

The first Christian martyr

Acts 6:8 - 8:1

Slides from John Percival's sermon at the morning service
Sunday 1st March 2026

“I just think that for the sake of peace in the world, interpersonal and international, the whole tired martyrdom discourse needs to go.”

Devi Dillard-Wright



1. Stephen – godly but opposed (6v8-15)

Acts 6v14

“We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

2. The Sanhedrin – religious but wrong (7v1-53)

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- Don't limit God

Matthew 12v6

Something greater than the temple is now here.

“In none of these epochs was God’s presence tied to a particular place. On the contrary, the God of the Old Testament was the living God, a God on the move and on the march, who was always calling his people to new adventures and always accompanying them and directing them as they went.”



John Stott

2. The Sanhedrin – religious but wrong (7v1-53)

- Don't limit God
- Get on board with God's purposes

Acts 7v25

Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

Acts 7v51-53

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him — ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

3. Jesus – ready and waiting (7v54-8v1)

Acts 7v55

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

3. Jesus – ready and waiting (7v54-8v1)

- A warm welcome
- A true disciple
- The providence of God