



## Beyond the Apostles

September 13, 2026

Acts 6



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### The Problem - Acts 6:1-2

*1Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists<sup>a</sup> 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.*

- Hellenists were Greek speaking Jews. Hebrews or Hebraic Jews were those who spoke Hebrew and Aramaic.
- *Daily distribution* was that of food to those in need. In this case the widows.
- This was no small matter, as God has revealed himself as one who protects and cares for widows (Psalm 68:5, James 1:27)
- It was a threat to unity.

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### The Solution (v3-5)

*3Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good reputation, 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. And this 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.*

- They proposed that there would be 7 Spirit filled men with character and wisdom to be appointed to oversee this distribution.
- Interestingly, the word for *ministry* here in verse 4 is the same word for *distribution* in verse 1. These, physical bread and the "spiritual" bread are both important avenues of serving within the body of Christ.

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- The laying on of hands was an important aspect of someone being “appointed” into a specific ministry calling.

### Meet Stephen (v5, 8-15)

**8**And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. **9**Then 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. **10**But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. **11**Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” **12**And 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, **13**and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, **14**for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” **15**And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

- One of the evidences that Stephen was indeed full of the Spirit was that he was moving with great power doing signs and wonders.
- This is the first instance of someone other than an apostle performing signs and wonders.
- He was also speaking boldly about Jesus.
- The stage is being set for the first martyr among followers of Jesus.

### Closing thoughts....

He sees, and is concerned, about those who can’t care for themselves. **How are we, as a church, expressing that characteristic of God’s heart?**

God has chosen to limit himself to working through His people. He provided manna directly from heaven. He desires to provide food through the hands of his people.

This account highlights the idea of the “priesthood of all believers”, in that leadership and ministry move beyond the apostles.

Ephesians 2:9-10 states that we are God’s handiwork and that we have been created with specific “good works” that we are to walk in.

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