

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 (ἤναγκάσθην 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	ἠναγκάσθην			
spake against	But	G3588	when the Jews	it I was constrained			
G483	G1161		G2453	G315			
ἐπικαλέσασθαι	Καίσαρα	οὐχ	ὥς	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.