

**GO! THIS MAN IS MY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT**  
**(The mission in Judea and Samaria)**

Acts 8:1–12:25

Key verse 9:15

“But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”

We thank the Lord for the study of the book of acts. Through this study, we learn about God’s plan for world mission. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were appointed as witnesses of Jesus to the ends of the earth. In the previous lesson, we learned about the first church in Jerusalem, which, regardless of the situation and opposition, boldly testified to the gospel of Jesus and formed a beautiful spiritual unity. But beginning with the stoning of Stephen, a wave of persecution swept over the church, forcing most of the believers to flee from Jerusalem. It seemed as if the end of the church had come. But God worked through the scattered believers, who proclaimed the gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit wherever they went, first in Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

In today's lesson, we learn how the Holy Spirit used persecution to spread the gospel from Jerusalem to Samaria and all of Judea, and beyond to all the Gentiles. God used the scattered Christians wherever they were as missionaries. When they overcame their prejudices against the Gentiles and simply obeyed God's guidance, the work of salvation was powerfully spread. Furthermore, God prepared a man who was an enemy of the gospel to be His chosen instrument for world mission. God also prepared the historical meeting of a Jew, Apostle Peter, and a Gentile, Cornelius. Let us learn today how sovereign God fulfilled his world mission purpose despite the suffering and helpless situation of the first Christians. Let us be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and follow God’s guidance as Jesus' witnesses for the spiritual revival in Europe and the M-world.

**1. The mission in Samaria and the conversion of Saul (8:1–9:43)**

1. The pioneering work in Samaria (8:1–25)

Let us read verse 1: "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." Until then, the church had been limited to Jerusalem. The apostles proclaimed the gospel boldly, and there was a wonderful unity of true love and devotion in the first church in Jerusalem. But after Stephen's martyrdom, a wave of persecution swept over the church. As a result, the believers scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. The main protagonist of this persecution was Saul, who went from house to house, dragging men and women away and throwing them into prison. He was an extremist Pharisee who wanted to eliminate all dissenters brutally.

From a human perspective, it was an extremely difficult situation for the believers. But the Holy Spirit used this persecution to continue and expand His work of salvation. Thus began the second phase of the acts of the Apostles, namely the pioneering of the lands of Judea and Samaria. The Christians did not remain as victims; on the contrary, every believer became a missionary. Wherever they went, they proclaimed the gospel of Jesus. On the one hand, they probably struggled for their daily survival, but at the same time they were full of joy and passion and shared the good news with many people. This reminds us of the beginning of the UBF World Mission, which began with the nurse missionaries in Germany. Humanly speaking, they were foreign workers, but they invited the students to the one-to-one Bible study and raised them as disciples of Jesus. Here we learn that God's work cannot be destroyed or stopped through persecution. On the contrary, persecution speeds the gospel because every believer is a missionary and a flame of the gospel to those around them.

Verses 4 to 25 tell the story of the deacon Philip. He came to the capital of Samaria in the course of persecution and began to preach the gospel. As we learned in John 4, the Jews had great prejudice towards the Samaritans. But Philip overcame his reservations and proclaimed the gospel to the Samaritans with the burning shepherd's heart of Christ. When the people heard the good news through Philip and saw that many were healed of spiritual and physical illnesses, they accepted the gospel and there was great joy in that city. It became clear that the power of Jesus was much stronger than the power of Simon the sorcerer, who had previously seduced the people with sorcery. Now many believed in Jesus and followed him. Even Simon the Sorcerer was amazed at the power of Jesus, which his magic tricks could not match.

There was a powerful work of awakening in Samaria, but there was also the spiritual danger that a one-sided, miracle-oriented work could develop. The church in Jerusalem sent Apostles Peter and John, who blessed and supported the work in

Samaria. Above all, they prayed for the new believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit. It was a beautiful work of cooperation, and many of the young believers received the Holy Spirit. God used the apostles to lay the right foundation for the believers in Samaria so that the Holy Spirit could continually work powerfully in them.

When the sorcerer Simon saw this powerful work of God, he wanted to pay the apostles in order to gain such power. His motive was not to do God's work, but to impress men and captivate them as he had done in the past. But apostle Peter realized his false motive of his heart and rebuked him harshly: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!" (20) People with impure or selfish motives cannot be blessed by God. Rather, they will experience God's curse.

