



“Those Who were Scattered Went
Everywhere Preaching the Word”

Acts 8:4

“Those Who were Scattered Went Everywhere Preaching the Word”

- Acts 8:4 - “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”
- 1Thes. 2:14 - “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans”

“Those Who were Scattered Went Everywhere Preaching the Word”

- “The people doing this evangelizing were not elders, deacons, and preachers. They were disciples, great hosts of them, seeking a place of refuge from the destruction of Saul. As they found places to sleep or stay for a few days, they would have to explain the purpose of this plight and flight. In so doing, they went everywhere telling the bad news of their persecution and the good news of salvation in Christ” (Reese, New Testament History: Acts, p. 317).

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- The message of salvation and resurrection was strongly opposed, and persecution increased progressively
 - Acts 4:1-3 - “Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.”

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- Acts 4:21 - “So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.”
- Acts 5:40 - “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”

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- Acts 7:54-60 - “When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not charge them with this sin. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

“Those Who were Scattered Went Everywhere Preaching the Word”

- Stephen's death drove many Christians out of Jerusalem
 - Acts 8:1-3 - “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.”

“Those Who were Scattered Went Everywhere Preaching the Word”

- But as Christians were scattered abroad, so was the gospel
 - Acts 8:4-6 - “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.”
- The gospel went north to the Samaritans and south with the Ethiopian eunuch - Acts 8:4-40

“Those Who Were Scattered...”

- In a matter of just a few days, they:
 - Lost an important evangelist and deacon,
 - Lost their safety and security,
 - Lost their close fellowship, and
 - Lost direct guidance from the apostles

“Those Who Were Scattered...”

- What would be the thoughts and responses of many professed Christians today under similar circumstances?
 - “God has forgotten us.”
 - “We have angered God, and He is punishing us.”
 - “The Adversary is in charge of all of this.”
 - “The church isn’t strong enough to survive this.”
 - “We’ve got to stay together in one place to be effective.”

Never Overlook The Word “Therefore”

- Why were the Christians driven from Jerusalem?
 - Stephen was stoned to death
 - The church was under attack
 - Christians were dragged out of their homes, put into prison, and scattered out of the city
- “Therefore...” What did they do?

Never Overlook The Word “Therefore”

- Notice that the text says: “Those that were scattered,” not “Those that scattered.”
 - They didn’t scatter themselves; they had been scattered by another cause and purpose
- Scattered is from “diaspeiro - meaning to sow throughout, distribute in foreign lands, to scatter abroad” (Strong’s).
 - It is from the same root as in the parable of the sower who scattered seeds (Matt. 13:1-23).

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- The Gospel could not be preached in all the world as long as they stayed together in one place.
- The church was much more effective scattered abroad than gathered in a megachurch of 5000.
- They continued to do the things that got them into trouble in the first place.

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- What resulted from being scattered to preach?
 - The first sermon was preached in Jerusalem in the late spring of 33 AD
 - Christians were driven from the city when Stephen was killed in 35 AD

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- Col. 1:5-6, 23 - “...the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit... 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”
- Colossians was written in 61 AD. Therefore, from the time Christians were scattered from Jerusalem going everywhere preaching the word, the Gospel was preached in the rest of the world in 26 years.

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- The Adversary miscalculated
 - Acts 8:25, 40 - “So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans... 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- Acts 9:32 - “Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.”
- Acts 11:19-21 - “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- What if persecution like in the first century arose here in the tristate area? What would you do?
- “I would get out of town just like they did!”
- Then what?

“Went Everywhere Preaching The Word”

- Would you slip away quietly, go about your business in a new place, and avoid mentioning you came from the place where Christians were driven away?
- Would you moan and complain about all you lost?
- Would you angrily denounce those who ran you out of town?
- Would you resent God for letting such an injustice fall on you?
- Or, would you rejoice at the opportunity to suffer for Jesus and tell others about the joy of being saved and seek to convert them to Christ?