

Acts 21:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

Analysis

Paul's question in Greek - 'May I speak unto thee?' - surprised the Roman commander who assumed he was dealing with an uneducated troublemaker. Paul's cultured Greek immediately changed the commander's perception, opening an opportunity for witness. This demonstrates how God-given education and cultural literacy can create opportunities for gospel advance.

Historical Context

Educated Greeks were respected in the Roman world. Paul's ability to speak cultured Greek (and later Hebrew, Acts 21:40) revealed his sophisticated background and distinguished him from common revolutionaries.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How can you use your education and cultural competencies as opportunities for gospel witness?

2. What does Paul's use of appropriate language teach about contextualizing communication for different audiences?

Interlinear Text

Μέλλων τε εἰσάγεσθαι εἰς ὁ παρεμβολὴν ὁ Παῦλος
was to be And led into Who the castle Who as Paul
G3195 G5037 G1521 G1519 G3588 G3925 G3588 G3972

λέγει ὁ χιλιάρχῳ Εἰ ἔξεστίν μοι εἰπεῖν τι
he said Who unto the chief captain May G1832 I speak G5100
G3004 G3588 G5506 G1487 G3427 G2036

πρὸς σέ ὁ δὲ ἔφη Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις
unto thee Who G1161 said Greek Canst thou speak
G4314 G4571 G3588 G5346 G1676 G1097

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org