Spiritual leaders should always be clear. Martin Luther, for example, was very clear and did not compromise with indulgence preachers, for whom the money they collected was much more important than the salvation of the sheep. He rebuked them harshly. Pastor Latzel courageously preaches the Word of God, even against the woke zeitgeist, although he has to endure much ridicule and malice, and even persecution from his own church leaders. Let us overcome the zeitgeist of godless humanism and courageously proclaim the gospel through one-to-one Bible study, so that Germany and Europe may once again be spiritually revived and used by God as a shepherd nation.

## 2. The first African convert (8:26-40)

Let us read verse 26: "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" Although there was a great work going on in Samaria, God had another plan for Philip.

The Ethiopian eunuch was a prominent figure in his society. He was seeking God and had already traveled a long way to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. He had bought a Bible, namely a copy of the prophet Isaiah, and read eagerly. Nevertheless, he could not understand. He needed a Bible teacher. When Philip saw him, he ran alongside the chariot. He asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian invited him to get in and explain the Word of God to him. Philip testified to him, beginning with Isaiah 53, the gospel of Jesus. Jesus was led to the slaughter like a sheep for our sins. He shed his blood for our salvation, and he rose again and gives eternal life to all who believe in him. The eunuch was overwhelmed and accepted God's Word with great joy and asked if he could be baptized. After baptism, Philip was taken away. But the eunuch went home rejoicing. God used this one person to establish the first base camp on the African continent. God worked through

this one person, so that Ethiopia became the first Christian country in Africa as early as the 4th century.

The Holy Spirit is the leader of world mission. God uses people like Philip, who obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God sends us to the thirsty souls of the students on campus from many countries. God helped my father, Shep. Peter, to meet a student on campus, who had come from Nepal to Germany for his PhD. God worked through one-to-one bible study in his heart and also in his wife. We believe that God is using this one person and one family to establish a new mission camp on in Asia. Let us pray for Sujan, Emmanuel, and Mostafa and their families, that they can be used as a source of blessing in God's eternal salvation work preciously.

At the beginning of our pioneering ministry, M. Matthäus heard God's call: "Get up and go to China" and simply obeyed. He met one student, Johan Cehen, who believed in Jesus through one-to-one Bible study. From this one person, God has worked powerfully and established numerous house churches in China, through which God raised many more young students as disciples of Jesus in China to this day. Let us hear and obey God's call, that we may be used for spiritual revival in Germany and Europe and send out witnesses of Jesus Christ into the M-world.

### 3. The conversion of a persecutor, Saul (9:1-31)

In chapter 9, we learn how the love of Jesus overcame the hatred of a persecutor and transformed him into an instrument of God. Saul, the Pharisee extremist, raged with threats and murder against the Lord's disciples. He considered Christians as a dangerous sect and threw them into prison. The high priests recognized his zeal and appointed him as the representative for the persecution of Christians in Damascus. He became an international persecutor of Christians. All Christians trembled before him when he set out for Damascus. But Jesus did not regard him as an enemy, but as a lost sheep. Jesus appeared to him in a bright light and asked him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Let us read chapter 9, verses 3 to 5: "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied." Actually, Jesus had every reason to punish or destroy Saul. Jesus is as pure and holy as a bright light. But Jesus did not punish or condemn Saul according to the law. Jesus saw him with his mercy and forgiving love. Jesus embraced a stiff-necked and dangerous persecutor with his forgiving love so that he could repent of his sin and turn to him.

In the world, people are judged according to their mistakes and punished without mercy. If you don't stop your car for at least two seconds at a stop sign, you have to pay \$90. But our Lord Jesus is full of grace and calls us by name so that we may recognize his grace of forgiveness and have a new beginning. Jesus embraced an enemy of the gospel ministry, Saul, so that he could be spiritually awakened. This was Jesus' searching and never giving up heart and his initiative, forgiving love for the worst sinner.

