

Acts 22:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

Analysis

And as they bound him with thongs—Paul is being stretched for flogging (μαστιγώσωσιν, *mastigōsōsin*, v. 24) with leather straps (ἱμᾶσιν, *himasin*, 'thongs, lashes'). Roman scourging was brutal—leather whips embedded with bone or metal designed to flay flesh. Men died from this punishment. The preparatory binding stretched the victim's arms forward, exposing the back fully.

Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?—Paul's timing is strategic; he waits until binding begins, making his point vivid. The question εἰ ἄνθρωπον Ῥωμαῖον (*ei anthrōpon Rōmaion*, 'if a Roman man') and ἀκατάκριτον (*akatakriton*, 'uncondemned, without trial') invokes the Lex Valeria and Lex Porcia—Roman laws forbidding the flogging or execution of citizens without trial. Paul uses his citizenship strategically to protect himself and establish legal precedent for the church.

Historical Context

Roman citizenship was precious and rare in the provinces. It provided protection from degrading punishment, right to trial, and appeal to Caesar. The Lex Porcia (248 BC) and related laws made it illegal to bind, flog, or execute a Roman citizen without trial. Violation could bring severe punishment to the offending official. Paul's Tarsian citizenship was unusual—possibly inherited from his father or

earned through service. This dramatic moment in Jerusalem (c. AD 57) echoes Acts 16:37 in Philippi, showing Paul's consistent use of legal rights to advance the gospel.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's strategic use of Roman citizenship demonstrate the principle of being 'wise as serpents' while advancing gospel purposes?
2. What's the difference between Paul claiming his rights and Jesus remaining silent before His accusers—when is each appropriate?
3. How can Christians today wisely use legal protections and civic rights to advance gospel ministry without compromising suffering for Christ?

Interlinear Text

ὥς δὲ προέτεινεν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἱμαῖσιν εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν
as And they bound him G3588 **with thongs** **said** **unto** G3588
G5613 G1161 G4385 G846 G2438 G2036 G4314

ἐστῶτα ἐκατόνταρχον ὁ Παῦλος Εἰ ἄνθρωπον
that stood by the centurion G3588 **Paul** **Is it lawful** **a man**
G2476 G1543 G3972 G1487 G444

Ῥωμαῖον καὶ ἀκατάκριτον ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν μαστίζειν
that is a Roman and uncondemned G1832 **for you** **to scourge**
G4514 G2532 G178 G5213 G3147

Additional Cross-References

Acts 16:37 (References Paul): But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

Acts 25:16 (Parallel theme): To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

Acts 27:43 (References Paul): But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

Acts 23:17 (References Paul): Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.