

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 5 w/Answers

Acts Chapter 6-7

When we left our study last week, we saw that God was adding mightily to the body of the church in Jerusalem. This week we will see that growth continue, and we will learn a great deal about the ministry of that church, its congregation and its leadership. From this, I believe that God will give us greater insight into our own responsibilities as members of our local body of believers and the work that He has set for us - wherever and whoever we are.



In this lesson, we will study Chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Acts and see firsthand the work of the church in Jerusalem and the continuing spread of the gospel message. Unfortunately, we will also witness violence in a dramatic way, with the stoning of Stephen and the death of one of the newly elected deacons, or servants, of the local church.

We will examine congregational responsibilities, ministry responsibilities and leadership responsibilities, as God begins building the Church, starting with the church in Jerusalem.

For our study this week, read Acts Chapters 6 and 7 and answer the following:

1. See what you can find out about the Apostle Paul. Many books have been written on Paul. See if you can determine what he was like, what he looked like, how he thought, etc. In addition to non-biblical books and references, we can also learn much about Paul from the New Testament itself. For starters, look up the following and jot down some of the facts about Paul that we learn from these verses.
 - a. Acts 13:9
 - i. ANSWER: He had a name change
 - b. Acts 17:28
 - i. ANSWER: He was a student of Greek as well as Jewish literature
 - c. Acts 21:39
 - i. ANSWER: He was a Jew of Tarsus
 - d. Acts 22:3
 - i. ANSWER: He was a student of Gamaliel
 - e. Acts 22:24-29
 - i. ANSWER: He was born a Roman citizen
 - f. Acts 23:6
 - i. ANSWER: He was a Pharisee, and his father was a Pharisee
 - g. Philippians 3:5
 - i. ANSWER: He was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews"
2. We can tell from prior chapters that the number of Christians being added to the church is growing daily and is now very large, certainly in excess of 5,000 and perhaps many more times that. (See Acts 5:12-16) Given that the church was now this size, where did the Apostles build the first Church buildings? (Acts 5:12, and 5:42)
 - a. ANSWER: They did not have a building; they met in the Temple and in homes.

3. So, the church is now substantial in size with many "disciples" following the Apostles. The daily work of the new "church" appears to be prayer, study, and healing; based on what we have read through chapter 5. What can we now also infer from Acts 6:1 that was a part of the work and ministry of the church in those days?
 - a. ANSWER: Distributing food to the widows who would have had no other means of support. This would also imply an organized approach to managing the resources required for such an undertaking - people, money, the food itself, and so on. A well-organized ministry will be evident in subsequent verses.
4. There were two types of Jew referred to by Luke: (1) those from Palestine - the native born Jews of the land, and (2) the Hellenistic Jews - those born in Greece; foreigners or aliens to the land of Palestine as a result of the dispersion. In addition to these differences, fill in the blanks below to annotate other distinguishing factors of these two groups.
 - a. The Palestinian Jews spoke Aramaic; the Hellenistic Jews spoke GREEK
 - b. The Palestinian Jews biblical text was written in Hebrew; the Hellenistic Jews scripture was in Greek and was called the SEPTUAGINT.
5. Based on your understanding of the two groups, do we have similar issues within the Church today? Explain what those challenges are, and how local churches are meeting those needs.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Yes we do; multi-cultural, or cross-cultural issues are prevalent today, particularly here in the Washington D.C. area.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Churches are opening their doors to allow other ethnic groups to use their buildings for worship.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Churches are meeting many needs by offering English classes, food, shelter, and clothing programs to assist other cultures visiting a foreign land.
 - d. ANSWER 4: Churches are providing Bibles and the gospel message, and tracts and other teaching aids produced in the person's native language.
6. The church is rapidly growing in Jerusalem, and its congregation is now made up of at least three groups. What three groups of people are mentioned in the first two verses of Chapter 6?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Widows
 - b. ANSWER 2: Apostles
 - c. ANSWER 3: Disciples
7. Read Chapter 6 verses 3-4. What principles about church leadership are illustrated here? (There are at least two.)
 - a. ANSWER 1: The election of leaders by the body
 - b. ANSWER 2: Delegation of authority by the Apostles to the servant-deacons to do the jobs that they were assigned
8. We can learn something else from these verses - that working in Christ's kingdom is not just about teaching, preaching or praying; it's also about ministry. What basic jobs were the first Deacons asked to take on?
 - a. ANSWER: The distribution of food to widows
9. What else did these deacons do, based on Stephen's and Philip's examples?
 - a. ANSWER: Taught, healed, and preached
10. When Stephen was hauled before the Sanhedrin, did his response indicate a thorough knowledge of scripture? Does this example show us that as God's servants we have a responsibility to be well-trained in scripture? Does it also show us we have a responsibility to train those whom we elect as church leaders?
 - a. ANSWER: Absolutely.
11. Who was one of the notable witnesses of Stephen's stoning?
 - a. ANSWER: Saul of Tarsus

12. Continuing from above, why would he have been there, and what business did he have in all this?
- a. ANSWER: He was a Pharisee
13. Did he actually approve of the stoning of Stephen? (Acts 8:1)
- a. ANSWER: Yes
14. What impact did Stephen's stoning have on the growth of the church?
- a. ANSWER: Among other things, it began the spread of the gospel message outside of Jerusalem since many in Jerusalem dispersed immediately following the stoning. We will examine this further in the next lesson when we look at Chapter 8.
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Again, we see the great testimony of the Apostles who boldly faced persecution, and in this example, even death.

Yours in Christ,

Wes