



## **The Expansion of the Church through Persecution (Acts 8:1-25)**

### *Study Notes Handout: Week Fifteen*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria... Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went. (Acts 8:1, 4)*

*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. - Tertullian (155 - 222 AD)*

1. Luke's Purpose in Writing (Acts 1:1 - 8)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Stephen's Purpose in Testifying (Acts 6:8 - 7:53)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. God's Purposes in Stephen's Martyrdom (Acts 7:54 - 8:4)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Church's Purpose wherever we are Scattered (Acts 8:4 - 25)

#### Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- i. What was Stephen (falsely) accused of? How might similar accusations be leveled against God-fearing followers of Christ today? (cf. Acts 6:11 - 14)
  
- ii. What was Stephen trying to accomplish in his response to the accusations, especially with the lengthy Old Testament survey? (cf. Acts 7:1 - 53)
  
- iii. How did God use persecution to accomplish His purposes in the early Church? What might have happened if it had not come? Is persecution necessary for faith to be vibrant? (cf. Acts 8:1 - 4)
  
- iv. What did the gospel do when it arrived in Samaria (cf. Acts 8:5 - 25)? What are some authentic signs of the gospel penetrating a society and people?



## Personal Study Notes

*<sup>1</sup> And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.*

*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*

*<sup>4</sup> Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*

Acts 8:1 & 4

*The Church Scattered & Gospel Spread (8:1-4)*

*Samaritans Receive the Spirit (8:5-17)*

*Simon's Misplaced Religion (8:18-24)*

*The Apostles Evangelize Samaria (8:25)*

*Personal Prayer Points from this Passage:*

**Questions or Insights for Discussion:**

1)

2)