



A SERVANT, A SERMON, A STONE, & A SEED (PART 2) • ACTS 6:8-8:3

In Acts 7:54-8:3, Stephen becomes the first martyr of the Christian church. Enraged by his message, the religious leaders of Israel stone him and widespread persecution sweeps through the infant church. Yet, in the darkness of these moments, light breaks through clouds. This text shines the first light of Scripture on Saul (who later becomes Paul) and the church is said to scatter – taking with it the good news of the gospel. As we look at part two of this account of Stephen’s life and death, we will focus our attention first on *The Stoning of a Messenger*, and second, *The Seed a Martyr*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Stephen’s vision, why do you think Jesus is standing (as opposed to seated on the throne)?
2. Now look at Stephen’s two brief prayers during his execution. What does he pray for? How do these prayers echo Jesus’s prayers on the cross?
3. Have you known God to be always near and always real in your own walk with him?
4. Consider Stephen’s suffering. What implications does this have for you and me as we face our own trials and sufferings?
5. In what ways did Stephen’s death act as a seed (in terms of Paul, persecution, and gospel advancement)?

PRAY: Praise God for those martyrs of the Christian faith who have gone before us. Ask that the Lord would strengthen your faith, especially in the face of persecution. And pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to suffer well and to keep your eyes on Jesus even in your greatest difficulty.