

Acts Chapter 6

1. Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying*, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.
 - A. Now in those days,
 1. **days**- Gr. **hemera**
 - B. when the number of the disciples was multiplying,
 1. **number**- not in Greek-omit
 2. **disciples**- Gr. **mathetes**
 - a. Notice these are disciples, not just converts. A disciple regulates their life by the Word of God.
 3. **multiplying**- Gr. **plethuno**- *to be multiplied, increase, be accumulated*
 - C. there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists,
 1. **arose**- Gr. **ginomai**- *came into existence*
 - a. Up until this point the enemy had attacked the young church from the outside. Now, he was working from the inside. More churches and ministries are brought down because of inward conflict than outward persecution.
 - b. Often murmurings and complaints seem to arise out of nowhere. This usually has the enemy behind it.
 2. **complaint**- Gr. **goggusmos**- *a muttering, murmuring, low and suppressed discourse*
 - a. This word means to have an under-current of discontent and negativity.
 3. **Hebrews**- Gr. **Hebraios**
 - a. *The **Hebrews** were those Jews who were more inclined to embrace Jewish culture and were mostly from Judea.*
-Guzik Commentary
 4. **Hellenists**- Gr. **Helenistes**
 - a. *The **Hellenists** were those Jews who were more inclined to embrace Greek culture and were mostly from the Diaspora (all over the Roman Empire).* -Guzik Commentary
 - b. *For the most part, **Hebrews** tended to regard **Hellenists** as unspiritual compromisers with Greek culture, and **Hellenists** regarded **Hebrews** as holier-than-thou traditionalists. There*

was already a natural suspicion between the two groups, and satan tried to take advantage of that standing suspicion. -Guzik Commentary

- c. *In the time when the gospel was first preached, there were two classes of Jews - those who remained in Palestine, who used the Hebrew language, and who were appropriately called "Hebrews"; and those who were scattered among the Gentiles, who spoke the Greek language, and who used in their synagogues the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint. These were called "Hellenists," or, as it is in our translation, "Grecians." - Barnes Commentary*

D. because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution

1. **widows-** Gr. **chera-** *from the base of the word chasma*
 - a. A widow is one whose spouse had died. When this happens, there is a chasm- a huge hole left in their life, that often they need help from others to bridge the gap.
 - b. Paul laid out requirements that must be met before a widow was to be helped by the church. [1 Tim. 5:8-10](#)
2. **neglected-** Gr. **paratheoreo-** *to look at things placed side by side, as in comparison, to compare in thus looking, to regard less in comparison, overlook, neglect*
3. **daily-** Gr. **kathemerinos**
 - a. People need to eat daily!
4. **distribution-** Gr. **dikonia**
 - a. Who was in charge of the distribution of the money before the seven deacons were chosen to do it in this chapter? It was the twelve apostles!
 - b. As we have seen in the last chapter, the saints would lay their money at the apostles' feet who then would distribute it. We know this because Peter said to select out men who can oversee this business because it is not proper for them to serve tables. Apparently, they had been.
 - d. This brings out several lessons for pastors and leaders. You need to delegate tasks to others so you can be positioned to do what God has called you to do. The apostles were to serve God in prayer and the people in the ministry of the

Word. This is the job description of the senior pastor as well. They were out of position which hindered their growth. Next, in the very beginning a pastor may need to handle the money that comes in, but as soon as possible this needs to be taken out of their hands! If a pastor handles the money, there is an open door for accusation or even temptation for the pastor. It also pulls them out of position of what they are called to do.

- e. Racism in the church is nothing new. It was here in the early church! It is interesting that it was even among the apostles! They were in charge of who got the financial aid. They were favoring the Hebrew widows over the Greek ones. We need to guard our heart against racism and prejudice. It can be subtle.

2. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

A. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said,

1. twelve- Gr. **dodeka**

- a. This is the twelve apostles of Jesus. Matthias is included in this number.

2. summoned- Gr. **proskaleomai-** *to call to oneself*

3. multitude- Gr. **plethos**

4. disciples- Gr. **mathetes**

5. said- Gr. **epo**

B. It is not desirable that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables

1. desirable- Gr. **arestos-** *pleasing, acceptable*

- a. This refers to God. It is not pleasing to God that the apostles leave the Word of God to do menial tasks others could do.

