

Acts 6: 1 - 15

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1. What complaint did the Grecian Jews make? (6:1)

Acts 6: 1

1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because **their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.**

Their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving *of food*.

A problem arose in the church.

1. The church was growing rapidly.

a. When any organization grows rapidly, all kinds of problems arise, and most of the problems center around how to handle the growth.

b. The church needed to minister to the new members, but it was having difficulty handling and reaching out to everyone.

c. The Apostles could not get to everyone.

2. There were different groups coming into the church.

3. The Apostles did not have enough help to look after every member.

2. What did the apostles—the Twelve—do in response to criticism? (6:2-4)

Acts 6: 2-4

2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

3 “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

1. The Apostles summoned the congregation of the disciples.
2. The Apostles said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.”
3. Brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

1. The Apostles summoned the congregation of the disciples.

The Apostles sought the congregation's:

- 1. Thoughts**
- 2. Advice**
- 3. Counsel**
- 4. Understanding**
- 5. Cooperation**
- 6. Involvement**
- 7. Love**

2. The Apostles' Mission

The Apostles said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.”

The Apostles had to concentrate on:

- 1. The Word of God**
- 2. Prayer**
- 3. The study of the Word of God**
- 4. Preaching the Gospel.**

3. THE FIRST DEACONS IN THE CHURCH

The Apostles suggested others (the office of a deacon) be appointed to minister to the needy.

The qualifications were:

1. They were men.
2. They were selected among them.
3. They were men of good reputation.
4. They were men filled with the Spirit.
5. They were men filled with wisdom.

3. Who was selected to serve the widows? (6:5)

Acts 6: 5

5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose **Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and **Philip**, **Prochorus**, **Nicanor**, **Timon**, **Parmenas** and **Nicolas**, a proselyte from Antioch.

Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon,
Parmenas and Nicolas

- 1. The church acted in unity, love and humility.**
- 2. “The whole congregation” of believers was pleased. The body had been reunited as one in spirit, with one purpose, worship and ministry.**
- 3. The fact that they were all Grecian believers points toward God’s moving the church out into the whole world.**
- 4. The men chosen were unknown except for Stephen and Philip. They were men who had the qualifications to serve.**

4. How were the men given authority to do their task? (6:6)

Acts 6: 6

6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

They were brought before the Apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

- 1. The church brought the men before the Apostles.**
- 2. The Apostles prayed.**
- 3. The Apostles laid their hands upon the seven men.**

5. What was the effect of the appointment of certain people to serve the widows? (6:7)

Acts 6: 7

7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

1. The word of God kept on spreading.

2. The number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem.

3. Many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

6. What kind of person was Stephen? (6:8)

Acts 6: 8

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

1. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. (v. 5)
2. He was full of grace and power.
3. He was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

STEPHEN'S RESUME

- 1. Full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6: 3, 5, 10)**
- 2. Full of faith, a man of great works, grace and power (Acts 6: 8)**
- 3. Full of wisdom (Acts 6: 3, 10)**
- 4. A man of great reputation or testimony (Acts 6: 3)**
- 5. A great defender of the faith (Acts 6: 10)**
- 6. One of the appointed servants of the church (Acts 6: 5)**
- 7. The first martyr of the church (Acts 7: 59–60; 22: 20)**

7. Who opposed Stephen? (6:9)

Acts 6: 9

9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, *including* both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen.

Some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, *including* both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia opposed Stephen.

1. At every opportunity Stephen was traveling all over the city of Jerusalem, preaching Christ to the Grecian Jews.
2. Several men stood up against Stephen. They opposed what he was preaching. They had remained faithful to their Jewish religion. The message of Jesus Christ was a threat to them and their religion.

Stephen shared the following:

- a. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world. Animal sacrifices, therefore, were no longer needed.
- b. Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man; man was now to worship God in spirit and truth through Christ and Him alone.

3. Saul of Tarsus, who was to become the apostle Paul, was probably a member of the Libertine or Cilician synagogue.

Saul was from Tarsus of Cilicia and was now in Jerusalem. He was certainly attending some synagogue, so he was probably attending the one of his own countrymen. However, he had also been born of a freed man, so he could have been a member of the Libertine (Latin word meaning a freed man or the son of a freed man).

8. Why couldn't Stephen's opponents get the better of him? (6:10)

Acts 6: 10

10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

They were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit guiding Stephen's speech.

Stephen was filled with wisdom and with the Spirit of God in defending the faith.

9. What kind of charges did Stephen's enemies make against him? (6:11)

Acts 6: 11

11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God."

They secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God."

10. How did the people react to the charges against Stephen? (6:12)

Acts 6: 12

12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council.

1. They stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes.

2. They came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council.

- 1. They bribed men to lie against Stephen.**
- 2. They stirred up the people and the leaders against Stephen.**
- 3. They arrested and dragged him to court before the Sanhedrin, putting him on trial for his life.**

1. The word “stirred up” means to shake as a volcano; to move and rock together as with a violent shaking. This was the first time the people themselves were aroused against the disciples.

2. The phrase “came up to him” means they rushed at him in fury, anger, and in violence.

11. Why did certain people consider Stephen dangerous? (6:13-14)

Acts 6: 13-14

13 They put forward false witnesses who said, “This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law;

14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us.”

1. They put forward false witnesses who said, “This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law.

2. We have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us.”

The charges against Stephen were:

- 1. Blasphemy against God and Moses.**
- 2. Blasphemy against the law.**
- 3. Blasphemy against the temple.**
- 4. Preaching the destruction of the temple and of Jewish customs.**

12. When those in the Sanhedrin looked at Stephen, what did they see? (6:15)

Acts 6: 15

15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

The Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

Ex. 34: 30

30 So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw **Moses**, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Matt. 17: 1-2

1 Six days later **Jesus** took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.