

Galatians 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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:

Paul appeals to widely known facts. "Ye have heard" (ēkousate, ἤκούσατε) references his reputation—his pre-conversion life was public knowledge. "My conversation" (anastrophēn, ἀναστροφῇν) means "conduct, manner of life"—behavioral pattern, not mere speech. "In time past" (pote) contrasts former life with present.

"In the Jews' religion" (en tō Ioudaismō, ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ) refers to Judaism as religious system and culture. Paul uses Ioudaismos (only here and verse 14 in NT) to describe his zealous Pharisaic past. "Beyond measure" (kath' hyperbolēn, καθ' ὑπερβολήν) means "to excess, extraordinarily"—Paul was extreme in persecution. "I persecuted" (ediōkon, ἐδίωκον) uses imperfect tense indicating continuous, habitual action.

"The church of God" (tēn ekklēsiān tou theou)—Paul attacked not mere human movement but God's own assembly. "Wasted it" (eporthoun autēn, ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν) means "destroyed, ravaged," using military language for violent devastation (same word Acts 9:21). Paul's savagery proves his gospel didn't evolve from natural progression but required supernatural intervention—the persecutor became the preacher through divine revelation alone.

Historical Context

Paul's persecution is documented in Acts 7-9. He held coats at Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:58), ravaged the church dragging believers to prison (Acts 8:3), breathed murderous threats seeking letters to arrest Damascus believers (Acts 9:1-2), and was known to Judean churches by reputation though not by sight (verse 22). His Pharisaic zeal (Philippians 3:4-6) made him Judaism's rising star and Christianity's chief enemy. This dramatic reversal authenticated both his conversion's reality and his gospel's divine origin—no human process explains such transformation. The Judaizers couldn't claim comparable divine intervention.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. In what ways does your pre-Christian past (whether morally good or bad) reveal the gospel's transforming power?
2. Why is it significant that Paul attacked not just Christians but "the church of God" specifically?
3. What should the miracle of conversion produce in both your confidence about gospel truth and compassion toward current enemies?

Interlinear Text

ἤκούσατε	γὰρ	τὴν	ἐμὴν	ἀναστροφὴν	ποτε	ἐν	τῷ
ye have heard	For	^{G3588}	of my	conversation	in time past	in	^{G3588}
G191	G1063		G1699	G391	G4218	G1722	
Ἰουδαϊσμῷ	ὅτι	καθ'	ὑπερβολὴν	ἐδίωκον	τὴν		
the Jews' religion	how that	beyond	measure	I persecuted	^{G3588}		
G2454	G3754	G2596	G5236	G1377			
ἐκκλησίαν	τοῦ	θεοῦ	καὶ	ἐπόρθουν	αὐτήν		
the church	^{G3588}	of God	and	wasted	it		
G1577		G2316	G2532	G4199	G846		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 8:3 (Parallel theme): As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Acts 9:26 (Parallel theme): And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

Acts 9:21 (Parallel theme): But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

1 Corinthians 15:9 (References God): For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 Timothy 1:13 (Parallel theme): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Acts 8:1 (Parallel theme): And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Philippians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

