ACTS 6

# Seven Men and a Face Like an Angel

*a quarrel over widows, seven men full of the Spirit, a spreading word, and a deacon on trial*

> *"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*
> ACTS 6:4

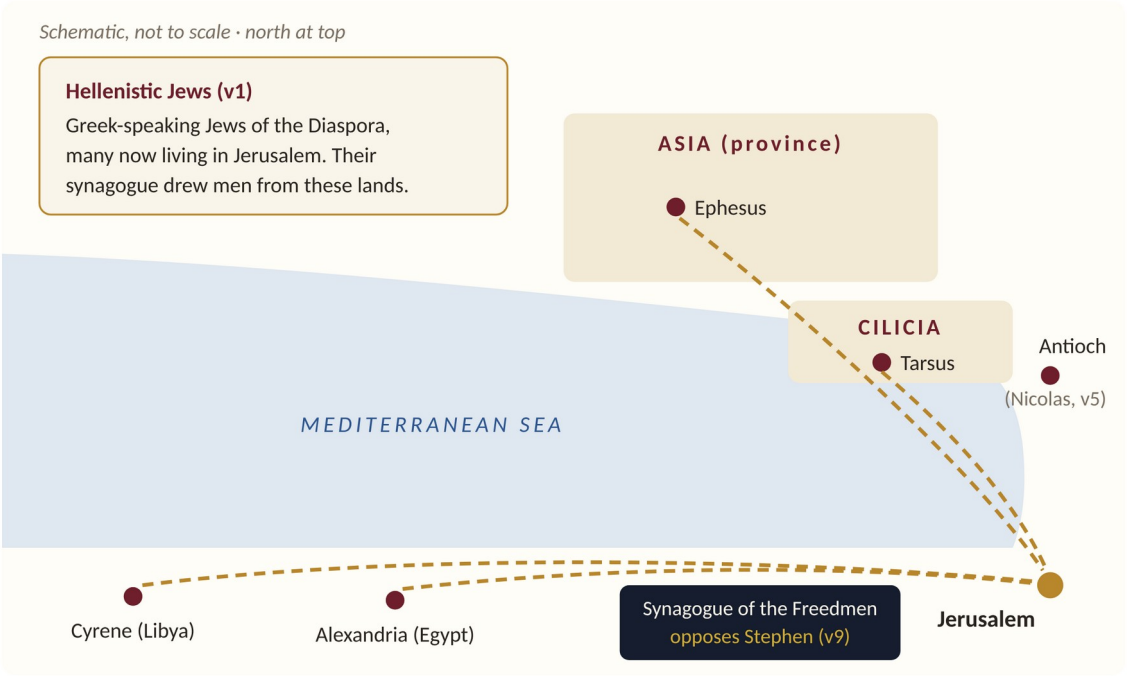
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

# Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 5 ended with the apostles flogged, released and rejoicing, “every day, in the temple and from house to house” preaching Jesus as the Christ (5:42).

2. The church in Jerusalem was entirely Jewish, but Jews were not all alike.

3. The apostles’ answer is a model of shared work.



# The First Quarrel

*Overlooked widows, a growing church, and apostles who keep first things first*

**ACTS 6:1**

*Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.*

**DAVID GUZIK**

Satan uses an unintentional wrong; no committee — they acted.

**R.C. SPROUL**

The first crisis; care for widows; pastors are ministers of the Word.

**C.H. SPURGEON**

A breach unrepaired may tear a church to pieces; keep together.