2. leave- Gr. **kataleipo-** *forsake, abandon*

3. Word- Gr. **logos**

- a. This is one of the major problems with our church today. The pastors have left the Word of God for the "ministry". They are busy doing everything else, and not what they are supposed to be doing, which is praying, studying and ministering the Word of God.

4. **serve-** Gr. **diakoneo**

- a. This word is where we get deacon from. The deacon's position is the ground floor office in the church. This is where young men and women start taking care of the daily menial tasks in the church. Deacons were never called to run the church like they do in some church organizations.
- b. The word deacon means a server or minister. Once a deacon is promoted to be an elder- a mature one, or bishop- an overseer, they do not leave the role they were in previously. They take that with them, and it changes how it looks. The Senior Pastor of a church is the head deacon, elder, and bishop in the church. The pastor is the chief servant and minister in the church. Promotion is just an opportunity to serve in a greater capacity.
- c. Instead of serving by taking care of menial tasks, a pastor now serves the congregation by praying for them and ministering the Word to them. They deacon the Word of God to them!

5. **tables-** Gr. **trapeza-** *a table on which food is placed, an eating place*

- a. *The word translated "tables" can refer to tables used in monetary matters (cf. [Mat 21:12](#); [Mar 11:15](#); [Joh 2:15](#)), as well as those used for serving meals. To be involved either in financial matters or in serving meals would take the Twelve away from their first priority. -MacArthur Commentary*

3. **Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;**

A. **Therefore,**

B. **brethren-** Gr. **adelphos**

C. **seek out from among you seven men of good reputation,**

1. **seek out-** Gr. **episkeptomai-** *to look (about) for, look out (one to choose, employ)*

- a. Here we see the apostles delegating. One of the most common mistakes of ministry leaders is not delegating ministry to others. They oversee everything. They work

alone. Working alone has some advantages, but survival is not one of them, nor is it effective. If you fail to delegate and release ministry to others, you will have a small ministry that is centered on you alone, and disciples will not be developed. This is a sad state of affairs that is played out countless times in our churches and ministries.

- b. God delegates. Jesus delegated to His disciples. You must learn to do the same!
- c. The apostles here wisely delegated ministry to others. Not only were they delegating the work of serving food, but also the finding of the men who would do it! They did not say, "we will find seven men...". They said you find them! Now, the apostles would have the final approval over those chosen. Once the seven men were located, they prayed about them, over them, then they released them to minister.
- d. Delegating involves releasing ministry to others, but the work that is to be done is approved by the leader and then evaluated. There should also be adequate training and equipping of the delegated ones in order to provide for their success. If this is not provided, then it is not delegating, it is called dumping! No one likes being dumped on!
- e. Also, notice that those who are called to serve over people are to be **sought out**. They are to be **chosen**! The worst way to find leaders in the church or a ministry is to ask for volunteers! You will have those who have no business being in leadership volunteering! What will you say then, "Is there anyone else?" I am speaking of seeking out those who will be working with people or serving over people. Seek them out, do not ask for volunteers! It is fine to ask for volunteers to help with activities where they are not over people. Asking for volunteers to set up, clean up, or other such things is fine and actually needful. Watch those people who do volunteer and look for those who are faithful and can follow direction. Also, look for those who start helping in these things without being asked. These are future leaders!

- f. Once you have located faithful people, then approach them and ask if they would pray about serving in a greater capacity. Most of the time they will say yes and be stable and a blessing to you and the church.
- g. Selecting leaders is a principle in the OT and NT. Jethro advised Moses to stop trying to take care of all the needs of the people alone. He was advised to **select** out leaders over 1000's, 100's, and 10's to help him serve the people. If he would have not done this, he and the people would have been worn out. [Ex. 18:13-24](#)

2. **seven-** Gr. **hepta**

- a. There is no explanation of why seven were chosen. They might have gotten this number in prayer. Do not just copy what you see others do. Pray and get direction on how you are to proceed in ministry.

