



Acts 8:1-13 | Session 19 | The Assembly is Scattered and the Kingdom Gospel Spreads

Acts 8:1-4 | The Assembly is Scattered, Saul Persecutes

Verse 1—

And Saul was consenting unto his death. The Greek word **consenting** carries the idea of pleasure. Saul was taking pleasure **unto** the **death** of Stephen. But also, it may indicate that Saul had influence even at that time and was part of the decision to kill Stephen. If the Sanhedrin voted, we are not told, but if they did, Saul may have been part of the voting body. There are now multitudes, **which was at Jerusalem**, who are a part of the Jewish assembly (translated church in the English Bible) and all of them are suffering **great persecution**. **Great** is the Greek word, *meGas*. **And they were all scattered abroad.** There were no more large assemblies and in fact, we never see large this again in the New Testament. **They were scattered...throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria.** This is the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus's prophecy of Acts 1:8. **Except the apostles, the apostles will soon follow.**

Verse 2—

Devout men (Acts 2:5), those who were waiting in expectation for the Messiah to come. **Made great lamentation**, that is, wailing and beating their breasts as a sign of grief.

Verse 3—

As for Saul (We won't hear any more about Saul until chapter 9), in contrast to the devout men, **he made havoc** (destroyed or dissolved) **the (church) ekklesia**. **Haling** (early form of the word *hauling*) **men**, that is, dragging them out of **every house**. It would have been common knowledge as to the houses in which they met. **Men and women were committed to prison.**

Verse 4—

They that were scattered...went every where preaching. The Greek word for **preaching** is *evangelizo* and is translated as preach, bring good tidings. Therefore, *preaching* they were spreading was **the word** of the kingdom of God—the same as Jesus taught the apostles for forty days after his resurrection (See Acts 1:3). This is the message they were commanded to teach—it is not **the word** of salvation by grace through faith and not of yourselves. The kingdom gospel was consistent: Repent (of sins and believe Jesus is the Messiah), be baptized, and receive the forgiveness of sins. It was a works message. And the part of that message that brought joy to the people was if they did those things, Jesus Messiah, the one they put to death, would forgive them, and would return to set up his kingdom.

Acts 8:5-13 | The Gospel Spreads

Verse 5-8—

The ekklesia has been scattered and are preaching the word, now we read of the first apostle to go out and do the same. **Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria.** Samaria is north of Jerusalem, but in Scripture everything is **down** from Jerusalem. **And preached Christ unto them.** Philip preached the same message as in verse 4. Just like what happened in Jerusalem when the kingdom gospel was preached, in Samaria, **the people**



with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake. The Samaritans were willing to hear the truth. Jesus had the same kind of experience with the Samaritans in John 4, which is perhaps why they believed so readily. **Phillip's** spoken message was supplemented with **miracles**. The miracles validated the message, since Jews sought after a sign (e.g., Matthews 12:38, 39; 16:4, etc.). Jesus is being proclaimed as the national Messiah of Israel rather than as personal Savior. Up to this point the good news of salvation by grace through faith has still not been taught.

Verse 9-11—

We see a contrast with Philip in the **certain man, called Simon:**

Simon The Sorcerer

Works wonders (8:11)

Draws crowds (8:9–10)

“Heeded” (8:10–11)

Simon is “great power” (8:10)

Simon “bewitches” the Samaritans with
His claims and magic (8:9,11)

Philip The Evangelist

Works wonders (8:6, 13)

Draws crowds (8:6–7)

“Heeded” (8:6)

Philip performs “great powers” (8:13)

Philip’s miracles cause wonderment by
Simon (8:13).

As God has worked miracles, so has Satan. Remember Moses and the magicians in the book of Exodus (See Exodus 7ff).

Miracles in and of themselves should not persuade us.

Verse 12—

It is now revealed what *gospel* Philip was preaching; **the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ** (as the King). This gospel required **belief and baptism**.

Verse 13—

Simon believed also. Later in verse 20 Simon will be rebuked by Peter.