

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 part that were of the Pharisees and strove
G1122 G3588 G3313 G5330 G1264

λέγοντες Οὐδὲν κακὸν εὑρίσκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ
saying no evil We find in man
G3004 G3762 G2556 G2147 G1722 G444

τούτῳ εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἦ ἄγγελος μὴ
this if And a spirit hath spoken to him or an angel not
G5129 G1487 G1161 G4151 G2980 G846 G2228 G32 G3361

θεομαχωμεν

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?