

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

I. THE APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS. (v. 1-7)

THE TIMING & OCCASION (v. 1)

A. (v. 1)

1. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied,..."

a. "And in those days"

- 1) This refers to the days following the second persecution of the Church ([Acts 5:17-42](#)).

b. "the number of the disciples was multiplied"

- 1) More and more people became believers because of the ministry of the apostles described in [Acts 5:42](#).¹

a) **NOTE:** I love the Lord's MATHEMATICS!

i. He "added" ([2:41](#)).

ii. Two were subtracted - Ananias & Sapphira ([5:1-11](#))

a. I've learned over the years to appreciate those blessed subtractions because then the Lord can add more and multiply!

iii. He again "added" ([5:14](#)).

iv. Then, He "multiplied" ([6:1](#)).

- 2) "disciples" - Gr. *mathētōn* - "learners; pupils; students; interns; apprentices"

a) Cf. [Matthew 28:19-20](#) - In the Great Commission, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and **make disciples**"

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books, p. 264.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

- b) **NOTE:** In the Jewish culture, a very few of the most outstanding Beth Midrash (secondary school) students sought permission to study with a famous rabbi, often leaving home to travel with him for a lengthy period of time. These students were called talmidim in Hebrew, which is translated in Greek as *mathētōn* ("disciples").
- i. In the first century Jewish culture, there is much more to a *talmid* than what we call a "student" today.
 - a. Student = someone who wants to know what the teacher knows for the grade, to complete the class or the degree or even out of respect for the teacher.
 - b. Talmid = someone who wants to be like the teacher, that is to become what the teacher is.
 - i. They were students that were passionately devoted to their rabbi and noted everything he did or said.
 - ii. This meant the *rabbi/talmid* relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture his students (*talmidim*) listened and watched and imitated so as to become like him.
 - c. Eventually, the talmidim would become teachers passing on a lifestyle to their talmidim.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- ii. **NOTE:** The decision to follow a rabbi as a talmid meant TOTAL COMMITMENT!
 - a. Since a *talmid* was totally devoted to becoming like the rabbi, he would have spent his entire time listening and observing the teacher to know how to understand the Scripture and how to put it into practice.
- iii. **KEY:** Jesus did not just say to go get converts or "decisions for Christ," but He said to go and "*make disciples of all nations*" (**Matt. 28:19**)!

2. "...there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews,..."

- a. "Grecians" - Gr. "Hellenists"; lit. "those who speak Greek"
 - 1) This speaks of language and culture, not ethnicity.
 - a) The *Grecians* were the Diaspora Jews who lived outside the Land of Israel, who were Greek by language and culture, but had moved into the Land.
 - i. The *Hebrews* are those Jews who lived in the Land, spoke Hebrew (and probably Aramaic), and lived after the Hebrew culture.
 - b) Alexander the Great had a great influence on the ancient world, and he left pockets of Grecian culture throughout the world. Many of the Jews adapted to the Grecian culture, especially if they lived outside the Land of Israel.
 - i. **NOTE:** The Apostle Paul was a mix of both of these cultures! He was from Tarsus outside the Land and was part of the Grecian culture, yet he was trained in Jerusalem and lived after the Hebrew culture as a Pharisee (**Phil. 3:5**), learning under Gamaliel (**Acts 22:3**).

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- b. "murmuring" - Gr. "grumbling; secret displeasure"
- 1) Murmuring is a very dangerous activity.
 - a) Cf. **Numbers 14:26-39** - The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and did not enter the promised land because of their *murmurings*.
 - b) Cf. **Numbers 16-17** - Korah and his group were Levites serving in the Tabernacle, but they *murmured* and wanted the priesthood. Then, the Lord judged Korah and his group by having the earth swallow them up. Then Aaron's rod budded to show that he was God's chosen priest.
 - 2) A schism was developing in the early church.
 - a) There were a lot of whisperings.
 - b) There was backbiting.
 - c) This is a dangerous condition because it could impede the ability of the Spirit to work.
 - 3) It is tragic how many works of God have been destroyed when schisms have developed.
 - a) Many churches have been divided and split because one faction began talking about, and complaining about, another faction in the church.
 - b) Paul said that these schisms were a mark of *carnality* (**1 Cor. 3:3-4**).
 - c) Jesus had warned the church at Ephesus that He was not as interested in their works as He was their love, and unless they returned to their first love, He would remove His presence from the church. (**Rev 2:1-7**).
 - 4) The Psalmist declared, "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*" (**Psalm 133:1**)

