A moment of self-confrontation

Has the grace of God changed our hearts?

Do we respond with grace both in the moment of confrontation and long after an offense?

Do we have a fearlessness with regards to the threats of others?