

I. The Selection of the Seven (1-7)

Greek speaking Jews born outside of Palestine

Jews born in Palestine who spoke the native language

Acts 2:45; 4:35

Included Matthias - Acts 1:26

All are Greek names, perhaps indicating that they were all Grecian Jews

Stephen: Acts 6:7-7:60

Philip: Acts 8:9-40; 21:8-10

A Gentile proselyted to Judaism prior to his conversion to Christ

¹Now 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**. *διακονία (diakonia): "service"*

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**. *διακονέω (diakoneō): "to serve"*

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." Acts 2:42; 4:33

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.

⁶Then they set before the apostles, and they prayed and **laid their hands on them**. Gen 48:13; Num 27:23

⁷And 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**.

Could have been prejudice or unintentional oversight

Men whose goodness was accredited by others and who clearly exhibited the fruits of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-23

Not given the title of **diakonoι**, (deacon), but were to attend to the daily **diakonia**, (v. 1) and their service is expressed by the verb **diakoneo**, (v. 2) the same which expresses the duty of deacons in -1 Tim 3:10-13

II. The Slander Against Stephen (8-15)

All foreign-born Jews:

Freedmen - Jews set free from Roman slavery.

Cyrenians - Jews from Cyrene in Africa. -Matt 27:32; Acts 2:10

Alexandrians - Jews from Alexandria, Egypt. Jews represented at least ¼ of the city. Septuagint translation was made here.

Cilicia - A province in Asia Minor. Capital was Tarsus. -Acts 7:58; 9:11

Asia - Roman province of Asia Minor. Capital was Ephesus.

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**, *The Jewish Sanhedrin*

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**.

They were unable to meet his arguments.

ὑποβάλλω (hupoballō)
Lit. "To throw or put under" - implication is to put under one's control by suggestion or money.

Same charge was brought against Jesus. - Matt 26:65

Punishment for blasphemy against God was stoning - Lev 24:16

Jesus had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple - Matt 24:2; Luke 19:41-44

Appointment of the Seven

Philippians 3:2-7 (ESV)

² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a **Hebrew of Hebrews**; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Acts 2:45 (ESV)

⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Acts 4:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

“daily **distribution**” - Greek NASB Number: 1248

Greek Word: διακονία

Transliterated Word: *diakonia*

Root: from [1249](#);

Definition: service, ministry:--

List of English Words and Number of Times Used

ministries (1),
ministry (19),
mission (1),
preparations (1),
relief (1),
serve (1),
service (7),
serving (2),
support (1).

—NASB Greek-Hebrew Dictionary

"serve tables" - Greek NASB Number: 1247

Greek Word: διακονέω

Transliterated Word: *diakoneō*

Root: from [1249](#);

Definition: to serve, minister:--

List of English Words and Number of Times Used

administered (1),
administration (1),
cared (1),
contributing...support (1),
do...the serving (1),
employ...in serving (1),
minister (3),
ministered (2),
ministering (3),
servant (1),
serve (4),
serve as deacons (1),
served (2),
served as deacons (1),
serves (5),
services...rendered (1),
serving (4),
take care (1),
wait (1),
waited (3).

—NASB Greek-Hebrew Dictionary

Acts 1:21-26 (ESV)

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Galatians 5:16-24 (ESV)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual

immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 4:33 (ESV)

³³ And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (ESV)

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Acts 21:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

Genesis 48:8-14 (ESV)

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn).

Numbers 27:22-23 (ESV)

²² And Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation, ²³ and he laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the Lord directed through Moses.

Stephen Arrested and Tried

Matthew 27:32 (ESV)

³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

Acts 2:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 7:58 (ESV)

⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 9:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

"instigated" - Greek NASB Number: 5260

Greek Word: ὑποβάλλω

Transliterated Word: *hupoballō*

Root: from [5259](#) and [906](#);

Definition: to throw or *put under*:--

List of English Words and Number of Times Used

secretly induced (1).

—NASB Greek-Hebrew Dictionary

Matthew 26:64-65 (ESV)

⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy.

Leviticus 24:16 (ESV)

¹⁶Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

Matthew 24:1-2 (ESV)

¹Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ²But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

Luke 19:41-44 (ESV)

⁴¹And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."