

SCATTERED

“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” (Acts 8:1)

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” (Acts 8:4)

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.” (Acts 11:19)

The Bible word translated in these verses as “scattered” is “diaspeiro”. W. E. Vine explains that it comes from “dia” (throughout) and “speiro” (to sow a seed). Thus when the early church was “scattered” it caused the church to grow. It was like taking seeds from a granary and scattering them in the field. Seeds in a granary do not produce a harvest, but seeds that are “scattered” do.

Jesus is called the “Seed” the first time He is mentioned in Bible (Gen. 3:15). Abraham was promised that in his Seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gal. 3:16). Since virtually all the people in the world are familiar with “seeds” the Bible repeatedly used “seeds” to illustrate spiritual truth. Jesus Himself frequently referred to “seeds” in His teaching. Take, for example, the parable of the Sower. This parable is found three times in the Bible: (Matt. 13:1 - 23; Mk. 4:1 - 20, and Lk. 8:4 - 15). Here are a few common sense observations from that parable.

- First, the seed has to be “good” (Matt. 13:24). Some seeds have been harvested improperly, or stored too long, and have no life within them. Dead seeds cannot produce life.
- Second, the seed must have an opportunity to grow. That’s why the devil tries to take away the Scriptures so we will not meditate upon them and let them take root.
- In the third place, the soil where the seed is planted must have sufficient depth to allow a root system to grow. Shallow people do not produce fruit. No roots, no fruit!
- In the fourth place, the growth of good seed, in good soil, can be hindered. Like weeds can take over a garden, the cares of this world can also keep good seed from producing
- Finally, good seed in good soil does not produce the same harvest. Some seeds produce 100, others 60, and others 30.

But let us return to the book of Acts and the explosive growth of the early church. Notice how many times the word “all” is used to describe these early believers.

- They “all” joined together constantly in prayer (Acts 1:14).
- “All” believers were together and had everything in common (Acts 2:44).
- They were “all” filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly (Acts 4:31).
- “All” the believers were of one heart and mind (Acts 4:32).
- When persecution broke out they were “all” scattered, except the apostles (Acts 8:1).
- Those who were scattered preached the Word wherever they went (Acts 8:4).
- No wonder the early church grew! It was “scattered”!

But now let us take our eyes off of others and look within. The Scriptures teach that we are to “examine ourselves “ to see whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Our look within should include the following considerations:

- A seed cannot grow until it dies (Jn. 12:24). The prayer of Christ: “Not my will but Thine be done” is an essential first step to bearing much fruit.
- When a seed dies and disappears it produces a new and exciting kind of life. When we die to self, the power of God can accomplish in us more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20).
- The grow of a seed is progressive. First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head” (Mk. 4:28). So be patient, and stand firm, the Lord’s coming is near (Ja. 4:8).