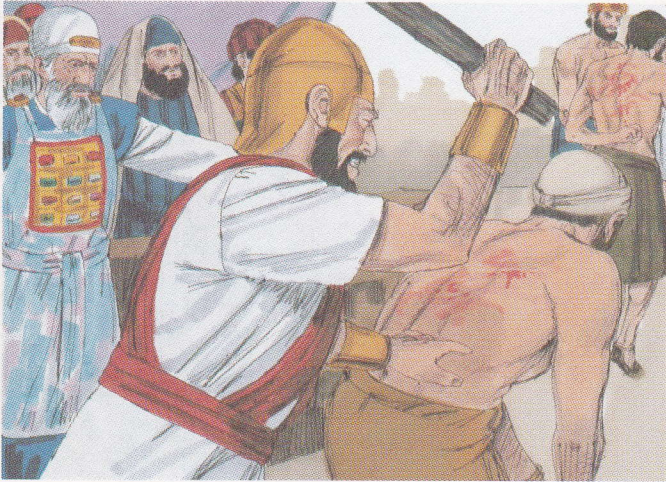
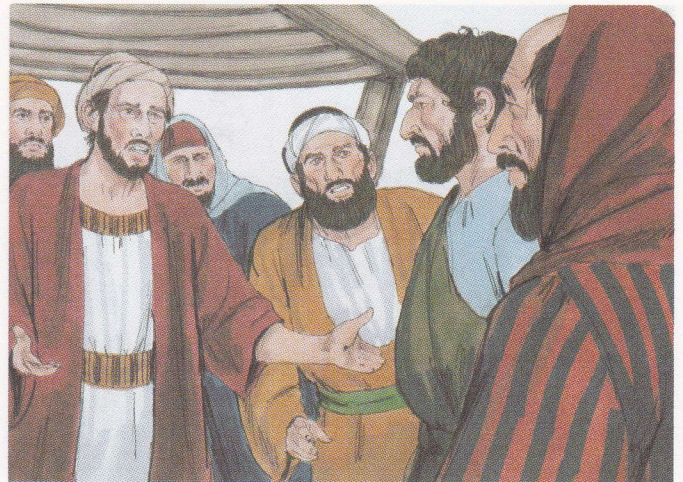


The Arrest of Stephen



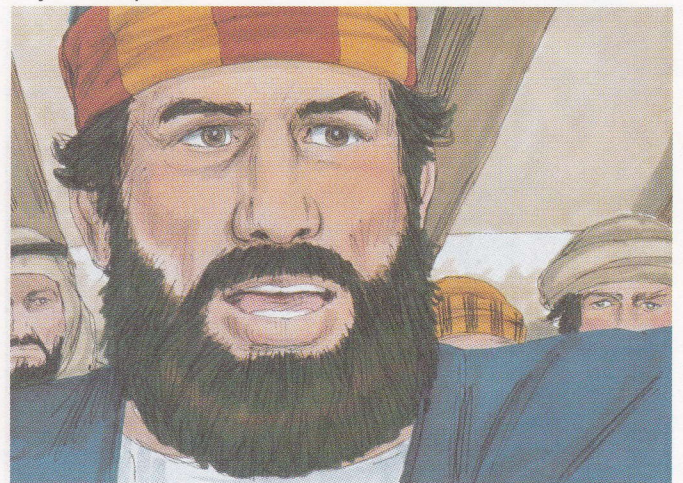
1 Even though the apostles had been beaten for preaching about Jesus, they did not stop talking to people. Thus, the number of disciples continued to increase.



2 But then trouble arose within the church. The Greek-speaking Christians felt that their widows were being neglected when the food was distributed each day to the poor of the church.



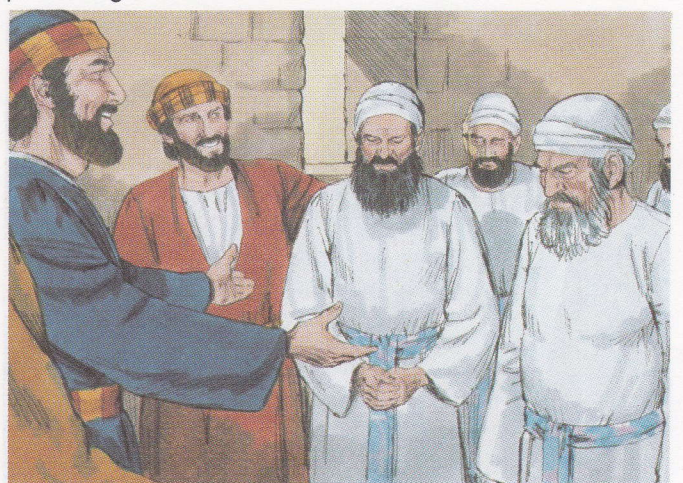
3 So the twelve apostles called all the church together. They said, "We apostles must not neglect our preaching in order to pass out the food. You choose seven men to do this work."



4 "They must be men who are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of passing out the food. And we apostles will spend our time praying and preaching the word of God."



