

A Philological Analysis of Religious Transformation

Although Paul's experience on the road to Damascus has been a topic of careful scholarly discussion, there has been somewhat of a lack of philologically-centered approaches to the issue. Upon investigating the key passage in question (Galatians 1:13–17), it becomes particularly apparent that the word ἀποκαλύπτω used to describe Paul's religious transformation merits wider consideration in light of other contemporary religious transformations. After a discussion of the word's usage and connotation in prior contexts—the LXX, Josephus, *AJ* 20.17, and Lucian, *Peregrinus* 11—this paper seeks to illuminate Paul's conception of his experience on the Damascus road in terms of an ἀποκαλύψις. This important finding will be briefly discussed with respect to the so-called New Perspective on Paul, as it seems that Paul viewed his experience as a rebuke of his previous religious beliefs and practices, rather than a complete conversion to Christianity and a separation from Judaism. Finally, Paul's experience will be discussed in the context of other religious transformations where the religious adherent described the conversion process as taking place over time and developing from a reasoned choice.

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