

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6c: Acts 6-7 – The First Deacons and the First Martyr

Introduction

The rapid growth of the early church created issues that needed to be addressed. We see the office of deacon being formed within Chapter 6. We also see the rise of Stephen as an early church leader and the level of persecution against the church raised as Stephen is martyred.

Acts 6:1-7 – The First Deacons

What was the issue that created the need for deacons and what does this teach us about when deacons should be ordained?

Why couldn't the apostles handle this problem themselves? What does this teach us about the duty of ministers?

Define the following words:

Deacon –

Tables (end of vs. 2) –

What were the qualifications for a deacon? (See also 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

On a big picture level, what is the purpose of the deacons?

How did the early church conduct its business and how can we apply this today?

Acts 6:8-15 – Stephen's Ministry

What was Stephen doing? Does it appear that he was a preacher?

Who was Stephen ministering to and what does this show us about the spread of the gospel?

What was it about Stephen that made his speaking so effective? (See also Luke 21:15)

When the Grecian Jews couldn't overcome Stephen's message, what did they do?

Why did Stephen's face shine as angel? (See also 2 Corinthians 3:7-11)

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Acts 7:1-53 – Stephen's message to Sanhedrin council

What does Stephen point out about the Israelite's response to the giving of the law (vss 38-41)

After being punished because of their idolatry, did the Israelites learn their lesson? (vss 42-43)

What is the point of Stephen's message to the Jews? (vss 51-52)

Why do you suppose he went through such a long narrative to build up to this point? (vss 1-37)

Acts 7:54-60 – The Murder of Stephen

How did Stephen's message affect the Jews and what was their response? Does this still happen today?

What was the last straw for the Jews?

What does Stephen's statement about Christ mean? (See further Matt 26:62-65, Heb 1:3, 12:2)

What difference do you notice about Christ's position between Acts and the passages in Matthew and Hebrews?

What do Stephen and Saul have in common?

Assignment:

Read Acts 8:1 – 9:31 in preparation for the next lesson