

Acts 28:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

Analysis

I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar (ἡναγκάσθη ἐπικαλέσασθαι Καίσαρα)—The Greek 'anankazo' (compelled) indicates Paul had no alternative when Jewish opposition threatened his life. His clarification—**not that I had ought to accuse my nation of**—shows he appealed for self-preservation, not to prosecute his people. This reveals Paul's ongoing love for Israel despite their hostility (Romans 9:1-3). The appeal exercised his Roman citizenship rights while fulfilling God's promise that he would 'bear my name before... kings' (Acts 9:15).

Historical Context

Roman citizens could appeal directly to Caesar (provocatio ad Caesarem), removing cases from provincial jurisdiction. This right, established under the lex Julia, protected citizens from arbitrary provincial justice and guaranteed trial in Rome.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Paul demonstrate loving difficult people while protecting yourself from their harm?
2. When is it appropriate to use legal rights for self-defense rather than passive submission to injustice?

Interlinear Text

ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἦναγκάσθην
spake against But when the Jews it I was constrained
G483 G1161 G3588 G2453 G315

ἐπικαλέσασθαι Καίσαρα οὐχ ὡς τοῦ ἔθνους μου ἔχων
to appeal unto Caesar not that G3588 nation my I had
G1941 G2541 G3756 G5613 G1484 G3450 G2192

τι κατηγορῆσαι
ought of
G5100 G2723

Additional Cross-References

Acts 26:32 (Parallel theme): Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

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 25:21 (Parallel theme): But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.