

BEHOLD THE GLORY

SERIES: SENT: LIVING THE MISSION
OF THE CHURCH.



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Acts 6-7
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Acts 6-7

Keith J. Matthews, a professor at Azusa Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary, writes,

“According to Gallup polls, it has been said that up to forty percent of Americans have had a ‘born-again’ experience, yet the transformative aspects of what that means in ‘real life,’ such as marriage and divorce or personal ethics and morality, reveal no discernable difference between Christians and the rest of the population.”¹

I always wonder, when I hear about such polls, about the percentage within the percentage: what percentage of those who say they’re believers have also immersed themselves in a community of believers? Nevertheless, we might wonder whether the church—and whether we ourselves—are missing something. I wonder if we’re missing the Holy Spirit: who he is and what he does.

There was a discernable difference between Stephen, who we meet in Acts 6-7, and the rest of the population. You could see it in his face. Literally. What made Stephen different?

Jesus sends us into the world. When we go into the world, will the world see any difference between us and the rest of the population?

What does the Spirit do?

Acts 6:1-7:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to

the ministry of the word.” 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

If the number of people involved in something increases, especially if different kinds of people are involved, it is inevitable that complaints will arise. In this case, Hellenists, Jews who were not originally from Palestine, complained about the Hebrews, Jews who were natives of Palestine. The dispute between the two factions foreshadows the larger differences between Jews and Gentiles that the apostles will have to mediate later in the book of Acts.

In this case, the apostles make sure that the Hellenist widows are taken care of, thereby resolving the dispute. They recognize the importance of the issue while at the same time recognizing that taking charge of the day-to-day administration of a solution would be, for them, a distraction from their calling both to pray and to communicate “the word,” which is the Gospel. The apostles don’t even take charge of appointing people to the task; they ask the whole community to appoint seven men to “serve tables.” Micromanagers they are not.²

The solution pleases “the whole gathering,” Hellenists and Jews alike, and even enhances the ministry of the growing community. As the apostles continue to pray and preach, the Gospel continues to increase: the number of disciples multiplies greatly in Jerusalem. The effectiveness of the apostles is especially seen in that “a great many of the priests” come to faith. Previously, both in the Gospels and Acts, priests are depicted as being in opposition to Jesus and his followers (Acts 4:1-7).

In Luke's narrative, Acts 6:1-6 serves to introduce readers to Stephen, who was one of the men put forward as a solution to the problem. Twice, first as one of the seven and second as an individual, Stephen is identified as being "full" of the Spirit, also called the Holy Spirit. What does the Spirit do for him—and for us?

The face of an angel

Acts 6:8-7:1:

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 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. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12 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, 13 and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 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." 15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

First, the apostles had to deal with a dispute within the community when the Hellenists rose up to complain about what the Hebrews were doing. Now, Stephen, who was appointed to deal with the internal dispute, has to face a dispute from outside the community when members of a synagogue complain about his teaching.

Stephen's opponents claim that he is speaking "blasphemous words against Moses and God." In the end, the words against God equate to words against "this holy place"—that is, the temple—and the words against Moses equate to words against "the law," which came through Moses. The members of this particular synagogue included Jews from distant lands, and expatriates often cling to cultural symbols to protect themselves from assimilation.

More than likely, if we listen to his upcoming defense, Stephen had been speaking about both the temple and the law in ways that were unfamiliar to his opponents, but he wasn't speaking against either the temple or the law. With the coming of the Messiah and the Holy Spirit, God's purposes for the temple and the law are being fulfilled.

How can Stephen be speaking against Moses and God, the temple and the law, when his face is "like the face of an angel," like Moses' face, when he returned from the presence of God with the law, and like Jesus' face, when he was transfigured before the disciples? (Exodus 34:29-35, Luke 9:29) By this time, Stephen, "full of the Spirit and of wisdom," "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit," "full of grace and power," is a temple who himself is part of a much larger temple comprising all those who believe in Jesus (Acts 6:3, 5, 8; 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 3:19-22).

Meeting with God

In that the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us and among us, we are a temple, both as individuals and together. What did the people of Israel do in the temple? They met with God.

