

Acts 19:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Analysis

But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters—The town clerk distinguishes between private legal disputes (previous verse) and public policy questions. The conditional *εἰ δέ τι* (ei de ti, 'but if anything') introduces a broader category. **Concerning other matters** (περὶ ἔτερων, peri heterōn, 'concerning different things') might include issues affecting the city as a whole—religious policy, civic rights, economic regulations.

It shall be determined in a lawful assembly (ἐν τῇ ἐννόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ, en tē ennomō ekklēsia, 'in the lawful assembly')—ἐννόμῳ means 'legal, legitimate, according to law,' distinguishing it from this illegal mob (also called ἐκκλησίᾳ, ekklēsia, 'assembly' in v. 32). The irony: Luke uses ekklēsia for both the church and the civic assembly, but only one operates lawfully—and it's not the Ephesian mob. The clerk insists on proper democratic process through the official city assembly, not riot.

Historical Context

Ephesus had a democratic assembly (ἐκκλησίᾳ) that met regularly to decide civic matters. This was distinct from mob gatherings, which Rome viewed as potentially seditious. The clerk's distinction between a legal assembly and an unlawful mob reflects Roman policy: cities with self-governance could maintain it only by keeping order. Any whiff of insurrection could bring harsh punishment, including loss of free city status. The clerk's appeal shows how Roman administrative

structure ironically provided space for Christianity to spread through legal channels.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What's the spiritual significance of Luke using the same word (*ekklēsia*) for both the church and civic assembly, yet distinguishing lawful from unlawful gatherings?
2. How does proper order and structure—whether in government or church—protect truth and prevent chaos?
3. In what ways do Christians today need to advocate for legal and orderly processes against mob mentality, even in the church?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δέ	τι	πὲρι	ἐτέρων	ἐπιζητεῖτε	ἐν	τῇ
if	But	any thing	concerning	other matters	ye enquire	in	G3588
G1487	G1161	G5100	G4012	G2087	G1934	G1722	

ἐννόμω	ἐκκλησίᾳ	ἐπιλυθήσεται
a lawful	assembly	it shall be determined
G1772	G1577	G1956

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