3. **men-** Gr. **aner**

- a. This is the more specific, dignified, and formal word for “men” than the word **anthropos**.

4. **good-** Gr. not in Greek- omit

5. **reputation-** Gr. **martureo-** *having a witness*

- a. Notice, they were to find men who had a witness by their lifestyle, not just their words. Your actions speak louder and give a clearer witness for the Lord than your words do.
- b. They were to find men who walked the walk, not just talked the talk.
- c. Our everyday life is a billboard for Jesus. What kind of billboard are you?
- d. Having a good report on their reputation was the FIRST requirement for leadership, not giftings. How often are people put into leadership because of their giftings although they lack character?

D. **full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,**

1. **full-** Gr. **pleres**

- a. The first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. By continuing to speak in tongues we stay filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. **Holy Spirit**

3. **wisdom-** Gr. **sophia**

- a. This means they had and walked in the wisdom of God. This came by being rooted in the Word of God.
- b. The two most beneficial things we can do today is speak in tongues and meditate the Word of God. These two daily disciplines will lead one into being a leader in the church. The opening into this is the deacon office.

E. **whom we may appoint over this business**

1. **appoint-** Gr. **kathistemi-** *to set or place over*

- a. Being appointed means you are placed as a steward. A steward is not the owner and makes sure they are carrying out the vision of the leadership, not their own vision. You must test someone by appointing them to a small task and see if they can carry out the vision given them, instead of them having their own vision. If they pass the test, you can trust them with more.

2. **business-** Gr. **chreia-** *a necessary business, affair*

- a. Notice, that character is a requirement to serve God even in the most natural and menial of matters. If you are to work with people, then character is paramount. If a leader lacks character, then they will misuse their position for selfish purposes and in the end hurt people.
- b. As a pastor or minister leader do not just look for talented and gifted people but look for people who have strong character. You can teach people how to do things and put qualifications in them, but you cannot put character into them. [2 Tim. 2:2](#)

4. **but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."**

A. **give continually-** Gr. **proskartereo-** *to persist in adherence to a thing; to be intently engaged in, attend constantly to*

1. This means these two disciplines should be a lifestyle for a five-fold equipping minister. Daily prayer and daily study of the Word is needed to be a productive and fruitful minister for Christ.

B. **prayer-** Gr. **proseuche-** *beseech to the face*

1. The first thing a minister is to do is pray. Has it come to that? YES!

Usually however, this is the last thing that is done or is neglected the most. The lack of the presence of God and fruitfulness in ministry often can be tracked back to the lack of prayer. Through prayer we get wisdom, knowledge, and strength.

2. If we do not pray for those God has put under our trust then we are sinning! [1 Sam. 12:23](#)

C. **ministry-** Gr. **diakonia**

1. Peter had said that it was not fitting or proper that the apostles **serve** tables. The word **serve** there is the Greek word **diakonia**. We have that exact same word in this verse. What is this teaching us? That as we grow and are promoted we never leave ministering and serving, but it just changes on how it looks. The seven deacons selected in this chapter were called to **serve-diakonia** tables. The apostles would **minister-diakonia** the Word. All are servants but the function is different.

D. **word-** Gr. **logos**

1. We see here that fivefold equipping ministers' main tasks are to pray for the people they serve and to be in and minister the Word of God.
2. We see these two functions are the main things a leader is called to do. We find this both in the OT and NT!
 - a. [Ex. 18:19-20](#)
 - b. [1 Sam. 12:23](#)
 - c. [Acts 6:4](#)
 - d. [Col. 4:12](#)
3. Often leaders are doing everything but these two things! They often are in meetings after meetings, bogged down with emails, and trying to meet people's individual needs all day. It is not wrong for a leader to attend meetings, answer emails, and help individuals, but if this eclipses prayer and time in the Word of God, then that leader is out of position and things will not be as fruitful as it could be, and they are setting themselves up for burnout or worse. A leader needs to delegate much of this so they can be in the right position, doing the right things, so that they can be the most effective.
4. We are called to minister the Word of God, not our opinions. Every teacher and preacher are an oracle of God. [1 Pet. 4:11](#)

5. **And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,**

A. **And the saying pleased the whole multitude**

1. **saying-** Gr. **logos-** *word, message*
2. **pleased-** Gr. **aresko**
3. **whole multitude-** Gr. **pas plethos**

a. Peter had performed notable miracles up to this point, but this may be the greatest! To have a whole multitude pleased by what you say is a miracle!

