

Acts 26:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

Analysis

My manner of life from my youth (τὴν βίωσίν μου τὴν ἐκ νεότητος, tēn biōsin mou tēn ek neotētos)—Paul begins his defense before Agrippa by appealing to his publicly verifiable Jewish credentials. The term biōsis denotes not mere existence but a whole way of life, encompassing conduct, convictions, and community.

Which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem—Paul strategically establishes himself as a Jerusalem-trained Pharisee, not a Diaspora Jew dabbling in Judaism. His upbringing "among mine own nation" (ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου, en tō ethnei mou) underscores his rootedness in covenant Israel. **Know all the Jews**—This bold assertion challenges his accusers: his pre-conversion zeal for Judaism was public knowledge, witnessed by the very religious establishment now opposing him. His transformation from persecutor to proclaimer becomes all the more compelling when grounded in this irrefutable Jewish pedigree.

Historical Context

Paul spoke these words around AD 59-60 during his Caesarean imprisonment, defending himself before Herod Agrippa II and Festus. As a student of Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), Paul's Pharisaic credentials were impeccable. His audience would have known that Jerusalem-trained Pharisees represented the intellectual and religious elite of first-century Judaism, making his conversion to Christ all the more remarkable.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's willingness to acknowledge his past identity (Pharisee, persecutor) model transparency in Christian witness?
2. What aspects of your pre-Christian life might God use as credible testimony to His transforming power?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	μὲν	οὖν	βίωσίν	μου	οἱ	ἐκ	νεότητος	οἱ	ἀπ'
which	manner	G3767	of life	My	which	from	my youth	which	at
G3588	G3303		G981	G3450	G3588	G1537	G3503	G3588	G575
ἀρχῆς	γενομένην	ἐν	οἱ	ἔθνει	μου	ἐν			
the first	was	among	which	own nation	My	among			
G746	G1096	G1722	G3588	G1484	G3450	G1722			
Ἱεροσολύμοις	ἴσασιν	πάντες	οἱ	Ἰουδαῖοι					
Jerusalem	know	all	which	the Jews					
G2414	G2467	G3956	G3588	G2453					

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 1:13 (Parallel theme): For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: