



## **MIDWEEK FILLUP | THE STUDY OF ACTS**

### **ACTS 6**

#### **OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

1. To note how the church in Jerusalem handled their internal problems
2. To examine the process of selecting and appointing those who serve in the Lord's church
3. To evaluate the charges that were brought against Stephen

#### **SUMMARY**

As the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied in number, it is not surprising to read of problems increasing as well. This chapter describes problems from within and without the congregation.

Hellenists (Jewish Christians who adopted Grecian culture) complained that the Hebrews (Jewish Christians who sought to preserve Jewish culture) neglected their widows in the daily distribution (cf. **2:44-45; 4:34-35**). The apostles, desiring not to be distracted from their own work, summon the disciples and charge them to select seven men whom the apostles might appoint to take care of this responsibility. Seven are selected by the people and appointed by the apostles through prayer and the laying on of hands. With the problem solved, the word of God spread and the number of disciples multiplied greatly, including the obedience of many priests (**1-6**).

Stephen, one of the seven, began doing many wonders and signs. Opposition arose from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen who disputed with Stephen. Unable to resist the Spirit and the wisdom of which he spoke, they resorted to false witnesses to stir up the people, elders, and scribes. Brought before the council, Stephen was charged with blasphemy against the temple and the law of Moses. The chapter ends with the council looking at Stephen, seeing his face as the face of an angel (**7-15**).

#### **OUTLINE**

1. **THE SELECTION OF THE SEVEN (1-7)**
  - a. **THE PROBLEM (1)**
    - i. As the church grew, there arose a complaint

- ii. The Hellenists were complaining against the Hebrews
- iii. The Hellenistic widows were being neglected during the daily distribution
- iv. Hellenistic, Hellenization, or Hellenism, refers to the spread of Greek culture that had begun after the conquest of Alexander the Great in the fourth century, B.C.E.

**b. THE SOLUTION (3-6)**

- i. The twelve apostles summon the multitude of disciples
- ii. It was not good that the apostles leave the word of God to serve tables
- iii. The congregation should select seven men that the apostles might appoint
  - 1. Of good reputation
  - 2. Full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom
  - 3. So the apostles might give themselves to prayer and the word of God
- iv. The multitude is pleased, and select seven men
  - 1. Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit
  - 2. Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch
- v. The seven men are appointed by the apostles
  - 1. Having prayed
  - 2. Laying hands on them

**c. THE RESULT (7)**

- i. The word of God spread, the number of the disciples multiplied
- ii. Many of the priests were obedient to the faith

**2. THE CHARGES AGAINST STEPHEN (8-15)**

**a. HIS MINISTRY (8-10)**

- i. Full of faith and power, he did great wonders and signs among the people
- ii. Disputed with some from the Synagogue of the Freedmen
  - 1. Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia
  - 2. Who were unable to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke

**b. THE ACCUSATIONS (11-14)**

- i. They secretly induced men to charge him with blasphemy against Moses and God
- ii. They stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes

1. To come and seize him
2. To bring him to the (Sanhedrin) council
- iii. They set up false witnesses who charged Stephen with blasphemy against:
  1. The holy place (temple): "We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place"
  2. Against the law (of Moses) "...and change the customs which Moses delivered to us"

c. **HIS COMPOSURE (15)**

- i. All who sat in the council looked steadfastly at him
- ii. They saw his face as the face of an angel