

Acts 26:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

Analysis

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests—Paul recounts the zenith of his pre-conversion zealotry before King Agrippa. **Authority and commission** (ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς, exousias kai epitropēs) denotes official rabbinic authorization—Paul wasn't a rogue persecutor but a credentialed agent of the Sanhedrin, armed with legal warrants (cf. Acts 9:2). Damascus, 135 miles north, had a significant Jewish population requiring external synagogue authorities to pursue 'the Way.'

The irony is profound: Paul's exousia from Jerusalem's priests would be eclipsed by Christ's greater authority on that very road. His meticulous documentation of credentials (Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:5-6) shows this wasn't youthful indiscretion but calculated theological opposition—making his subsequent transformation undeniably supernatural, not psychological evolution.

Historical Context

This occurred circa AD 34-35, during the intense persecution following Stephen's martyrdom. Damascus was a major city in the Decapolis under Roman Syria, with substantial Jewish diaspora communities. Paul's commission from the high priest (likely Caiaphas or Jonathan) demonstrates the Sanhedrin's extraterritorial reach over diaspora synagogues through religious authority, even lacking direct Roman jurisdiction.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's emphasis on his official credentials before Agrippa strengthen his testimony's credibility rather than excuse his guilt?
2. What does Paul's journey to Damascus 'with authority' reveal about religious conviction without regeneration—and how might we possess similar zeal apart from true spiritual sight?

Interlinear Text

'Εν	οἵς	καὶ	πορευόμενος	εἰς	τὴν	Δαμασκὸν	μετ'
Whereupon	G3739	and	as I went	to	G3588	Damascus	with
G1722	G2532		G4198	G1519		G1154	G3326
ἐξουσίας	καὶ	ἐπιτροπῆς	τῆς	παρὰ	τῶν	ἀρχιερέων	
authority	and	commission	G3588	from	G3588	the chief priests	
G1849	G2532	G2011		G3844		G749	

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