

The Acts of the Apostles I
The Choosing of the Seven Men
Acts 6:1-15

I. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (Acts 6:1-7)

- A. The Need for Organization (Acts 6:1-2; Exodus 18:13-18, 24-26; 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40)
- i. Increase in numbers (Acts 6:1)
 - ii. Neglected service (Acts 6:1)
 - iii. Murmuring members (Acts 6:1)
 - iv. Expanding ministries (Acts 6:2)

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not *the author* of **confusion**, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be **done** decently and **in order**.

- B. The Call for Organization (Acts 6:3-6) – Calling Men (Labourers) to Serve
- i. Their qualifications (Acts 6:3)
 1. Honesty (1 Timothy 3:7)
 2. Filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) – Not the same as the indwelling of the Spirit at salvation. (Note: Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the **Spirit**, if so be that **the Spirit of God dwell in you**. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** **10** And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. **11** But if the **Spirit of him that raised up Jesus** from the dead **dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead **shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you**.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

- a) Old Testament examples (Exodus 28:3; Exodus 31:3; Exodus 35:31)
 - i) Filled with the spirit
 - ii) Filled for wisdom, understanding, and knowledge
 - iii) For a specific work
 - iv) The Spirit would come and go at this time.
 - v) The Spirit came for a certain task.
- b) John the Baptist (Luke 1:15)
- c) Elisabeth filled with the Holy Ghost when saluted by Mary (Luke 1:41)
- d) Zacharias filled with the Holy Ghost to prophesy (Luke 1:67) – Note this matches what God did with those in the Old Testament when men were tasked with a work.
- e) Example found in Barnabas (Acts 11:24)
- f) Example of Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost at his death (Acts 7:55)
- g) New Testament Christian (Ephesians 5:18)
 - i) The optional nature of the filling (Ephesians 5:18)
 - 1) The filling is not the experience of all believers. (i. e. you can be saved and not filled with the Spirit). Else there would be no reason for Paul to command believers to be filled with the Spirit.
 - 2) You must yield your life and will to the Holy Spirit (God). The context of Ephesians 5:18 gives a description of that surrender to the Spirit.
 - ii) The repetitive nature of the filling
 - 1) The filling of the Spirit may occur many times in the same person. It is not necessarily a one-time event (Acts 2:4-5)
 - 2) The same apostles are filled again in Acts 4:31 (Acts 4:31). The same men were again filled with the Holy Ghost. This time they do not speak in tongues because there were no people present from different nations who

spoke different languages. Rather they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

iii) The filling of the Spirit illustrated

- 1) Think of a house. Think of it as the house where you live. This house is sufficiently large to allow guests to stay with you. Could you have a guest inside your house who did not fill that house? Surely you could. That is simple. Could you then have someone living in that house who did not have access to the entire house? That is, could you tell a visitor that he could live in the house but that certain rooms were off-limits to him? Again, this is certainly possible. This is the way it is with the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) If you are saved, the Holy Spirit is in you. It does not matter how cold you are toward God right now. If you are saved, the Holy Spirit is indwelling you. If He is not, then you are not saved. But that does not mean He that has free access to your whole inner man. Think of the parts of your heart as a house with many rooms. Each room contains a different part of your inner man; of who you are. The indwelling of the Spirit without the filling of the Spirit is like this. It would be like bringing someone into your house and saying, "This is your bedroom and you can use the living room, but stay out of the rest of the house. The other rooms are off limits."
- 3) That is how we treat the Holy Spirit many times. We give Him certain areas of our heart or life. We may give Him Sunday morning. He says, "Thanks a lot, but I want

all of you. I want all of your heart; all of your life; I want everything about you.” You cannot be filled with the Spirit until you are emptied of self and until you surrender every area of your heart and life to Him.

- iv) The need to be filled with the Spirit
 - 1) The Bible says we accept these things by faith. We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
 - 2) That means when you surrender in your heart to the Holy Spirit for the filling of the Spirit, you must trust He has filled you. You do not wait for the feeling. It is not the feeling of the Holy Spirit, but the FILLING.
 - 3) As a child of God you are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. The psalmist came close to this thought in Psalm 139:23-24, he asked God to search him and to know his heart (Psalm 139:23-24).
- v) Marks of a Spirit filled life (Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 5:18-21)
- vi) For more information on the “Filling of the Spirit” see Pastor David Reagan’s article on this topic at <http://www.learnthebible.org/filling-of-the-spirit.html>

3. Wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-17)

ii. Their purpose (Acts 6:3-4)

- 1. To care for the business
 - a) The daily ministrations (Acts 6:3)
 - b) Caring of the widows (Acts 6:2)
- 2. To free the apostles (Acts 6:4)
 - a) For prayer
 - b) For the word

iii. Their choosing (Acts 6:5-6)

- 1. Chosen by the multitude (Acts 6:5)
- 2. Approved by the apostles (Acts 6:6; Acts 13:2-3)

- iv. For the ministries (Acts 6:4) – (Four total)
 - 1. Ministry of the word (Acts 6:4)
 - 2. Ministry of the saints (1 Corinthians 16:15; John 13:34-35)
 - 3. Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18)
 - 4. Ministry to the Lord (Acts 13:2)
 - 5. Take heed to the ministry (Colossians 4:17)

1 Corinthians 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the **ministry of the saints**.)

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the **ministry of reconciliation**; **19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath **committed unto us the word of reconciliation**.

Colossians 4:17 And say to Archippus, **Take heed to the ministry** which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

- C. The Results of Organization (Acts 6:7)
 - i. Word increased (Acts 6:7; Acts 12:24; Acts 19:20)
 - ii. The ministries could increase
 - iii. Disciples multiplied
 - iv. Priests obedient (John 12:42)

II. THE PERSECUTION OF STEPHEN (Acts 6:8-15)

- A. The Person of Stephen (Acts 6:3, 5, 8)
 - i. Full of the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:5)
 - ii. Full of wisdom (Acts 6:3; Colossians 3:16)
 - iii. Full of faith (Acts 6:5, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:7)
 - iv. Full of power (Acts 6:8; 2 Timothy 1:7)

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all **wisdom**; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by **faith**, not by sight:)

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of **power**, and of love, and of a sound mind.

- B. The Work of Stephen (Acts 6:8-10)
 - i. In power (Acts 6:8)
 - ii. In boldness (Acts 6:9; Acts 17:16-17; Acts 19:8-9)
 - iii. In wisdom (Acts 6:10; Luke 21:15)

- C. The Witness Against Stephen (Acts 6:11-14)
 - i. Bribed witnesses (Acts 6:11)
 - 1. Blasphemy against Moses
 - 2. Blasphemy against God
 - ii. Angered people (Acts 6:12)
 - 1. Stirred up the people (cp. Acts 4:21; 5:26)
 - 2. Brought to the council
 - iii. False teachers (Acts 6:13-14)
 - 1. Concerning the holy place (Acts 6:13)
 - 2. Concerning the law (Acts 6:13)
 - 3. Concerning the customs (Acts 6:14; Mark 3:1-6)
 - 4. Two things religious people will protect – even to the point of murder (Acts 6:14)
 - a. Their place (John 11:47-54)
 - b. Their customs (Acts 6:14; Mark 3:1-6)

- D. The Witness of Stephen (Acts 6:15)
 - i. To the council
 - 1. They saw one fully surrendered to the Lord
 - 2. They saw one determined to preach the truth
 - 3. They saw one willing to die for his Lord (Galatians 2:20)
 - ii. Of the truth