

The Book of Acts

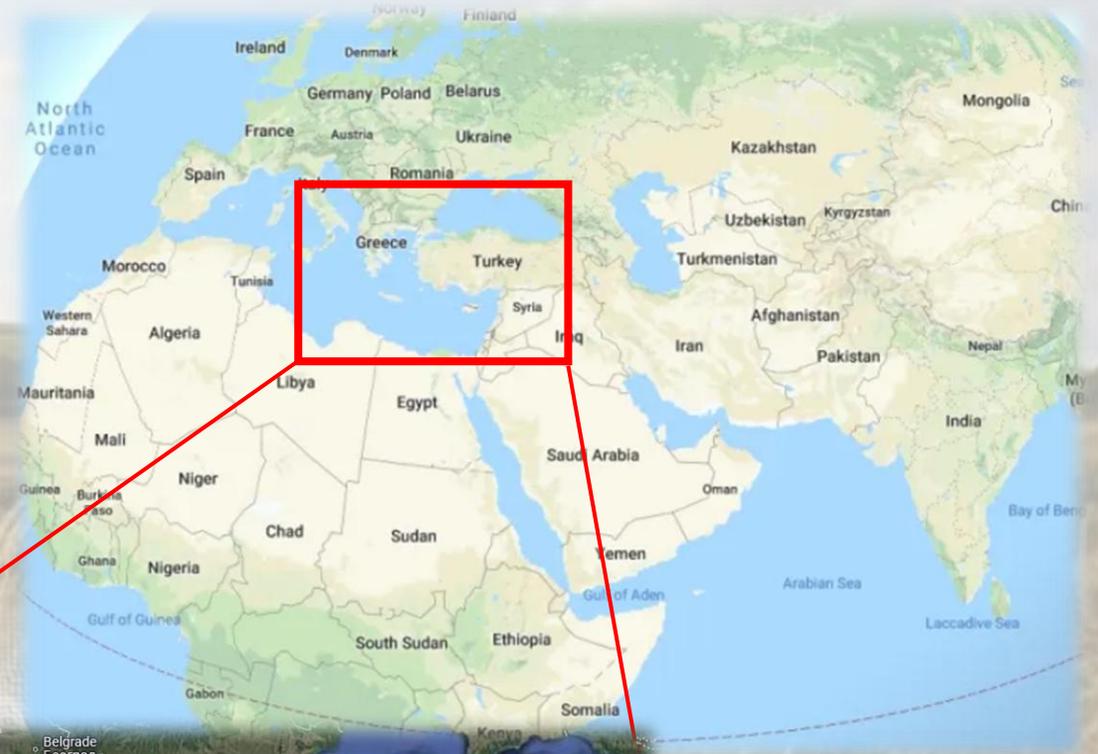
THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts

The Persecuted Church
June 16, 2025

Facts about Acts

- Where does the book of Acts take place?
 - Basically from Israel to Rome and from ~33 A.D. to 64 A.D. (~2000 years ago).
- What is persecution?
 - punishment or harassment usually of a severe nature on the basis of race, religion, or political opinion in one's country of origin.



The 12 Apostles (Disciples)

