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*Acts 9:4b ...and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"*

*Acts 9:5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.*

*1 Timothy 1:13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.*

### **Kicking against God's goads**

*Acts 26:14 "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads."*

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## **Transformation Begins**

### **The Life and Ministry of Paul—part 1**

June 26, 2016

*Acts 6:8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.*

■ *Acts 6:10 ... but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.* ■

*Acts 6:15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.*

■ *Acts 7:54 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.* ■

*<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*

*<sup>56</sup> "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

*Acts 7:57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.*

■ *Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.* ■

*<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

*<sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

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Acts 8:1 **And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.**

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

## **The Rise of Christianity**

Acts 5:17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.<sup>18</sup> They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!

<sup>30</sup> The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

<sup>31</sup> God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

<sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

Acts 5:39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

<sup>40</sup> His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in

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and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

<sup>42</sup> Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

■ Acts 26:10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

<sup>11</sup> Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

■ Acts 8:3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

## **The Road to a New Life**

Acts 9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.<sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground

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