

## Acts 6:1-7:14

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### Acts 6:1

“those days” - indefinite period of time in the Bible. It could be a number of years. On the other hand, it could be a much shorter period of time. In **Matthew 2:23 – 3:1** - “In those days” is a long time after the record in **verse 23**. In **Acts 1:15** - “in those days” is a much less period of time. The days between the ascension and the day of Pentecost

“the number of the disciples was multiplied” – the believers had increased tremendously in Jerusalem.

“murmuring” - complaint

“Grecians” - Greek speaking Jews. They are called in secular literature Hellenists. These were Jews who, because of persecution and other reasons, had been expelled from some countries and areas and had immigrated to Alexandria, Egypt. There they learned Greek. Alexandria, Egypt was a Greek-speaking area. There was always a cleavage between the Hellenists and the Aramaeans, here called Hebrews. In many respects, the Jewish or Hebrew religionists considered the Greeks pagan and their language was not very adequate as far as they were concerned. These Grecians or Hellenists murmured or complained against the Aramaeans because the widows were neglected, not properly cared for, in the daily ministering, daily care. **I Timothy 5:9-10 Verse 9** “taken” - chosen. Widows were to be taken care of. In the early Church there were widows who had no other source of income and many times they had their children to take care of. Then the Church took care of those women. However, widows of the Hebrews (Aramaean) were given better care than the Hellenists, because these were Greek-speaking ones.

### Acts 6:2

“called the multitude of the disciples” - called all the believers together, had a big ‘branch meeting.’

“tables” - food

“not reason” – not reasonable, not logical, not proper. That was good sense-knowledge wisdom by spirit-filled men but I believe it was spiritually wrong. I do not believe that it was Christian to the end that it should have been. We’re going to read about them choosing spirit-filled men who serve tables and preach too. You can get so wrapped up in teaching the Word that you don’t want to haul the garbage. You can get so cleaned up, so deeply engrossed within the teaching of the Word and think you’re so important in the research of it, that you don’t want to serve tables. I think this is what had happened in the early Church. The only other answer I can see is if it were worked from another text where it would come up that “It’s not reasonable, logical or proper.” – “It’s not possible for us” (That’s the attitude). “It’s not possible for us to do all the teaching, take care of all the branch leaders etc., and still take care of widows.” That I can buy, spiritually.

### Acts 6:3

“honest report” - *martureō*, transliterated - martyrs and translated – witnesses; great ‘witnessers’, of honest report, men who witness to.

“the Holy Ghost” – spirit, *pneuma* – ‘the Holy’ must be scratched. That doesn’t mean they were to just be born again. It meant men who were versatile, dynamic in the operation of the manifestations and specifically the manifestation of wisdom.

“business” - need.

#### **Acts 6:4-5**

“faith” - believing. In **verse 3** they had to be full of *pneuma* and wisdom. I believe it’s added here to show that Stephen was not only spiritually sharp on the manifestation of wisdom, but he was really a great man in the manifestation of believing.

“Holy Ghost” – *pneuma hagion* – all the rest of the manifestations too. Just like **verse 3**.

“Antioch” - in Syria

Of these seven listed here, only two are mentioned again in the Word of God; namely, Stephen and Philip. All seven of these were Hellenists; they were all Greek names.

“Stephen” - *Stephanos*, means - a crown

I don’t know how they chose these seven. They are never, in the Bible, called deacons. That was a term introduced later. The word is still carried on in church circles today regarding men and women who so-called ‘look over’ and maintain the material side of the ministry. In the Word of God, they’re not called deacons.

#### **Acts 6:6**

“they” – the apostles

“laid *their* hands on them” - that’s the ordination.

#### **Acts 6:7**

When the Word increases, people get delivered. It’s the Word that has to increase.

#### **Acts 6:8**

“faith” – *charisma* - grace, divine favor

“power” - *dunamis*

“Stephen...did” - Stephen did it because he was full of grace and *dunamis*. He had the God given ability. He must have believed; it said he operated greatly in the manifestation of believing (**verse 5**) and wisdom (**verse 3**). He was just walking on God’s Word.

