



# I SAW THE LIGHT

Acts 22:6 (NKJV)

*“Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.*”

**FearLESS**

# Acts 22:1–5 (NKJV)

1 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.”

2 And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said:

3 “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,

5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

# HIS FORMER ZEAL

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- In his opening words Paul addressed the crowd with the formal introduction Stephen used before the Sanhedrin, “Brothers and fathers”. Both were making a defense and were concerned to establish their loyalty to Judaism; henceforth this respectful Jewish address.
- Paul described his address in formal language as a “defense” (apologia). His speech did not, however, address the charge that started the riot—that he had desecrated the temple.

# HIS FORMER ZEAL

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- It did address the larger issue—Paul’s faithfulness to Judaism.
- This defense continues to unfold in the speeches that follow—before Felix and the Jews in chap. 24 and before Agrippa in chap. 26.
- In a sense all the remainder of Acts is Paul’s defense before the Jews.
- Paul is shown to be a faithful Jew, particularly when one agrees with him that faith in the risen Christ is the true termination of his faith in Judaism.

- When proclaiming or teaching the Word of God, the speaker should exercise tact and diplomacy.
- However difficult he may find the adjustment to a culture or a situation in which God has placed him, he ought to learn to address the people in words that touch their hearts.
- In communicating the gospel effectively, he must strive to gain a point of contact with the audience.

# Psalm 37:30–31 (NKJV)

30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, And his tongue talks of justice.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.

- Paul speaks with great wisdom and love for his brothers and fathers of Judaism as he tries not to offend them as he desires them to hear his love for Jesus Christ.

## James 3:10–12 (NKJV)

10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

- Though Paul was being persecuted he spoke sternly, but with respect, and with clarity, but with kindness.

# I Was Loyal To My Former Beliefs

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## **Acts 22:4–5** (NKJV)

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,

5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.



# I Was Loyal To My Former Beliefs

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- Paul shows no partiality; he mentions both men and women.
- The fact that Luke relates the account of Paul's conversion three times is sufficient proof that Paul freely admitted his part in persecuting the church.
- I really believe Paul shows the Lord can save anyone in this area of text.

## **Psalm 34:22** (NKJV)

The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

# I Was Loyal To My Former Beliefs

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- When he became a believer, he realized that he would suffer persecution for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Philippians 1:29–30** (NKJV)

29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,  
30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

# I Was Loyal To My Former Beliefs

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- Even though this persecution came chiefly from the Jews, he still called them brothers.

## **Romans 12:9–10,14** (NKJV)

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

# I Was Loyal To My Former Beliefs

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## **Romans 12:17–18** (NKJV)

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

- Even though this persecution came chiefly from the Jews, he still called them brothers.

## **Acts 22:6–10** (NKJV)

6 “Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.

7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’

8 So I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’

9 “And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.

10 So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’

# I Saw The Light!

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- When Paul speaks about a bright light flashing from heaven, he communicates to his Jewish audience that he experienced a divine encounter.
- The Jews knew from the Scriptures that light proceeds from God and that it is a feature God employs to reveal himself.

## **Psalm 4:6** (NKJV)

There are many who say, “Who will show us any good?”  
LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

# I Saw The Light!

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## Psalm 44:3 (NKJV)

For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.

## Psalm 89:15 (NKJV)

Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.

## Exodus 13:21–22 (NKJV)

21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.

22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

## Habakkuk 3:4 (NKJV)

His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden.



- In fact, the light of God's self-disclosure supersedes created light. In his speech before Agrippa, Paul says that the light which enveloped him was brighter than the sun (26:13).
- Paul asserts that he was converted to Christianity not because believers persuaded him but because Jesus stopped him near Damascus.

- He recalls that he fell to the ground and heard a voice addressing him twice by his Hebrew name, Saul.
- From their knowledge of Scripture, the Jews knew that when God calls people, he often repeats their name.
- For instance, from the burning bush God said: “Moses, Moses” (*Exod. 3:4*), and in the tabernacle God called the boy Samuel and said: “Samuel, Samuel” (*1 Sam. 3:10*).
- Paul, therefore, indicates that he was divinely called. The voice asked, “Why do you persecute me?”

8. *“But I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ ”*

- While he was blinded by the light, lying on the ground, and hearing a heavenly voice asking him a question—Paul remembers—he kept a clear mind.
- The voice that addressed Paul asked him why he was victimizing me. Paul had to answer by asking the voice to identify himself. Thus he inquired, “Who are you, Lord?” And the surprising answer came back to him, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.”

8. *“But I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ ”*

- The Jews listening to Paul know that Jesus called him from heaven and indicated twice that Paul persecuted him. Paul refrains from further identifying Jesus but leaves the distinct impression that Jesus is divine.
- The Jews also learn from the dialogue between Jesus and Paul that Jesus completely identifies with the believers.

9. *“They who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.”*

- The travel companions of Paul witnessed the brilliant light and saw Paul lying on the ground. Although they observed the phenomenon, the light did not blind them as it did Paul.
- Further, they heard a voice speaking but did not understand it, even though the voice addressed Paul in Aramaic (26:14). The voice was incomprehensible to them. They were speechless because of fright.
- Not they but Paul understood Jesus’ words that led to Paul’s conversion.

10. *“I asked, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go to Damascus and there you will be told everything that has been arranged for you to do.’ ”*

- Next, Paul reveals a continued dialogue with Jesus. He asked him, “What shall I do, Lord?”

## **Psalm 100:2** (NKJV)

Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.

- I saw the light!