

Romans 16:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Analysis

Who have for my life laid down their own necks—*Hoitines hyper tēs psychēs mou ton heautōn trachēlon hypethēkan* (οἵτινες ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν). *Hypethēkan ton trachēlon* (ὑποτίθημι τὸν τράχηλον, laid down the neck) is vivid—risked execution. *Hyper tēs psychēs mou* (ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου, for my life) indicates they endangered themselves to save Paul. The occasion is unknown—perhaps the Ephesian riot (Acts 19:23-41) or imprisonment—but their courage was notable.

Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles—*Hois ouk egō monos eucharistō, alla kai pasai hai ekklēsiai tōn ethnōn* (οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἐθνῶν). Paul's gratitude is shared by *pasai hai ekklēsiai tōn ethnōn* (all the Gentile churches). Priscilla and Aquila's service benefited the entire Gentile mission—by saving Paul, they preserved the apostle to the Gentiles. Their sacrifice had ripple effects: Paul lived to write Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, establish churches, mentor Timothy. One couple's courage served countless believers across generations.

Historical Context

The phrase 'laid down their necks' reflects Roman execution practices—beheading by sword (*gladius*). Early Christians regularly faced arrest, mob violence, imprisonment. Priscilla and Aquila's willingness to risk martyrdom exemplifies the

church's sacrificial ethos. Tertullian wrote (AD 197), 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.' Courage under persecution was normative, not exceptional. Paul's letters frequently mention co-workers who suffered for the gospel (Philippians 2:29-30, Epaphroditus nearly died; Colossians 4:10, Aristarchus imprisoned).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Priscilla and Aquila 'laying down their necks' (hypethēkan ton trachēlon) for Paul challenge your understanding of Christian friendship and partnership?
2. What would it look like to risk something significant (reputation, career, safety) to support gospel ministry in your context?
3. How does one couple's sacrifice ripple across the entire church (pasai hai ekklēsiai)—what might your faithfulness enable in others?

Interlinear Text

οἵτινες	ὑπὲρ	τῆς	ψυχῆς	μου	τὸν	ἑαυτῶν	τράχηλον
Who G3748	for G5228	G3588	life G5590	my G3450	G3588	their own G1438	necks G5137
ὑπέθηκαν	οἷς	οὐκ	ἐγὼ	μόνος	εὐχαριστῶ	ἀλλὰ	καὶ
have G5294	unto whom G3739	not G3756	I G1473	only G3441	give thanks G2168	but G235	also G2532
πᾶσαι	αἱ	ἐκκλησίαι	τῶν	ἐθνῶν			
all G3956	G3588	the churches G1577	G3588	of the Gentiles G1484			

Additional Cross-References

1 John 3:16 (Parallel theme): Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

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