

Acts Chapter 6, 7, and 8

8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace // 1 Peter 4:8-10

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. // 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. // 1 Corinthians 12:12

Servants of the Word (Acts 6:1-7)

- The Apostles and future elders are called to be dedicated to Prayer and Preaching the Word
- "In order to be effective in the job to which they had been called, they had to devote themselves to prayer and to the preaching of the Word of God." // Sproul, R.C. Acts: An Expositional Commentary
- διακονία - diakonia - service - translated as "ministry"

Servants of the Table (Acts 6:1-7)

- The seven names of the men selected are Greek names
- χρεία - chreia - need/necessary - translated as "duty"
- διακονέω - diakonen - to serve

Stephen was empowered like Jesus (Acts 6:8)

- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. // Acts 1:8
- And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee // Luke 4:14
- But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. // Matthew 12:28

Stephen spoke with wisdom like Jesus (Acts 6:9-10)

- **20** So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. **26** And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent. **39** Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." **40** For they no longer dared to ask him any question. // Luke 20:20, 26, 39-40
- **12** But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. **13** This will be your opportunity to bear witness. **14** Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, **15** for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. **16** You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers[c] and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. **17** You will be hated by all for

*my name's sake. **18** But not a hair of your head will perish.
19 By your endurance you will gain your lives. // Luke
21:12-19*

Stephen faced a trial like Jesus (Acts 6:11-15)

- *Matthew 26:57-68*

Stephen preached the Old Testament like Jesus (Acts 7:1-53)

- *I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. // Matthew 12:6*
- *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." // John 2:19*
- ***44** Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **47** and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. // Luke 24:44-47*
- *"A single thread runs right through the first part of his defense. It is that the God of Israel is a pilgrim God, who is not restricted to any one place...He has pledged himself by a solemn covenant to be their God. Therefore, according to his covenant promises, wherever they are, there He is also."
// John Stott*
 - Abraham (7:2)
 - Joseph (7:9)
 - Moses (7:20-22)

Stephen died like Jesus (Acts 7:51-60)

- *Jesus taught that the pharisees are like their ancestors in rejecting the prophets by rejecting him*
- *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." // Luke 23:34*

The church is persecuted

- ***13** Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" **14** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **15** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" **16** Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." **17** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. // Matthew 16:13-18*