

## Acts – Church on the move

### Chapter 6v1 to 7v53 Stephen's sermon

A longer passage this time – do spend time reading through it. Two main themes, caring in the community of the church and Stephen's sermon to the religious leaders. Explore Notes says – 'power, preaching, persecution, prison, prayer and praise – all describe the Apostles experience and the progress of the gospel'. Our overall title 'church on the move' we see happening here with gospel growth and powerful preaching.

#### *CHURCH CHOOSING* v 1 - 7

v1 Gospel growth - numbers added (maybe results from 5v42) – however problems occur. No church is perfect – but see in v2-6 how effectively it is dealt with and then in v7 the results.

What are the main ministries of a pastor? (v2b and v4) How may we free the pastors for this? Do we expect things of a pastor – different from what God's Word teach us?

v3 & v5 Maybe a very basic job here – but what guidelines are given for choosing the necessary leaders? Are these important for all the various tasks for the Lord and His work? What qualities are often looked for first, or even solely?

See further guidelines in 1 Timothy 3v8-13

v6 Acknowledged and commissioned

v7 Is it any surprise that God honoured their faithfulness?

'number' is mentioned in v1 & v7 – should we be praying for increase in numbers?

#### *CLEAR PREACHING* v 8 – 7v 53

v8-15 One man stands out from the 7 - note v8 & v10. How had his gifts developed? How do the people and particularly the religious leaders respond?

What seems to be their main problem? (see v14)

v15 'saw his face' – pure, calm, unruffled composure reflecting the presence of God – (Dr John MacArthur) – see also Exodus 34 v29-35

Ch7 Was he giving his defence (or responding to the high priest's question) or possibly 'defending the faith'? Why did he give a history lesson?

Notice Stephen's purpose of this 'sermon'.

1) – Showing a respect for the Patriarchs and Moses. Certainly not the blasphemous words that they accused him of. (6v11)

2) – Show how the leaders and Jews generally had consistently rejected leaders that God had sent. Cf. – v9-10, 25-27, 35-37, and 39-40.

3) – Then also showing that Jesus prediction in 6v13-14 – about destroying the temple - - was not wrong or blasphemous – see 7 v46-50. (Read also the full quote – Isaiah 66v1-3)

What attitude is he challenging in these Jews that were listening to him?

v51-53 He is now wrapping up his speech - and he certainly will not 'pull any punches'. Is this the way to conclude a sermon?

What attitude is Stephen accusing them of?

Notice in v52 how their resistance and rejection shows.

v53 Is this a challenge to us – what we have heard, now to obey?

Someone has said – 'Jesus has many more admirers than disciples'.

Sharing the Gospel – are you willing to stick your neck out, just like Stephen did, whatever the cost? See 1 Thessalonians 2v1-2

DJ

#### PRAYER POINTS –

Pray for souls to be saved. For people not just to hear God's Word but to respond.

Jesus calls us – not just to hear Him, or even talk about Him - - BUT to follow Him.

General Church Meeting – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November

November 26<sup>th</sup> – Women's Book Club