

Acts 6 First Servants

- Satan continues to disparage the church.
- Again, he fails miserably as the church continues to grow – so much they need help as seen in this chapter.

1. Selection – v. 1-7

- 1: preaching and teaching the truth always increases the number. Possibly 5yrs have passed, thousands of members; enough widows needed assistance it became too much for the apostles. Hellenistic Jews: Greek-speaking, scattered native Hebrews, spoke Aramaic, those remained; murmured against the “neglect”
- 2: immediately called the congregation together; needed to continue being witnesses of the resurrection (1:8), taking them away from this it would be a victory for Satan.
- 3: trust in the congregation; how to choose leaders: from the congregation. Why 7? Perfect number, Jews had committees of 7 ...
- Best answer: they needed 7 for the job.
- Qualifications: 1. Man, not woman. 2. needed servant hearts (serve [diakonos, deacon] are they? Fit qual. 1 Tim. 3:8-13? No called the “7” in Ac. 21:8). 3. good rep: you rep. JC/church. 4. full of Spirit: not miracles, spiritual maturity; 5. wisdom: practical qualification
- 4: selection allows apostles to do their job
- 5: “one of the greatest NT miracles [jest], everyone agreed and got along!” Stephen: full of faith implied earlier, mentioned 1st, star of Ch. 6, 7; Philip, star of Ch. 8; nothing else recorded of other 5; Trad: Prochorus, martyred at Antioch; Nicolas, proselyte, 1st mentioned of in the church
- 6: set in place with a ceremony to show the importance and seriousness of the task; laying on of hands: imparted miraculous gifts to the 7, cannot pass to others
- 7: Gospel again victorious; chief priests becoming obedient – great credence to teaching

2. Arrest – v. 8-15

- 8: 2 words for crown in NT: 1. diadēma: diadem, crown placed on heads of kings, Rv. 19:12; 2. stephanos – crown of victory, placed on winner’s heads (Olympic games, Rv. 2:10). Stephen also full of grace. Not told what miracles he did, but he did them!
- 9: serving tables did not detract him from preaching & teaching. 1st mention: synagogue
- Trad: 480 synagogues in Jerusalem; Libertines: freedmen (from slavery); Cyrene & Alexandria: N Africa; Cilicia & Asia: Roman provinces in Asia Minor. Stephen did not back down even when people objected!
- 10: Stephen won the victory on his own merit, not the HS

- 11: could not get Stephen to stop, so they tried any way possible to stop him; underhandedly: bribed; blasphemous words: speaking contemptuously of things divine. He did not blaspheme Moses or God!
- 12: accusations were enough; dragged: not kicking and screaming, but seized him
- 13,14: now Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin; correct: spoke about Jesus
- 15: serious charges filed, now turn to accused to see how he reacts.
- Instead of a trembling convict, they saw a transformed Christian!

Lessons:

- We all have a job to do in the service of the Lord. Let us not shirk our responsibilities.
- When choosing those to serve the congregation, it is always beneficial to choose those from among the congregation. Those outside do not know the members like one of their own do.
- Stephen caused a ruckus by preaching the truth. They eventually seized him, but he never quit preaching what is true. We would do well to emulate his example.

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