

ACTS: By His Spirit

Acts 6-7: Stretched

¹In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:1-4)

When God's Spirit stretches us . . .

▶ Priorities change

¹...their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1)

- What needs doing?
- Who is doing what?

²..."It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. (Acts 6:2)

³...choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. (Acts 6:3)

► **Persecution increases**

⁸Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

⁹Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) ... ¹⁰But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. (Acts 6:8-10)

¹⁵All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. (Acts 6:15)

⁵¹"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! (Acts 7:51)

⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

⁶⁰Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:59, 60)

³³When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23:33,34)