

# ACTS

## Chapters 6 and 7

### Note from Kathy

*This new body of believers shares many of the same challenges the church faces today.*

- *There was opposition from the world that did not have a heart for the things of God.*
- *There were issues from within that needed to be addressed and handled.*

*This is the work of leadership. Leaders must know very clearly what God has called them to do and know the people God has placed under their care. A good leader should get to know the character, strengths and gifts of those around them.”*

#### ➡ Deacon or Diakonos

One who serves.

One who, by the virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use.

One who executes the commands of another.



### Acts 6: Observation

1. Acts 6 starts by describing a dispute that had developed. What was the problem?
2. After identifying the problem, the apostles discussed how to remedy this issue. What was the solution to the problem?

What were the requirements?

List the men chosen.

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| a. | d. | g. |
| b. | e. |    |
| c. | f. |    |

3. In Acts 6:7 we see a very exciting bit of news. Why was this a noteworthy fact to record?

From what you have seen so far in Acts 1-5, what were the feelings of the Sanhedrin toward these believers?

### ► Acts 6:5, 8

"This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit... <sup>8</sup>Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people."

### ► Acts 6:9-15

"Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. "Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, 'We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.' <sup>12</sup>So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. <sup>13</sup>They produced false witnesses who testified, 'This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. <sup>14</sup>For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.' <sup>15</sup>All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

4. We are introduced to a man named Stephen in Acts 6:5 and 8. What did you learn about this man?
  
5. Acts 6:9-12 mentions a group that stood in opposition and argued with Stephen. They were known as Libertines or Freedmen. Try doing a bit of research. See what you can learn about this sect of Jews.

What problems did they cause Stephen?

6. What two lies did they falsely report to the Sanhedrin concerning Stephen?
  - a.
  - b.

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## Acts 7: Observation

7. Acts 7 begins with the high priest questioning Stephen to see if these charges are true. Knowing their love and respect for the scripture, Stephen begins giving a history lesson of God's dealings with the nation of Israel. It was his desire to show them God's hand from the start and pointing them to the Messiah. Fill in the chart below with the summarized facts from the verses.

Acts 7:2-5	
Acts 7:6-7	
Acts 7:8	
Acts 7:9-16	
Acts 7:17-19	
Acts 7:20-22	
Acts 7:23-29	

Acts 7:30-34	
Acts 7:35-43	
Acts 7:44-46	
Acts 7:47-53	

### ► Acts 7:54-56

*"When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> Look, he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"*

### ► Acts 7:59-60

*"While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.' <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep."*

8. What was the reaction of the Sanhedrin to Stephen's history lesson?
9. What special gift was Stephen given in Acts 7:55 that few have ever seen?
10. Obviously overwhelmed with joy at seeing Jesus, Stephen shares this experience with those present. Did this help the situation?

Were the religious leaders endeared to him when they heard what Stephen saw?

11. Do not miss the small detail in verse 58 of the man left in charge of the coats that day. It was \_\_\_\_\_.
12. A person's final words are very important. Stephen's final words are a prayer. What did he pray?

## Acts 6 and 7: Application

1. This was a time of great growth in the church, but not everyone was rejoicing. There are issues within and issues from without. We can take a lesson from these amazing men of God: pray and fix what can be fixed. What part are you playing at your church: consumer or contributor?

Are you part of the solution to problems the church is experiencing today?

### Acts 10:34 (KJV)

*"Then Peter began opened his mouth, and said, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.'"*

### Acts 10:34 (New KJV)

*"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality."*

### Acts 6:15

*"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."*

### Philippians 4:7

*"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

2. Stephen was a man filled with God's spirit and wisdom. Acts 10:34 tells us that God is no respecter of persons—see the 2 versions for clarification. God will give us His Spirit and His wisdom to handle the needs around us. Have you asked your Father to fill you with His Spirit and give you wisdom to be fully used by Him?

3. God gave Peter and Stephen words and wisdom when needed. What situations this week could you ask God to do that for you: talking to a boss, husband, child or parent?

4. Look how Stephen's demeanor is described in Acts 6:15. How is this possible?

What are some words that might describe what the Sanhedrin saw in Stephen's face that day?

What was going on in Stephen's heart? Read Philippians 4:7.

5. God was blessing the church and adding to its numbers daily. Stephen was instrumental in the display of God's power and grace, and yet, he faced opposition. How do you handle opposition? Do you get frustrated and ask God to zap those who make the work harder? Or are you one of the pious religious persons who stir up things and twist the truth? (If God pricks your heart, you need not write it down, but simply stop and talk to God about it.)

6. When faced by his accusers Stephen did not get angry or curse the day these men were born. No, he saw them as Jesus saw the lost, sinners in need of a Savior. Each person must be reached in a slightly different way. These men esteemed Moses and the prophets, so Stephen tried to use their stories to lead them to truth. It has been said that you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make them drink. It is also true of the hearts of men and women. You can share truth, but they must choose to accept it or not. How do you view the lost?

To what lengths will you go to reach their heart with the gospel?

7. Stephen shared biblical examples to help them see truth. Are you familiar enough with the stories of the Bible so that you too could use them to draw others to the truth of God's amazing grace and sacrificial love for them?

➡ **Acts 7:60**

*"Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'"*

8. Stephen cared deeply about them and wanted nothing more than to see the lost come to salvation. They did not respond to his presentation of the gospel. After he spoke, they no longer wanted to merely silence Stephen, now they wanted him dead. Even here we see his heart was fixed on loving others to Christ. What did he say in Acts 7:60 that displayed the heart of Christ?

Would this be your prayer if you had been persecuted, lied about and was facing death?

➡ **Luke 23:34**

*"Jesus said, 'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'*

9. Stephen was the first believer to die for the faith. He was lied about and suffered persecution, and yet, he did not retaliate. Stephen's life and death should cause each believer to ask themselves the question, what am I willing to suffer to live my life in a way that truly reflects my Lord?

Am I willing to die for my faith in Christ?