

# THE BOOK OF ACTS

## ACTS 6:1-10 | LESSON SUMMARY

### Scripture vs Society

**ACTS 6:1**, "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution." (ESV)

- Hellenists vs Hebrews
  - It can be easy through a modern lens to read this as Gentile vs Jew or even Christianity vs Judaism
  - At this point, the church is entirely Jewish in composition
    - Hellenists = Grecian Jews or Jews who were heavily influenced by Greek culture, or simply born outside the Holy Land
    - Hebraic Jews = Jews born in the Holy Land, spoke Hebrew or Palestinian Aramaic, and preserved Jewish Culture.
- The implication is that the Hellenists are being treated as "less than"
  - This could easily result in a church split

**ACTS 6:2**, "And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." (ESV)

- Superiority?



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- Some scholars have latched onto this passage and suggested that “to serve tables” was beneath the disciples. This criticism, however, is narrow-minded.
  - Peter and the original eleven have more experience and spiritual maturity
  - The church required more diversity and a greater number of “deacons” in leadership

### Stephen

**ACTS 6:8**, “And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.” (ESV)

- One of the men chosen for leadership was Stephen: he will be distinguished for many reasons
  - Tensions are mounting between the different groups of Jews
  - Freedmen = captive Jews brought to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C.
    - Cyrene = chief city in Libya
    - Alexandria = second most important city in the Roman Empire
    - Cilicia & Asia = the western part of Asia Minor



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- Rumors spread to undermine Stephen
  - “But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.” (Acts 6:10, ESV)

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Luke Strelan, *Strange Acts; Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles*, Randall Price, *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archeology*, *The Holman Bible Atlas*

