

7. These men were chosen by the community then “*presented*” to the apostles. What did the apostles do as they were “*presented*”? (Acts 6:6)

8. What was the historic significance of this action? (For background see Numbers 27:12, 13, 15-17; use verses 22 & 23 for your answer.)

A Believer named Stephen - Acts 6:8-6:15

Stephen had not been part of The Twelve and it is unclear if Stephen knew Jesus personally or if he became a believer through the apostles’ teaching. If it was through the apostles, then Stephen became the first example of a “second” generation believer.

9. What was Stephen doing among the people? (Acts 6:8)

10. Luke said that “*opposition arose.*” Who were the ones opposed to the apostles and the community of believers? (Acts 6:9a)

11. “*These men began arguing with Stephen.*” How did Stephen handle this argument? (Acts 6:10)

12. What did the opposition do next?
 - Acts 6:11

 - Acts 6:12a

 - Acts 6:12b

 - Acts 6:13

- Acts 6:14

13. The whole assembly was looking "*intently at Stephen.*" Why were they doing that? (Acts 6:15)

Stephen before the Sanhedrin - Acts 7:1-60

14. The high priest, Caiaphas, asked Stephen if the charges were true. Stephen addressed the assembly as "*brothers and fathers*". What do you think Stephen was trying to convey by addressing the members of the Sanhedrin in this manner? (Acts 7:2a)

15. His answer was a sermon in the form of a history lesson of the nation of Israel. He began with Abraham, considered the father of the Jews. What did he say about Abraham? (Acts 7:2b-4)

16. Stephen moved through their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was Jacob whose twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel; Stephen called them the twelve patriarchs of the nation. He continued with the story of Moses; what does he emphasize about the relationship between Moses and the Israelites? (Acts 7:35a)

17. How did Stephen say that God verified Moses as His servant? (Acts 7:36)

18. "*This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.'*" What did Stephen say about God's words to Moses? (Acts 7:38b)

19. But who refused to obey? (Acts 7:39a)

- What did they do? (Acts 7:39b)

20. In spite of Israel’s lack of faith, God remained in their presence - - first in the Tabernacle and then in “the house” built for Him by Solomon. Before we conclude the trial of Stephen, review what the charges against him were. (Acts 6:13 & 14)
21. Stephen reminded them, “The Most High does not live in houses made by men.” (Acts 7:48) Then, looking straight at the most powerful leaders in Israel, Stephen turned the accusation back on them. Prefaced by the word “you,” fill in the table below what Stephen said about these leaders:

Acts 7:51a	YOU	
Acts 7:51b		
Acts 7:51c		
Acts 7:52		
Acts 7:53		

22. How well did Stephen’s sermon go over with the men of the Sanhedrin? (Acts 7:54)
23. Stephen did not seem to notice their reaction because God, through the Holy Spirit, was giving Stephen a glimpse into heaven. What was he seeing? (Acts 7:55)
24. Assuming they also could see, he cried out for them to “Look!” What did he describe to them? (Acts 7:56)
25. This was too much for these leaders to take. “They covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.” (Acts 7:57–58a) Where did Luke say those witnesses who were stoning Stephen laid their coats? (Acts 7:58b)
26. While they were stoning Stephen, what was Stephen doing? (Acts 7:59)

27. What were the final words of Stephen, the first disciple to die because of his association with the name of Jesus of Nazareth? (Acts 7:60)

Stephen was a true disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. Like his Lord, he died at the hands of those religious leaders who did not want to hear or believe that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, the Righteous One of God. The final words of Stephen closely mirrored those of his Savior. As Jesus was about to die, he cried out, *"Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."* (Luke 24:32) And then, with a loud voice said, *"Father into your hands I commit my Spirit."* (Luke 24:46) *"It Is Finished!"* (John 19:30)

Life in the community of believers (now called the church) changed dramatically after the death of Stephen. In large measure it was due to one particular man named "Saul."

In the Word continues the next study year with the story of Saul and the persecuted church.