



## Tell Me the Story of Jesus

## Lesson 30 – Acts 06

### People — Who is involved?

*Widows were being cared for by the church.  
Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon,  
Parmentas, and Nicolas were chosen to  
oversee caring for them.  
Jews from the Synagogue of Freedmen accused  
Stephen of blasphemy in the Council.*

### Places — Where does it happen?

*Jerusalem*

### Pearls — What information will help me to understand better?

- Vs 1 – The “Hebrews” were Jews who lived in Israel and followed the Hebrew language and customs. The “Hellenists” or “Grecians” lived elsewhere, spoke Greek, and imitated Greek customs. The complaint seems to have been that there was prejudice in dealing with ethnicity.*
- Vs 2 – Notice, the apostles’ primary mission was to preach the gospel. While providing for both these groups of Jewish widows was important, they should not be distracted from primary duties.*
- Vs 3 – They called the entire church together and asked them to select seven committed men.*
- Vs 5 – The men chosen all seem to have had Hellenist names. One was a proselyte. Wisely, the care of Hellenist widows appears to have been placed in hands of those who would understand best. Stephen (first martyr) and Philip (preacher to Samaria) are important to the continuing story.*
- Vs 6 – “Laid hands on them” probably means that the apostles appointed & authorized their work.*
- Vs 7 – Do not overlook that many Jewish priests became Christians.*
- Vs 9 – The “Synagogue of the Freedmen” was perhaps populated by liberated Jewish slaves (libertini). Many Jews enslaved by Pompey in Rome (61-63 B.C.) gained freedom and left Rome. These Freedmen are identified with Cyrene (northern Africa), Alexandria (Egypt), Cilicia, & Asia. They are apparently radical, outspoken Jews who challenged Stephen. The “Theodotus Inscription” found by Raymond Weill in 1914 is thought by some scholars to have described a function of this synagogue to provide for itinerate freedmen Jews in Jerusalem.*
- Vs 11 – Their methods are corrupt. They suborned witness to lie about Stephen.*
- Vs 13 – Further evidence of their corruption.*
- Vs 15 – The council is the same court that had previously tried Peter and John.*

### Perspectives — What may I learn from this chapter?

- 1. The church took immediate measures to correct any perceived inequities.*
- 2. Men chosen to do God’s work should have exemplary character.*
- 3. Christians are often slandered and made victims of corrupt people with impure motives.*