

Acts 16:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Analysis

Paul's circumcision of Timothy 'because of the Jews which were in those quarters' demonstrates missionary adaptation without gospel compromise. Though Paul opposed requiring Gentile circumcision (Acts 15), Timothy's Jewish mother made him ethnically Jewish. Circumcising him removed unnecessary offense to Jewish evangelism while maintaining that circumcision doesn't save.

Historical Context

Timothy's mixed heritage (Jewish mother, Greek father) created ambiguity in Jewish eyes. His circumcision wasn't for salvation but for cultural credibility in Jewish ministry - 'becoming all things to all men' (1 Corinthians 9:20-22) in action.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between gospel compromise and wise cultural adaptation?

2. What does this teach about removing unnecessary obstacles to others' hearing the gospel?

Interlinear Text

τοῦτον	ἠθέλησεν	τὸν	Παῦλος	σὺν	αὐτοῦ	ἐξελθεῖν	
Him	would	which	Paul	with	him	have to go forth	
G5126	G2309	G3588	G3972	G4862	G846	G1831	
καὶ	λαβὼν	περιέτεμεν	αὐτοῦ	διὰ	τὸν	Ἰουδαίους	τὸν
and	took	and circumcised	him	because	which	of the Jews	which
G2532	G2983	G4059	G846	G1223	G3588	G2453	G3588
ὄντας	ἐν	τὸν	τόποις	ἐκείνοις·	ἤδεισαν	γὰρ	ἅπαντες
were	in	which	quarters	those	they knew	for	all
G5607	G1722	G3588	G5117	G1565	G1492	G1063	G537
τὸν	πατέρα	αὐτοῦ	ὅτι	Ἕλληνα	ὑπῆρχεν		
which	father	him	that	a Greek	was		
G3588	G3962	G846	G3754	G1672	G5225		

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 2:3 (Parallel theme): But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

1 Corinthians 9:20 (Parallel theme): And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

Galatians 5:6 (Parallel theme): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.