



Sunday, February 12, 2012

A Face Like the Angels

Speaker: Joe Boot

Scripture: Acts 6:1-15; 7:51-60

Sermon Notes:

1. The implications of holding Jesus as Lord and Prince above all include suffering, persecution, and even martyrdom.
2. Gazing at Stephen, all in the council saw that his face was like that of an angel, revealing the presence and glory of God (Acts 6:15).
3. The office of deacon was given to oversee the distribution of alms and needed provisions among the poor in the church.
4. True preaching is not just communication; it's the word of life transforming us and creating new conditions of life.
5. The law of God requires care for orphans and widows, and so the early church undertook ministry to practical needs.
6. Both ministry of the Word and the ministry of compassion are high and holy work.
7. The normal Christian life is to be filled, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
8. All opposition could not withstand the Spirit-guided wisdom of Stephen's words.
9. The task of bearing witness to the word of God passes from angels to men at Pentecost.
10. The status of men as lower than the angels (Psalm 8) is transitioned through Christ to the status of judging angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).
11. Stephen's face was like the face of an *angel* – a being whose task was to be a messenger (cf. Rev 1:20; etc.).
12. When we preach Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we're His angels (messengers).
13. In the OT, the angel of the Lord is a theophany, i.e., a human form surrounded with light and glory, in which Jehovah was present.
14. The Angel of the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt (Isaiah 63:8-14).
15. Moses' face shone like that of an angel (Exodus 34:29-30).
16. In Early Church tradition, there are reports of Paul's face shining like an angel. Likewise, when we are full of boldness, truth and mercy, it should be manifest on our faces.
17. Stephen's sermon is respectful, but it is absolutely uncompromising regarding the truth (see Acts 6:2, 7:51-53).
18. Stephen shows how Israel has resisted the salvation of God throughout its history.
19. The living oracles delivered by the angel on the mountain were set aside by Israel (Acts 7:38).
20. Israel failed to recognize the glory, presence, and righteousness of God in the tent of meeting (Acts 7:44).
21. So Stephen's audience resisted the presence and righteousness of God held up before them.
22. Sinful man hates and opposes the righteousness of God. If you're a faithful witness of Christ, you too will be opposed.
23. The new covenant is that the Law of God is written on our hearts.
24. Full of the Holy Spirit, Stephen saw God's glory and Jesus exalted in the place of highest authority (cf. Mark 14:62).
25. The Son of Man is given universal dominion over the nations (Daniel 7:13-14; cf. Psalm 110:1).
26. Even in persecution, martyrdom, and death we are witnesses of the Lordship and dominion of Christ.
27. To have the confidence to speak and act for God, we must first see Jesus in the place of authority and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
28. We can't live out the Christian life when doing it in our own strength.
29. Jesus Himself will stand in our defense if we are faithful to Him (cf. Matthew 10:32).

Application Questions:

1. Contrast the importance of the ministry of spiritual bread and that of physical bread.
2. How is the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives necessary for ministry of compassion to practical needs?
3. Are our lives and ministry marked by the Spirit, mercy, and word of God?
4. What does it mean for us to be angels of salvation to our communities, our city, our world?
5. What should we emulate about the example of Stephen in Acts 7?
6. Are we intimidated? Do we lack power and effectiveness in our Christian life? Why?