



THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE HOLINESS OF GOD (ACTS 7)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this story we learn that the persecution of the church results in the gospel spreading to areas outside of Jerusalem. This is the promise of Jesus fulfilled as his followers obey his command to make disciples of all nations. When the church spreads, the church faces new challenges. This story teaches us about the nature of those challenges and how to overcome them. Overall, we learn that when the church is attacked, God's plan always prevails.

2.0 ACTS 8 – THE GOSPEL SPREADS

2.1 SAUL RAVAGES THE CHURCH

The opening verses of Acts 8 expand on the character of Saul of Tarsus. The one who began as one of the vicious opponents of the church ends up as one of the most important Christians in all of history. Sometimes it is our greatest enemies who have the most potential for greatness in the kingdom of God. But what set Paul apart from other zealous Pharisees who did not convert? Paul's passion for God was greater than his

passion for his traditions. Furthermore, Saul's ravaging of the church results in the gospel being spread abroad. God's plan always prevails.

Preaching Points:

- Our passion for God must be greater than our passion for our human traditions.
- Everyone has potential to be won for God.
- Hatred for those who are faithful is born out of lies.
- God's plan always prevails in the face of the persecution of the church.

2.2 PHILIP PROCLAIMS CHRIST IN SAMARIA

Philip is the perfect man for this job. Samaria is an "unclean" city that has already heard the gospel and even met Jesus (John 4).

Preaching Points:

- You are perfect for just the right job!
- Sometimes people need to hear the gospel more than once. Timing is everything.
- When God is with us, he gives us the power we need to demonstrate his anointing.
- Joy is always the result of setting people free. Do you have joy? Do you bring joy?
- Demons are real, and so is God's deliverance

2.3 THE BASICS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Throughout the ministry of the church, demons are cast out. This is a difficult concept for the Western church, whose culture is marked by naturalism, scientism, the Enlightenment, and the scientific revolution. As such, we must be reminded of the following:

- Spiritual warfare is real and a part of the Christian worldview
- The goal of demons against the redeemed is to prevent us from being effective for the Kingdom of God. This attack can be carried out against our witness of character, as well as our spiritual giftings.
- Christians can be "demonized".
- Spiritual warfare is a truth encounter, not a power encounter.
- Demons feed on our unrepentant sin, habitual sin, and our emotional baggage ("wounds"); especially our trauma.
- The key to winning in spiritual warfare is intimacy with Jesus and simply to repent and believe.