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Acts 6

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Acts 6.

Topics.

- The apostles appoint seven men to look after the widows.
- Teaching or helping the poor (which is more important?)
- The apostles lay hands on seven chosen men.
- The wonder, majesty and beauty of the Bible.
- Stephens face was like the face of an angel.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, many signs and wonders were done by the apostles and multitude were being added to the Lord which enraged the religious rulers. Peter and the apostles were brought before the Jewish council and after being beaten and told not to teach Jesus were set free. They then went and taught Jesus in the Temple and from house to house.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ACTS 6:1-6

The Apostles appoint Seven Men to look after the Widows.

- **Acts 6:1-6:** Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ²And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

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The Hellenists: were non-Greeks who spoke Greek, Hellenists was a term used especially of Jews who made Greek their language and often adopted Greek ideas and practices (Acts 6:1) (Acts 9:29) (the KJV has Grecians) (the RSV has Hellenists).

Teaching or helping the poor (Which is more important?). Some of the faithful in Christ today feel that the primary focus of serving the Lord should be on helping the poor and those in need while those who love to study and read feel it is more important to teach the eternal words of the Lord Jesus Christ and so there is often confusion in the house of God over which should be given the higher priority. The answer is very simple when we look at the wisdom of the twelve when they were faced with this same question. They fully agreed that it was not right that the poor should be neglected, but also stated that it would also not be right that they should give up proclaiming the word of God to do the work of caring for those in need. Their answer to this question was straightforward and clear cut they told the people to appoint men full of the Holy Spirit, integrity, faithfulness and wisdom to be overseers of the Lord's work in caring for the poor which left them free to proclaim the Good News of the gospel which was the ministry Jesus had called them too, showing that proclaiming the gospel and helping those in need are both equally important works in the house of the Lord that should be attended too (Acts 6:1-6).

The apostles lay hands on seven chosen men: what the apostles said pleased the entire gathering so the people chose seven men and took them before the apostles who then prayed and laid their hands on them ordaining the seven men for the ministry they had been chosen for (v5-6). Laying hands on those being ordained for the work of the Lord was a sign to the people that the chosen men were approved of by those who had been tried and tested and proven faithful for the work of the Lord and who were already accepted by the people as being trustworthy servants of Christ. The following shows that each name carries a characteristic of Christ the royal King and the friendship he has with those who faithfully follow him.

1. **Stephen:** means a, wreath or a chaplet as a badge of royalty and carries the idea of a prize in the public games or a symbol of honour.
2. **Philip:** means dear, friendly, an associate or neighbour and carries the idea of a friend who one is fond of.
3. **Prochorus:** means in front of or prior to and carries the idea of being superior, above or before another.
4. **Nicanor:** means, victorious and carries the idea of subduing, conquering, overcoming, prevailing or getting, the victory.
5. **Timon:** means valuable of honour and precious it carries the idea of being of the highest degree.
6. **Parmenas:** means constant, to stay or abide in a place or state of relationship in an attitude of expectancy.
7. **Nicolaus:** means victorious over the people and carries the idea of conquest, triumph and victory (he was a proselyte of Antioch)

NOTICE: when the meanings of each name is put together it presents a picture of three things:

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1. Of a royal person who is worthy of the highest degree of honour and whose is of tremendous value and precious above all others.
2. Of a person who is overcoming, prevailing and who is triumphantly victorious in subduing and conquering others in victory.
3. Of a person who is in a constant state of heart felt expectancy because of their relationship with a very dear friend who they are overwhelming fond of.

The wonder, majesty and beauty of the Bible: this is another example of the fabulous splendour of the Bible, the seven names present a picture of Jesus the Royal King and faithful friend who unselfishly and sacrificially laid down his life for his friends (John 15:13). And of those who are trusting in his name for salvation and who are faithfully following him with a joyful expectation of his glorious return.

ACTS 6:7-15

Stephens Face was like the Face of an Angel.

- **Acts 6:7-15:** And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. ⁸And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. ¹¹Then they secretly instigated men who said,

"We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." 15And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Freedmen: refers to a Roman freeman.

The words, "A great many of the priests became obedient to the faith," (v7) shows that even Jews of the highest religious authority were converting to Christ, but when those of the synagogue of the Freedmen saw that multitudes and even their own priests were forsaking the Law of Moses and converting to Christ they tried to trap Stephen with questions, but his wisdom overcame all their questions. To condemn Stephen those of the synagogue of the Freedmen, did exactly as the prideful and hypocritical religious authorities did to condemn Jesus they appointed false witness who twisted what Stephen was saying so much so that the Jewish elders and the scribes seized Stephen and took him before their council, but those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen deliberately brought in false witnesses to testify against Stephen and against Jesus.

NOTICE: "Stephens face was like the face of an angel" (v15) meaning even though people were twisting and lying about him and what he was saying about Jesus he remained in perfect calm and peace contrasted to being upset and angry at those who were falsely accusing him. Stephens calm testifies to the words, "Stephen was not only full of power but also of grace" (v8).

One of the reasons for Stephen's calm and peace no-doubt was that he had fully surrendered his life to serving Christ as the following chapters show, even when it meant dying for him. Proclaiming the eternal words of Christ was more important to Stephen than his own mortal life. A second reason for Stephen's angelic like face was God's presence. God will honour and impart His Spirit of peace to anyone who has such a depth of devotion and commitment that they willing put the work of His Son above their own mortal life.

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As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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