B. **And they chose Stephen,**

1. **chose-** Gr. **eklegomai**

a. Again, leaders who serve and work with people are to be chosen. The deacon office was being established this day and it is the first stage of church leadership.

b. *It is observable, that the names of all these deacons are Greek names; from whence, it seems, that they were of the Grecian or Hellenistic Jews; so that the church thought fit to choose men out of that part of them which made the complaint, in order to make them easy; which is an instance of prudence and condescension, and shows of what excellent spirits they were of.* -Gill Commentary

2. **Stephen-** means *crowned*

a. Stephen started out as the first deacon but then became a teacher and miracle worker. The deacon position is the gateway to promotion to higher spiritual use as an elder, bishop, and the five-fold equipping offices.

b. Stephen was the first recorded martyr in the church. Jesus stood up at the right hand of God in honor of this man's ultimate sacrifice for Him and the Kingdom.

C. **a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit**

1. **man-** Gr. **aner**

a. Stephen was a man just like us, but He was mightily used by God. We find out why in this verse!

2. **faith-** Gr. **pistis**

a. Stephen was full of faith. Where does faith come from? It

comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. Stephen was a Word man before he was a miracle worker.

3. **Holy Spirit**

- a. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit. Stephen kept full of the Spirit by speaking much in tongues.
- b. This is how we can be mightily used by God as well. In order to do this, we need to be filled with the Word [faith] and the Holy Spirit.

D. **Philip-** means *lover of horses*

1. Philip started out as a deacon, but he was promoted by God and became an evangelist, one of the five equipping offices. [Eph. 4:11](#)
2. Being faithful to serve with your actions, opens you up to a promotion to serve with your words. [1 Tim. 3:13](#)- boldness in this verse means freedom to speak!
3. We see Philip's evangelistic ministry in chapter 8.

E. **Prochorus-** means *leader of the chorus*

1. *One of "the seven" chosen by the Christian community in Jerusalem to superintend the dispensing of charity to the widows and other poor (Act 6:5). The name is Greek, and he may have been a Hellenist. According to tradition he became bishop of Nicomedia and died a martyr at Antioch. -ISBE*

F. **Nicanor-** means *conqueror*

1. Nothing is spoken of him after this. Some people who are called into the role of deacon, remain there. That is their calling and will go nameless until the Lord reveals to all what they had done, and they receive their reward from Him.

G. **Timon-** means *honorable*

1. *Said to be afterwards bishop of Bersea, though others make him bishop, of Bostra. -Gill Commentary*

H. **Parmenas-** means *abiding*

1. Tradition states that he was martyred at Philippi, in the reign of Trajan, but his name does not appear again in Scripture.

I. **and Nicholas**

1. **Nicholas-** means *ruler of the people*
 - a. *He was first a Greek or Gentile, and then became a Jew, a proselyte of righteousness, and then a Christian, and now made a deacon. Some think, that from this man sprung the*

sect of the Nicolaitanes, spoken of in the Revelations; though others think, that that wicked set of men only covered themselves with his name, or that they abused some words of his, and perverted the right meaning of them; though was it certain he did turn out a wicked man, it is not to be wondered at, that since there was a devil among the twelve apostles, there should be a hypocrite and a vicious man among the first seven deacons.

-Gill Commentary

- b. The apostles prayed about these men and put them into the ministry, but one of them later turned out to be a leader of evil. This brings out that God trusts people where they are now, not what they will be.
- c. Most of the time you will choose great leaders but know that probably not all of them will be great. Jesus chose Judas and here the apostles chose Nicholas.

J. a proselyte from Antioch

1. proselyte- Gr. **proselutos**

- a. This means Nicholas converted to Judaism as a Gentile.

2. Antioch- means *speedy as a chariot*

- a. The first gentile church was located in Antioch. Paul operated out of this church on his missionary journeys.

6. whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

A. whom they set before the apostles;

1. set before- Gr. **histemi-** *to stand*

2. apostles- Gr. **apostolos**

- a. The people found the candidates for the first deacons, but the apostles had the final say, if they were to be chosen. They prayed about and over them before they were put into position.

B. and when they had prayed,

1. prayed- Gr. **proseuchomai**

- a. I believe a pastor should pray about and over those who are to be leaders in their church. The pastor should lay his hands upon them and set them into their position.

C. they laid hands on them

1. laid- Gr. **epitithemi**- *to place upon*

- a. You do not have to lay your hand on someone's head for this to work. You can place your hands on their shoulders. There is no scripture that says where your hands need to be placed, however, it is important to be discreet when laying laying hands on the opposite sex.

2. hands- Gr. **cheir**

- a. The doctrine of the laying on of hands is one of the elementary teachings of Christ. [Heb. 6:2](#)
- b. Laying on of hands to place people into ministry positions is one aspect and there is also the laying on of hands for healing and to receive the Holy Spirit.
- b. Paul teaches that we are not to lay our hands on someone suddenly, or quickly to put them into leadership. We need to know the person and their character first. Laying your hands on someone suddenly that you are mad at is not one of the categories under the doctrine of laying on of hands!

7. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

A. Then the word of God spread,

1. word- Gr. **logos**

- a. The Word is powerful and effective for the purpose God has sent it. [Isa 55:11](#)

2. spread- Gr. **auxano**- *to grow*

- a. Notice what happened when the apostles were properly positioned, doing, and focusing on what God mainly called them to, which was prayer and ministry of the Word. What was the result? The Word spread and grew! Well of course it would!
- b. God's desire is that His word would grow so much that it prevails over all the works of the enemy. [Acts 19:20](#)

B. and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,

1. number- Gr. **arithmos**

2. disciples- Gr. **mathetes**

- a. What was the result of the Word growing and increasing?
The disciples were equipped and brought many to the Lord through evangelism and then those won to the Lord came to church and became disciples!
- 3. **multiplied greatly**- Gr. **plethuno**
 - a. Discipleship increases when the Word increases!
- C. **and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith**
 - 1. **great**- Gr. **polus**- *many*
 - 2. **priests**- Gr. **hiereus**
 - a. The impact of the Word was so powerful that even many of the priests of the law were convinced and were saved!
 - 3. **obedient**- Gr. **hupakouo**
 - a. In the NT, obedience is equivalent to faith in Jesus. How does someone become obedient to the faith? They put their faith in Jesus.
 - 4. **the faith**- Gr. **pistis**
 - a. The faith is the same as the gospel of Jesus Christ.

8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

- A. **And Stephen,**
 - 1. **Stephen**- means *crowned by God*
 - a. Notice that Stephen was one of the first deacons selected. He was chosen to take care of menial tasks in the church such as serving tables.
- B. **full of faith and power,**
 - 1. **full**- Gr. **pleres**
 - 2. **faith**- Gr. **pistis**
 - a. Stephen was chosen because he had a good reputation and was full of the Spirit and wisdom.
 - b. Here it says he was full of faith. This means he was full of the Word, the source of faith.
 - 3. **power**- Gr. **dunamis**
 - a. This is the power of the Spirit. The Word and Spirit work together.
 - b. Every believer has received the Spirit of power! [2 Tim. 1:7](#)
- C. **did great wonders and signs among the people**

1. **did-** Gr. **poieo**
 - a. We saw in [Acts 5:12-13](#) that the apostles did signs and wonders among the people, but none of the other disciples dared to join them in this. However, we see one dared to do so! Stephen was not one of the apostles or what they call today a “super duper” in the church, but he dared to let God use him in signs and wonders. This is open for every believer. Jesus promised that those who believed on Him could do His works and greater works! [John 14:12](#)
2. **great-** Gr. **mezas**
 - a. Stephen as a deacon performed mega wonders and signs!
3. **wonders-** Gr. **teras**
4. **signs-** Gr. **semeion**
5. **people-** Gr. **laos**
 - a. Stephen worked amongst the people, so he was in touch daily with their needs. God met those needs through Stephen, naturally through food, but also spiritually through the power of the Spirit of God. We should be among people and be able to minister to them naturally and supernaturally.

9. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.

A. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen

1. **arose-** Gr. **anistemi-** *to stand up*
 - a. When the Spirit of God is moving, it is a given that opposition will arise from somewhere.
2. **called-** Gr. **lego**
3. **Synagogue of the Freedmen-** Gr. **libertinos**
 - a. *The **Synagogue of Freed Slaves** was probably a group of Jewish slaves and children of Jewish slaves who had been freed by Rome and had formed their own synagogue in Jerusalem. -Life Application Commentary*

B. Cyrenians- means *wall*

C. Alexandrians- means *of Alexander*

D. and those from Cilicia and Asia

1. **Cilicia**- means *land of Celix*

a. This is the region where Tarsus was. Paul was from Tarsus.

2. **Asia**- means *orient*

E. disputing with Stephen

1. **disputing**- Gr. **suzeteo**- *to seek together, to inquire of one another, to dispute with*

a. There are some who love to debate but they disguise it by saying, "Lets seek the truth together". They really are just interested in winning debates with others. Stay away from such people.

10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

A. **able**- Gr. **ischuo**- *to have force, able*

1. They did not have sufficient force to withstand the force of the wisdom and Spirit that Stephen spoke by.

2. Wisdom carries a force with it as well as the Spirit of God.

B. **resist**- Gr. **anthistemi**- *to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, oppose*

C. **wisdom**- Gr. **sophia**

a. This was one of the qualifications that the first deacons had to possess. They were to be full of wisdom. Leaders need wisdom to deal with people and the opposition from the enemy.

D. **Spirit**- Gr. **pneuma**

a. Keeping full of the Holy Spirit by praying in the Spirit will provide a force greater than the enemy.

E. **spoke**- Gr. **laleo**

11. Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

A. **Then they secretly induced men to say,**

1. **secretly induced**- Gr. **hupoballo**- *to instruct privately, instigate, to bribe or induce (someone) unlawfully or secretly to perform some misdeed or commit a crime*

a. Notice that when the outright frontal attack on Stephen did not work, his antagonists regrouped and started working in

secret. This is how the enemy works. This is the nature of a bully. They will try to bully others. The best way to deal with a bully is to stand up to them. Bullies have one thing in common, they are cowards at heart. However, if you stand up to a bully, they will back down but often they may start working secretly against you. This is what happened here.

b. The religious leaders did the same thing to Jesus.

[Mat 26:60](#)

2. **men-** Gr. **aner**

B. **We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God**

1. **heard-** Gr. **akouo**

2. **speak-** Gr. **laleo**

3. **blasphemous-** Gr. **blasphemos-** *to give a hurtful report*

a. When we gossip about someone and give a negative report, we are blaspheming them!

c. It is a good rule of thumb that if what you say about someone would cause you to blush if you knew that they heard it, then it is best to say nothing.

4. **words-** Gr. **rhema-** *the spoken word*

5. **Moses-** means *drawing out*

a. In other words, the Law. The terms the Law and Moses could be used interchangeably because Moses was the intermediary through which the law came.

[Acts 15:21](#), [John 1:17](#)

b. By this time, the Jews were venerating Moses to the level of God.

6. **God-** Gr. **theos**

a. This refers to a Christian's belief that Jesus Christ is God. This was blasphemous to the religious Jews.

c. The religious Jews wanted to kill Jesus because He claimed equality with God. [John 10:33](#)

12. **And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council.**

A. **And they stirred up the people,**

1. **stirred up-** Gr. **sugkineo-** *to move to tear apart*

2. **people-** Gr. **laos**

- a. The last verse and this verse show how a classic church split happens. You have a person who wants control and comes against leadership but they are resisted. Instead of trying to continue to overtly vie for leadership they then go underground and secretly start getting others on their side and get them to move to tear apart from leadership. This is the work of the devil. Do not be a part in any church or ministry split or you will be doing the work of the devil!

B. the elders,

1. **elders-** Gr. **presbuteros-** *mature ones*

- a. These were supposed to be mature ones in the nation but were all but that.

