

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles

NT Survey Lesson 56--Acts 6

Introduction: This chapter shows that the first church had problems that needed to be solved. The apostles give us a wonderful example of how to be good leaders and implement principled solutions to needs the local church may have. In the latter half of the chapter Luke focuses in on one of the seven that were chosen to serve the church, Stephen, and describes the events that led to his martyrdom.

A problem is solved among the first Christians--Ac. 6:1-7

1. Had the early church developed a means by which to meet the needs of the widows among them? Was it basically a good plan?
2. What complaint is lodged concerning the efforts being made? Can you account for any factors that might have led to this neglect? Could you say Jerusalem was having "growth" problems?
3. What was the attitude of the apostles when this was brought to their attention? Were they angry or did they feel threatened by being informed of a problem?
4. Did the apostles have a plan for solving the problem? Did they implement the plan without discussing it with the whole church? Why do you think they were wise to involve the whole congregation? Did such an arrangement violate God's teaching about the role of women? Why or why not?
5. Did the apostles reserve authority and function for themselves? What did they determine they would do? Why?
6. How did the whole church participate in this decision? Who in particular is noteworthy among those chosen?
7. What did the apostles do to these men? Why?
8. To what may we attribute the ongoing increase of the early church?

Events leading to Stephen's stoning--Ac. 6:8-15

1. What had Stephen been empowered to do?
2. Who “won” the discussion between Stephen and the men of the Synagogue of the Freedmen? Why?
3. Of what was Stephen charged by his enemies? Were these charges true?