

## PERSECUTION SCATTERS THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL

(Acts 8:1-4)

### I. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (1-2)

### II. THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (3-7)

### III. THE CHURCH'S WITNESS FOR CHRIST IN JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND SYRIA (8-12)

#### A. The Persecuted Church is on the Move

1. The city of Jerusalem, which has dominated the story up to this point, begins to settle into the \_\_\_\_\_, illustrating the truth that opportunity \_\_\_\_\_ is opportunity \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. Saul's \_\_\_\_\_ (Gk. *syneudokōn*) of Stephen's execution reveals his commitment to the extermination of Jesus' disciples, which he proceeded to implement \_\_\_\_\_. (v. 1a)
  
3. "At that time a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem..."
  - a. From the human side this was a \_\_\_\_\_ turn of events, which was essentially a reign of \_\_\_\_\_ on Christians. (v. 1b)
  
  - b. From the divine side this opposition of the enemy helped \_\_\_\_\_ the Church from becoming a Jewish 'sect' and forced them to migrate, \_\_\_\_\_ them to \_\_\_\_\_ the Great Commission of Acts 1:8. (v. 1c, cf. Gen. 50:19-20; Rom. 8:28)
  
- \* While a large majority of believers from the church in Jerusalem scattered, who remained? (v. 1d)
  
4. Faithful men gave Stephen a \_\_\_\_\_ and gave a loud, \_\_\_\_\_ mourning over his passing. (v. 2)

5. Saul of Tarsus was a brilliant student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); and in his own words...
- a. *"I advanced in Judaism \_\_\_\_\_ many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being \_\_\_\_\_ exceedingly zealous for the \_\_\_\_\_ of my fathers."* (Gal. 1:14)
  - b. *"circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a \_\_\_\_\_."* (Philip. 3:5)
  - c. *"concerning \_\_\_\_\_, persecuting the church; concerning the \_\_\_\_\_ which is in the law, \_\_\_\_\_."* (Philip. 3:6)
6. Remarkably, this same Saul who consented to Stephen's death would \_\_\_\_\_ far \_\_\_\_\_ for the cause of Christ than Stephen did. (Acts 9:16; 14:19-20; 2 Cor. 11:23-28)
7. Before he was saved, Saul was not content to merely harass the Christians in Jerusalem, instead...
- a. He made *"havoc (Gk. lumainomai) of the church,"* meaning, he \_\_\_\_\_ it, devastated it, tried to utterly \_\_\_\_\_ it. (v. 3a, cf. Acts 26:11)
  - b. He actually barged into homes and \_\_\_\_\_ both men and women, sending them to \_\_\_\_\_. (v. 3b, cf. Acts 22:4)
8. Those believers who were scattered aboard did \_\_\_\_\_ cower in fear, but instead they \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gospel everywhere they went! (v. 4)

\* What can you learn and personally apply from this passage?