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Foundation Of The Diaconate

Now that we've finished the book of Nahum I was going to show some linkages between archaeological discoveries and the book of Nahum that are now housed primarily in the British Museum and if you get a chance to go there it would be well worth your time to spend a few days in that museum studying Nahum. But after a day of preparing to do this I was still not pleased with my work and so I convinced myself we would do better to do an exegetical study of the NT passages related to elders and deacons. The elders and deacons are studying these issues right now and you are the core group and so as you'll see from tonight's text you're the one's who really need to have a handle on the underlying exegesis so we are all on the same page.

Tonight we'll start with Acts 6 which is the formation of the diaconate or the deacons. The diaconate actually formed before the elderate. Why do you suppose the diaconate formed before the elderate? Because the early church had apostles. So the apostles were serving as the elderate. But as the witness moves out from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and finally to the remotest part of the earth there comes a need to appoint elders in the new local churches that are forming all over the Mediterranean world. But at the time of Acts 6 there were no local churches outside of Jerusalem, the witness was staying snug as a bug in Jerusalem. You just had the Church of Jerusalem and they probably didn't even recognize themselves as a Church. They just probably thought of themselves as the remnant of Jewish believers in the Messiahship of Jesus. It took time for Luke and Paul to reflect back and recognize years later that something new had formed on the day of Pentecost called the Church. So forget about the Church for now. The diaconate formed among a group of Jews who were looking for the Kingdom. They stayed in Jerusalem because Jerusalem was the center of the Kingdom. They had been told that they would sit on twelve thrones and rule in the Kingdom. They

went to the Temple because that was the center of Judaism. So they were very kingdom oriented at this time and they are hoping that the nation Israel will repent so that the kingdom of God will come and they are preaching that Jesus is the Messiah, that He was crucified and raised by God and He is the gate into the kingdom.

So understand that the kingdom is the mindset of the Jews in Acts 6 when the diaconate was formed. But that is not the mindset of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They have another program in mind of going out, pressing the witness out of Jerusalem into the surrounding region of Judea and Samaria and ultimately to the remotest parts of the earth. Acts 6 is stage setting for this going out. Acts 6 is how the Holy Spirit pushed them out. He formed the diaconate. You say how does the diaconate result in the witness going out? Well, you will see in this passage that it was the formation of the diaconate which relieved the apostles so they could focus on prayer and teaching of the word. And that always has to be central to any church growth movement. And secondly, it was the interaction of the deacons with people that resulted in the witness going out. It's going to be the deacons, not the apostles, through which the witness goes out of Jerusalem, which may shock you.

So two positive things are going to come out of the formation of the diaconate. One, the apostles will have the time and energy to devote to prayer and teaching, that's all training of believers, that's the focus of their duties. And the deacons will have the time and energy to devote to the needs of the congregation and outreach, attending to physical needs within the body of believers and getting in touch with the people on the streets with the gospel.

Now to get this formed the Holy Spirit uses a problem that arose between two groups or factions in the church. The apostles are going to encounter a problem in this passage and they solve the problem but they have no idea that what they are really doing is actually dividing up the responsibilities so that more training can occur and more evangelism can occur. This is going to blow the church out of Jerusalem. So keep your mental focus on the Holy Spirit, because yes, these men are going to move out but why are they moving out? Because the Holy Spirit is forcing them out.

So in 6:1 we have the dispute. You have the **Hellenistic Jews** vs **native Hebrews**. These are two cultural factions. The church is made up of people

from different cultures and different cultures rub one another, often the wrong way, this is often a source of division. Culture has always been a challenge in the church because you're trying to get all these people together who have different languages, different customs and everybody looks at everybody else and thinks, "Boy, they're weird." So naturally it's an easy place to get a fight going. In our town we have two cultures, we have the Auslanders and we have the Germans and these are two cultures that collide and it's very easy to rub one another the wrong way and sort of stare at the other side like, "What's wrong with you?" And those of you who've lived here all your life can tell me story after story where this rubbing occurred. And often this rubbing comes into a group of believers and that's what's going on here. Here we have two cultures colliding, the **Hellenistic Jews** and the **Native Hebrews**.