Psalms 27:4:

**One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.**

The Spirit enables us to meet with God, to gaze upon his beauty, to marvel at his attributes. Meeting with God then has a transformational effect in our lives. Our faces may not take on the look of an angel, though certainly encountering God can have a dramatic effect on one's outward appearance. The New Testament is concerned not with a transformation in appearance but with an inner transformation so that we become more like Christ (Romans 8:29, 12:1-2). In Acts 7, Luke portrays Stephen as acting and speaking in a Christ-like manner. Just as we often take on the characteristics, even the mannerisms, of someone we spend an intense amount of time with, we take on the characteristics of Christ as we spend time in his presence.

The high priest asks Stephen if the accusations against him are true. Stephen answers by telling the story of Israel in three chapters.

Chapter One: The patriarchs

Acts 7:2-16:

And Stephen said:

“Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, ‘Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.’ 4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. 5 Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. 6 And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. 7 ‘But I will judge the nation that they serve,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.’ 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

9 “And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him 10 and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. 11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. 13 And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to Pharaoh. 14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. 15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, 16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

Chapter Two: Moses

Acts 7:17-43:

“But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt 18 until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. 19 He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. 20 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God’s sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father’s house, 21 and when he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

23 “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?’ 27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ 29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

30 “Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. 33 Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.’

35 “This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’ 38 This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. 39 Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices,

during the forty years in the wilderness,
O house of Israel?

43 You took up the tent of Moloch
and the star of your god Rephan,
the images that you made to worship;
and I will send you into exile beyond
Babylon.’

Chapter Three: The temple

Acts 7:44-50:

44 “Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. 45 Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, 46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him. 48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the

prophet says,

49 “Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
What kind of house will you build for
me, says the Lord,
or what is the place of my rest?
50 Did not my hand make all these things?”

Fresh understanding

How does Stephen answer the accusations against him? There is nothing in his defense that speaks against Moses, the law, or the temple—and certainly nothing that speaks against God.

What about Moses? He speaks positively of Moses, not to mention the patriarchs, Joshua, David, and Solomon. Stephen speaks highly of Israel’s heroes, but not so highly of their contemporaries. First, Moses’ contemporaries rejected him, so that he had to flee to the land of Midian. Then, after Moses delivered them from Egypt, they rejected him again. They not only rejected Moses, they also rejected the Lord and turned to other gods. Stephen also reminds his accusers that Moses pointed beyond himself to the coming of a prophet who would be like him. If you listen to Moses, Stephen is saying, he guides you Jesus, the prophet who is more than a prophet.

What about the law? Moses received “living oracles,” not the rigid religious customs, which Stephen’s accusers have turned them into. There’s more to the law than his accusers are recognizing. The history lesson that Stephen provides proves that the Israelites were unable to keep the law in that they continually turned away from the Lord. As the apostle Paul says, the Mosaic Law was a “guardian” to prepare Israel for adulthood, which commenced with the coming of Christ (Galatians 3:23).

What about the temple? The Lord was with the heroes of the faith wherever they went, apart from the temple. If Stephen’s accusers call the temple “this holy place,” then the “place” where Moses met the Lord, long before the temple was built, was “holy” ground. It served as a temple. The Lord doesn’t dwell in houses made by human hands, Stephen says; he dwells with the likes of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Moreover, creation itself is a temple. The Lord dwarfs the earth, not to mention the building in Jerusalem that Stephen’s accusers are so zealous for. He can’t be confined anywhere. For these reasons, the temple shouldn’t be glorified; otherwise, people will make an idol of it. After all, the temple was

made with “human hands,” just like the golden calf.

By the way, when the apostle John sees a vision of the New Jerusalem, what does he see? He sees many things, but he doesn't see the one thing you'd probably expect him to see: “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (Revelation 21:22). John doesn't see a temple because the New Jerusalem—the new creation—is a temple! The presence of God is everywhere and in everyone. So in the end, we will go back to the beginning—heaven is God's throne, and earth is his footstool—but a better beginning, for John's description of the new creation in Revelation 21-22 outshines the description of the first creation in Genesis 1-2.

Israel's fraught history demonstrates that it needs a fresh understanding of Moses, the law, the temple, and God. Israel needs God in a new way: the way of Jesus, the way of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Stephen brings the history lesson home.