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a) This has been one of my greatest joys here as we see the Lord raising up Calvary Chapel Escondido, the love and unity the Lord has given to us!
 - 5) **NOTE:** It is so important that we bring the issues out into the open and expose them to the light, rather than letting them fester in darkness.
 - a) Jesus said, *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."* (Matt 18:15-17)
 - 6) **KEY:** If you have a problem with someone, what they have done or what they are doing, there are only TWO that you should go to about it: 1) The Lord; 2) them; and preferably in that order!
- 3. "... because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations."**
- a. "neglected" - Gr. *paratheóreo* - "overlooked; disregarded"
 - 1) Those who were following the Grecian culture felt that as the church distributed the welfare to the widows, that those widows who still followed the Hebrew culture were getting preferential treatment.
 - 2) Under the Law of Moses, widows were under special protection (Deut. 14:29; 24:19; 26:12), but, in their culture that was under Pharisaic rule, the widows were often ignored (Mk 12:38-40).
 - 3) In contrast to the Pharisees, the Church in Jerusalem did have a special concern for widows, as we know from its Senior Pastor, James (James 1:27). However, there was a perceived prejudice in favor of the locally-born, Hebrew-speaking widows over the Greek-speaking widows who immigrated into the country.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- b. "daily ministration" - Gr. "daily ministry"
 - 1) This speaks of the distribution from the common fund ([Acts 2:43-45](#); [4:32-35](#)) that was distributed daily.
 - 2) **NOTE:** This is the 2nd problem to arise out of the attempt of the early church at a form of socialism ("spread the wealth around").
 - a) The first problem was the hypocrisy of Annanias and his wife ([5:1-11](#)).
 - b) Later, another problem arose which was much greater — the financial problems when the funds ran out!
 - i. Paul had to take up offerings from the Gentile churches to help the poor brethren in Jerusalem.

THE ADVICE OF THE APOSTLES (v. 2-4)

B. (v. 2)

1. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them,..."

- a. "the multitude of disciples"
 - 1) They lost count by this point!
 - a) 120 disciples ([1:13-15](#)) + 3,000 on the day of Pentecost ([2:41](#)) + 5,000 men after this 2nd Sermon ([4:4](#)) - 2 after the death of Ananias and Sapphira ([5:1-11](#)) + a multitude ([5:14](#)) x the number of disciples multiplied ([6:1](#)).
- b. This was a GENERAL CHURCH ASSEMBLY called by the Twelve Apostles!

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

2. "...and said, *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*"

a. "reason" - Gr. "desirable; pleasing; fitting"

1) They are not saying that they are above waiting on tables!

a) Cf. [John 13:12-17](#) - We remember how Jesus waited on them at the Last Supper and washed their feet, and so we read, "*So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*"

b) Cf. [Mark 10:42-45](#) - "*But Jesus called them [to him], and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*"

2) They were not *above* waiting on tables, but it was a matter of being faithful to the call of God in their lives, which was ministry of the Word of God.

a) I'm sure that on occasion, an Apostle might have waited on tables. It is not to be, however, the daily occupation.

b) We all have priorities in our lives, and we should not allow things to push those priorities out. It is

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

knowing your calling and being obedient to that calling.

- b. "serve" - Gr. *diakoneō* - "wait at table; serve as deacon"
 - 1) The noun form of this Greek word is "deacon" or "servant", thus they want to appoint 7 men that can be deacons!

C. (v. 3)

- 1. **"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."**

a. The CHARACTERISTICS of Those To Appoint As "Deacons":

1) They were believers from within the congregation.

a) "look ye out among you"

2) They were to be men.

a) "seven men"

- i. LADIES: Don't wad up your bulletin and throw it at me! Later on, women are allowed to be deaconesses, but at this point, they were just men (**Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim. 3:11**).

3) They were to be men with a good reputation.

a) "honest report" - Gr. "attested; approved; spoken well of"

4) They were in good standing with the congregation.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a) I believe that they already had a reputation of as servants and men of integrity!

5) They were men filled with the Holy Spirit.