Now the church dispute involved these two parties and I want you to notice one of the parties of the dispute because this party to the dispute is going to be the key for evangelization of the world. You say, how's that? Well down in verse 5 they chose seven men to solve this problem, you can see their names Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, etc...if you do a language study of these men's names you discover that they're all Hellenistic names. They are not Hebrew names, they're Greek names. So where are they from? Are they from within the land or from outside the land? They're from outside the land, they're diaspora Jews, Jews from all over the Mediterranean world with various backgrounds now in Jerusalem, now called up to solve this widow problem.

So the solution to this church fight is to form the diaconate and the diaconate they form is composed of all Hellenistic Jews and it's going to turn out that it's through the diaconate that world evangelism gets started. They didn't know they were going to be some great evangelists, they were just involved in solving an inner conflict in the church body, they're just signing up to serve tables, but God is going to also use them for His evangelistic purpose.

See God is always doing more than the thing you and I can see, you may see one thing but God sees the one thing you see and 300 other things you don't and He'll surprise you like that. So here's what happens - they choose seven men and they're all Hellenistic Jews. These guys can solve the problem. But they can solve another problem too. God is doing much more, he's taking

these men in the diaconate and he's going to use their background to take the gospel out of Jerusalem. They've got enough people inside Jerusalem, the church is as snug as a bug, the native disciples aren't going out anywhere, they're comfortable right at home, so God is going to take these non-natives, men who are cosmopolitan in outlook, men who are well traveled, men who know the world and he's going to use them in their newly installed office to take the gospel out, out of Jerusalem. That's what God is doing.

Now this shows us a few things. One thing about the office of deacon, which is being formed in this passage, is that the deacon is different from the elder. The deacon is in contact with lots of people, he's not huddled up in his study or a prayer closet, he's out on the streets, he's talking with people, he's involved in their lives and this gives him a lot of opportunities for evangelism. I'm not saying being a deacon carries the responsibility of evangelism and everyone else just sits on their duff. I'm saying however, that the responsibilities the deacon do predispose them to opportunities to evangelize. Why? Because their duties take them out to people, it's a more social function. The apostles, who will later be replaced by the elders do not have duties that predispose them to lots of opportunities to evangelize. Because what are their responsibilities? Verse 4, "prayer and ministry of the word." Prayer requires you to think, and you need to get alone to do that, you can't formulate prayers that actually get through to the throne of grace out in a social situation, you need peace and quiet to get well-thought out prayers, and ministry of the word, that involves everything from studying the text to teaching it and again, you can't prepare to teach outdoors in the local market, you need a quiet place to do that. So neither of the elder's duties naturally lends itself to lots of opportunities to evangelize; they're just not too social. But they do naturally lend themselves to training of believers, preparing other believers to go out and evangelize because in the peace and quiet you get lots of time to reflect on things and ask questions, go to the word and find answers. So you can see from the nature of the responsibilities of the deacons and the elders, that they naturally lend themselves toward different ends, one naturally results in evangelizing unbelievers, the other naturally results in training believers. It doesn't mean there's no crossover whatsoever, but it does point a general direction.

So with that background let's come to 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. Now notice the phrase **at this time while the disciples were increasing in number**, Luke has three terms he uses. One is “brethren” (Acts 1:15, 16: 2:29, 37; 3:17, 22; 6:3; 7:2, 23, 25, 26, 37) the second is “believers” (Acts 2:44; 4:4, 32; 5:14) and the third is “disciples” (6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 25, 26, 36, 38; 11:26; et. al.). These all have their special usage, “brethren” is always the Jewish people, believer, unbeliever, it makes no difference up to this point, it’s a way of referring to people of the Jewish race, “believer” we use all the time. Luke has used it numerous times, and it refers to those who hear the gospel message and believe it, those are the believers. And disciple is a believer in training; it’s used by Luke three times in Acts 6 and continues to be used in this manner throughout the Book of Acts.

