

Acts 23:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

Analysis

Paul's claim to have lived 'in all good conscience before God' doesn't mean sinless perfection but rather integrity in following known truth. Even as persecutor of Christians, Paul acted according to his understanding of God's will (1 Timothy 1:13). This demonstrates that conscience must be informed by Scripture and Spirit, as sincerity alone doesn't guarantee correctness.

Historical Context

Paul stood before the Sanhedrin, the 71-member Jewish ruling council that had condemned Jesus. His defense speech began with establishing his own credentials as a devout Jew who lived conscientiously.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between following your conscience sincerely and following God's truth accurately?

2. What does Paul's example teach about maintaining integrity even when your understanding of truth changes?

Interlinear Text

ἀτενίσας	δὲ	ό	Παῦλος	τῷ	συνεδρίῳ	εἰπεν
earnestly beholding	And	G3588	Paul	G3588	the council	said
G816	G1161		G3972		G4892	G2036
Ἄνδρες	ἀδελφοί	ἐγὼ	πάσῃ	συνειδήσει	ἀγαθῇ	
Men	and brethren	I	in all	conscience	good	
G435	G80	G1473	G3956	G4893	G18	
πεπολίτευμαι	τῷ	θεῷ	ἄχρι	ταύτης	τῆς	ἡμέρας
have lived	G3588	before God	until	G3778	G3588	day
G4176		G2316	G891			G2250

Additional Cross-References

Acts 24:16 (References God): And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

2 Timothy 1:3 (References God): I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

2 Corinthians 1:12 (References God): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

Hebrews 13:18 (Good): Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

1 Corinthians 4:4 (Parallel theme): For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Acts 22:5 (Parallel theme): As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and

went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Acts 23:6 (References Paul): But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Proverbs 28:1 (Parallel theme): The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 Corinthians 4:2 (References God): But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

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