

Acts 6
The Seven Selected, Steven Accused

I. The Hellenists have a complaint – 6:1

- A. The complaint was against the Hebrews concerning the neglect of their widows
 - 1. Hellenists – “One in Hellenistic times who adopted the Greek language and culture, especially a Jew of the Diaspora” – These were mainly non-Judean Jews
 - 2. The Hebrews were Jewish Christians that were native to Judea

II. The apostles delegate duties – 6:2-7

- A. The apostles call the congregation together and request that they choose from among them 7 men:
 - 1. Good reputation
 - 2. Full of the Holy Spirit
 - 3. Full of wisdom
- B. The apostles said that it was not desirable for them to leave the preaching of the word of God to “serve tables”
 - 1. The brethren choose Stephen, Philip, Nicanor, Prochorus, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas (proselyte from Antioch)
 - 2. Based on the names of these men, it would seem that at least the majority of the seven were Hellenists themselves.
- C. The word of God spread, especially now that the apostles could completely focus on the ministry
 - 1. A great many of the Jewish priests were converted

III. Stephen stands against the Synagogue of the Freedmen – 6:8-15

- A. Stephen was full of faith and power, teaching the people
 - 1. Did many signs and wonders – required one of the apostles to have laid their hands on him to receive miraculous gifts.
- B. The Synagogue of the Freedmen arose to dispute what Stephen taught
 - 1. Stephen withstood the Freedmen with Holy Spirit and wisdom
 - a) They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke
 - b) “*Freedmen*” – slaves that Rome had set free, lived in Rome
 - (1) There was a Synagogue of the Freedmen in Pompeii
 - c) They stirred up the people against him, this led to his arrest
 - d) They established accusations against Stephen
 - (1) Blasphemous words against Moses and God (**6:11**)
 - (2) Blasphemous words against temple and Law (**6:13**)
 - (3) “Jesus will destroy the temple, and change the customs of Moses” (**6:14**)
- C. Stood before the Sanhedrin to defend himself – **6:15; 7:1ff**
 - 1. “*Face of an angel*” (**6:15**)?
 - a) Shone brightly?
 - b) Face of peace, calm, innocence?

Questions:

1. Is there any insinuation or context to suggest that the neglecting of the Hellenist's widows was deliberate? If the neglecting of the widows was not deliberate, then why had it happened?
2. Do the apostles suggest in vs. 2 that "serving tables" was a job that was beneath them? If not, then what did they mean by this?
3. Discussion: What process was used for the "whole multitude" to select the seven men? Would this provide some evidence of a "congregational meeting"?
4. One of the "qualifications" of the seven was that they had to have been "full of the Holy Spirit". Does this mean they had to have miraculous gifts already?
5. Was the laying on of hands by the apostles in vs. 6 symbolic or miraculous? How does your answer harmonize with question #4 (the last question)?
6. Why is it important to note that a "great company of priests were obedient to the faith" in verse 7? What influence, or impact, might this have had on the Jewish community?
7. Why would the Freedmen induce people to false witness?
8. We know that Stephen was teaching and standing for the Gospel among the Freedman. This being the case, he likely did teach and say things that the Freedman deliberately twisted to provide a false witness. What might these teachings have been, given the accusations? How might what Stephen had taught (which the Freedman twisted) have fit with John 2:19?
9. What are some possible explanations of vs. 15 when it reads that Stephen's face was seen as the "face of an angel"? Miracle or non-miracle?