

Acts 8:1-8

And Saul approved of their killing him.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Philip in Samaria

4. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8. So there was great joy in that city.

1. Persecution happens.v1b.

Notice the persecution happens TO the church.

Remember that church as a concept means the gathered people of God.

Too often we see persecution as individual as if we're are all alone in it. Rest assured that persecution is against us because we are God's people, not because we are people in general. If we didn't claim to be Christian then there wouldn't be any tension.

Christianity is a worldview that creates tension. Even though we are to love, even though we are to care for others, even though we are to live good lives - that is intimidating.

2. Notice God uses the situation v1b and v4

"All except the apostles were scattered"

." Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went"

Actually one of the big reasons the gospel spread so effectively was this scattering.

They preached every where! Remember what I said about the word preach a few months ago.

It is preach,proclaim same thing.

It's not a critical mass thing. Look at the whole book of Acts.

The apostles and disciples talked up Jesus everywhere. In groups, in goal, in the market place and crikey even in the temple.

I suppose we have got to look at that from a here and now perspective.

Do we proclaim What Jesus said and did wherever we go?

The logical answer is of course not.

The next question is why not?

3. Philip is the example. V5-7

5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

Notice the example.

- A. Philip went to Samaria
- B. Preached
- C. Used miracles as sermon illustrations (most miracles in Acts are sermon illustrations)
- D. After seeing miracles they listened even more.
- E. The Holy Spirit affected ministry. (Deliverance, healing)
- F. Changed culture.

Note: persecution changed culture but God used it to change culture!