

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 havoc	G3588	of the church	every	G3588
G4569	G1161	G3075		G1577	G2596	
οἴκους	εἰσπορευόμενος	σύρων	τε	ἄνδρας	καὶ	γυναῖκας
house	entering into	and haling	G5037	men	and	women
G3624	G1531	G4951		G435	G2532	G1135
παρεδίδου	εἰς	φυλακὴν				
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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