

Acts 23:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

Analysis

The Pharisees' partial defense - 'We find no evil in this man' - represented limited progress. Their concession that perhaps 'a spirit or an angel' spoke to Paul (referencing Acts 22:6-10) acknowledged supernatural possibility while avoiding Jesus's lordship. This demonstrates how people may accept elements of truth without embracing its full implications.

Historical Context

The Pharisees' statement 'let us not fight against God' echoed Gamaliel's earlier wisdom (Acts 5:39). They recognized that opposing genuine divine revelation would be futile, even if they hadn't fully embraced Christianity.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to partial truth or incomplete understanding in others - with encouragement or frustration?
2. What does this teach about how God works progressively in people's understanding of spiritual reality?

Interlinear Text

ἐγένετο	δὲ	κραυγὴ	μεγάλη	καὶ	ἀναστάντες	οἱ		
there arose	And	cry	a great	and	arose	G3588		
G1096	G1161	G2906	G3173	G2532	G450			
γραμματεῖς	τοῦ	μέρους	τῶν	Φαρισαίων	διεμάχοντο			
the scribes	G3588	part	G3588	that were of the Pharisees	and strove			
G1122		G3313		G5330	G1264			
λέγοντες	Οὐδὲν	κακὸν	εὐρίσκομεν	ἐν	τῷ	ἀνθρώπῳ		
saying	no	evil	We find	in	G3588	man		
G3004	G3762	G2556	G2147	G1722		G444		
τούτῳ·	εἰ	δὲ	πνεῦμα	ἐλάλησεν	αὐτῷ	ἢ	ἄγγελος	μὴ
this	if	And	a spirit	hath spoken	to him	or	an angel	not
G5129	G1487	G1161	G4151	G2980	G846	G2228	G32	G3361
θεομαχῶμεν								
fight								
G2313								

Additional Cross-References

Acts 22:7 (Parallel theme): And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

John 12:29 (Parallel theme): The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Acts 23:29 (Parallel theme): Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

Acts 25:25 (Parallel theme): But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

Acts 26:31 (Parallel theme): And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

Proverbs 16:7 (Parallel theme): When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Mark 2:16 (Resurrection): And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?