

## ACTS 6

### *Stephen Stirs Up the Sanhedrin<sup>1</sup>*

#### *Seven Chosen to Resolve a Hellenist-Hebrew Dispute*

1 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists (Ἑλληνιστῶν) complained against the Hebrews (Ἑβραίους) because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. 2 And the Twelve<sup>2</sup> called together the large number of the disciples (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν)<sup>3</sup> and said,

It is not right that we should neglect the word (λόγος) of God to keep serving (διακονέω, pres.) meals (τραπέζαις). 3 Therefore, brothers (ἀδελφοί), select from among yourselves seven men<sup>4</sup> of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, 4 while we for our part will devote (προσκαρτερέω) ourselves to prayer (προσευχή) and to the ministry of the word (τῆ διακονία τοῦ λόγου).

5 What they said pleased the whole community. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 They had these men stand before the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 The message (λόγος) of God continued to spread. The number of the disciples (μαθητῶν) increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests (ἱερέων) were obeying (ὕπακούω, imperf.) the faith (πίστις).

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8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people (λαός). 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom (σοφία) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα) with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say,

We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

12 They stirred up (συγκινέω) the people (λαός) as well as the elders (πρεσβυτέρους) and the scribes (γραμματεῖς). Then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the Sanhedrin (συνέδριον). 13 They set up false witnesses (μάρτυρας ψευδεῖς) who said,

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<sup>1</sup> Here begins a second wave of witnessing, primarily by Hellenistic Jews who were not apostles (Stephen, Philip, Saul, Barnabas), but also by apostles (Peter, John).

<sup>2</sup> Matthias is one of them.

<sup>3</sup> Is every believer a disciple? Or are the disciples the leaders among the believers?

<sup>4</sup> Not women.

This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law (νόμος). 14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy (καταλύω) this place and will change (ἀλλάσσω) the customs (ἔθη) that Moses handed over (παραδίδωμι) to us.

15 And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel (ἄγγελος).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Just as Moses' face was like an angel, so Stephen's face is like an angel.

### ***Biblical Worldview***

1. The term disciple likely refers to church leaders, not all believers (Ac 6:1, 2, 7).
  - a. See *Discipleship*.
2. Conflicts must be resolved in local churches for unity to continue (Ac 6:1).
3. Preaching and teaching of the Bible must not be neglected in the local church (Ac 6:2).
  - a. Some in the church must be solely focused on prayer, preaching, and teaching (Ac 6:4).
  - b. Prayer, preaching, and teaching take precedence over serving meals (Ac 6:4).
4. Many men of good standing, full of the Spirit and wisdom, are needed in our churches (Ac 6:3).

*Notes*