If he used the word “believer” in verse 1 it would read, “Now at this time while the *believers* were increasing in number,” and we would know very easily how to interpret that because we’d go back to the report of 2:41 and we’d find this, “So then, those who had received his word were baptized [that’s water baptism]; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” and we’d come down to verse 44, “and all those who had believed were together and had all things in common,” clearly that’s a report on the number of people who had believed. And in 4:4 we’d find another report. Luke likes to keep reports on the number in this movement because his report is probably a court brief that he prepared. Verse 4, “But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.” That’s a report of the number of believers in Jerusalem, actually just the men so you had probably 15,000 believers in Jerusalem at the time when you add the women and children. Now when we come to 6:1 does it say the number of believers was increasing? No, it says, the number of disciples was increasing and that doesn’t necessarily mean the same thing as the number of believers increasing.

To clearly set these apart a disciple in Luke’s writing is one who is under training, he’s learning doctrine; a believer is simply one who responds to the gospel. So what is verse 1 telling us? That the number of trained believers was increasing in the city of Jerusalem. How did this happen? Go back to v 42, the apostles were going to the Temple and from home to home and doing what? Preaching and teaching. So they had two avenues, the large avenue at

the Temple and the narrow avenue of private homes and they were preaching and teaching in private homes and in the Temple. So the concept was “We’ve got to get these believers trained in the word, trained in the word, trained in the word.” This was the number one priority. How often were they teaching? It says “every day.” It wasn’t just Wednesday at 7 o’clock and Sunday at 9:30 and 11. It was every day of the week. And that tells you something, notice the pronoun in the middle of the verse, is it I, I kept right on teaching. No, it’s “they,” “they kept right on teaching. And if you go back to verse 40 you see it’s the apostles doing the teaching. So it clearly shows you that one man can’t do this, no one man can do this, you need a group of men, a group of elders to do this kind of thing and when they did this it’s what led to verse 1. “The disciples were increasing in number,” you had more and more trained believers. So this is a strategy for how things really get moving, you teach and you teach and you teach, daily teaching, that’s where the increase really gets going and you need a multitude of teachers to do that. Not one man. Years later what does Paul tell Timothy? When young Timothy takes the pastorate, what was Paul’s advice to him? “The things which you have heard from me...teach these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Aha, so Paul propagated the same strategy, you can’t do this alone Timothy, you need to find faithful men and train them to go train other men who will train other men who will train other men and so forth in a great long chain, that’s how the church really gets strong.

Now when you’re getting this kind of increase, not an increase necessarily in the number of people in the pews on Sunday morning, but in the number of trained believers who are training other believers that’s what results in a very effective church. They won’t need gimmicks, they’ve got something going for them that is infinitely more powerful than gimmicks, they have the word of God and that’s exactly what happened in Acts 6. The world of Judaism, the established leadership are about to face an undefeatable opponent, this is cultural conquest and people don’t like the sound of that but that’s what it is, the gospel is prevailing and men are being trained in truth. And Acts 6 is reporting that finally the church had grown in maturity and was about to start conquering. They’ve built numbers in the early chapters, Acts 2, 3,000 believed, Acts 4, 5,000 men believed, that’s all evangelism, now by Acts 6 the number of trained believers is increasing and they now become a threat to the leadership in Jerusalem. And by the end of chapter 7 the Sanhedrin are going to be so overwhelmed by a single disciple named Stephen, a deacon,

that they are going to murder him, that is how powerful his historical recital was and from that the seeds of the gospel are blown out of Jerusalem. It's going to go out.