C. and the scribes,

1. **scribes-** Gr. **grammateus-** *in the Bible, a man learned in the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings, an interpreter, teacher. Scribes examined the more difficult and subtle questions of the law; added to the Mosaic law decisions of various kinds thought to elucidate its meaning and scope, and did this to the detriment of religion. Since the advice of men skilled in the law was needed in the examination in the causes and the solution of the difficult questions, they were enrolled in the Sanhedrin; and are mentioned in connection with the priests and elders of the people.*

D. and they came upon him,

1. **came upon-** Gr. **ephistemi-** *to stand upon*

E. seized him,

1. **seized-** Gr. **sunarpazo-** *to forcibly grab together*

F. and brought him to the council

1. **brought him-** Gr. **ago-** *to bring or carry*

- a. This word **ago** always is used of being led by the power of another. This helps us understand being **LED** by the Spirit. We are carried along by the power of the Spirit!

2. **council-** Gr. **sunedrion**

13. They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;

A. They also set up false witnesses who said,

1. **false-** Gr. **pseudes**

2. **witnesses-** Gr. **martus**

- a. In doing this, the religious leaders are breaking the very law they say they are upholding. [Exo 20:16](#)
- b. No doubt, Stephen had taught the people that the temple was but a shadow of the body of Christ and the sacrifices offered within it were only types of the true sacrifice which is Christ and that the law was a mere shadow of the Messiah, Jesus. However, they twisted his words to say that they were evil. This is false.

3. **said-** Gr. **lego**

B. This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the Law

1. **man-** Gr. **anthropos**

- a. This is the general word for man. The specific and more formal and respective word *aner* is not used here.

2. **cease-** Gr. **pauo**

- a. Stephen was a faithful witness by his life and words.

3. **speak-** Gr. **laleo**

4. **blasphemous-** Gr. **blasphemos-** *a hurtful report*

- a. Religious people will twist your words into blasphemy. They did this to Jesus. [Matt. 26:65](#)

5. **words-** Gr. **rhema**

6. **holy-** Gr. **hagios**

7. **place-** Gr. **topos**

- a. This refers to the temple.

8. **law-** Gr. **nomos**

- a. This is not only the law of Moses but oral tradition they have called the Law.

14. for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

A. **heard-** Gr. **akouo**

B. **say-** Gr. **lego**

C. **Nazareth-** means *one separated*

1. This is why Jesus was called a Nazarene.

D. **destroy-** Gr. **kataluo-** *to dissolve, demolish*

E. place- Gr. topos

1. This is the temple.
2. Jesus said this in His earthly ministry. [Joh 2:19](#)
3. Stephen was faithful to say what Jesus said. We should do the same.

F. change- Gr. allasso

1. Undoubtedly, Stephen spoke of the change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant and from the High Priest of the Law and the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek which is Christ. Therefore, there had to be a change of laws. [Heb 7:11-19](#)

G. customs- Gr. ethos- a custom, usage, habit, an institute

1. Judaism had become a mere religion. Paul called it "the Jew's religion". It was just an outward form and man's customs by this time.

H. Moses

1. In the Jew's religion Moses was venerated. The only man worthy of worship is Jesus Christ!

I. delivered- Gr. paradidomi- to give over to another

15. And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

A. And all who sat in the council,

1. **sat-** Gr. **kathzomai**
2. **council-**Gr. **sunedrion**

B. looking steadfastly at him,

1. **looking steadfastly-** Gr. **atenzio-** *to gaze upon*

C. saw his face as the face of an angel

1. **saw-** Gr. **eido**
 - a. They should have seen this and stopped to think that maybe he was speaking the truth and that they needed to heed it. However, they did not.
2. **face-** Gr. **prosopon**

3. **angel- Gr. aggelos**

- a. This means his face was glowing. It is interesting that Moses' face glowed when he came down the mountain but as it started to fade, he put a veil over his face so no one would see. Stephen did not have to cover his face because the glory did not fade. [2 Cor. 3:13](#)
- b. Stephen kept beholding the glory of the Lord and was transformed into the same image from glory to glory even by the Spirit of God. [2 Cor. 3:18](#)