

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

ACTS 6

Acts 6

Acts 6 opens with a division in the young church in Jerusalem. Let's identify what and who were the problems. First, the context. In Acts chapter 2, when the church was formed in Jerusalem, the city was perhaps ten times the size of Jerusalem on normal days when it was not during the "appointed times" that God had mandated. Jewish people were scattered around the Greco-Roman world due to the dispersions that took place between the fall of the Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians and 586 B.C. as Judah was taken to Mesopotamia at the hands of the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

In the Torah, the LORD had commanded that three times each year, each person or family journey to the central worship center during the days of Passover, Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles). Tens of thousands of Jews from around the world would come to Jerusalem to fulfill the commandment. Some could only come once in a lifetime because of costs, travel, and health. Those who lived in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, or another close Roman province would have spoken Aramaic/Hebrew. Those who lived outside Fertile Crescent would have spoken Koine Greek, the universal trade language of the day. Those groupings were not only about the language they spoke but also about culture, their habits, diets, and the like. The Apostles and most of the core leadership in the Jerusalem church from the Levant, modern Israel, and

immediate neighbors would have been Aramaic/Hebrew speaking in their mother tongue. Still, they also would have had the mannerisms and habits of those in and around Jerusalem. Those from elsewhere would have grouped, as they would have a Greek language and lifestyle.

The stage was set for controversy. The Greek language and lifestyle group of widows cared for by the rest of the church noticed a difference in the care given to the "Natives" than to the "Outsiders" by the Apostles, or this is at least the complaint. The Apostles took to heart the complaint and, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, gave a solution to the problem. They wisely said, You choose any qualified men (The apostles gave the qualifications) and bring them to us, and we will provide them with their assignments to care for and **serve** (deacon) all of you sweet widows. When the qualifications were given and the men were chosen, everyone chosen had a **Greek name!** All the first "deacons" were people who shared the same language and lifestyle, the same culture, the same foods, and the same habits. The reality is we all are drawn to people like us. We trust and understand them more, and they know the strain of relationships. A problem was solved, and later, the function of those chosen and who served as the early servants (Greek- deacon) was brought into the church as an office.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, please help us turn to You for wisdom and instruction on how to solve problems and find solutions, especially as it relates to our relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Amen