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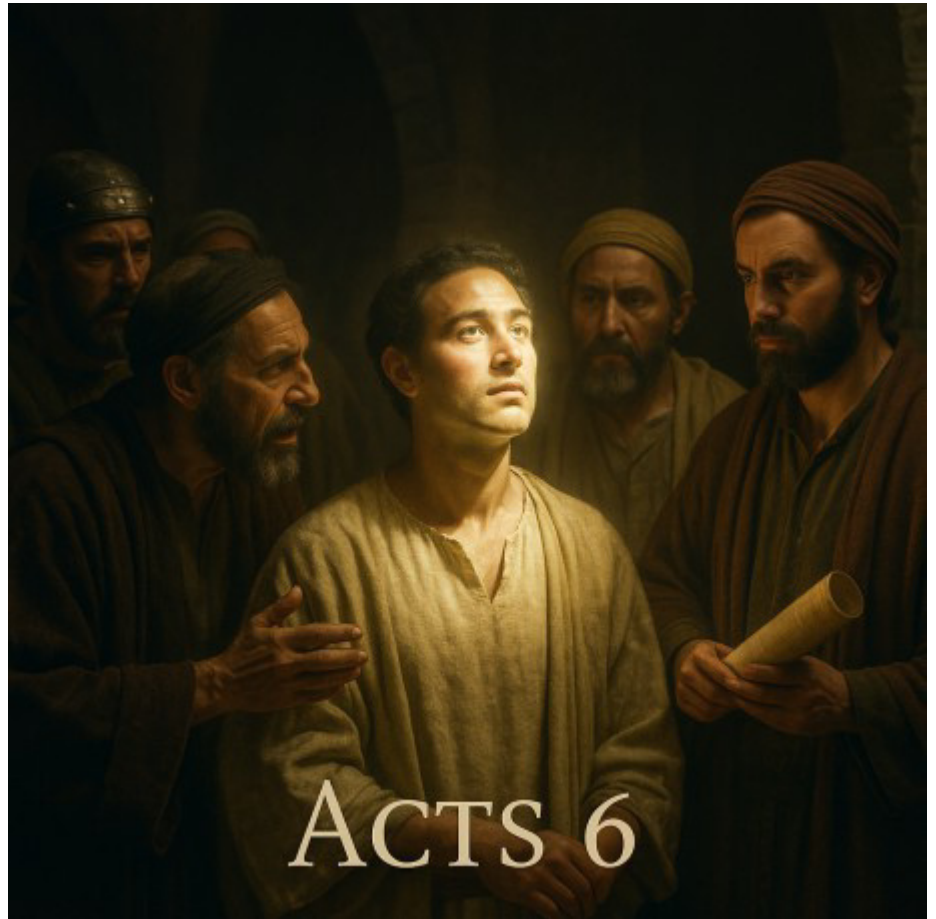
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Acts 6 This study has not been posted on facebook yet



By Dan Maines

Acts 6

Acts 6:1

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

† Growth in the church led to tension between Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) Jews and native Hebrews. The issue was practical but revealed the need for organized leadership.

† Josephus (Antiquities 12.1.1) describes divisions between Greek-speaking Jews and those of Palestine. The church faced the same cultural challenges.

Acts 6:2

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."

† The apostles recognized their primary duty was prayer and teaching the word. Administrative work needed faithful servants.

Acts 6:3-4

Instead, brothers and sisters, 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. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

† The solution was Spirit-filled servants. Wisdom and reputation mattered as much as practical ability.

† The Mishnah (Peah 8.7) emphasizes careful distribution to widows and the poor. The church met this need with Spirit-led order.

Acts 6:5

The announcement 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.

† The seven included Stephen, who would soon become the first martyr, and Philip, later an evangelist. Nicolas was a Gentile convert, showing the gospel's wide reach.

† Early tradition (Constitutions of the Apostles 7.46) names these men as the first deacons of the church.

Acts 6:6

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

† The laying on of hands signified appointment and blessing. This practice had Old Testament roots (Numbers 27:18-23) and continued in the church.

Acts 6:7

The word of God kept 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.

† The growth of the church included priests, showing even those tied to temple service recognized Christ as the true High Priest.

† Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 2.17) affirms that many priests and Levites converted to Christ in the early days.

Acts 6:8

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

† Stephen's ministry was marked by miraculous power, confirming God's favor and the advance of the gospel.

Acts 6:9-10

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. But they were unable to cope with his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

† Opposition arose from diaspora Jews in Jerusalem, but Stephen's Spirit-filled wisdom silenced them.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 9.11-12) emphasize the Spirit of wisdom as God's gift to His chosen. Stephen embodied this promise.

Acts 6:11-14

Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came up to him, dragged him away, and brought him before the Council. They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man does not stop speaking against this holy place and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses handed down to us."

† False witnesses accused Stephen, echoing the false accusations against Jesus (Matthew 26:59-61). The charge was that Stephen undermined the temple and the Law.

† Josephus (Wars 6.2.1) confirms the Jews' deep attachment to the temple, making accusations against it highly inflammatory.

Acts 6:15

And all who were sitting in the Council stared at him, and they saw his face, which was like the face of an angel.

† Stephen's radiant face recalled Moses' glory after speaking with God (Exodus 34:29). God's presence was visibly upon him, showing the council that their accusations were false.

How it applies to us today

† Church growth requires Spirit-led organization. Practical needs must be met without neglecting prayer and the word.

† God calls leaders with wisdom, faith, and Spirit-filled character, not just skill.

† Opposition and false accusations will come, but God equips His people with wisdom and boldness.

† Stephen's shining face reminds us that God's presence is with His servants even in trial.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Antiquities 12.1.1 – Division of Hellenistic and Hebrew Jews

† Mishnah, Peah 8.7 – Proper distribution to widows and the poor

† Constitutions of the Apostles 7.46 – The seven as the first deacons

† Numbers 27:18-23 – Laying on of hands

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.17 – Priests and Levites converted

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 9.11-12 – Spirit of wisdom given to the faithful

† Josephus, Wars 6.2.1 – Jewish attachment to the temple

† Exodus 34:29 – Moses' radiant face

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