

Meeting the Holy Spirit

Who Is He, and Why Don't We Know Him So Well?



Meeting the Holy Spirit

- *The Spirit Before Pentecost*
- *The Explosion at Pentecost*
- *New Life in the Spirit*
- *The Spirit and the Flesh*
- *Where the Rubber Hits the Road (part 3)*
- *The Gifts of the Spirit*



Where the Rubber Hits the Road

- This is where things get really interesting...
 - Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and empower them—so what did that mean, exactly?
 - Obviously, that meant lots of different things, but what aspect of that empowerment have we specifically seen Paul talking about in sections like Ephesians 3:14-4:6?
 - Looking at that again for just a moment, how exactly did we talk about the Holy Spirit empowering us to fully grasp and to live out God's “surpassing” love?



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 - Let's remind ourselves about the Holy Spirit's work in the early Church—
 - Re-read Acts 5:42-6:4
 - Describe the qualities that they were looking for in these first Deacons
 - Why were they looking for wise Christians who were “full of the Spirit” just to wait on tables?
 - How does *that* reflect what we've been talking about from Ephesians 3:14-4:6, John 13:34-35, Acts 2:44-47, etc., regarding the witness that the Holy Spirit was empowering them to live out?



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 - Re-read Acts 5:42-6:4
 - Read Acts 6:5-6
 - What does this section specifically tell us about Stephen and his qualifications to wait tables?
 - Are we as consciously concerned about our leaders being similarly “full of... the Holy Spirit” today?
 - If not, then what sorts of qualifications *do* we tend to look for, and why is that?
 - And if we *do*, then how do we normally tend to operationalize that empowerment in our heads?



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 - Are we as consciously concerned about our leaders being similarly “full of... the Holy Spirit” today?
 - Why do people who are just waiting tables need hands-on prayers of dedication?



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 - Let's remind ourselves about the Holy Spirit's work in the early Church—
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 - Read Acts 6:5-7
 - What does this section specifically tell us about Stephen and his qualifications to wait tables?
 - What's the implication of the first word in vs 7?
 - What's the significance of the last phrase in vs 7?
 - What exactly is happening here that is bringing all of that about?



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 - Read Acts 6:5-7
 - Read Acts 6:8
 - Later on, in Acts 8, the deacon Philip did much the same thing in his ministry to Samaria—so how is the diaconate different from eldership again?
 - So why do Christians today still often see Deacons as “lower” positions—less “spiritual” than Elders? Or, worse yet, as ecclesiastical “stepping-stones” toward *becoming* Elders?



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 - So how would you describe Stephen from verses 5 and 8 here?



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 - Read Acts 6:8-10
 - Later on, in Acts 8, the deacon Philip did much the same thing in his ministry to Samaria—so how is the diaconate different from eldership again?
 - So how would you describe Stephen from verses 5 and 8 here?
 - What's going on in vs. 9-10, and why do you think that it's happening?



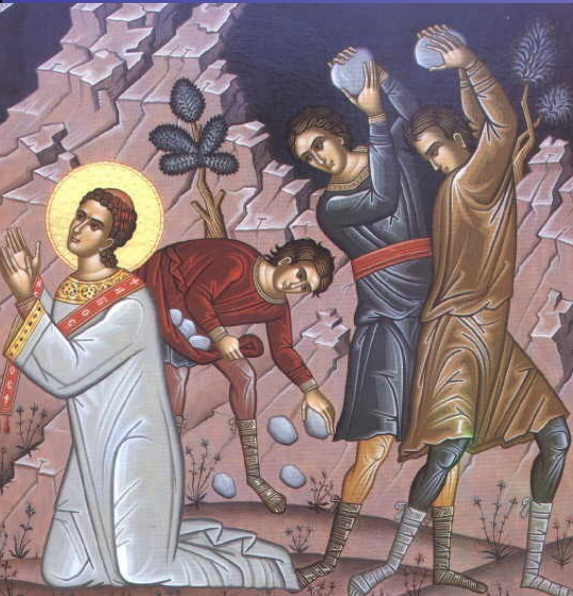
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 - Read Acts 6:8-10
 - Read Acts 6:11-15
 - What does that last phrase mean in verse 15?
 - How is this phrase *usually* interpreted by people?
 - Is that interpretation consistent with the *Biblical* portrayal of angels and/or Stephen so far?
(if not, then why do people traditionally like to interpret this verse as telling us that Stephen is being “quietly serene” here?)



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 - Read Acts 6:11-15
 - What does that last phrase mean in verse 15?
 - How is this phrase *usually* interpreted by people?
 - What does this phrase (taken together with verses 5, 8, and 10) tell us about Stephen?
 - So how does misunderstanding verse 11 (via a misunderstanding of the nature of angels) make us too often misunderstand and misrepresent this story of the stoning of Stephen?



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 - What does that last phrase mean in verse 15?
 - How is this phrase *usually* interpreted by people?
 - What does this phrase (taken together with verses 5, 8, and 10) tell us about Stephen?
 - In his defense in the verses that follow, Stephen boldly and clearly summarizes Genesis from Abraham to Moses, emphasizing the authority and sovereignty of God—but also the power of Moses, who'd heard God's voice...
 - Why?