- a) It was a requirement to be filled with the Spirit to do even the most menial tasks!
 - i. Cf. **Exodus 35:30-36:2** - Speaking of Bezaleel, the carpenter of the Tabernacle, *"And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set [them], and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, [both] he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, [even] of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, [even] every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:"*

6) They were to be full of wisdom.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a) "wisdom" - Gr. "skill; insight; clarity"
- b) I believe this could also include their insight and clarity of the Word of God.
 - i. Obviously, Stephen and Philip were men that had clarity and insight in the Word of God.
 - a. Stephen (7:2-53)
 - b. Philip (8:5, 12, 30-35)

7) They were appointed by the Leadership.

- a) "whom we may appoint over this business"
 - i. While the congregation may have nominated people, the actual appointment was made by the Apostles, functioning as elders.
 - a. In other words, the leaders said, "Here's the qualifications for the position, and if you know of anybody, please have them apply. Then, we will vet them and appoint them."
 - ii. **NOTE:** In the Jewish synagogues, there were always three deacons that would care for the physical needs of the congregation, and since this new Church congregation was quite large, they felt the need to have seven.

D. (v. 4)

- 1. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
 - a. "But we"
 - 1) The "we" is in contrast to the seven men because the Apostles, functioning as elders, had a different responsibility.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- b. "give ourselves continually" - Gr. proskartereó - "devote; endure; stay in a fixed direction; to continue to do something with intense effort; to give constant attention to"
- 1) **NOTE:** This is the same Greek word used in [Acts 2:42](#), where the Church "**continued steadfastly** in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
- c. The Pastor's job is primarily to be devoted to:
- 1) Prayer.
 - 2) The ministry of the Word.
 - a) Cf. [1 Peter 5:1-4](#) - "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
- d. **KEY:** The primary function of pastors and elders is to deal with spiritual needs of the Church, not to handle the physical needs of the Church. Thus, there was a need for deacons at this point!
- 1) **NOTE:** The Apostles knew that if they neglected their first priorities, that the rest would fall apart.
 - a) My responsibility as a pastor-teacher is to give myself continually to prayer and the Word of God, that I may equip you guys for the work of the ministry and bring you into full maturity. ([Eph. 4:11-12](#))

ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

THE SEVEN DEACONS CHOSEN (v. 5-6)

E. (v. 5)

1. ***"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:"***

a. *"And the saying pleased the whole multitude"*

1) This is a work of the Spirit!!

a) It's not very often that you have the whole church agree on something! 🤝

2) I believe that the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the gift of the word of wisdom to show them the solution to the problem.

b. *"Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"*

1) Luke is showing a link between Stephen and the Apostles and gives these details about him because of Stephen's role in the next section of Scripture (6:8 - 8:4).

c. *"Philip"*

1) This is NOT the Apostle Philip, but another *Philip* in the congregation.

2) Luke mentions *Philip* second because of his role later on (8:5-40) after Stephen.

3) *Philip* will eventually become an Evangelist and move to Caesarea where Paul would stay with him, and *Philip* had 4 virgin daughters that had the gift of prophecy (21:9).

d. *"and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch"*

Acts 6 | “Deacons Chosen”

- 1) Besides Stephen and Philip, the Bible doesn’t tell us anymore about these other guys.
 - a) **NOTE:** Luke may have written this book as a pre-trial document for Paul, and these names, though they don’t mean much to us today, show us that it is a historical narrative and really happened in history.
- 2) “*Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch*”
 - a) Nicolas was a *proselyte*, which means he was a Gentile who had previously converted to Judaism, but has now become a believer in Jesus as the Messiah.
 - b) He was also from *Antioch*, probably mentioned by Luke because of the role the city will play later in Acts.
 - c) Some early writings² suggest that he was the founder of a sect called “*the Nicolaitans*”, who later took on doctrines that were influencing the churches ([Rev 2:6, 15](#)), which Jesus said He hated.

e. **Three OBSERVATIONS of These Seven Men:**

- 1) All seven had Greek names.
 - a) These were Hellenistic Jewish believers who immigrated to the Land of Israel.
- 2) Being Hellenistic Jews guaranteed that they could not be accused of favoritism toward the Hebrew widows at the expense of the Grecian widows.
 - a) **GREAT SOLUTION:** The Hellenists felt that their widows were not being treated equally, so put men of the Hellenist culture over the whole project.
- 3) This again showed that the murmuring came from the Hellenists.

