

Acts 26:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

Analysis

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven (φῶς οὐρανόθεν, phōs ouranothen)—Paul emphasizes the supernatural origin of the light that arrested him on the Damascus road. **Above the brightness of the sun** (ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου, huper tēn lamprotēta tou hēliou) stresses the overwhelming glory exceeding natural illumination at its zenith. This 'midday' detail unique to Paul's third telling (cf. Acts 9:3, 22:6) heightens the miracle—a light brighter than noon sun. **Shining round about me** (περιλάμψαν, perilampsan) means 'flashed around,' enveloping Paul and his companions in divine radiance.

This theophany parallels Moses' burning bush and Isaiah's throne vision—God revealing himself in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16). The light's superlative brightness demonstrates Christ's deity; Paul later identifies this glory as 'Jesus of Nazareth' (v.15), proving the risen Lord's exaltation to divine majesty. The physical reality—witnessed by traveling companions—refutes naturalistic explanations (sunstroke, hallucination) that attempt to diminish Paul's apostolic encounter with the risen Christ.

Historical Context

This occurred circa AD 34-35 on the road to Damascus, approximately 135 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Paul recounts this conversion experience for the third time

in Acts, now before King Agrippa II (last of the Herodian dynasty) and the Roman procurator Festus in Caesarea around AD 59-60. The 'midday' timing—when the Mediterranean sun reaches maximum intensity—makes the supernatural light's superior brightness undeniable to Paul's juridical audience.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 – God is love

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the physical, witnessed nature of Paul's Damascus road encounter refute modern attempts to reduce conversion to purely psychological experience?
2. What does the 'above the brightness of the sun' imagery teach about Christ's glorified state and the overwhelming nature of true divine revelation?

Interlinear Text

ἡμέρας	μέσης	κατὰ	τὴν	όδὸν	εἰδον	βασιλεῦ	οὐρανόθεν
At midday	G3319	in	G3588	the way	I saw	O king	from heaven
G2250		G2596		G3598	G1492	G935	G3771

ὑπὲρ	τὴν	λαμπρότητα	τοῦ	ἡλίου	περιλάμψαν	με
above	G3588	the brightness	G3588	of the sun	shining round about	me
G5228		G2987		G2246	G4034	G3165

φῶς καὶ τοὺς σὺν ἐμοὶ πορευομένους
a light and G3588 with me them which journeyed
G5457 G2532 G4862 G1698 G4198

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 17:2 (Light): And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

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