



# CHRISTMAS

## Saint Stephen

**December 26**



The story of the first Christian martyr, who worked “great wonders” and had “the face of an angel,” is told in Acts chapters 6-7. Likely a Greek-speaking Jew, Stephen was among seven deacons chosen to help the widows in Jerusalem’s Hellenistic community, who were being neglected. But the wonders he worked rattled local Jewish leaders. Witnesses at his trial before the Sanhedrin gave false testimony, and Stephen defended himself with a stirring speech recalling the long history of Israel’s relationship with God and calling his listeners “stiff-necked people . . .

just like your ancestors.” Saul, later the Apostle Paul, witnessed the stoning of Stephen and heard him pray for his persecutors. He is the patron of bricklayers, stonemasons, and numerous individual Christian churches.