Now at this time, notice, verse 1, **a complaint arose** and the Greek word there means they were murmuring under their breath one side against the other. And the murmuring was **on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews**. Why? **because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food**. Now this daily serving not only consisted of food, there was that but there was also the financial contributions, we might call it benevolence. These widows needed financial support so they could live. Jerusalem had a widow problem. It developed because of a situation unique to the Jewish people. The OT taught that in the last days the Jewish people would be raised from the dead and assembled at the temple in Jerusalem. So what every Jewish man wanted to do was be buried in Jerusalem. That way, when the resurrection occurs he could just walk straight over to the temple. They even align the Jewish graves all over Jerusalem so that each one is facing the temple, that way when you're raised you just start walking, you don't have to turn left, you don't have to turn right, you don't have to look around for the temple, you just have to walk. So you had all the men moving to Jerusalem just before they died, that way they'd be buried there, when they died the widow population increased, that's where their particular problem came from. So you have funds coming in to help them, they didn't have life insurance and social security back then, people gave to support these widows. So if you turn back to Acts 4:34 you see the process of how this worked. "For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need," evidently by the apostles. So the contributions came in to the apostles and went out by the apostles, but by Acts 6 you have an inequality growing, all the apostles were native Hebrews and the Hellenistic widows felt they were being overlooked, it's hard to imagine the apostles doing that and they probably weren't but these Jews had large cultural differences and so rather than convince them the apostles took it as an opportunity to re-evaluate what they were doing, and they noticed something, they noticed, hey, we don't have to distribute all these funds, it's eating up all our time anyway, let's delegate!

So verse 2, **So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples**, notice the **disciples**, not all the believers but the trained believers were brought together, men who were actively training in doctrine, we'd say here, the core group, they're not going to call every Tom, Dick and Harry that has their name on the church role but hasn't been there for the last six months, give me a break, those people are more of a problem than anything else, they're not really a part of the church, they're flakes, they don't know what's going on, they're not consistent and the apostles are not interested in their vote, it's the core group they're interested in hearing from. Why? Why don't they just select? Because they said, you know, we don't know everything about everybody so let's get a selection from the larger sampling of the core group, they know who can minister to them in this manner better than we do, so they summon the core group, the disciples. **and they said to them, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3" "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4" "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."** Now they solve this problem in a very interesting way. You'd think as the apostles who have apostolic authority they'd handle this problem, and in a way they do, but it's not in a direct way. Why don't they handle it? Obviously because of verses 2 and 4. They already know what the will of God is for their lives. Their job is to pray and to teach the word! It's not to visit the sick, go hold Johnny's hand, go solve Suzy's problem and pat people on the head, you'll never get to prayer and the word if you do all that.

Now I think you will agree with me that the number one problem in churches today is neglecting these two very things, praying and teaching. Praying because, my goodness! that takes so much time and there are so many distractions. The bottom line is we are a lot like Jesus' disciples who got rebuked in the Garden of Gethsemane. Remember how Jesus went to pray and He came back an hour later and all the disciples were snoring on rocks and He said, hey, what's wrong with you guys, where's your prayer life. And we all say I know that's not an isolated problem. And it's because we lack self-discipline. Prayer is tough stuff. That's why the disciples asked Him one time, hey, teach us to pray. They weren't asking for a prayer manual, they were asking Him to tell them how to really attend to this ministry. How do you go out there and pray in the wilderness for an hour, I can't do that, how

do you do that, teach us to pray. That's the point and that's one of the core responsibilities of the elders, to really learn how to devote themselves to this ministry. Two is teaching, don't neglect the word of God, you can't go anywhere without the teaching of the word of God. What good are you going to do running around putting fires out when you can stand in one place and teach other people how to put fires out? So they said, hey, we don't have time to put fires out, it's eating up our prayer and study time and we're neglecting our main job.

So verse 3, **“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.** This is the genesis of the office of deacon. Deacon isn't a spiritual gift, it's an office and it's not really formalized at this point but the apostles, who are acting as the elders at this time, realize they need some help, so they take the disciples, the core group, and have them select a group of seven men. Notice, they did not choose women, they had women in the church but these offices have authority and you don't see any female apostles or female deacons. In coming weeks we're going to see over in 1 Timothy 3 that the deacon's wives serve alongside their husbands, not in a separate office but alongside of them and they have certain spiritual requirements they have to meet. And the reason is because of the nature of the duties the deacon has to carry out. Some of his duties are sensitive issues that deal with other women or children and it's important to be above reproach in all things so the wives come in real handy in those situations. But for now we are just pointing out that this is an office for men. God says the men are the leaders. And notice what the apostles tell them to do, **select**, that means “to skeptically analyze” and it means you thoroughly investigate these men, doctrinal evaluations; this is not a little decision. These guys are going to have to solve a church squabble and the problem is among the women. And how many of you men want to try to put your hand in that cookie jar? Yet somehow the men have to go in there and solve the women's problem. So obviously the first deacons were not selected on the basis of how well they could use a hammer. They need some heavy duty spiritual requirements, doctrinal requirements. Nor could they be men that are just going to go in and tip toe around, they're going to have to stand up to the women so they iron things out. They probably won't like that at first in our culture, but if this is ever going to really be solved these have to be real men with real solutions. Further we're going to find that once these men solve this