Ananias was a disciple in Damascus. He was frightened when Jesus wanted to send him to Saul. But he obeyed Jesus' instruction absolutely. Let's read verses 15 and 16 together: "But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." For Jesus, Saul was not simply an enemy or an evil person. Jesus saw with hope of God who Saul would be in the future, namely God's chosen instrument to preach the gospel to Gentiles and kings. Through Jesus' grace of forgiveness, Saul could have a great future ahead of him as one of the main actors in world mission. Ananias obeyed Jesus' instruction, overcame his fear and reservation, and embraced Saul, calling him "brother." When Saul experienced this unconditional, true, absolute, eternal love of Jesus, it was as if scales fell from his eyes. He regained his sight. He was baptized, ate food, and regained his strength.

It is Jesus' wonderful unsearchable grace that he chose a persecutor of the church as his instrument for world mission. With Jesus, there are no hopeless cases. We know the story of John Newton, who went to Africa as a young man to live a life in sin. He worked as a slave trader. But on a voyage, he was converted to Jesus during a storm. From then on, his life was changed 180 degrees and he became a pastor. He wrote the well-known hymn, "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound. That saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see." It is also my personal testimony that he was a damned sinner, but was saved by the wonderful grace of Jesus.

Like Saul, I was a terrible sinner of pride and arrogance and lived with the youth desire. Although Shep. Peter Ryu served me through precious common life fellowship unconditionally, I did not want to hear from him the forgiving love, and tried to solve my sin problem of gambling addiction with my own power. I was rebellious and often sneaked away to satisfy my youthful desires, seducing my friends into joining me. Arrogantly, I acted like my mother, who tried to overcome her alcohol problem on her own and repeatedly sank deeper into her sin. As a result, she was unable to form a harmonious family unit to work together for God's work, even though my father

served her with great patience and supported her in every way. I often sought only what I wanted. Thanks and praise be to the Lord, Jesus Christ, that through the enduring love and prayers of co-workers, he revealed his healing power of transformation in my mother. Just as the Holy Spirit transformed my mother, he can also heal and transform me. Praise and thanks be to Jesus that he has accepted me and my mother in his wonderful grace and unconditional love and has called us as his chosen instruments for his work of salvation. Thanks and praise be to Jesus that he gave his innocent life for me on the cross and wants to use me in his grace as his precious instrument for world mission. He helps me through Romans 6:11 with the right knowledge to lead a new life based solely on the grace of God in Christ Jesus. My school performance has improved incomparably in recent years. Now, by the grace of God, I am able to work together with Shep. Peter Josef as the responsible person for online mission. God also uses me as His chosen instrument to invite my friends Theo and Kilian to join our community and to serve with my father on campus, witnessing to God's wonderful grace and showing that young students can also be used in God's plan of salvation

After meeting Jesus personally, Saul became a powerful defender of the gospel in Damascus, which raged the Jews in anger. But God saved him when he was lowered in a basket from the city wall. In Jerusalem, many Christians were afraid of him and distrusted him. But Barnabas took him in and introduced him to the church and eventually sent him to his hometown Tarsus.

Because we have experienced God's transforming power in our lives, we can also see the young students on campus with the hope of God and visit them like Ananias. Ananias overcame his prejudices and obeyed Jesus' command: "Go, for this man is my chosen instrument." Let us overcome all our bias and prejudices about our fellow students, classmates, or young people and see them with the hope and vision of God. They can experience the wonderful grace of God and be his witnesses even to the ends of the earth. Let us go to campus boldly and share the living Word of God with students, so they may encounter Jesus personally, be spiritually revived and established as God's precious instruments for world mission.

In verses 32-43, we see the work of the Holy Spirit in Judea through Apostle Peter.

The Holy Spirit worked through his precious chosen instrument throughout Judea, even though the Christians at that time were in a very oppressed and threatened situation.

Peter healed a paralyzed man in the city of Lydda, so he could walk freely. In the city of Joppa, Peter awakened a young Christian woman, named Tabita, who had just

died. She was raised us like Jairus' daughter. In this way, the gospel work was spread in Judea.

## **2. God's council for Gentile mission and the first mission center (10:1–12:25)**

### **1. The historical meeting for the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles (10:1–11:18)**

In chapter 10, we see how the Holy Spirit worked specifically to open the door for the mission to the Gentiles. He arranged an unusual meeting between the Roman centurion Cornelius and the Jewish Bible teacher Peter. Cornelius was a Roman centurion in the port city of Caesarea. He was devout and God-fearing and always prayed to God. One day an angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter. He obeyed immediately and sent some servants as messengers to Peter.

