

Acts 7:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Analysis

The irony peaks: they 'received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.' Those accusing Stephen of law-breaking were themselves law-breakers. Privilege of receiving the law increased guilt for disobedience. Angels mediating Sinai's revelation emphasized its sacredness.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition held that angels mediated the law's giving at Sinai (Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 2:2). Stephen turns their accusation back on themselves - they violated what they claimed to defend.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does religious privilege increase accountability for obedience?
2. What does accusing law-keepers of law-breaking accomplish in Stephen's argument?

Interlinear Text

οἵτινες	έλαβετε	τὸν	νόμον	εἰς	διαταγὰς	ἀγγέλων	καὶ
Who	have received	G3588	the law	by	the disposition	of angels	and
G3748	G2983		G3551	G1519	G1296	G32	G2532
οὐκ	έφυλάξατε						
not	have						
G3756	G5442						

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:2 (Word): For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Galatians 3:19 (Word): Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Acts 7:38 (Parallel theme): This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

Deuteronomy 33:2 (Word): And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

John 7:19 (Word): Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

Galatians 6:13 (Word): For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.