problem guess what happens next? They move on to a greater problem; namely, the problem of evangelizing the world. The apostles aren't going. Who goes? The deacons, these seven guys here start with a basic responsibility, to distribute funds and later they move on to a more prominent thing, evangelism. The apostles don't do that. It sounds strange but they have other responsibilities in Jerusalem. To pray and teach. And the fact is you just can't do everything and the apostles realized that. Was it a good thing to distribute funds to widows? Yes. Nothing wrong with doing that. But there is something wrong if it's causing you to neglect the word of God and prayer. There's no substitute for that, it has to be done. These other issues could be handled by others. So this was the plan.

Verse 5, **The statement found approval with the whole congregation;** and they choose the seven. It's not a big deal whether it's seven or not, if they'd had two widows you wouldn't need seven deacons, and if they'd had 500 they would have needed a lot more, the reason they chose seven is because that's how many it would take to be manageable.ⁱ And so let's look at these men. Now the interesting thing about these seven names is they are all Greek. So they are all Hellenistic Jews. There's not a single Hebrew native on this. That may sound odd to you, you'd think you want to have a balance, some Hellenistic some native. But no, something else is going on, God has a plan for these seven that goes beyond distributing funds. In v 3 they must be men of **good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.** They had to have the filling of the Holy Spirit plus skill, the word "wisdom" means "skill". They had to be very skilled men to step in there and administer this program fairly and justly, listen to complaints, sort out which complaints were good, valid, and which complaints were just somebody blowing smoke because they didn't feel good that day. This takes discernment and skill.

So they chose seven Hellenistic Jews. First **they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.** Luke, by the way when he uses this notice, uses the Holy Spirit plus a noun of quality, and that qualifies what he means when he says full of the Spirit, he means full of faith. "They chose Stephen," Stephen is going to turn into the first martyr of the Church, he is going to become a skilled evangelist and apologist, he gets his big chance later in Acts 6 and 7. But Stephen started his career distributing funds. He didn't just hop in one giant step and become the Church's first martyr.

Let's look at the next man's name; **Philip**. In Acts 8 we're going to find out how Philip was promoted. He started out distributing funds and he wound up as a great evangelist, he had daughters who had the gift of prophecy, he won one of the top black men to Christ in the world at that time, who was the treasurer of Ethiopia; he was a fantastic evangelist. He was a master at exegesis of Isaiah 53; he was a strong Bible student. Stephen and Philip prove to you, or should, that these men, before they were appointed, had hours and hours and hours and hours and hours of Bible teaching. Stephen didn't just get up and give the famous address he's going to give in chapter 7. That took years of training; same with Philip, he didn't get up and start going through the exegesis of Isaiah 53. That took years of preparation.

The next man, **Prochorus** we don't know much about except from what comes down through church history. This man volunteered to go into exile with John the apostle to the isle of Patmos and while he was there he became the personal stenographer for the apostle John. Apparently he sat there as John the apostle dictated the Book of Revelation and the fourth gospel,ⁱⁱ and he wrote it all down. So the text that you read in the Revelation and the Gospel of John was first written by Prochorus - again a man started with a simple job like distributing money and he wound up having the privilege of listening to John dictate these two books. His was martyred in Antioch.

