

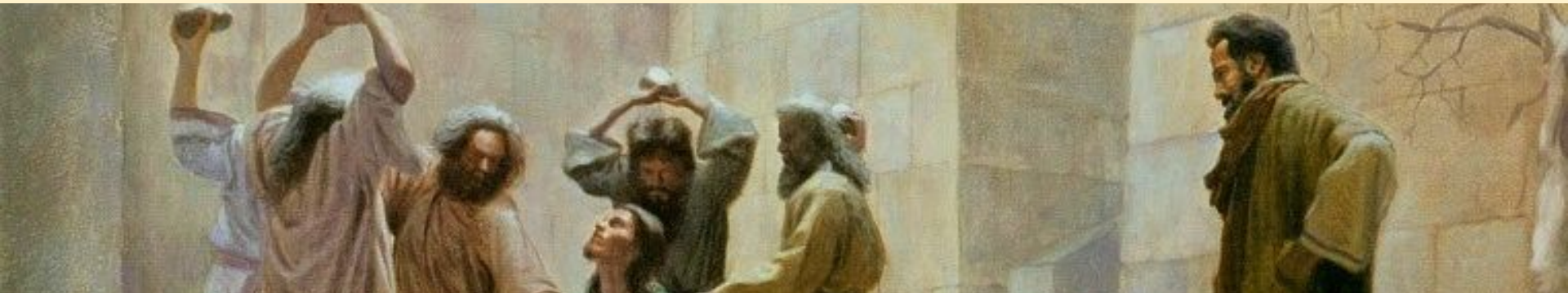
# ACTS

Saul

Acts 8-9.31

# **LET US PRAY | KIA IINOI TAATOU**

**God of Compassion, we pray for the persecuted; for Christians in all places who suffer in your name. Grant them courage, hope and peace. Inspire us to proclaim our faith with conviction and gratitude. Help us all to usher in your kingdom & will: on earth as in heaven.**



# WELCOME | NAU MAI HAERE MAI

Today:

- Recap(itulation) - week five
- Acts 8-9.31: Saul
  - Persecution & violence
  - The Gospel is proclaimed





# OVERVIEW

- **ACTS 8:**

The persecution after Stephen's death scatters believers, but that scattering becomes a means for the gospel to spread beyond Jerusalem. Philip's ministry in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch shows the message reaching new people and regions, while Simon's confrontation warns against trying to treat God's power like a commodity.

- **ACTS 9.1-31:**

Saul, once a fierce opponent of the church, encounters the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus and is transformed into a believer and baptized follower. He soon begins preaching Jesus publicly, faces opposition, and is eventually introduced to the apostles by Barnabas before leaving Jerusalem for Tarsus.

# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

## THE GOSPEL GOES TO SAMARIA

- A. What is Samaria and why is it significant? (Acts 1.8)
  - a. What Samaritans do you know?
  - b. Fulfillment?
- B. What do you make of Simon the Magician? (Acts 8.9ff)
  - a. Money?
  - b. Intercession?



# ETHIOPIA - NUBIA

**1. A Vital Commercial Hub:** Mediterranean and Middle Eastern traders viewed Ethiopia as a wealthy center of global commerce, sitting at the vital crossroads between the Roman Empire, India, and the African interior. The 1st-century AD Greco-Egyptian trade manual, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, documents Aksum (ruled by King Zoskales at the time) as a highly important metropolis. The empire was famous for exporting highly valued luxury goods, most notably raw ivory, rhinoceros horn, tortoise shell, and gold.

**2. Wealth and Political Power:** Traders and foreign powers recognized Aksum as a true, centralized, and well-governed state. The kingdom was known for its "King of Kings", its sophisticated stone architecture and royal palaces, and its bustling Red Sea port of Adulis. Later in antiquity, the Persian religious figure Mani would officially list Aksum alongside Rome, Persia, and China as one of the four greatest powers of the time.





# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

## PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

- A. Role, reason for travel, pastimes ...
- B. Why Isaiah?
- C. When have you felt prompted to engage in mission?
- D. How equipped have you felt?



# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

## MEANWHILE, SAUL WAS UTTERING THREATS ...

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.



# DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE

## CONVERSION - TURN AROUND / TRANSFORM

- Paul's conversion is radical. Can you think of any modern equivalents of Saul (i.e. not Paul)?
- How do you think people would respond to their conversion?





# DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE

## CONVERSION - TURN AROUND / TRANSFORM

“In the conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1–19), we receive a glimpse of the radical grace that God will show to and through Saul of Tarsus: God does not leave behind even one who supervises the murder of innocent Christians. Such behavior by the man who would become the “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13), through Christ, offers hope to sinners who feel unforgivable; we should never write off either ourselves or others as beyond redemption.” (TGC)

# DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Does what we have done define us?
- Does what we are doing define us?
- Are we always the sum of our acts?
- More thoughts ...?



# TERMS

## REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

- How do you understand these terms?
- μετανοέω (metanoēō) & Αφίημι (ἀφίημι)



# SOME THEOLOGY (HOMEWORK?)

## DIVINITY OF CHRIST

- (1 Cor. 8:6; Rom. 9:5; Col. 1:15–20; Heb. 1:3).

## REDEMPTION

- (1 Cor. 15.3)



## **NEXT WEEK**

Week 7: The Gospel to the Gentiles

(Acts 9.32-12.25)

