

Acts 22:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Analysis

He spake in the Hebrew tongue (τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ)—Likely Aramaic, the common language of Palestinian Jews. Paul's linguistic choice was strategic: speaking the people's heart language (not Greek, the empire's lingua franca) immediately established his Jewish credentials and cultural authenticity.

They kept the more silence (μᾶλλον παρέσχον ἡσυχίαν)—The verb implies granting or furnishing silence, suggesting the crowd actively chose to listen rather than merely quieting down. Language creates connection; Paul's Aramaic transformed a murderous mob into an attentive audience, if only temporarily (they resumed rioting at verse 22 when he mentioned his Gentile mission).

Historical Context

Roman occupation meant most official business occurred in Latin or Greek. That Paul commanded both Aramaic (his native tongue as a Jew from Tarsus) and educated Greek (evident in his letters) shows his bicultural sophistication—able to bridge Jew and Gentile worlds.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How might 'speaking the language' (culturally, not just linguistically) of your audience enhance gospel communication?
2. What aspects of your testimony naturally connect with those who don't yet know Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἀκούσαντες	δὲ	ὅτι	τῇ	Ἑβραϊδί	διαλέκτῳ	προσεφώνει
when they heard	(And	that	G3588	in the Hebrew	tongue	he spake
G191	G1161	G3754		G1446	G1258	G4377
αὐτοῖς	μᾶλλον	παρέσχον	ἡσυχίαν	καὶ	φησὶν·	
to them	the more	they kept	silence	and	he saith	
G846	G3123	G3930	G2271	G2532	G5346	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 21:40 (Parallel theme): And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,