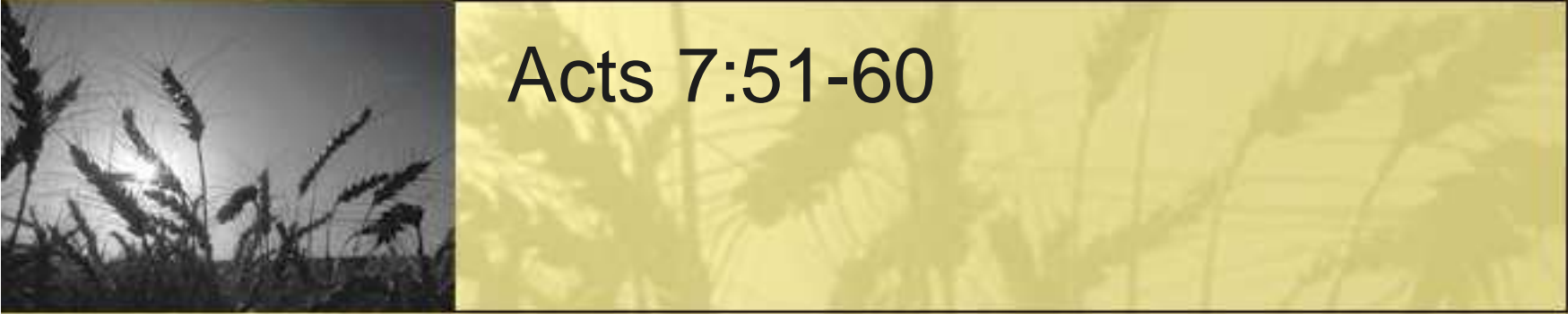


The Anointed Kingdom: Proclaiming Release



Acts 7:51-60



God and Captives

- Captivity...
 - The thought is ugly and foreign in our thinking
 - Tends to be a forgotten group...
 - Prisons of body are terrible
 - Prisons of the mind, more so...
- Joseph, Samson, David, Jeremiah, JB, Paul
 - All these and more (Hebrews 11:36,37)
 - What is God's desire for these?
 - **RELEASE!**



Stephen's Defense

- Stephen is one of 7 Deacons –
 - “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” Acts 6:5
 - To serve widows lunch! Such requirements!
 - When you are faithful in little... Acts 6:8
 - Full of grace and power! Great wonders & signs
- Proclaiming Jesus
 - Stephen is a “living sermon” and God responds!
 - NOTE: unable to argue or cope with His ...
 - Wisdom and the SPIRIT
 - Not from Stephen alone, but from inside him



Proclaim?

- *kerusso* – to announce, herald (Luke 4:18)
 - NOTE: this has nothing to do with results!
 - WE cannot free ANYONE...
- Stephen is dragged before the Sanhedrin
 - Same group that had killed Jesus (about 3 yrs)
 - They had rebuked Peter & John (Acts 4)
 - False witnesses! (6:13,14)
 - His response? Fear? Threats? Anger?
 - NO! He proclaims truth!



Speaking **THE** Word

- Stephen never talks about himself!
 - What a novel thought! Or is it?
 - Abraham and God (1-8)
 - Joseph and brothers (9-19); rejected!
 - Moses and Israel (20-34); misunderstood!
 - Moses on Call (35-44); refused and replaced!
 - David and Solomon... looking for God's favor
- **AND THEN...**
 - Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart!
 - Always resisting the HS!



Lessons to Learn

- Stephen focused on the Message!!!
 - God has made a WAY!
 - God has sent MESSENGERS!
 - God has an ANSWER for slavery!
- Stephen aimed at the HEART!
 - We tend to try to win people's minds...
 - That is fine, but true change comes in HEARTS
 - They were “cut” and “gnash” (54)
 - He focused on God's presence in him...
 - Covered their ears, not his mouth...



So, Stephen...

- Our thoughts would be...he failed!
- No big revival, no big change.. Just a death?
- NO! God has the last word...
 - A man holding coats...? Another simple job...
 - His life will be different because of the WORD!
- Our call is to **PROCLAIM**...
 - With our “jobs”...
 - With our lives...
 - With our “deaths”?
 - “I see...the Son of Man...” God of Glory (1,55)