

Characteristics

At one point it appeared as if **both** men were **headed** for the **same destiny**... on the **same** course of **corruption**. **Hitler** wanted to **kill** the **Jews**, and **Paul** (Saul) wanted to **kill** the **Jews** who had become **Christians**—to **kill** the early **church**—to **squelch** its **impact**, dragging them off to **prison**. **Both** believed they were **servicing** God.

- But Paul would one day **find** the better **path**, **follow** it... and be forever **changed**.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 14:12

What Are Roads to Nowhere?

As a young man, Paul **thought** he was **fulfilling** his **purpose** in life when...

... "he began to destroy the church" Acts 8:3

A **zealous** Pharisee in the **early** days of the church, he went **house** to house to find **followers** of Jesus Christ / and **imprison** them. He **stood** by and **watched** while **Stephen**, the first Christian martyr, was **stoned** for his **faith**—**consenting** to his **death**.

But his **fight** against Christians **ended** when he **saw** the risen Christ, / his real **purpose** in life **began**. *"Still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples" Acts 9:1*, Paul was traveling to **Damascus** and was on the **outskirts** of the city **when** a *"light from heaven flashed around him" Acts 9:3*.

Jesus **showed** that he wasn't just **persecuting** the **church**, but was **really** persecuting **Jesus**. **Later**, Jesus said of Paul...

"This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles/ their kings/ before the people of Israel." Acts 9:15

Paul was **beaten** for his beliefs, **imprisoned** for his purpose, in **chains** for his choice—**clearly** he **chose** Christ.

The Roads to Emptiness

You are chasing after the wind and on a road to emptiness if you are...

- Externally-focused... concerned **about your own** outward appearances **of success**—**egotism**
- Materialistic... impressed **with** money **and** possessions—**materialism**
- Pleasure-seeking... **seeking** happiness **as your highest** goal **in life**—**hedonism**
- Task-oriented... **placing** projects **over** people—**workaholism**
- Insecure... pleasing **people** to gain **acceptance**—**idolatry**
- Negative... **dissatisfied**, **disinterested**, **bored**, and **bitter**—**pessimism**
- Escaping reality... **numbing** reality **through** **alcohol**, **food**, **drugs**, **activities**—**escapism**
- Status-seeking **seeking** fame, **power** or intellectualism **as your highest** goal **in life**—**elitism**

"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." Proverbs 26:12

"There's a way of life that looks harmless enough; look again—it leads straight to hell" Proverbs 14:12