

Acts 26:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

Analysis

And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying— In private consultation (ἀναχωρήσαντες ἐλάλουν πρὸς ἄλλήλους, anachōrēsantes elaloun pros allēlous, 'having withdrawn, they were talking with one another'), the authorities discuss Paul's case. This sidebar conversation provides their honest assessment, free from public posturing. **This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds**—Their verdict: Οὐδὲν θανάτου ἢ δεσμῶν ἄξιόν πράσσει ὁ ἀνθρωπος οὗτος (Ouden thanatou ē desmōn axion prassei ho anthrōpos houtos, 'Nothing worthy of death or imprisonment is this man doing').

This is the fifth official Roman declaration of Paul's innocence (after Gallio, Lysias, Felix, and Festus). The present tense πράσσει (prassei, 'is doing') indicates ongoing assessment—they find no past crime and no ongoing criminal activity. Yet Paul remains imprisoned. This exposes the injustice: authorities acknowledge innocence but refuse to act on it, deterred by political pressure and Paul's own appeal to Caesar. Truth is clear; justice is delayed.

Historical Context

This private consultation between Agrippa, Festus, and their advisors represents the highest levels of Jewish and Roman authority in the region agreeing on Paul's innocence. The statement carries weight—Agrippa's Jewish expertise and Festus's Roman legal authority concur. This consensus would be known in official circles,

providing protection for Christian communities throughout the region. The declaration also fulfills the pattern seen with Jesus: Pilate declared 'I find no fault in him' (John 18:38, 19:4, 19:6), yet still ordered crucifixion. Righteous suffering despite official acknowledgment of innocence marks both Christ and His followers.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the gap between acknowledged innocence and continued imprisonment illustrate the corruption that enters when political calculation overrides justice?
2. What does this passage teach about the value of clear conscience—Paul knows authorities find him innocent, even if they won't free him?
3. In what ways should Christians maintain hope when authorities acknowledge truth but still refuse to act justly?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἀναχωρήσαντες ἐλάλουν πρὸς ἄλληλους λέγοντες
And when they were gone aside they talked between themselves saying
G2532 G402 G2980 G4314 G240 G3004

ὅτι οὐδὲν θανάτου ἄξιον ἢ δεσμῶν πράσσει ὁ
G3754 nothing of death worthy or of bonds doeth G3588
G3762 G2288 G514 G2228 G1199 G4238

ἄνθρωπος οὗτος
man This
G444 G3778

Additional Cross-References

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 23:9 (Parallel theme): 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.

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