“miracles” - signs

#### **Acts 6:9**

“Libertines” - Up until this time the Sadducees were the great attackers of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there are added the Pharisees. The Pharisees became involved because of the influence of the Grecians, Hellenists. According to one writer there were over 480 different synagogues in the city of Jerusalem. There were over a 100,000 Jews in Alexandria, Egypt. An emancipated Jew was called a “Libertine.” In 63 B.C., Pompeii captured a lot of the Jews and carried

them to Italy. In approximately 20 A.D., the Emperor Tiberius expelled them from Rome. That's also how Aquila and Priscilla got out of Rome. They also got expelled, thrown out, ex-communicated. (**Acts 18:2**) One, who had been a captured slave, if and when he was set free, was called a Libertine and in Jerusalem they had at least one synagogue that was made up of that kind of men. Others came from Cyrene and other that had come from Alexandria and Cilicia is very interesting because that happens to be Paul's territory. Paul was a student of Gamaliel; therefore, this ties it all together.

“Asia” – Asia minor

“disputed” - questioned, bugged

#### **Acts 6:10**

“they” – the Pharisees .of the groups in **verse 9**. If Paul, the great scholar of Gamaliel, was in that group, then it is an interesting verse. If Paul wasn't there it's still interesting.

The similarities between this record in Acts 6 and 7 and Paul's record in Acts and some of the epistles are very significant. The usage of words is very significant.

#### **Acts 6:11**

“suborned” – one translation has ‘appointed.’ I like the word ‘bribed.’ “Then they bribed men to say...” - sounds real modern. The Pharisaical leaders, the leaders of the synagogues, bribed them.

#### **Acts 6:12**

“caught” - violently seized. They didn't just take him by the hand and say, “let's have a cup of coffee.” They threw handcuffs on him and yanked him down the Street with them.

“council” - Sanhedrin

#### **Acts 6:13**

“set up false witnesses” - in the Sanhedrin, the highest court of religion so to speak. After first bribing, they deliberately set up false witnesses.

“holy place” – the temple

“law” - that Moses gave.

#### **Acts 6:14**

“shall” - will (both times)

“customs” - laws

I don't know if this “holy place” refers to the temple or the location of the meeting of the Sanhedrin. According to history, rooms in the southeast part of the temple area were the rooms where the Sanhedrin met; the court of law.

#### **Acts 6:15**

“council” - Sanhedrin, 70, ruling body.

“steadfastly” - very intently. I can see them, “looking daggers”, and when they looked at him with all that anger and all that jealousy, what they saw was not daggers but like the face of an angel. They were so ravishingly, so devilishly angry, so possessed (some of them) that they just “looked daggers” at Stephen and all Stephen did was just blessed them with the greatness of the love he had in his heart, that’s all.

“face of an angel” - A figure of speech because an angel doesn’t have a face. Angel is spirit. This figure of speech is of beauty, wonderfulness, godliness, tenderness, and everything that the Bible would teach regarding the ministry of angels and serving people. Quite a contrast, but that didn’t change the leaders’ minds. They knew Stephen had something they didn’t have, but that didn’t change their minds. They knew that Stephen had a tenderness, a love, a grace; a *charisma* (**verse 8**) about him, but that didn’t change their minds. They still clobbered him.

### Acts 7:1

“Are these things so?” - These things are so; a declaration. The high priest spoke for the Sanhedrin who believed the false witnesses (paid men). They said that Stephen was teaching heresy and his words were blasphemous. Even though Stephen was honest, right on, and he loved God and expressed the greatness of that love on his countenance, that did not change their minds.

### Acts 7:2

“God of glory” - could be a genitive of character (figure of speech).

Genitive of character is used seven more times in the Bible regarding God:

1. **Romans 15:5**; **II Corinthians 1:3** - the God of comfort. 2. **Romans 15:13** - the God of hope. 3. **II Corinthians 13:11** - the God of love. 4. **Romans 15:5** - the God of patience. 5. **Romans 15:33** - the God of peace. 6. **I Peter 5:10** - the God of grace. 7. **Deuteronomy 32:4** - the God of truth.

“Charran” - Haran in **Genesis 11:31**

### Acts 7:3

“kindred” - relatives, brethren

### Acts 7:4

“when” - after that

“removed him” - changed his abode

“wherein ye now dwell” - into which ye came and now dwell there

### Acts 7:5

“not ... to set his foot on” - not one little spot.

“his seed...no child” - How can he promise it to him and to his seed after him when he doesn’t even have a child? In order to have seed you got to have a child.

