

*Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the Spread of God's Word*

**Persecute, Proclaim, or Purchase:  
3 Responses to the Good News of Jesus**

**Acts 8:1-25**

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*"Acts is fundamentally about the mission of the church and the progress of salvation from its Jewish roots to the Gentile world."*

*~ NIV Study Bible*

**I. You can persecute because it threatens your way of life. (v 1-3)**

- A. "Laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul"

**Acts 8:1-2** "And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him."

- B. Saul made war against the Christians in the early church.

**Acts 8:3** "But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison."

**II. You can proclaim because you have experienced life transformation. (v 4-8, 12-13, 25)**

- A. The scattered preached!!!

**Acts 8:4** "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word."

- B. Philip proclaimed Christ in both word & deed.

**Acts 8:5-8** "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city."

**Acts 8:12-13** "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed."

**Acts 8:25** “Now when they had testified and spoken the Word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the Gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.”

C. “So there was much joy in the city” (v 8)

Persecution leads to joy when our response is proclamation.

Is your city, school, workplace, or neighborhood full of joy because of the presence of God’s people? How can you more effectively bring joy with you where you go?

**III. You can try to purchase power and influence but miss out on God.** (v 17-24)

A. It was never about the signs!

**Acts 8:17-19** “Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’”

B. Money CAN’T buy God’s power or blessing.

**Acts 8:20-24** “But Peter said to him, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.’ And Simon answered, ‘Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.’”