**Acts 8:1**

\*After courageous Deacon Stephen exegeted the *Tanak* and then excoriated the Sanhedrin members for their failure to honor the Law, the holy place, and Moses’ prediction of the coming prophet Jesus, he put them on trial by interrogating the members about their murderous behaviour towards the prophets. They stoned him under the direction of Saul of Tarsus, the *“consenting”* henchman of the Sanhedrin.

\*The LORD employed Saul to force the Jerusalem Baptist Church to practice the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20)! The significantly-reduced mega-church (20,000 plus) learned several basic church truths, namely, the **agility** of the assembly and the **rejection of congeniality** with outside officials!

\*Under Saul’s leadership *“great”* persecution (vv. 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 27) occurred (cf. Acts 22:4), and God scattered (sowed) members (Rom. 8:28) throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee (Acts 9:31). Luke recorded that attack, and its acuteness, audience, and aftermath!

\*The apostles remained (possibly with widows). Later, the Jerusalem Baptist Church included Mary the mother of John Mark, Rhoda, James, and the brethren (Acts 12:12-17; cf. also Acts 1:13-14).

\*Later, the former Pastor Peter wrote to former members of the *diaspora* in Asia Minor (I Pet. 1:1)!

**Acts 8:2-3**

\*Church members buried and lamented Stephen’s death. This “rising star” completed God’s will!

\*Saul made havock with his savage ravage of the assembly going to their houses and imprisoned and killed them (Acts 26:11; I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13). Interestingly, converted Saul suffered the consequences of stoning (Acts 14:19-21) and persecution (I Cor. 4:12; II Cor. 4:9) > *“an eye for an eye”* (Lev. 24:19-20)!

\*The “scattered church” refers to scattered church members, not to an invisible and universal church! Theologian R. Saucy argues that this verse teaches the universal church even when not assembled! No, the church members were scattered and started visible assemblies! When Covid came, church members who stayed home were not “the church.” *Ekklesia* means a visible assembly!

**Acts 8:4-5**

\*Luke revealed the “who,” “where,” and “what.” The Baptist church members went everywhere and preached the Gospel! This included another deacon, Philip, who preached Christ and baptized men and women (Acts 8:12) at the city of Samaria.

\*Since baptism is a church ordinance, Deacon Philip started the Samaritan Baptist Church with his family on the first Sunday and added saved sinners to it through baptism. He was qualified to pastor the church since he was qualified to be a deacon (married and children [I Tim. 3:2-4, 12]). Any faithful church member can start a church but only a qualified man can pastor a church!

**Acts 8:6**

The Lord Jesus had planted the seed of truth in Samaria (Jn. 4:4 ff.). The half-breed Samaritans needed signs accompanying the preaching (I Cor. 1:22) and they responded in united faith as ready candidates for church membership.

**Acts 8:7-8**

\*Luke revealed the spiritual darkness in apostate NK Samaria (cf. Eph. 2:1-2) as some in the population were demon possessed with unclean spirits, palsies, and lame. The power of the Gospel is stronger than the hold of Satan (II Cor. 4:4; I Tim. 1:11). Because of the liberating power of the Gospel, many had great joy!