²In the writings of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Pseudo-Tertullian.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

F. (v. 6)

1. "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

- a. **Q** = What is the purpose of the laying on of hands?... It signified the blessing, affirmation, support, and identification with someone and his/her ministry.
- 1) The first mention of laying on of hands was when Jacob blessed Joseph's sons Ephraim & Manasseh. ([Gen. 48:14-20](#))
 - 2) In the O.T., those who offered sacrifices laid their hands on the animal as an expression of identification. ([Lev. 8:14, 18, 22](#); [Heb 6:2](#))
 - 3) When Moses ordained Joshua to take over his ministry, he laid hands on him. ([Num. 27:23](#))
 - 4) Jesus often laid His hands on people. ([Mark 6:5](#); [Luke 4:40](#); [13:13](#))
 - 5) Jesus said that these signs will follow those that believe, "*they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*" ([Mark 16:18](#))
 - 6) In the Early Church, we often see the laying on of hands:
 - a) [Acts 8:17](#) - "*Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*"
 - b) [Acts 9:17](#) - "*And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as you were coming, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*"
 - c) [Acts 13:3](#) - "*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*"

ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- d) **Acts 19:6** - "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied."
- e) **1 Timothy 4:14** - "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."
- f) **2 Timothy 1:6** - "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."
- g) **Hebrews 6:2** - "Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

THE RESULT (v. 7)

G. (v. 7)

1. "And the word of God increased;..."

- a. "increased" - Gr. "grew up (idea of maturity); became greater; spread"
 - 1) The Greek verb is in the imperfect active tense, which means the Word of God "kept on growing"!
 - 2) This is the result of the apostles being able to give their full attention to the Word of God and prayer (v. 4).

2. "...and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;..."

- a. "greatly" - Gr. "all-out; exceeding; total effort with a vengeance"
 - 1) This is the adverb form of the Greek word for "excessive" or "violent", thus the idea of "going for it with a vengeance!"
- b. I believe that real church growth comes from the clear expository teaching of the Word of God.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- 1) We won't grow because of the strength of a big personality pastor. (Obviously!)
- 2) We won't grow by seeking to adapt a program to meet the needs of the community.
- 3) These things usually feed the flesh, but the Word of God feeds the spirit of man, thus I see that the only true solid growth can come by the Word.

3. **"...and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."**

- a. *"were obedient"* - Gr. imperfect active - the idea is that priests were becoming obedient to the faith, *one after the other!*
- b. This is wonderful, however, with this *great company* of Jewish priests coming to the faith, some brought with them much of the traditional practices of Judaism and became "Judaizers", who taught that it was still necessary to become a Jew to be saved ([Acts 15](#); [21:17-25](#); [Gal. 2:4-5](#)). This ultimately brought a schism in the early church and trouble to the Apostle Paul.
 - 1) Quite often, when people come to Christ, they bring with them a lot of the old way of life.
 - a) We are told that *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* ([2 Cor 5:17](#)) Unfortunately, this is not always so. Many times a person hangs on to some of the old things.
 - 2) Traditions often have a greater hold on a person than truth.

II. **THE ARREST OF STEPHEN. (v. 8-15)**

A. (v. 8)

1. **"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."**

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a. Here is a man being used greatly by God, and he is just a faithful servant waiting on tables.
 - 1) This speaks of the importance of being faithful and diligent in the place that God has placed us.
 - a) Too many people want to start at the top.
 - i. It is interesting how many people are ready to take the mantle of Chuck Smith. Many, I'm sure, are even serving in any other capacity.
 - b) God allows us to prove ourselves faithful in the ministry.
- b. **NOTE:** One of the main purposes of the book of Acts is to tell the story of Peter and Paul, and Stephen is the link between these two key Apostles: He was appointed by Peter (v. 6), but Paul will be consenting to his death (8:1).

B. (v. 9)

- 1. ***"Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen."***
 - a. **NOTE:** There were about 480 different synagogues in Jerusalem during the Second Temple period, and some of these synagogues were built by Jewish people coming from various parts of the Diaspora. Here, Luke mentions 5 of these synagogues:
 - 1) "Libertines" - Gr. "Freedmen"
 - a) These were Jews who were once slaves of Rome or sons of Jewish slaves of Rome, but now had been freed. They came from Rome and built their own synagogue.
 - i. There were Jews who had been taken into captivity in Rome, and in A.D. 19 the Roman Senate passed a decree to banish 4,000 of the men to Sardinia because of their

Acts 6 | “Deacons Chosen”

“superstitions.” The rest were ordered to leave their religion, or to leave Italy.³ Thus, those Jews who left Italy found refuge in Jerusalem and established their own synagogue.

