

Acts 8:1-3 notes Saul was present and how the execution began a wave of \_\_\_\_\_ . After this, Saul was sent to \_\_\_\_\_ with orders to destroy the Christian community there. He left Jerusalem with officers of the temple for the 150-mile walk to this city.

Saul, the Pharisee or “separated one,” walked alone during the seven-day journey, allowing time for contemplation and meditation. Over the miles he must have thought of \_\_\_\_\_. Why had his face lit up so brightly when he was killed? Why did he ask his Lord to forgive his executioners for taking his life? As he walked, he began to entertain the questions: “Could it be that Stephen was right? Could it be that Jesus is the Messiah?”

Saul would soon discover the answer to this question, as we shall see in the next episode.

**Personal Application**

Where was Jesus in Stephen’s greatest time of need? \_\_\_\_\_

Stephen died without knowing of Saul’s subsequent conversion. Why should this bring us hope and encouragement to remain faithful in our witness? \_\_\_\_\_

What comfort does this story bring about praying for others? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Personal Application**

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**Standing at the right hand of the father and watching what was happening.**

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Seven days would be a very fast trip.

**Application Notes**

1. Where was Jesus?

Jesus was standing at the right hand of the Father, watching what was happening.

And Jesus is just as close today when we go through problems and difficulties.

From our modern perspective we can see how Jesus supported Stephen at his death. But remember, this opened a wave of persecution that caused the believers living in Jerusalem to flee from their homes.

This was very unpleasant - but Jesus was present, and the Good News is that He is present with all believers even when we go through difficult times!

Application questions can often be intimidating.

The Leader’s Manual provides Tony’s suggestions on how to use the application questions.

Carefully and prayerfully think through the Personal Application questions and allow the participants to answer before sharing your thoughts.

2. Stephen died without knowing....  
This is incredible! Can you imagine when Stephen meets Paul in heaven? “What are you doing here?”

And Paul says, “Stephen, let’s go for a long walk. I have a lot to tell you about.” Stephen never knew the powerful impact of his witness upon Saul. The last time he saw Saul, the persecutor was holding the garments of the men taking his life. We can’t monitor the effectiveness of our witness by the way people react to us.

3. What comfort does this story bring about praying for others?  
We never know the impact of our witness upon our children or grandchildren, the people we work with, or....

Our call is to be faithful, as Stephen was. I want to be faithful, as he was—don’t you?