

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6d: Acts 8-9:31 – Persecution and Conversion

Introduction

Under normal circumstances, we would think that persecution would kill a cause and exterminate a people. However, when the Lord is involved, there is no such thing as “normal circumstances”. We see the church go and grow in these next two chapters, watered by the blood of the saints.

Acts 8:1-4 – The Persecution

What was the result of the localized persecution in Jerusalem?

How does this fit into God’s plan as revealed in Acts 1:8

How did the disciples go forth out of Jerusalem? Were they afraid to speak the name of Christ?

Acts 8:5-25 – The Gospel Preached in Samaria

What was Simon’s position among the Samaritans?

Why do you suppose that it was necessary for Peter and John to come before the gifts of the Holy Spirit were imparted upon the Samaritans.

What was this event that we are seeing transpire?

What was Simon’s root problem?

Did Simon appear to have a repentant heart about his sin? Why or why not?

Acts 8:26-40 – Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

What do we learn about this man that Philip went to speak to?

What does the eunuch acknowledge about his understanding? How does this apply to us?

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When they reached the water's edge, the eunuch asked about being baptized. What does this imply about what Philip included when he preached the gospel? (See also Acts 8:12)

What was the condition that Philip gave for being baptized?

What did the eunuch's profession mean?

What about the eunuch's baptism indicates that he was immersed rather than sprinkled?

Acts 9:1-9 – Saul's Conversion

What was Saul's intention in going to Damascus?

Who does the Lord accuse Saul of persecuting? What does this teach us about persecution? (See also Matthew 24:9)

What were the pricks to which Saul referred? (See also Acts 7:54)

If Saul had been under conviction yet was still persecuting the church, what does this teach us about the way people respond to the gospel?

At what point did Saul get saved? How do we know?

How and why did Saul lose his sight? (See Acts 9:4, 9:8, 22:11, Rev. 1:12-16) What does this teach us about Jesus' glorification?

Acts 9:10-31 – The Early Ministry of Saul

What was Ananias' hesitation when the Lord instructed him to go to Saul?

What is ironic about Ananias going to help Saul? (See Acts 9:1-2, 9:10 and 22:11-13)

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What does the Lord tell Ananias that His purpose is for Saul and how does that fit into the big picture of the Book of Acts? (See Acts 1:8)

How was Saul so quickly able to go and preach Jesus in the synagogue? Don't most converts take more time to learn and grow? Do we see this type of thing happening today?

What was initially more exciting about Saul, his message or his testimony (vs 21)? What about later (vs 22)?

What was the Jews reaction to Saul's conversion and his zeal in converting them?

How was Saul treated by the disciples?

Looking back at the last two questions, what lesson did Saul learn early on as a Christian? How would this help him later in his ministry?

Who was it that stood up for Saul and helped him to gain acceptance by the other Christians?

Assignment:

Read Acts 9:32 – 12:25 in preparation for the next lesson