

Paul's Attendants Heard Not the Voice and Were Prostrate

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Paul's Attendants Heard the Miraculous Voice,
and Stood Speechless
(Acts 9:7)

Paul's Attendants Heard Not the Voice and
Were Prostrate
(Acts 26:14)

At a cursory glance the scriptures above may seem contradictory. However, when the original Greek words in a supporting text are examined closely, it will become apparent that Paul was not misrepresenting what occurred when he encountered Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

And the men who journeyed with him (Paul) stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one (Ac. 9:7; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Sometime after this event, Paul had to deal with an angry mob in Jerusalem and he explained the same story to them (Ac. 22:1-8). This time however, Paul added the fact that his companions could not understand what the voice was saying.

Now those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not **hear (SGD 191; understand, perceive the sense of what is said)** the voice of him who spoke to me (Ac. 22:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Paul then repeated this same event while addressing King Agrippa, but made no mention of his companions either hearing or understanding the voice (Ac. 26:1-13).

And when we all had fallen to the ground, **I heard a voice** speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads' (Ac. 26:14; emphasis added).

Paul's account in Acts 26:14 did not include his companions hearing a voice, because it was not relevant to the point he was making with King Agrippa. Nor did he deny that they heard something. Consequently, an omission in one account does not constitute a contradiction in scripture. Instead, Paul used whatever was pertinent to the situation he found himself in. Besides, very few people could recount a story in exactly the same manner numerous times; especially if it was separated by months or years.

In conclusion, Acts 9:7 states that the individuals accompanying Paul heard something, while Acts 22:9 says they did not understand what they heard. The final account of this event, in Acts 26:14, does not comment one way or another regarding Paul's companions hearing a voice. Therefore it is an error to claim that Paul contradicted himself.

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