**MATTHEW HENRY**

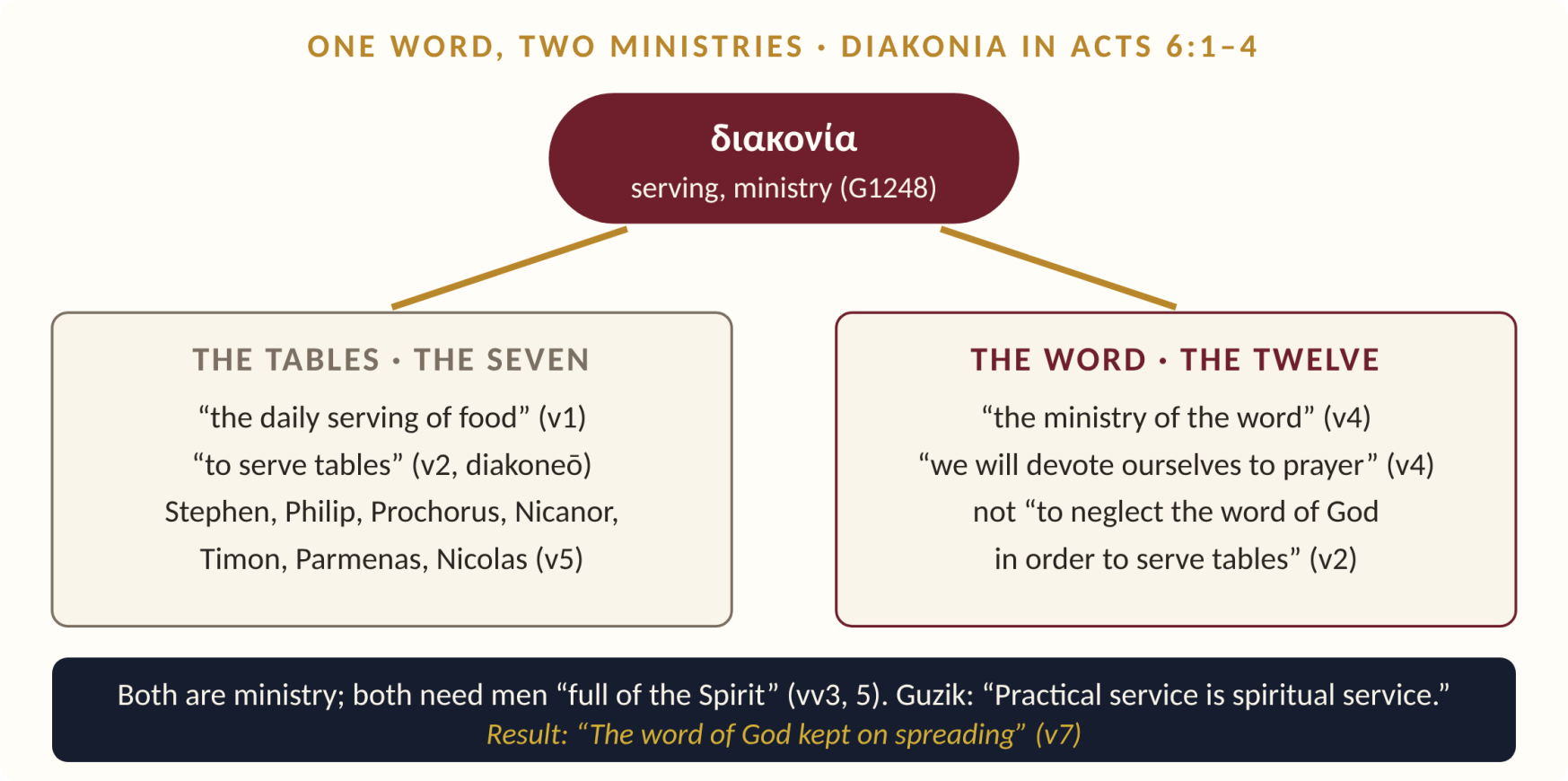
A secret heart-burning over a money-matter; preaching is the best work.

**γογγυσμός**

GONGYSMOS · "COMPLAINT"

Grumbling, muttering — the word sounds like what it means.

# One word, two ministries




*Luke uses the same word for serving food and for the ministry of the word; the apostles divide the work, not its dignity.*

# Seven Men and a Spreading Word

*The church chooses, the apostles pray and lay on hands, and even priests believe*

**ACTS 6:7**

*The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.*

**DAVID GUZIK**

Greek names for a Greek complaint; practical service is spiritual service.

**R.C. SPROUL**

Great faith, ability, commitment; the diaconate founded.

**C.H. SPURGEON**

The Spirit, prayer, every member a minister; the priests believed.

