

# Church – The Beginnings, Part 21

## Stephen – the First Martyr of the Church – Part 2

Acts 6:8–8:4 | 03/19/2017

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### Links to Our Current Teaching Series and Previous Teachings:

Current Series: Church, The Beginnings → [NLFJI.org/ACTS](http://NLFJI.org/ACTS)

Sections in Acts up to this point and a little peek ahead (similar to “episodes”):

Acts 1 → Transition from the Gospels to just before the day of Pentecost

Acts 2 → The Day of Pentecost, Peter’s Preaching, and the forming of the first church of Jesus Christ

Acts 3:1 – 4:31 → The Healing in the Temple (Miracles), More Gospel Preaching, More folks saved, Persecution and More Preaching of the Gospel

Acts 4:32 – 5:42 → Community of Faith, Finances, God’s Judgment against Ananias & Sapphira, Gospel Preaching, Miracles, Persecution, More Preaching, Community of Faith

Acts 6:1 thru 8:4 → Church Leadership Challenges, the Testimony & Martyrdom of Stephen, Scattering

### Stephen – the First Martyr of the Church – Part 2

1. Stephen – one of the 7 Deacons from Acts 6:1-7 (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit)  
He’s a Leader – a Servant Team Leader – leading other servants (also see 1 Timothy 3:8-13)  
( of the Leaders of 1000’s, 100’s, 50’s and 10’s )

He was being faithful in his service to the Widows, leading his team. → FAITHFUL

He was also being used by God toward those OUTSIDE of the Body, the Lost → Obedient  
God WILL use anyone who is sold-out to Jesus Christ, fully surrendered to Christ.

→ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people (vs 8)

2. Opposition: Synagogue of the Freedmen – ( for more research: <http://bit.ly/SynFreedActs6> )  
This opposition “arose” – so it was not overnight, but it built up to the point of full force.

Opposition, Persecution and even Martyrdom are Par for the Course: Predicted & Expected  
Reference: Matthew 5:10-12; 10:16-23; 2 Timothy 3:12

We will NOT suffer any form of persecution if we HIDE out and never say anything for Christ’s sake. We will experience opposition ONLY WHEN we Speak Out, WHEN we Spread the Gospel, when we Stand Up for God’s Righteousness ... and that is what we see here in Acts 6:8 – 8:4

Synagogue of the Freedmen? ( for more research, go to: <http://bit.ly/SynFreedActs6> )

3. KNOW THE WORD OF GOD:  
→ Stephen KNEW the Word of God  
→ Stephen Memorized large portions of Scripture (Acts 7 – basically the whole O.T.)

God is Faithful to His Promises – The Holy Spirit

→ will Lead us into all the Truth (read John chptrs 14-16)

→ will Speak through us when we are Persecuted (Matt. 10:16-23)

4. Why Persecution? What is the Purpose of Persecution?
  - a. It was Promised – Matthew 5:10-12; 10:16-23; 2 Timothy 3:12  
→ sheep among wolves – Be gentle as doves, wise as serpents
  - b. It was used by God to Scatter His People – as they were scattered, they Spread the WORD: Acts 8:4 - Therefore those who were SCATTERED went everywhere PREACHING the WORD

This story of the impact of Stephen’s LIFE and The Persecution that Arose because of His Witness and Martyrdom continues on in the rest of Acts 8 & Acts 11:19-26

**Acts 11:19-26** - <sup>19</sup> Now those who were **SCATTERED** after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and **Antioch**, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. <sup>20</sup> **BUT** some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to **Antioch**, spoke to the **Hellenists** (*i.e.: Greek Speaking Gentiles*), preaching the **LORD Jesus**. <sup>21</sup> And the hand of the **LORD** was with them, and a **great number believed and turned to the LORD**.

<sup>22</sup> Then news of these things came to the **ears of the church in Jerusalem**, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as **Antioch**. <sup>23</sup> When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and **encouraged them** all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the **LORD**. <sup>24</sup> For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a **great many people were added to the LORD**.

<sup>25</sup> Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. <sup>26</sup> And when he had found him, he brought him to **Antioch**. So, it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and **taught** a great many people. **And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch**.

**2 Timothy 3:12** - Yes, and **ALL** who desire to live godly in **Christ Jesus** will suffer persecution.

**Matthew 5:10-12** - **Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for **My sake**. (12) Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Matthew 10:16-20** - Behold, I send you out as **sheep in the midst of wolves**. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. (17) But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. (18) You will be brought before governors and kings for **My sake**, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. (19) But when they deliver you up, **do not worry about how or what you should speak**. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; (20) for it is not you who speak, but the **Spirit of your Father** who speaks in you.

**John 16:1-3** - These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. (2) They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, **the time is coming** that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. (3) And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. (4) But these things I have told you, **so that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them**.

**John 16:13** - "... when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come

**John 14:26** - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in **My name**, **He will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.