

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

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

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