- 2) “Cyrenians” = Jews from North Africa.
 - a) Cf. [Mark 15:21](#)- “*Simon the Cyrenian*”

- 3) “Alexandrians” = Jews from Egypt.
 - a) Alexandria was a city in Egypt.
 - b) The Jerusalem Talmud states that they built their synagogue at their own expense.⁴ The Babylonian Talmud tells the story of Rabbi Eliezer Ben Zadok, who acquired from some Alexandrian Jews a building formerly used as a private synagogue⁵ “and turned it to his own use.”⁶

- 4) “*them of Cilicia*” = Jews from Southern Turkey
 - a) The capital city of Cilicia was Tarsus, the birthplace of Saul, so their synagogue may very well have been his place of worship.
 - b) Since Saul was there during Stephen’s trial ([8:1](#)), this may also mean that Saul would have been involved with these disputations with Stephen, and would have been among those who lost their arguments with him.

³ Henry Alford on Acts 6. <http://archive.org/stream/newtestamentfor02alfogoog#page/n298/mode/1up>

⁴ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. “Commentary Series: The Book of Acts.” Apple Books. p. 275

⁵ The Jewish Encyclopedia offers the following rabbinic sources: “Tosef. Meg. iii. [ii.] 6; Yer. Meg. iii. 72d” (in: Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 5, p. 120).

⁶ Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae Et Talmudicae*, Vol. 4, p. 67.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

5) "Asia" - Asia Minor; modern eastern Turkey

C. (v. 11)

1. **"Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."**

a. "suborned" - Gr. *hupoballó* - "paid off; bribed; secretly induced; instructed privately; instigated; colluded"

1) This 3rd Persecution began with a conspiracy, shown by the bribery that was paid.

b. They could not rationally respond to Stephen and the wisdom of the Spirit, so they turned to DIRTY TACTICS.

1) How is it that we seem always surprised when the world turns to dirty tactics? So often in our culture, if someone cannot answer the truth:

a) They turn to lies and make up stories to confirm their false positions.

b) They will attack the person and their character.

i. We see it in politics; debates; etc...

D. (v. 13)

1. **"And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:"**

a. These *false witnesses* brought TWO charges against Stephen:

1) He preached judgment against the Temple.

a) Stephen knew that the Messiah had prophesied that the Temple was destined for destruction, so he was probably preaching that!

2) He preached Grace and the New Covenant.

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a) Stephen knew that Jesus brought in the New Covenant at the Last Supper, and that the Law of Moses had come to an end.

E. (v. 14)

1. ***"For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."***
 - a. They were accusing Stephen of saying:
 - 1) Jesus will destroy the Temple, thus being disrespectful to the Temple.
 - a) Probably all Stephen was doing was repeating Jesus' prophecy that the Temple was destined for destruction as a judgment for their rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus.
 - 2) Jesus will change the customs which Moses gave the Jewish people.
 - a) This probably included a charge of blasphemy against both the Torah, which is the Law of Moses, and the Mishnah, which is the body of Jewish tradition. Stephen was probably saying that the Law had come to an end as a mandatory rule of life with the death of the Messiah and that Pharisaic or Rabbinic Judaism was superseded by the new faith. This would anger the Pharisees. The accusation is now very clear: Stephen was speaking against something that would anger the Sadducees and against something that would anger the Pharisees. (Fruchtenbaum)⁷

F. (v. 15)

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

⁷ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books. p. 278-279.
20 of 21

ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

Acts 6 | "Deacons Chosen"

- a. "looking steadfastly" - Gr. "staring; completely fixed; gazing intently"
 - 1) The Sanhedrin were *staring* at Stephen, probably to intimidate him.
 - a) Most people, when they are being charged by false witnesses show some kind of emotional expression on their face, like anger or uneasiness.
 - 2) However, as they *stared* at him, his face began to glow with the Shechinah glory!
 - a) There was a supernatural brightness from his face.
 - i. In Luke's Gospel, he speaks of a supernatural brightness associated with the appearance of angels ([Luke 2:9; 12:7](#)).
 - ii. Also, the Jewish leaders would have thought of Moses ([Exodus 34:29-32](#)), and in the context, they are accusing Stephen of blaspheming Moses ([v. 11](#)).
- b. **NEXT WEEK:** In chapter 7, we'll see this Deacon give the longest sermon in the Book of Acts ([7:2-53](#)), which will lead to him being the first in the church to wear a martyr's crown ([7:54-60](#)). Read ahead for next week!