

# Acts 26:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

## Analysis

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**After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee** (κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος)—Paul uses akribestatēn (ἀκριβεστάτην), the superlative form meaning "most exact" or "strictest," emphasizing the Pharisees were not merely religious but rigorously precise in Torah observance. This is Paul's third defense speech in Acts, delivered before King Agrippa II, and he strategically highlights his impeccable Jewish credentials.

**Which knew me from the beginning** (προγινώσκοντές με ἀνωθεν)—The verb proginōskō means "to know beforehand," and anōthen means "from the beginning" or "from above." Paul appeals to eyewitnesses who could verify his Pharisaic pedigree from his youth in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). His transformation from persecutor to apostle is therefore not the abandonment of Judaism but its Christ-centered fulfillment—the very hope of Israel's resurrection (Acts 26:6-8).

## Historical Context

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Paul spoke before Herod Agrippa II (c. AD 59-60) in Caesarea while under Roman custody. The Pharisees were the strictest Jewish sect, comprising only about 6,000 members, known for oral tradition, belief in resurrection, and meticulous Torah observance. Paul's training under Gamaliel (Acts 5:34) gave him elite status among Jerusalem's religious leadership.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's past as a zealous Pharisee prepare him uniquely to articulate the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles?
2. In what ways does God use our pre-conversion background and training for kingdom purposes after we come to faith?

## Interlinear Text

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προγινώσκοντές με ἀνωθεν ἐὰν θέλωσιν μαρτυρεῖν

Which knew me from the beginning if they would testify

G4267

G3165

G509

G1437

G2309

G3140

ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας

that after the most straitest sect of our

G3754

G3588

the most straitest

sect

G3588

of our

G2596

G196

G139

G2251

θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος

religion

I lived

a Pharisee

G2356

G2198

G5330

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 23:6** (Resurrection): 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.

**Acts 22:3** (Parallel theme): I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught

according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

**Acts 24:5** (Parallel theme): For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

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