

## Chosen for God's Glory – Acts 6:1-15

### Introduction:

In Acts 6 we are introduced to an amazing first century Christian by the name of Stephen. He was chosen by the church to serve, but more importantly by God to bring glory to Christ Jesus. Chosen by God sounds incredible, but it was not to be an easy assignment. Like John the Baptist before him, and even our Lord Jesus, Stephen would find that service for the Lord costs everything. We too have been chosen by the Lord to share the Good News about salvation in the name of Jesus. Are we ready for what that might cost us?

### Choosing the Deacons – Acts 6:1-7

1. Church growth is wonderful, but often it leads to growth pains. What challenge was the church facing in verse 1? Who were the Grecian Jews and who were the Hebrew Jews? What tension might be present between these two groups? What might God be trying to teach the church? (James 2:1)

In the ancient Near East, widows often could not survive unless immediate family members provided for them (compare 1 Tim 5:9–16).<sup>1</sup>

2. Who takes control of the situation according to verse 2? What do they outline as their priority? How might this apply to the church today?

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Ac 6:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

3. The twelve apostles come up with a plan and turn the matter over to the disciples (the church body). What was the plan? What were the prerequisites of the leaders?
4. In verse three we see a very important leadership skill. What did the Apostles say they would do with this task? Why is this important?
5. What would the Apostles do with their time (what would be their priorities)? (v.4)
6. What was the response of the church body (v. 5)? Who did they choose for this task of caring for the widows?

**6:5** All of the men listed in this verse have Greek names. The community acts to ensure care for those outside its original social and cultural bounds—those who were previously marginalized—by appointing to leadership people who are from the same background.<sup>2</sup>

7. Describe what happens once the seven men are chosen to care for this ministry (v. 6).
8. Verse 7 begins with the word “so” which means “as a consequence.” What was the result of the disciples addressing the disunity issue in their midst? Why might Luke mention the priests who came to faith at this point?

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<sup>2</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Ac 6:5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## **Spirit-Filled Worker – Acts 6:8-15**

9. Was Stephen one of the Apostles? But look at what the Holy Spirit did through this man of God. What does this tell us about the “power” promised in Acts 1:8? (ie. is it for Apostles only?)
  10. Who opposed the ministry of Stephen? They started to argue with Stephen, but could not hold their own against him. Why (v. 10)?
  11. Note where the opposition came from. One of the places mentioned is Cilicia. Who might have been in that crowd (cf. Acts 21:39)?
- 9, 10. synagogue of the Libertines**—Jewish freedmen; manumitted Roman captives, or the children of such, expelled from Rome (as appears from Josephus and Tacitus), and now residing at Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>
12. What tactic did they resort to in their attempt to silence Stephen? (v.11) Compare this to John 8:44 and discuss, “They claimed to be of God, but whose tactics were they using?”
  13. What happens to Stephen in verse 12? Who is he taken to?
  14. What lies did they produce to accuse Stephen (v.13)? Looking at these accusations, what were the priorities of these people?

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<sup>3</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [\*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 179). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

15. What was Stephen accused of saying about Jesus of Nazareth? (v.14) What was true? What was false? Do you think Stephen gave a message like the one in John 2:19?
16. What did the Sanhedrin observe (v. 15)? What do you think that looked like? How does this fit with 2 Corinthians 3:18?

It was not even necessary for Stephen to speak in order to give witness, for the very glow on his face told everybody that he was a servant of God. Certainly the members of the Sanhedrin would recall Moses' shining face (Ex. 34:29–30). It was as though God was saying, "This man is not against Moses! He is like Moses—he is My faithful servant!"<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

Stephen was chosen to wait on tables – to make sure the widows were cared for properly. But he would not let that limit his witness, and he boldly told others about Jesus. Opposition soon arose and though he was falsely accused and tried, he still represented Christ well. May we have the same boldness, courage and grace that Stephen showed. And may we never have to face that kind of opposition!

Hymn 724: Rise Up O Church of God

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 430). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.