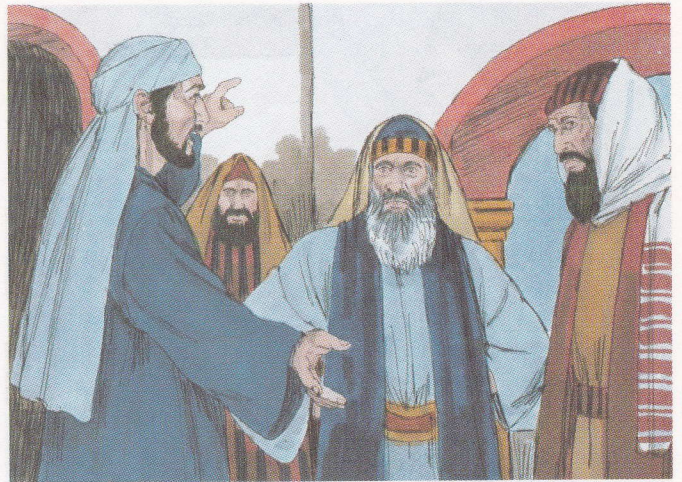
5 The church agreed with this idea. So they chose seven men: Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. Then the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them.



6 The word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew quickly. Even many of the Jewish priests became obedient to the faith.



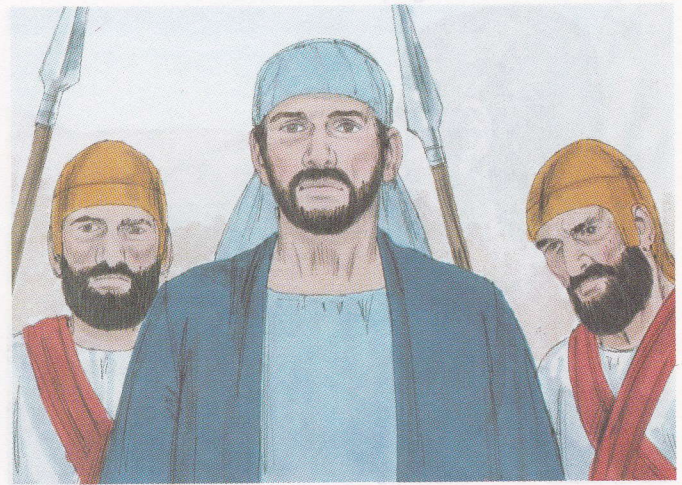
7 Now Stephen, who was one of the seven chosen to pass out food to poor Christians, was a man full of God's grace and power. He even performed miracles among the people.



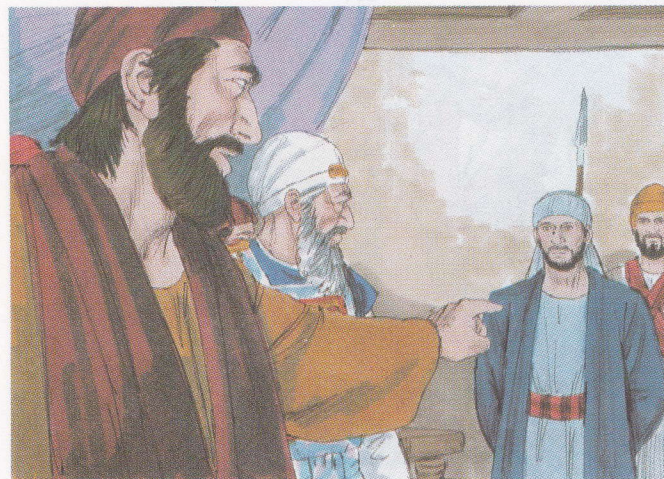
8 However, some Jews from the Synagogue of the Freedmen began to oppose Stephen. They argued with him, but Stephen's wisdom was too much for them.



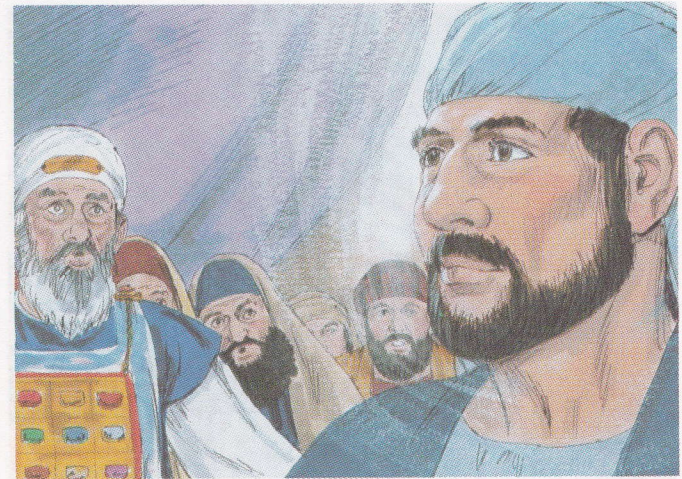
9 So these Jews secretly arranged for some men to tell lies about Stephen. The men went around saying, "We have heard Stephen saying evil things about Moses and about God."



10 Their lies made the people and the Jewish leaders angry. The leaders seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin (the Council).



11 Certain false witnesses stood up and said, "We have heard this fellow Stephen say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the temple and change the customs which Moses gave us."



12 Everyone sitting in the Sanhedrin stared at Stephen. They saw that his face was like the face of an angel.