At the same time, God was working in the live of Peter, who was still very attached to Jewish traditions. During his prayer time, God revealed to him through a vision that he was allowed to slaughter and eat all kinds of unclean animals. He saw a large sheet in which many unclean animals, four-footed, creeping and flying, were gathered, and then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat. Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Peter was reluctant because he was accustomed to strict Jewish purity, "Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean". But this threefold vision finally helped him to realize that God wanted him to overcome his instinctive rejection of all Gentiles and enter the house of the Roman Cornelius.

Peter was amazed when he found a whole gathering of people who were thirsty for the word of God. They accepted Peter as God's messenger. Their hearts were prepared, so that even during his sermon they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter recognized God's council and the work of the Holy Spirit and baptized the new believers. What a historic event it was that the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out upon the Gentiles. Those who had come with Peter saw this event and were filled with great joy. When Peter overcame his bias and obeyed God's guidance, he experienced the overwhelming work of God. He praised God and said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." (verses 34-35).

The conversion of Cornelius was a historic event through which the early church could overcome its prejudices against Gentiles and begin to accept them as equal brothers. At first, Peter was misunderstood from the Jewish believers and rebuked for going into the house of a Gentile and eating with them. But when they heard how

powerfully God had worked in Cornelius, they could not but praise God for his guidance and his mighty work, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

## 2. The first mission center in Antioch (11:19-30)

Antioch on the Orontes at that time was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. God's work in Antioch was first begun by some of the Diaspora Christians who came there because of persecution. They not only went to the Jews, but also spoke to the Greeks about Jesus. God worked so powerfully among the Greeks that the first multicultural church was born in Antioch. When the believers in Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas. Barnabas recognized God's mighty work among the different emigrant groups and encouraged and strengthened the believers in Antioch to grow as a strong church of Christ. Then he invited Saul to join him. Let's read verse 26, "and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul served the church with all their heart and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Barnabas and Saul served the young believers wholeheartedly with in-depth Bible study, helping them to discover their spiritual identity as witnesses of Christ Jesus and enabling them to work together for world missions. As a result, the church grew not only in numbers but also in the depth of its faith and in the world mission of Christ Jesus. Thus, it was able to serve as the first world mission center.

As the believers studied God's word diligently and preached with zeal, they were called "Christians." But they were grateful to be considered "crazy for Christ."

God's mighty work is done through zealous in-depth Bible study. God has used in-depth Bible study for the past 8 years through GLEF in a precious way to mobilize the young people of the next generation. Through the living word of God many were strengthened and mobilized for global leadership. Now they are working self-executive and responsible as outstanding Bible teachers and witnesses of Jesus. Now they are serving their fellow students, that they can live with the Word of God and serve world mission.

Chapter 12 deals with the persecution wave that began under King Herod Agrippa. He had James, one of the leaders of the church, executed with the sword. When he received applause from the Jews, he also threw Peter into prison to execute him as well. It was a very critical situation for the early church because their leaders had been eliminated. Apostle Peter was in prison and faced execution. What did the church do? They all came together in prayer. The whole church prayed for Peter, who was sleeping in prison under heavy guard. God was gracious and sent an angel to

free Peter and lead him out of prison. This was the unexpected work of God, so that the Christians could not believe it when Peter suddenly stood at the door again. But God had saved him with his gracious hand because He still wanted to use him for His work of salvation. King Herod Agrippa, however, was punished for his arrogance and dyed from worms.

In this lesson, we learn how confidently and carefully God Himself prepared the spiritual environment for world missions by spreading the gospel in Judea and Samaria, even though the scattered early Christians found themselves in the midst of a difficult and challenging situation due to persecution. Above all, we learn how dramatically but lovingly and graciously God, in cooperation with Ananias and Barnabas, transformed Saul, a persecutor of the church, into his chosen instrument for world missions. The Holy Spirit works powerfully through believers who are willing to obey his guidance and be witnesses of Christ Jesus. Let us go to campus with the promise of God through the obedience of faith: "Go, for this man is my chosen instrument." Let us overcome our human calculations and prejudices and be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. Let us experience our God raising up 100,000 Bible teachers for spiritual revival in Europe and sending out 100,000 missionaries for world missions. May God establish 120 world mission base camps like the church in Antioch for the M-Mission through us and through the power of the Holy Spirit.