### Acts 7:6

“sojourn” - to be a stranger

“strange” - foreign

“entreat evil” - is to do wrong to them

“four hundred years” - **Galatians 3:17** says 430 years. The 400 years was the sojourning; to be a stranger, and that period began with **Genesis 12:1-4**. In **verse 1** “Lord” is *Jehovah* and refers to Haran, father of Lot, Abraham’s brother. There was split in family. *Jehovah* spoke to Haran who spoke to Abram. “And the Lord (Haran) said to Abram” - by way of Haran by way of Abram. That’s when the period of 400 years started. In **Exodus 12:40** the 430 years agrees with the record in **Galatians 3:14 & 17**. In **Genesis 21:12 & 15:13** we have that 400 years of **Acts 7:6**. Literally they were in Egypt only 215 years. The other 215 years they were sojourning, running around.

In Bullinger’s Bible, Appendix 50. VII. 7,8,9,10 on page 69...From Abraham’s call to the exodus was 430 years...From the call in the seed of Abraham, which was Isaac, was 400 years. The contradiction is not in the Word, it’s in our understanding of it. Bullinger shows many 430 year periods where there is always a sojourning type of thing, a slavery of one way or another; very remarkable. Check Appendix 50, VII, page 69.

In **Acts 7:4**, it says that Abraham went from Haran after his father was dead but by a comparison of **Genesis 11:26 & 32** and **Genesis 12:4**, it would seem that Abraham went from Haran sixty years before his father’s death.

This difficulty may be solved by supposing that Abraham was not the oldest son of Terah, his father, but the youngest. He was named first in **Genesis 11:26**, because of his importance. Other documentations for this are with Noah’s sons and also with Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. Napoleon, on account of his eminence, might be named first on a list of the Bonapartes though he was not the oldest.

If Sarai was the daughter of Haran, the same as Ischah of **Genesis 11:29** according to a Jewish tradition and therefore, a niece to Abraham, then the latter must have been much younger than Haran. For Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham (**Genesis 17:17** and you must compare that with **Genesis 20:12**.) Thus the birth of Abraham might have been so far distant from that of his elder brother as would bring the death of his father before his seventy-fifth birthday.

There is also a documentation I want to read to you; The place of the trial of Stephen and the defense was the temple building but specifically in the ancient room of the Sanhedrin, called The Hall, Gazith, meaning - the stone chamber. It was supposed to have been situated in the southeast corner of one of the courts of the temple building.

**Acts 7:6**

“bring them into bondage” - enslave them

“entreat them evil” - wrong them or hurt them

**Acts 7:7**

“be in bondage” - serve

**Acts 7:9**

“envy” - *zelos* – zealously envious or jealous

**Acts 7:10**

“afflictions” - tribulations

“favour” - grace

“governor” - ruler

**Acts 7:11**

“the land of” - is scratched

“affliction” - persecution

**Acts 7:12**

“first” - for the first time

**Acts 7:13**

“kindred” race (**verse 14** also)

“made known” - became manifest

**Acts 7:14**

Here there are seventy-five souls, but in **Genesis 46:26-27** there are only sixty-six souls mentioned. The Septuagint version has “seventy-five souls” both in **Genesis 46:27** and **Exodus 1:5**. The explanation is that the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh are included from the genealogy as recorded in **I Chronicles 7:14-21**.

In **Acts 7:14**, Stephen speaks of “all” the kindred of Jacob, whereas in **Genesis** only the lineal descendants are enumerated. Stephen included the wives who came down into Egypt. Joseph’s wife was in Egypt. Judah’s wife was dead according to **Genesis 38:12** and probably Simeon’s wife also for according to **Genesis 46:10**, Simeon’s youngest son was born of a Canaanitish woman. So if you add the nine wives to the sixty-six descendants of Jacob in **Genesis 46:26**, you come up with the number seventy-five.

“sent” - *apostellō* - apostle

In **Acts 7**, this is the fourth recorded sermon in the book of Acts. If you will note carefully every one of those previous sermons and this one too, all of these sermons or teachings are always Biblical. He has not used one illustration from Reader’s Digest or Shakespeare. The Word of God prevailed. How is the Word going to prevail if you use all of your illustrations from Playboy and the rest of that stuff? It’s interesting how the critics speak of the discrepancies in Acts, Genesis, and Galatians. Discrepancies are not in the Word, they’re in men’s understanding and minds.