

Persecution & Problems that require Standing Fast

Mission Wins

Acts 8-9

The International Mission Board Missionaries are also resilient!

The Pandemic Does Not Stop Missions



When faith meets barriers, Faith Wins!

Pandemics and legal proceedings can't stop the mission of the church!

For two whole years while under house arrest in Rome awaiting trial, *Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!* Acts 28:31

8:1-3 Persecution – Trouble in the House

Saul comes on the scene at the stoning of Stephen. He is aligned with others who are bent on destruction of the church. Satan attacks in many ways. According to 1 Timothy 1:12-17 it is the first of many acts of persecution. There Paul speaks of his "blasphemy, and arrogance", and being the worst of all sinners.

8:4-8 Philip the Evangelist – God's Answer for Troubles

"So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the Word."

The church went on!! Their crisis became an opportunity. God blessed with growth!



8:9-25 Discernment for dealing with Conniving and Deceptive People

Simon, like Ananias & Saphira, sought to profit from religion. The Bible warns many times of those who would appear to be faithful, but were not gracious servants and indeed were selfish, greedy and false in faith, causing much damage. You can't buy grace nor the gifts

of the Holy Spirit. We also see the results of incomplete discipleship in v. 15-16. Discernment brought correction to the deception.

Matthew 7:15 *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*

Philippians 3:18-19 *For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.*

Titus 1:7, 10-11 *As an overseer of God's household, he must be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a bully, not greedy for money, ...¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party. ¹¹It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn't in order to get money dishonestly.*

2 Peter 2:1 *There were indeed false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 *For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

8:4, 25 The traveling preachers went to Samaria. Acts 1:8 is being fulfilled ...*Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria...* God is at working growing His church in an expanding mission field.

8:15-17 The giving of the Holy Spirit takes place in various ways throughout Acts 2:1-4 Pentecost; 8:15-17 laying on of hands; 10:44-48 Holy Spirit given prior to baptism; 11:15-17 after baptism; Apollos received the H.S by the laying on of hands, 19:1-7. It is God's gift that is given in response to faith in Christ.

Peter made his first use of "the keys of the kingdom" at Pentecost, when he opened the door of faith to the Jews; he uses them for the second time here when he imparts the Spirit to the Samaritans. Until now, people had to be baptized to receive the Spirit; but now the gift was given through the laying on of hands (see Paul's case in 9:17). Those who teach that Peter's command in Acts 2:38 is God's demand today have a hard time explaining how these Samaritan believers received the Spirit several days after they were baptized. When we reach Acts 10—concerning the Gentiles—we have God's order for today: hear the Word, believe, receive the Spirit, be baptized.¹

8:26-40 Evangelism produces a new Evangelist to Ethiopia

From one eager to help himself, we move to a humble man who asks for help to understand God's Word. One sought to buy God's favor and gift, and the other receives it freely by grace through faith. The eunuch came to worship God in Jerusalem, and was blessed. Dt. 23:1 said that a eunuch would not be welcome in the assembly of God. One more barrier crossed.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament](#) (p. 297). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

In this story we hear how God was at work among the apostles, leading them by angels (:26) and the Spirit (:29;39). God was at work among them in mighty ways.

9:1-9 Prosecutor & Persecutor to Proclaimer of the Gospel to Gentiles

We have seen previous destruction and deception as attacks upon the Way (:2), and it now continues with threatening declarations from Saul. But, the attacks against the church are about to be overcome by the demonstration of God's power to save even the worst. The one who roared like a lion (1 Peter 5:8) met the Lion of Judah = who is Jesus, the resurrected Son of God. Meeting the resurrected Jesus changes everything for Saul.

This event is a clear record of the saving power of God. There is a great reversal. (cf. :21-22) Saul is shown the grace of God and all his zeal and passion is now unleashed under the ordination and commissioning of the Holy Spirit. (Saul's testimony is repeated in 22:6-21; 26:12-23)

In chapter 8 we have seen the leading of an angel and the Spirit in Philip's life. Now, Saul is confronted directly by Jesus, and this bully crumbles before His presence.

9:10-19a Mean spirited to Missionary

Saul was humbled by being in the presence of Jesus' Holiness and Majesty.

From this event forward Paul had trouble physically with his eyes (Galatian 4:15, 6:11). Others wrote for Him, but he had great insight into God's word and given it to others through his preaching, teaching and writing.

Ananias was a man of great faith and was used to be in on the healing, ordaining and commissioning of Saul to the Gentiles.

Notice the pattern of Saul's salvation: saved, Holy Spirit filled (:18), & baptized :19).

9:19b-29 Grace Extended to Saul

1. In Damascus (:19b-25) Three years – Galatians 1:18

Preached in the synagogues that Jesus is the "Son of God". It is recorded in Matthew 26:63-64 & Luke 1:70-71, that Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin for claiming to be the "Son of God." Saul would have known about it. NOW, he proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God. Saul also becomes what we call an apologist or defender of the faith. As it was said in 6:10 of Stephen, "they could not stand up to him." Saul, who had condoned Stephen's death, now takes his place. Defense of the gospel is demonstrated and called for in Acts 9:9; 17:17; Phil.1:7, 1 Peter 3:15 & Jude 1:3.

2. In Jerusalem (:26-29) - Galatians 1:19; 2:9

Barnabas gave Saul credibility with the church in Jerusalem. He is opposed, a second time Saul is escorted out of town secretly 9:25 & 30. Peter, Stephen & Saul paid a price willingly to proclaim the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus.

9:31 The Church Continues to Grow

The mission goes on. The church grows. The church is strengthened and encouraged to by the Holy Spirit and God gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:6-7. They were faithful co-laborers and God grew His church (1 Cor. 3:8-9, Eph. 2:21) as Jesus said He would in Matt. 16:18.

Persecution doesn't win. **Preaching** the gospel changes the world.