

Acts 22:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

Analysis

Born in Tarsus—Paul claims both Jewish purity and Roman citizenship (21:39). Tarsus was a major intellectual center, suggesting elite education. **At the feet of Gamaliel** (παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ)—Studying 'at the feet' indicated formal rabbinic discipleship. Gamaliel I was the most respected Pharisee of his generation (Acts 5:34-39), grandson of Hillel, whose moderate wisdom had earlier spared the apostles' lives.

Perfect manner of the law (ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου)—The Greek 'akribeia' means exactness, precision, strictness. Paul wasn't a casual Jew but a zealous Pharisee who kept the law meticulously (Philippians 3:5-6). His persecution of Christians stemmed not from ignorance but from informed conviction that this sect was heretical. Christ didn't save a nominal Jew but transformed a passionate opponent.

Historical Context

Studying under Gamaliel (ca. AD 22-30) placed Paul at Judaism's intellectual apex. Gamaliel taught in Jerusalem, making Paul a product of the Holy City's rabbinic schools despite his Diaspora birth. This training made Paul uniquely qualified to explain how Jesus fulfilled Torah and Prophets.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's impeccable Jewish pedigree strengthen his testimony that salvation is by grace through faith, not law-keeping?
2. What 'credentials' from your pre-Christian life has God redeemed for gospel purposes?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγώ	μὲν	εἰμι	άνήρ	Ἰουδαῖος	γεγεννημένος	ἐν	Ταρσῷ
I	verily	am	a man	which am a Jew	born	in	Tarsus
G1473	G3303	G1510	G435	G2453	G1080	G1722	G5019
τῆς	Κιλικίας	ἀνατεθραμμένος	δὲ	ἐν	τῇ	πόλει	ταύτῃ
G3588	a city in Cilicia	brought up	yet	in	G3588	city	G3778
	G2791	G397	G1161	G1722		G4172	
παρὰ	τοὺς	πόδας	Γαμαλιήλ	πεπαιδευμένος	κατὰ		
at	G3588	the feet	of Gamaliel	and taught	according		
G3844		G4228	G1059	G3811	G2596		
ἀκρίβειαν	τοῦ	πατρώου	νόμου	ζηλωτῆς	ὑπάρχων		
to the perfect manner	G3588	of the fathers	of the law	zealous	and was		
G195		G3971	G3551	G2207	G5225		
τοῦ	θεοῦ	καθὼς	πάντες	ὕμεῖς	ἐστε	σήμερον·	
G3588	toward God	as	all	ye	are	this day	
	G2316	G2531	G3956	G5210	G2075	G4594	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:11 (Parallel theme): And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

Acts 5:34 (Word): Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

Acts 26:5 (Parallel theme): Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Acts 21:39 (Parallel theme): But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

Acts 21:20 (Word): And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

2 Corinthians 11:22 (Parallel theme): Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

Deuteronomy 33:3 (Word): Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.

Luke 10:39 (Word): And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

2 Kings 4:38 (Parallel theme): And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

Acts 6:9 (Parallel theme): Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.