And **Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas**, we know nothing from church history about these three. The last one we know something about, **Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch**. That's interesting; what was the city that was to become the missionary center of the Church? **Antioch**. Here is your contact already developing, right back here. The Holy Spirit moving in the middle of a widow's controversy to get the right man in the right place with the right background at the right time. And Nicolas as a proselyte was incorporated into the Church structure. Later Nicolas, because he became so outstanding, as often happens in history, had a group of apostates name their movement for him, called the Nicolaitans in Revelation 2:6, 15. Little is known about what this sect believed. But Nicolas apparently didn't have anything to do with that heresy; they just used his name to get a following.ⁱⁱⁱ

Verse 6, **And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them**. So they have made their seven choices, they bring them before the **apostles**, and what do they do? They

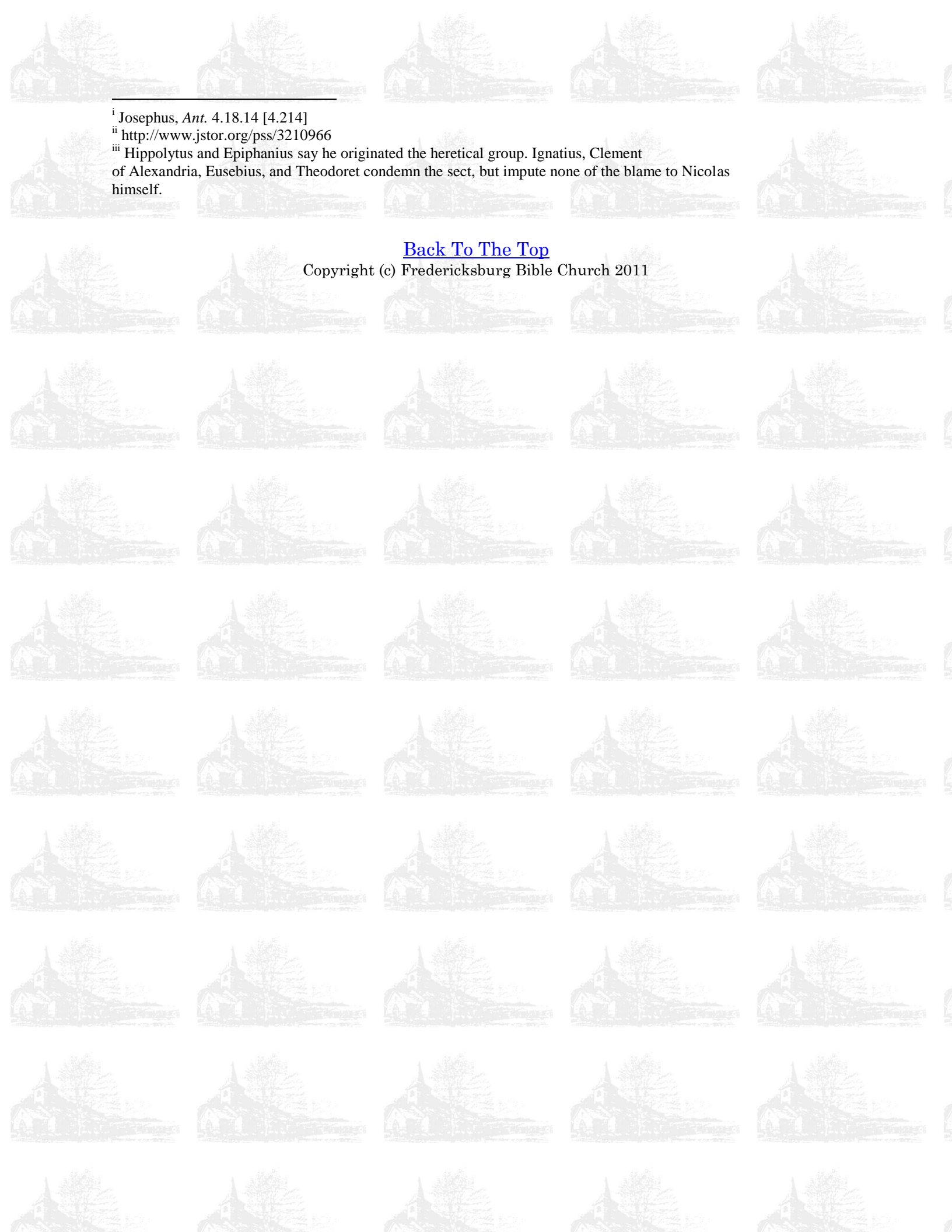
pray. Pray, pray, pray, you can't get enough of prayer, it's a very serious ministry, these men demonstrate how important it is because these men are apostles, and if apostles need to pray then we need it all the more. It demonstrates, hey Lord, we're not independent here, we need your guidance, we don't want to go this alone down here, this is your church, not mine and it manifests humble dependence. **And after praying they laid their hands on them.** They're not arresting them; they're transferring authority to them. It means we are giving them charge over certain tasks in the church and we want them to be recognized because one, you need to know who these men are, so it puts them out in the public eye, that's where they will be ministering. And two, they need your prayers, you can't pray for them if you don't know who they are. And three by the apostles laying hands on them it's obvious that the apostles approved of them and we're not going to have two groups operating independently of one another. We have the apostles, they oversee everything including the deacons but they're a team and the deacon's role on the team is to assist the apostles in ministering to the physical needs of the church so the apostles are freed up to minister to the spiritual needs of the church, to pray and to teach the word. So this laying on of hands bit is very important; it is putting the deacons in an official role.

