

2 Timothy 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

Analysis

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Paul describes his trial. "At my first answer" (en tē prōtē mou apologia, ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μου ἀπολογίᾳ) refers to preliminary hearing (prima actio) in Roman legal proceedings where charges were presented and defendant gave initial defense. Apologia (ἀπολογία) means defense, answer—from which we get "apologetics." "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (oudeis moi paregeneto, alla pantes me enkatalipon, οὐδείς μοι παρεγένετο, ἀλλὰ πάντες με ἐγκατέλιπον).

Paraginomai (παραγίνομαι) means stand beside, appear as supporter. Enkatalepō (ἐγκαταλείπω) means abandon, desert, forsake—same word used of Demas (v. 10). Roman legal system allowed witnesses to speak for defendants. No Christians came forward—whether from fear, inconvenience, or distance, Paul faced charges alone. This painful abandonment recalls Jesus's experience (Matthew 26:56). Yet Paul, like Christ, responds with grace: "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (mē autois logistheiē, μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθείη).

Logizomai (λογίζομαι) means reckon, count, charge to account. Paul prays God won't count this desertion as sin requiring punishment. This echoes Jesus's prayer: "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34) and Stephen's: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). Paul models Christ like forgiveness toward those who abandoned him in desperate need. This isn't minimizing their failure but entrusting

justice to God while extending grace. Such forgiveness is supernatural, impossible without Holy Spirit's enabling.

Historical Context

Standing with accused Christians during Neronian persecution meant risking arrest and execution. Many believers understandably feared association with condemned prisoners. Yet their absence at Paul's trial must have been deeply painful—the apostle who gave everything for churches stood alone when needing support. This isn't first time: Asian believers had deserted (1:15), only Luke remained (v. 11). Yet Paul forgave, showing extraordinary grace. His example inspired countless believers facing similar abandonment. The prayer reflects martyr spirituality: forgiving persecutors and unfaithful friends, leaving judgment to God, maintaining love despite betrayal.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when those you've served abandon you in time of need—with bitterness or Christ like forgiveness?
2. Are there people whose failures or betrayals you need to forgive, praying that God won't charge their sin to their account?
3. When believers face persecution or trials, do you courageously stand with them despite personal risk, or do you distance yourself for safety?

Interlinear Text

Ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μοι ἀπολογίᾳ οὐδείς μοι
At G3588 **first** G4413 **my** G3450 **answer** G627 **no man** G3762 **with me** G3427
G1722

συμπαρεγένετο, ἀλλὰ πάντες με ἐγκατέλιπον· μὴ
stood G4836 **but** G235 **all** G3956 **me** G3165 **men forsook** G1459 **not** G3361
to their charge G846 **I pray God that it may** G3049
αὐτοῖς λογισθείη·

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:60 (Parallel theme): And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Mark 14:50 (Parallel theme): And they all forsook him, and fled.

John 16:32 (Parallel theme): Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.