Law-breaking accusers

Acts 7:51-53:

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

God gave Abraham the rite of circumcision, and it became part of the law through Moses. Stephen's accusers may have followed the letter of the law in this regard, but they have violated the spirit: they are “uncircumcised in heart and ears.” They are not following in the footsteps of Moses or the other heroes; they're mimicking those who rejected both the heroes and the Lord. Finally, they murdered and betrayed the prophet Moses anticipated, “the Righteous One,” Jesus of Nazareth. What God always wanted was not to dwell in a building but to dwell in a human, and he's finally done that in Jesus Christ. Especially inasmuch as they murdered Jesus, who fulfills the law, Stephen's supposedly law-keeping accusers have become lawbreakers. Now who's against the law?

The Lord has given wisdom to Stephen, just as he gave it to Joseph. The Lord has performed wonders and

signs through Stephen, just as he performed them through Moses. If angels delivered the law, then Stephen's face appeared to his accusers like that of an angel. The angels are on Stephen's side. Stephen stands with Moses and the other heroes, and even with the angels, while his accusers stand with those who rejected both the heroes and the Lord.

The Spirit makes us courageous

Stephen, full of the Spirit, is nothing if not courageous. He courageously speaks the truth to his opponents, just the way that Jesus spoke the truth to his opponents, even the same group of opponents. In what way does the Spirit transform us as we meet with God? The Spirit makes us courageous, like Christ.

Laura Warner, a member of our church, said that while Paul Taylor was preaching last Sunday, she felt that the Lord was asking her to do something. She later discerned that he wanted her to say grace before lunch at a gathering of women later that week. She was afraid but determined nonetheless

When the women sat down, Laura said, “Would it be all right if I said a prayer?” The women said yes, and Laura prayed. She did what she felt the Lord asked her to do. But after praying, she felt that there was still more that he was asking her to do. Before she knew it, Laura was talking to the women about Jesus. She went on for some time before one of the women suggested that it was time to stop talking about “religion.” Laura said, “It's not religion; it's faith.”

After the lunch, Laura said she imagined both her late husband and her late brother both giving her the thumbs up sign. The Spirit made Laura courageous.

First, the Spirit makes Stephen courageous. Next, the Spirit makes him loving.

Stephen's last prayer

Acts 7:54-60:

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together

at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Presumably, Stephen wasn't finished with his speech: he doesn't even get to an appeal before he's interrupted. He hadn't yet, like Peter, told them to repent and believe (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 4:12). His accusers, however, have heard enough. They are furious, not only with Stephen's interpretation of the law and the temple but also because he has turned the tables on them: the accused accuses the accusers.

Literally, Stephen's accusers are “cut to the heart.” When people heard Peter's sermon in Acts 2, they too were “cut to the heart,” but in response, they asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). After Peter told them what to do, three thousand repented and came to faith. Stephen's accusers, though, have no interest in asking him what should they do; neither do they have any interest in repenting.

The Holy Spirit dwelt in the temple. But Stephen himself is now “full of the Holy Spirit”: the Spirit fills not a building but a person. The temple was where heaven and earth met; now heaven and earth meet in Stephen, a human. Stephen's accusers gazed at him, but he gazes not at them but into heaven.

What does he see? He sees the glory of God—not in the temple but in heaven. Earlier, Stephen said that the “God of glory” had appeared to Abraham apart from the temple; now Stephen himself sees “the glory of God”—again, apart from the temple (Acts 7:2). Moses asked to see the glory of God, but he only got to see God's “back” (Exodus 33:17-23). On the other hand, nothing of God's glory is said to be withheld from Stephen. Gazing into heaven, Stephen sees the heavens opened so that he can see reality. He sees Jesus, whom he identifies as the Son of Man, “standing at the right hand of God.”

Jesus had identified himself as the Son of Man, who in the vision of the prophet Daniel ascends, as the royal representative of God's people, to the Ancient of Days, God, to receive an everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14). When Jesus was dragged before the same council that Stephen appears before, he told his accusers, “But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the

right hand of the power of God” (Luke 22:69). Jesus told the council members that they could do as they pleased in their earthly courtroom, but in the heavenly courtroom, he will share the throne of God, and they will have to answer to him. Jesus' claim to be Daniel's Son of Man, in authority over the council, sealed his fate.