And in v 7 we see the results. **The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem,** again, notice the result. The result is two-fold. One, **The word of God kept on spreading,** that's evangelism. The gospel was going out and more and more people were becoming believers, primarily through the diaconate as we discover in the following verses. Stephen and Philip, two Hellenistic Jews become examples of that in Acts 6-8. And the second result is **the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem,** notice inside Jerusalem. This is not the number of believers increasing, this is the number of disciples increasing, and not just a little bit, greatly increasing, observe the text. This is what happens when the elders do their job, a great increase in the number of trained believers. So it's a benefit to everybody if the deacons and elders get in their appropriate roles, it helps with evangelizing unbelievers so you get more and more believers and it helps with training believers, you get more and more and that can produce a change in the surrounding culture.

And notice, **and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.** That's one of the interesting results because now the gospel is making inroads in the highest level of Jewish society. We don't know how many of the priests, scholars estimate there were about 2,000 priests in Jerusalem at the time, who alternated duties in the temple. So **a great many of** them, could be several hundred of them and it sounds like they not only became believers but they became obedient to the new revelation given in Messiah, became disciples.

What I want to spend our last moments on is emphasizing that the reason the word of God was spreading and the number of disciples was increasing was, from the context, *good management*. The elders knew that the time they needed to pray and teach the word was more important than anything else. So they did not waste their time distributing funds. Instead they formed a diaconate of well-trained men to take care of it. This division of resources is crucial to evangelism and discipleship.

As to how they formed it let me summarize by making seven points we can distill from this passage. First, deacons came into existence before the elders. And the simple reason is because the apostles were serving as elders originally. Later as the church enlarged they appointed elders in all the churches and that will become the norm and standard for the church age. Second, it was the congregation of the disciples that selected the deacons. It was not the elders who did this and it was not every Tom, Dick and Harry on the church roll. It was the disciples, the believers in training, the core group because they knew best who could serve their needs fairly and justly. Third, it was the elders who outlined the procedure and qualifications that the core group would follow in selection; men of good reputation, full of the Spirit, full of wisdom. Those are all selection criteria that the elders outlined. Fourth, it is the elders who put the deacons in charge of the task after prayer and by a special ceremony of laying on of hands. Fifth, the contributions still came in to the apostles but the distribution of funds went out through the deacons. Sixth, this allowed the elders to allot their time to their number one priority, prayer and teaching of the word. That is so easily neglected, even for good causes, but it must not be. Seventh, and most importantly, the effects were large in the realm of evangelism and discipleship, more people became believers and these believers were being trained and the church grew.



ⁱ Josephus, *Ant.* 4.18.14 [4.214]

ⁱⁱ <http://www.jstor.org/pss/3210966>

ⁱⁱⁱ Hippolytus and Epiphanius say he originated the heretical group. Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Theodoret condemn the sect, but impute none of the blame to Nicolas himself.

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