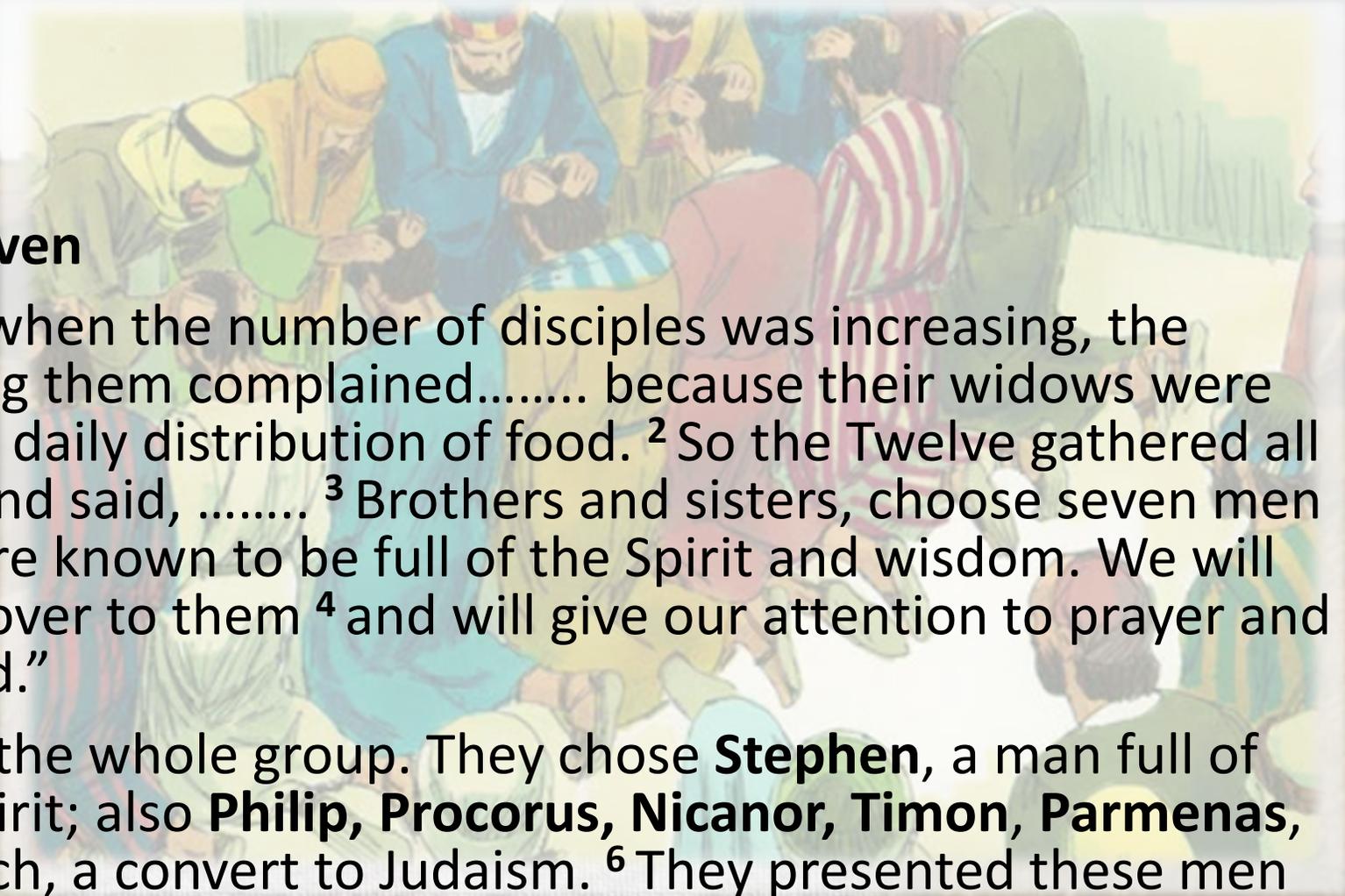
The 12 Apostles were those who actually new Jesus and followed him while he taught people about the “good news”. They were:

Peter, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (Matthias took his place after Judas betrayed Jesus).

What is the good news?

Acts

Deacons Were Chosen



The Choosing of the Seven

Acts 6: 1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews^[a] among them complained..... because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ³ Brothers 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 ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose **Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also **Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas**, and **Nicolas** from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The Church is Spreading!



But it is not easy, and people begin to try to stop the Apostles from teaching.....

The Apostles Punished

The Sanhedrin's Actions (Acts 5:17-42, 8:1-3): The Jewish religious court, the Sanhedrin, arrested and punished the apostles for preaching in Jesus' name.

¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.....They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Stephen Persecuted



Saul – the Chief Persecutor

Acts 7: they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

8 And Saul approved of their killing him.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Wrapping it up

- Sometimes we are picked on for what we say, believe, or look like. But should that stop us from saying or doing what we know is right in God's eyes?
- A common bible verse about being persecuted for Jesus is **Matthew 5:11**: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me." Matthew 5:11 (ESV), This verse, along with Matthew 5:10 and 12, promises a reward in heaven for those who endure suffering for their faith.
 - Does that give you comfort like the Apostles had when they were being punished?
 - Are you glad you live in a country where you are allowed to tell people about Jesus without being punished or risking your life?

The persecuted church in China

