

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## LESSON 9: CHAPTER 6, CHAPTER 7:1-27

24 July 2015

- Vs. 1** As the church continues to grow in number, a problem arises: murmuring (complaining). Paul clearly condemns murmuring in Philippians 2:14. Grecians (Greek speaking Jewish converts from the dispersion) murmured against the Hebrews (Aramaic speaking Jewish converts from Palestine). Meals were being administered to widows in the church and the Grecians complained that their widows were being neglected.
- Vs. 2** The twelve addressed the assembly concerning this matter. It is not reasonable for the church leadership to **“leave the word of God”** to address carnal issues. This practice would (and does) paralyze the important and necessary work of the church.
- Vs. 3** The congregation is instructed to appoint seven men to deal with these carnal issues in the church. These men had to be **“of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.”**
- Note: these men were not expected to give the members what they want. They were assigned to put a stop to the unreasonable complaining (see Titus:1:10-11). This freed up the church leaders to continue in prayer and Bible study and evangelism.
- Vs. 4** The order given in this verse shows the great importance of prayer. Prayer first, ministry second. Never try to minister without prayer. Ministry is more profitable through prayer.
- Vss. 5-6** The selection of the seven men is made. First mention of Antioch is given here in a positive light. (KJV manuscripts came from Antioch). First mention of Alexandria is given in verse 9 in a negative light (modern bible manuscripts came from Alexandria). Egypt is always negative.
- Vs. 7** **“The word of God increased...”** Why? Because the leadership stayed the course and didn't let the murmuring (vs. 1) get them off track. God blessed their decision and they continued to multiply in number, including **“a great company of the priests.”**
- Vs. 8** Stephen is full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (vs. 3), full of faith and of the Holy Ghost (vs. 5), and full of faith and power (vs. 8). He **“did great wonders and miracles among the people.”**
- Vss. 9-14** Stephen's ministry results in many unbelievers rising up to dispute with him, but they are no match for **“the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake”**(vs. 10). These disputers privately hired false witnesses to speak against Stephen (vs. 11, 13) and stir up the people (vs. 12).
- Stephen is accused of: speaking blasphemous words against Moses, and against God (vs. 11), speaking against **“this holy place, and the law”** (vs. 13), saying that Jesus **“shall destroy this place and shall change the customs”** (vs. 14). Notice Stephen gets treated the same as the Lord did.
- Note: in Matthew 24:2, Jesus said, **“There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”** He didn't say He would destroy it. See also Mark 14:58.

It is true that Stephen and the disciples are turning people away from Moses, the Law, the Temple, and the Old Testament customs. Why? Because they're trying to turn people toward NEW Testament faith in Jesus Christ (they're not offering the Kingdom of heaven to the Jews).

**Vs. 15** It's interesting that when Stephen is accused of speaking against Moses, God lit up his face like He did Moses' face in Exodus 34:30.

## **CHAPTER 7**

**Vss 1-8** Stephen preaches to the council. His message thus far is being received well. He has not said anything disagreeable in their ears. He speaks of the sojourning of Abraham, the birth of Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs (the 12 fathers of the tribes of Israel), bondage in Egypt, the exodus, and the covenant of circumcision. It is a classic Jewish message up to this point.

**Vs. 9** This is the first point of contention in Stephen's message. He mentions "**the patriarchs, moved with envy.**" He's hinting at the similarities between how Joseph's brothers treated HIM (Gen. 37:11)—and how JESUS' brethren (the Jews) treated HIM (Mark 15:10). God was with Joseph. God was with Jesus (Luke 2:52).

**Vs. 10** Pharaoh (type of God) made Joseph governor over Egypt (Type of the world).

**Joseph:** rejected by his own people, delivered into affliction, ascended to the throne to rule over those who rejected him.

**Jesus:** rejected by his own people, delivered to the cross, ascended to the throne to rule over those who rejected him.

**Vss. 11-16** Jacob's (Israel's) sons, had rejected Joseph when he was with them. While Joseph is on the throne, there is a time of hardship and famine (type of Great Tribulation). "**At the SECOND TIME**" (vs. 13) "**Joseph was made known to his brethren.**" The wording here points to the Second Advent of Jesus, at which time His "brethren" (Jews) will receive Him as King.

**Vss. 17-19** Stephen tells of the Israelites multiplying in Egypt, being abused by the Egyptians, and having their babies killed. According to Exodus 1:22, their babies (sons) were "**cast into the river.**"

**Vss. 20-27** Moses was born during this time of the baby slaughter. Moses was the redeemer that escaped the slaughter. The same thing happened to Jesus 40 years before this day in Acts 7. Stephen will now discuss the various ways that Moses' life illustrates the life of Jesus as Savior and deliverer.

Moses was nourished by Pharaoh's daughter (vs. 21). He survived in the house of an Egyptian. Jesus survived in a house in Egypt (Mt. 2:13).

Moses was "**mighty in words and in deeds.**" When Jesus spoke, people said, "**never man spake like this man**" (Jn. 7:46). See also Luke 4:22.

Moses was God's chosen deliverer, but his brethren "**understood not**" (vs. 25) and rejected him as "**ruler**" and "**judge**" (vs. 27). Jesus tried in many ways to show the Jews that He was there to deliver them, but they rejected Him. (Luke 19:14, John 19:15).