The council members are enraged, they grind their teeth, they cry out with a loud voice, they stop their uncircumcised ears because of what they've heard, and they rush together at Stephen. Stephen, gazing into heaven, said “Behold,” but his accusers don't want to see anything, and they've heard enough. They drag him outside the city and stone him, like a cursed man, just as Jesus was crucified outside the city (Leviticus 24:14, Hebrews 13:12). Stephen calls out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”; likewise, Jesus called out, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” Stephen calls out with a loud voice, just as Jesus called out “with a loud voice” (Luke 23:46).

Stephen's accusers also cried out “with a loud voice,” but they did so as they rushed at him to cast him out of the city and stone him. When Stephen cries out with a loud voice, however, he does so not in opposition to his enemies; he does so to intercede for them: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” Stephen's last prayer is for those who are killing him! Jesus, hanging from the cross, also interceded for his enemies: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

It is not for nothing that Luke portrays Stephen's experience as mirroring that of Jesus. He wants us to see that Stephen is Christ-like.

The Spirit makes us loving

Stephen, full of the Spirit, is nothing if not loving, even toward his enemies, just the way that Jesus was loving toward his enemies. As we meet with God, the Spirit not only makes us courageous, like Christ, he also makes us loving, like Christ. The kind of love that intercedes for those who are killing you is otherworldly.

Frederick Buechner writes:

The love for equals is a human thing—of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles. The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing—the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world. The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing—to love

*those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich, of the black man for the white man. The world is always bewildered by its saints. And then there is the love for the enemy—love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain. The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. It conquers the world.*³

If you want to change the world, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

The face of Christ

In the end, Stephen, full of the Spirit, sees Jesus. Isn't that who he's been fixing his eyes on all along? The Spirit has enabled Stephen to meet with God, and God is seen in Christ. The apostle Paul gives us a behind the scenes look at the dynamics of spiritual transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

Aided by the Spirit, what do we do? We behold the glory of the Lord: who he is in his goodness and power. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6 that we see “the glory of God in the face of Christ.” What happens as we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ? We are being transformed literally “from glory into glory.” We are being transformed into the same image that we are beholding: the glory of the Lord, which is seen in the face of Christ, in who he is. The Israelites of old couldn't behold God in his glory because Christ, who fully reveals God, had not yet come. We can. We can behold the glory of God in the goodness and power of Christ, who reveals God to us. We don't transform ourselves; the Spirit enables us to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ and thereby transforms us—into courageous people, into loving people, not all at once of course, but surely and, eventually, completely.

So, we behold Christ, privately in worship and corporately in worship. What does Stephen say? “Behold.” Note, however, that Stephen sees Christ neither in his prayer closet nor as the church is gathered in worship: he beholds Christ as Christ sends him to the front lines in the battle for humanity. If you want to see Christ, serve Christ. Seek to be courageous and loving for his sake. Put yourself in a position where you need Christ. You'll see Christ, and you'll become even more courageous and loving.

When Stephen looks into heaven and sees Christ, we are not told whether Stephen sees his face. The emphasis is not on the physical characteristics of the Son of Man but on his position.

There's a difference between what Jesus said and what Stephen sees, isn't there? Jesus said that the Son of Man would be “seated” at the right hand of God. Stephen, however, sees Jesus, as the Son of Man, “standing” at the right hand of God. As Stephen stands up to his enemies, he stands alone; no one stands with him. Hell unleashes its fury, and what does Stephen see? He sees Jesus, the Son of Man, rising from his throne, standing to defend him and receive him. And who is this? Not some petty dictator. Not even the best human leader you could imagine. This is the eternal Son of Man, Lord of heaven and earth.

John speaks of when Christ returns to consummate his reign and usher in the new creation: “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). We behold Christ now, but, as the apostle Paul says, “in a mirror dimly.” As we do so, we are being transformed. One day, however, we will see Christ “face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12). John says that in the new creation, the servants of the Lord will “see his face” (Revelation 22:4). When we do, the transformation will be complete. Complete transformation is based on complete perception: the Spirit will completely transform us when we see Christ in *all* his goodness and power.

I wonder, based on Stephen's experience, whether those of us who believe in Christ will not simply see his face. I wonder if we will also see him rise from his throne to welcome us home.

Can you imagine!

Endnotes

¹ Matthews, Keith J. *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*. Colorado Springs, CO. 2010.

² Likewise, Moses, heeding the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, delegated responsibilities for settling disputes (Exodus 18:17-27).

³ Buechner, Frederick. *The Magnificent Defeat*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. 1966.