

Comments About Acts 6

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 6.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Notable growth

As a Bible student reads the first five chapters of the book of Acts, it is evident that the church was growing. Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples numbered about 120 (Acts 1:15).

Notice a few references about the increase of people.

Acts 2:41—"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

Acts 4:4—"However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."

Acts 5:14—"And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."

Fixing a problem

While the increase of people brought a great deal of excitement to the disciples, the increase also brought a problem. There were complaints that the widows were being neglected (Acts 6:1).

So the 12 disciples gathered the people to discuss the challenge.

Although the 12 disciples were willing to serve tables, they thought it was a better use of their time to preach the Word of God.

Acts 6:2-4—"Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' "

The people set chosen men before the apostles for the apostles to pray and to lay hands on them (verses 5-6).

The people chose the seven men—Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas (verse 5).

These seven men tended to the needs of the growing number of disciples, while the 12 apostles preached the Word of God.

Facing resistance

The rest of the chapter (verses 8-15) described some of the resistance encountered by one of the newly chosen men (Stephen).

- Stephen was full of faith and did great wonders and signs among the people (verse 8).
- Some people from the Synagogue of Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians and people from Cilicia and Asia) disputed with Stephen (verse 9).
- These people were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke (verse 10).
- These people secretly influenced people to slander him (verse 11). They accused him of saying, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."
- These people stirred up the people, elders and scribes to seize Stephen and to deliver him to the council (verse 12).
- These people set up false witnesses to speak before the council (verses 13-14).

Acts 6:13-14—"They also set up false witnesses who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.' "