

Acts 22:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

Analysis

Who art thou, Lord? (Τίς εἶ κύριε)—Paul's 'Lord' (κύριε) could mean mere 'sir' or acknowledge deity; the context clarifies. He recognizes supernatural authority but doesn't yet know the speaker's identity. **I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest**—This self-identification shatters Paul's theological framework. The crucified heretic he thought justly executed now speaks from heaven with divine authority.

'Jesus of Nazareth' emphasizes the historical person Paul sought to eradicate. The phrase 'whom thou persecutest' (present tense, ὃν σὺ διώκεις) reveals Jesus lives and actively suffers with his church. This wasn't past-tense ('whom you persecuted') but ongoing reality. The resurrection wasn't metaphor but accomplished fact—the One Paul considered cursed (Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13) was vindicated Messiah.

Historical Context

This encounter resolved Paul's central theological crisis: How could the crucified Jesus be Messiah when Deuteronomy 21:23 pronounced God's curse on anyone hanged on a tree? The resurrection validated Jesus's messianic claims and reinterpreted the curse—Jesus bore God's curse for sinners (Galatians 3:13), making crucifixion the means of salvation, not disqualification from messiahship.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What cherished beliefs or certainties has Christ overturned in your life through direct encounter?
2. How does Jesus's self-identification ('Jesus of Nazareth') affirm that Christianity stands or falls on historical events, not merely ideas?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγώ	δὲ	ἀπεκρίθην	Τίς	εἶ	κύριε	εἶπέν	τε	πρός
I	And	answered	Who	art thou	Lord	he said	And	unto
G1473	G1161	G611	G5101	G1488	G2962	G2036	G5037	G4314
με	Ἐγώ	εἰμι	Ἰησοῦς	ὁ	Ναζωραῖος	ὃν	σὺ	διώκεις
me	I	am	Jesus		of Nazareth	whom	thou	persecutest
G3165	G1473	G1510	G2424	G3588	G3480	G3739	G4771	G1377

Additional Cross-References

Acts 26:9 (References Jesus): I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Acts 6:14 (References Jesus): For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

