

Acts 16:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

Analysis

The accusation continues: 'And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.' This charge frames Christian faith as violation of Roman law. The appeal to Roman identity ('being Romans') shows how patriotism can be weaponized against religious freedom. The gospel's exclusivity offends pluralistic systems.

Historical Context

Roman law protected traditional religions (*religio licita*) but prohibited new, unauthorized cults. Christianity's exclusive claims threatened Roman religious tolerance, which required accepting all gods.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the gospel's exclusivity conflict with cultural pluralism?
2. When does national identity conflict with Christian commitment?
3. How should believers respond when accused of cultural disloyalty?

Interlinear Text

καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθη ἡ αὐτούς εἰστιν ἡμῖν

And teach customs which not are for us

G2532 G2605 G1485 G3739 G3756 G1832 G2254

παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν

to receive neither to observe Romans being

G3858 G3761 G4160 G4514 G5607

Additional Cross-References

Esther 3:8 (Word): And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

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