

Acts 6:8-7:60

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 1-18-17

Context

I. Foundations for World Mission (6:8-12:24)

- A. Stephen the martyr (6:8-7:60)
- B. Philip the evangelist (8:1-40)
- C. The conversion of Saul (9:1-31)
- D. The conversion of Cornelius (9:32-11:18)
- E. Expansion and opposition (11:19-12:24)

Foundations for World Mission - 6:8-12:24

Poised to fulfill the _____ (Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:8b)
_____ of world mission laid by two men: Stephen the martyr and Philip the evangelist
Two remarkable _____: Saul the Pharisee and Cornelius the centurion

Introduction to Stephen - 6:8-12

Already introduced by Luke

- One of the seven put in charge of food distribution to the widows (6:5)
- Only one of them described as “full of faith and the HS” (6:5)

6:8a - “full of grace and power”

- “Grace” = a gracious, _____ - character
- “Power” evident in the “great wonders and signs...among the people” (v. 8b).

His ministry sparked fierce opposition

- V. 9 - “Freedmen” = freed slaves and their descendents, foreign Jews who had come to live in Jerusalem
- “rose up and argued” (v. 9) - but _____ who they were dealing with (v. 10)
- Vv. 11-12a - Initiated a _____ against him
- Vv. 12b-13 - brought before the council on charges from “false witnesses” (vv. 12b-13)
 - Sequence: theology > slander > violence

Stephen is Accused - 6:13-15

Vv. 13 - “This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law”

- Temple = sanctuary for the _____ of God
- Law = the _____ of God’s mind and will

V. 14 - referring to Jesus’ own claims about the temple and Law

- Concerning the temple
 - John 2:18-22 - the temple of his _____ (cf. Mark 14:53-65; 15:29; Matthew 26:61)
 - Matthew 12:6 - something greater than the temple - the _____ of God in the flesh. The new meeting place.
- Concerning the law
 - He would _____ the law. Not disrespect, but a contradiction of their scribal misinterpretations.
 - Matthew 5:17 - They all _____ to him

V. 15 - "face of an angel" (cf. Exodus 34:29ff.)

- God's _____ is clearly upon Stephen
 - V. 8 - grace and power of his ministry
 - V. 10 - irresistible wisdom
 - V. 13 - shining face

Stephen's Defense - 7:1-53

The temple

- The Jews' false conclusion = its existence _____ God's presence
- Four epochs of Israel's history:
 - Vv. 2- 8 - Abraham - God established a holy people before a holy place.
 - Vv. 9-16 - Joseph - Though in Egypt, "God was with him" (v. 9)
 - Vv. 17-43 - Moses - There was holy ground outside the holy land.
 - God is present _____, and wherever he is is _____.
 - Vv. 44-50 - David and Solomon - The temple is not in any literal sense God's home (cf. I Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1-2a)
- Summary
 - God is not _____ to one single place.
 - No _____ can confine him or inhibit his activity.
 - His solemn pledge was to be with his _____

The law

- Who truly respected Moses and obeyed the law (vv. 20-22; 31-32; 35; 38) and who did not (vv. 25; 27; 35; 39ff.)
- Vv. 51-53 - they stand guilty of the same sins!
 - "Stiff-necked" = _____
 - "Uncircumcised hearts and ears" = heathen at heart; willfully deaf to the truth
 - Sinned against the Holy Spirit, the Messiah, and the law

Calvin: "No harm can be done to the temple and the law when Christ is openly established as the end and truth of both."

Stephen's Sentencing - 7:54-60

- Vv. 55-56 - Christ standing? (cf. Ps. 110:1; Luke 22:69). F.F. Bruce: "Stephen has been confessing Christ before men, and now he sees Christ confessing his servant before God."
- V. 59 - Prayer for forgiveness (cf. John 38:31)
- V. 60a - Receive my spirit (cf. Luke 23:34)
- Stephen/Jesus parallels: False witnesses; charge of blasphemy; executions accompanied by two prayers

Stephen's True Legacy = his role in the development of the worldwide Christian _____

Teaching - Jesus is ready to accompany his people by the HS as they head out into the world. Stephen offers a biblical-theological _____ for missions.

Death - Profoundly left an impression on Saul. Occasioned a great persecution and scattering of disciples throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1b), it also _____ the church and _____ it to mission.