

# Bible Workshop:

## Acts of the Apostles 6

### Outline

- vv. 1,2 Discontent in the ecclesia
- vv. 3-8 Seven brethren chosen
- vv. 9-14 Charge of blasphemy against Stephen
- v. 15 Stephen's demeanour

### Discussion points

- 1 Discuss the difficulties that can arise when the numbers in the ecclesia grow. What are the pros and cons of a small or a large ecclesia (v. 1)?
- 2 What was the basis of the division noted in verse 1? How could a similar state of affairs arise in ecclesial life today, and what is the solution?
- 3 Do we have to make a choice between "the word of God" and "serv[ing] tables" today (v. 2), or can we do both? Why did the apostles make the division?
- 4 We are given one geographic location in verse 5. Why is it relevant?
- 5 Do you think it would be easy for a great company of priests to accept the Truth (v. 7)? What would be the major difficulties?
- 6 Where did Stephen come from, and what was his background?
- 7 What was the charge brought against Stephen in verse 11, and why was it so serious? Was there any truth in this charge against him?
- 8 What was true and what was false in the charges brought against Stephen in verses 13, 14? What echoes are brought to mind?
- 9 What might Stephen's accusers have seen in his face (v. 15)? What other instances come to mind?

### Details

- 1 What was "the daily ministrations" (v. 1) and why was it necessary? Why is it described as 'serving tables' in verse 2?

- 2 What is the symbology of the laying on of hands (v. 6)? Is there an Old Testament shadow? Why is it accompanied by prayer?
- 3 How many times does the word 'wisdom' occur in Acts? What does it really mean? Why was it such a feature of Stephen's discourse (v. 10)?

### Tasks

- 1 Look at the choice of the seven men in verse 5 and see what the common links are. Does this favour one side of the dispute? Why was the choice made in this way?
- 2 Find out as much as you can about the synagogue of the Libertines (v. 9). Note the four geographic locations mentioned and find what significance they might have.
- 3 Make a list of all the attributes of Stephen's character that are stated in this chapter. What picture do we get of this man?

### Information

Note the change of location for setting forth the gospel message. With the preaching of Stephen we move from the temple to the synagogue, and that the synagogue of the Libertines. This sets the stage for the rest of Acts.

### Take-home point

Disagreements and disputes are sure to arise in our families, natural and spiritual. Let us note the compassionate, loving and speedy way the matter is resolved in this chapter. Let us try to follow that example.

*David Lawrence*

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