



## Study 6—Taking Care of Business

### Acts 6:1-15

#### The story so far...

At the end of Acts 5, we saw the church facing persecution from the Jewish ruling council, who flogged the apostles, and ordered them not to speak about Jesus. But the apostles simply rejoiced that they were counted worthy of suffering for Jesus and continued to preach the good news. But things are going to get worse!

In this section of Acts we meet Stephen a godly man who pays the ultimate price for his faith.

#### Read Acts 6:1-7

Note: At this stage, the church was virtually entirely Jewish in its make up. But there were two groups of Jews: the Greek Jews and the Hebraic Jews. The **Greek Jews or Grecian Jews** were those who spoke Greek and who had been born outside of Israel. They tended to be more Greek in their thinking. The **Hebraic Jews** were those born in Israel and who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. They were usually committed to closely maintaining the Jewish customs and practices.

- a) What is the priority for the church leaders? Does this seem like the priority they should have. Why/Why not?
  
- b) In church today, where do you think the distractions can come from that take leaders' attention away from the 'ministry of the word and prayer'?
  
- c) What principles can you draw out of these verses about the way the church should seek to solve such problems?
  
- d) What qualities did the people need to have who were selected to "wait on tables".
  
- e) What does this say about choosing anyone for positions within the church?
  
- f) What were the results of the apostles delegating the social work in order to concentrate on their praying/preaching ministry? (v7)

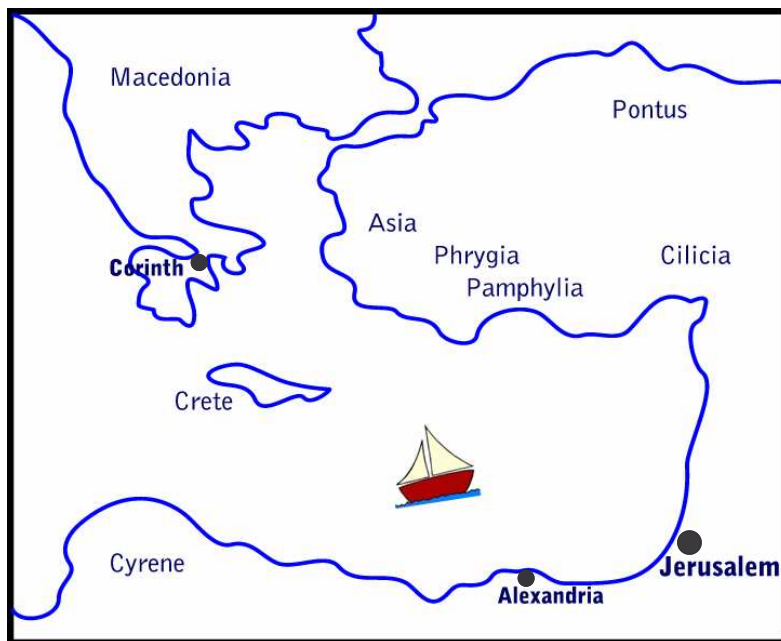
**Read verses 8 to 15**

a) What are we told about Stephen in these verses? How is he described?

Even though the Apostles have appointed Stephen and the other six to look after the practical needs of the church, that doesn't rule the six out of the main game of telling people about Jesus.

b) Who is it who opposes Stephen?

Use the map below to find and circle the places mentioned.



c) What false accusations are made against Stephen?  
(Make a note of them—you'll need these key points to help you make sense of his reply speech in the next chapter.)

**AGAINST (v11)**

**AGAINST (v11)**

**AGAINST (v13)**

**AGAINST (v13)**

Note: The accusations against Stephen were extremely serious. Nothing was more sacred to the Jews, and nothing more precious, than their temple and their law. The temple was their 'holy place', the sanctuary of God's presence. The law was 'Holy Scripture', the revelation of God's mind and will. Therefore, since the temple was God's house, and the law was God's word, to speak against either was to speak against God.... a very blasphemous thing to do.

d) What similarities can you see between the accusations against Stephen in verse 14 and the things that happened to Jesus in Matthew 26:59-65?

**Read through Stephen's speech in Acts 7:2-53 in your group.  
It's a little heavy going, but very important preparation for next week!**