**MATTHEW HENRY**

God has His remnant in the worst places.

**διακονέω**
DIAKONEŌ · "TO SERVE"

To wait on, to serve — first at table, then in any work done for another.

# Full of Grace and Power

*Stephen's signs, the Synagogue of the Freedmen, and a wisdom no one could answer*

**ACTS 6:8**

*And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.*

**DAVID GUZIK**

Full of faith and power; the Spirit won the debate; Saul's synagogue?

**R.C. SPROUL**

Honest debate, short-lived honesty; none could resist.

**MATTHEW HENRY**

Full of faith, full of power; they fought the Spirit in him.

**χάριτος · δυνάμεως**
CHARITOS · "GRACE"

The NASB reads "full of grace and power" (v8) from the Greek charitos; the KJV's "full of faith and power" follows later manuscripts that echo verse 5.

# The Face of an Angel

*Suborned witnesses, charges against Moses and the temple, and a shining face in the Council*

**ACTS 6:11**

*Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."*

**DAVID GUZIK**

Opinion easily shaped; accused like Jesus; Moses' reflected glory.

**R.C. SPROUL**

False witnesses twisted Jesus' words; reflected glory, like Moses.

**MATTHEW HENRY**

Mildness and majesty; a shining face does not stop the stones.

**ὑπέβαλον**

HYPEBALON · "SECRETLY INDUCED"

From hypoballō, to throw under, to put up someone secretly — the KJV's "suborned."

# Tried like his Master

## THE SERVANT TRIED LIKE HIS MASTER

| | JESUS · Matthew 26 | STEPHEN · Acts 6 |
|---|---|---|
| court | "the whole Council" (26:59) | "brought him before the Council" (v12) |
| witnesses | "many false witnesses" (26:60) | "false witnesses" (v13) |
| charge | "destroy the temple of God" (26:61) | "will destroy this place" (v14) |
| method | "trying to obtain false testimony" | "secretly induced men" (v11) |
| his face | "they spat in His face" (26:67) | "like the face of an angel" (v15) |

Jesus had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" — "of the temple of His body" (John 2:19, 21).

*Guzik: "It is a good thing to be accused of the same things Jesus was accused of."*

*Read across each row: Stephen's trial follows the pattern of Jesus' trial almost point for point.*

# What to carry from this chapter

1

### Satan tries the dinner table.

After a lie (5:1–11) and a prison (5:17–40), the third attack is a quarrel.

2

### Grumbling is a wilderness word.

Gongysmos (v1) is the word for Israel's "grumblings" over food in Exodus 16.

3

### Tables and the word are both diakonia.

The same word names the food line (v1) and the pulpit (v4).

4

### Prayer comes first.

"We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (v4).

# More to carry

5

### Greek names for a Greek complaint.

All seven names are Greek (v5).

6

### Unity is a means of blessing.

Spurgeon: “A breach once made has a tendency to widen.”

7

### Priests obeyed the faith.

The establishment that condemned Jesus began to yield (v7).

8

### Full, full, full.

Stephen is full of the Spirit, wisdom, faith, grace and power (vv3, 5, 8).

# Talk it through

1. The complaint was real but quiet — a “secret heart-burning” (Henry). What grumbling am I carrying that I have never brought into the open in a healthy way?

2. Who are the “overlooked widows” around me — the people easy to miss in my church, unit or neighborhood — and what is one way I can see them this week?

3. The apostles knew what only they could do and protected it. What is the main thing God has given me to do, and what am I letting crowd it out?

4. The seven had to be “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” to serve food. Do I think of my ordinary service — cooking, cleaning, driving, fixing — as spiritual work?

5. Stephen’s enemies could not answer him, so they lied about him. How do I respond when I am misrepresented for following Jesus?

## CLOSING

*Acts 6 shows a church that solves a real problem without losing its main thing. The apostles keep to prayer and the word, Spirit-filled men take the tables, and the word spreads even into the priesthood. Then one of those table-servers stands before the Council with the glory of God on his face. No service is too small for the Spirit, and no servant is too small to shine.*

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.