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 - Read Acts 6:8-10
 - Read Acts 6:11-15
 - Read Acts 7:35-40
 - What crucial elements of Moses' ministry does Stephen include here?
 - Leadership, judgment, and deliverance
 - Wonders and miraculous signs
 - Sharing God's living words
 - Rejection by his own people
 - The promise that a prophet like him will come at a future time (see also Acts 3:22-23)
 - How would this summation help defend Stephen and point to Jesus?



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 - Read Acts 6:8-10
 - Read Acts 6:11-15
 - Read Acts 7:35-40
 - Read Acts 7:44-50
 - What sort(s) of things do you see Stephen emphasizing here?
 - How are they *relevant* to this situation?



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 - Read Acts 6:11-15
 - Read Acts 7:35-40
 - Read Acts 7:44-50
 - Read Acts 7:51
 - How are their actions “resisting the Holy Spirit” here?
 - Describe the “feel” of Stephen's statement at this point—how would he be coming across to his audience, do you think?
 - Why might it helpful to remind ourselves of verse 6:15 here?
(i.e.; is Stephen coming across as particularly “quietly serene” here? If not, then what is the Holy Spirit empowering him to be like?)



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 - Read Acts 7:44-50
 - Read Acts 7:51-53
 - How are their actions “resisting the Holy Spirit” here?
 - Describe the “feel” of Stephen's statements in verses 52-53—how would he be coming across to his audience at *this* point?
- What important element(s) might we miss if we doggedly kept picturing the Holy Spirit as just making Stephen “quietly serene” here?



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 - Read Acts 7:44-50
 - Read Acts 7:51-53
 - Read Acts 7:54-56 (but think about your *inflections*...)
 - Describe the two reactions here
- Again, how might we miss an important element if we pictured the Holy Spirit just making Stephen “quietly serene” here?
(and, looking ahead to verse 57, why would they feel the need to then shout down such a gentle statement from such a “quietly serene” man?)



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 - Read Acts 7:44-50
 - Read Acts 7:51-53
 - Read Acts 7:54-56
 - Read Acts 7:57-8:1
 - How have the two reactions both escalated here?
 - Describe the Sanhedrin in verse 57
 - Describe young Saul Paulus in verse 58 and 8:1
 - Describe Stephen in verses 59-60
 - How does his previous fierceness help us understand his final moments here—
 - If he's *still* fierce while speaking here?
 - If now he's finally serene?

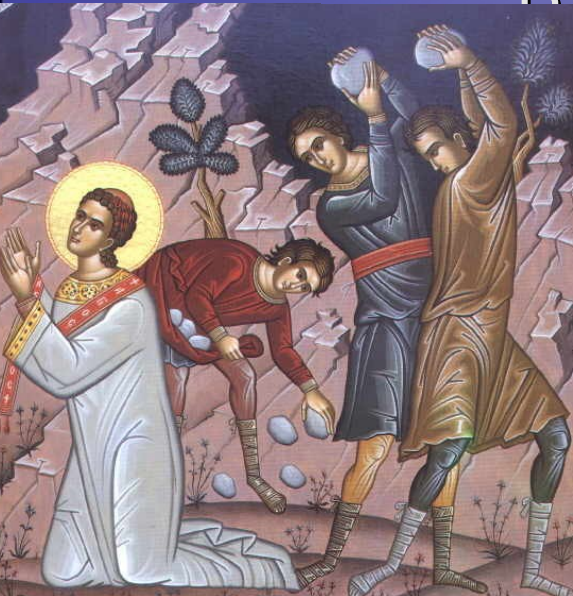


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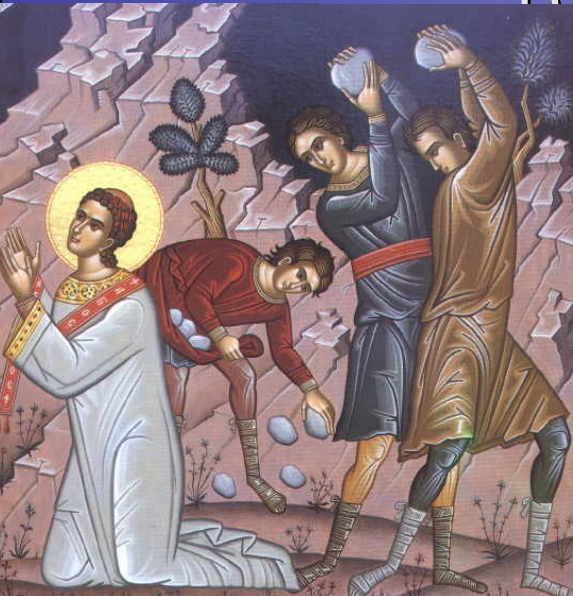
- Describe the Sanhedrin in verse 57
- Describe the young Saul Paulus here
- Describe Stephen in these verses
- Who's acting the most “naturally” here?
 - What's making the *difference* here?



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How have the two reactions both escalated here?
What does all of that suggest about how the Holy Spirit can use even a waiter...?



Where the Rubber Hits the Road

- Funky little teaching moment...
 - Why might the Holy Spirit not protect us from harm?
 - What was the clearly expressed, immediate *result* of Stephen's stoning in 8:1?
 - What was the promise that Jesus gave to His disciples back in 1:8?

