

Acts 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Analysis

Saul 'made havock' (Greek elumaineto - to ravage or destroy) of the church with systematic violence. Going 'house to house' shows organized, thorough persecution. Haling 'men and women' to prison demonstrates the breadth of his assault on the church. This verse establishes Saul's credentials as 'chief of sinners' (1 Timothy 1:15), making his later conversion a supreme demonstration of sovereign grace. Reformed theology sees this as preparation for Paul's ministry - his firsthand knowledge of opposition would fuel compassion for the persecuted and magnify God's grace.

Historical Context

Saul likely had official authorization from the Sanhedrin to arrest Christians (Acts 9:1-2, 26:10). This persecution drove the church underground and scattered believers throughout the region, inadvertently spreading the gospel as Jesus predicted (Acts 1:8).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Saul's violent past magnify the power of God's transforming grace?
2. What does systematic persecution reveal about spiritual warfare against the church?
3. Why does God sometimes allow His church to face devastating opposition?

Interlinear Text

Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατὰ τοὺς
for Saul As he made havock G3588 of the church every G3588
G4569 G1161 G3075 G1577 G2596

οἴκους εἰσπορευόμενος σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας
house entering into and haling men and women
G3624 G1531 G4951 G435 G2532 G1135

παρεδίδον εἰς φυλακήν
committed them to prison
G3860 G1519 G5438

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 1:13 (Parallel theme): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

1 Corinthians 15:9 (Parallel theme): For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Galatians 1:13 (Parallel theme): For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Philippians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Acts 9:21 (Parallel theme): But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

Acts 22:19 (Parallel theme): And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Acts 7:58 (Parallel theme): And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

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