

## CHAPTER 25.12

# ACTS

"PERSECUTION ERUPTS"  
Acts 6:8 – 8:4  
February 26, 2017

Stephen was astounded by God's glory, not obsessed with his own story.

I. Hearts focused on the glory of God reflect His glory.

A. Countenance (6:15)

B. Grace and Truth

C. Rejected and Accepted

When hearts aren't focused on God's glory, they will land on something else they value.

1) Turned towards Egypt. (7:39-41)

2) Turned towards other gods. (7:42-43)

3) Uncircumcised hearts and ears. (7:51)

II. Hearts focused on the glory of God experience His presence.

Abraham

Joseph

Moses

Stephen

Hearts focused on the glory of God reflect His glory and experience His presence.

**How does this apply to me?**

## NEXT WEEK

"PERSECUTION ERUPTS,  
THE GOSPEL SPREADS"

### Historical Timeline:

Within about two years of Jesus' death and resurrection, the church had mushroomed both numerically and geographically. Numbering many thousands, these Jesus followers were found in Jerusalem and throughout the Judean and Galilean region. The emphasis upon Jesus as God with us, not only when He walked on earth but also through His Spirit in the church, was creating seismic shifts within the Jewish faith. Those who believed in Jesus as Messiah understood that His single sacrifice for sins removed the need for further sacrifices in the temple grounds. In addition, Jesus' presence among them by His Spirit negated the essential function of the temple as representing Yahweh's presence among His people. These foundational shifts pushed the Jewish believers in Jesus further and further away from mainstream Judaism. The person of Jesus became a stumbling stone, upon which many would fall. Faith in Jesus alone would soon become cause enough for a hail of stones to be hurled at the disciples.

### Passage Overview:

The clear voice of Stephen became the spark that lit a powder keg of fury. Stephen's powerful and clear presentation of hope in Jesus was so Spirit controlled and led that all debate with him crumbled into the ruined shreds of tattered human reasoning. Failing at every debate with him, his detractors turned to violence and lies.

Dragged before the religious elite, Stephen clearly presented the truth of God's constant presence with His people Israel. Yahweh's presence was not dependent on a structure or a building. He was always present with them. Yet, time and time again the Jewish nation had rejected those God sent to speak to them and lead them on His behalf.

Now, in these days, God had spoken to them supremely through Jesus, the Righteous One. But they had rejected Him as well.

Rage spewed. Heaven opened. And there, as always, was the presence of God, in the person of Jesus. As the stones pounded Stephen into the ground, the Savior welcomed him into His presence.

The church would be pursued to distant lands. Philip preached to the hated Samaritans and a great many turned to Jesus. The Spirit even fell on them, just as He had on the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Then the gospel spread into the heart of Africa, as a royal Ethiopian official placed his faith in Jesus. "To the end of the earth" had begun!

**Reading for Next Week:** Acts 6:8 – 8:40