

1 Corinthians 12:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Analysis

No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed—The ultimate test of Spirit-inspired speech: does it confess or curse Jesus? Anathema Iêsous (ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, "cursed be Jesus") may reflect Jewish synagogue curses against Christians (cf. Acts 26:11) or pagan oaths required during persecution. No genuinely Spirit-inspired utterance—whether prophecy, tongues, or teaching—can blaspheme Christ.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost—Kyrios Iêsous (Κύριος Ἰησοῦς) is the earliest Christian creed, assigning to Jesus the divine name reserved for Yahweh in the Septuagint. This confession requires supernatural illumination (Matthew 16:17). Mere intellectual assent differs from Spirit-wrought conviction that bows the will to Christ's lordship. Paul establishes the criterion for evaluating all spiritual gifts: Do they exalt Christ? Do they acknowledge His supreme authority? Gifts that draw attention to the speaker rather than magnifying Christ fail this test.

Historical Context

Roman imperial cult demanded citizens declare "Caesar is Lord" (Kyrios Kaisar). Christians' confession "Jesus is Lord" was politically subversive, often costing them their lives. Jewish Christians faced excommunication from synagogues for this

confession. The phrase became a baptismal formula and central creedal statement of the early church.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How can Christians today test whether spiritual experiences or teachings genuinely honor Christ's lordship?
2. What modern 'spiritual' practices might appear powerful yet fail to confess Jesus as Lord?
3. In what areas of life do you struggle to say 'Jesus is Lord' rather than maintaining self-sovereignty?

Interlinear Text

διὸ	γνωρίζω	ὑμῖν	ὅτι	οὐδεὶς	ἐν	πνεύματι	θεοῦ
Wherefore	I give	you	that	no man	by	Ghost	of God
G1352	G1107	G5213	G3754	G3762	G1722	G4151	G2316

λαλῶν	λέγει	Ἀνάθεμα	Ἰησοῦν,	καὶ	οὐδεὶς	δύναται
speaking	calleth	accursed	Jesus	and	no man	can
G2980	G3004	G331	G2424	G2532	G3762	G1410

εἶπεῖν	Κύριον	Ἰησοῦν,	εἰ	μὴ	ἐν	πνεύματι	ἁγίῳ
say	is the Lord	Jesus	G1487	G3361	by	Ghost	the Holy
G2036	G2962	G2424			G1722	G4151	G40

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 3:5 (References God): Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Romans 10:9 (References Jesus): That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

John 15:26 (Spirit): But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 13:13 (References Lord): Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

1 Corinthians 8:6 (References Jesus): But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Matthew 22:43 (Spirit): He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

Mark 9:39 (References Jesus): But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

Deuteronomy 21:23 (Curse): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Romans 9:3 (Curse): For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

1 Corinthians 16:22 (References Jesus): If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.