

Acts 13:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Analysis

Paul's warning quotes Habakkuk 1:5 - 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish' - applying ancient prophecy to his hearers' situation. God's work in their day (Messiah's coming, death, resurrection) was so astounding that scoffers risked 'perishing' by refusing to believe. The warning 'though a man declare it unto you' indicates that even clear testimony can be rejected by hardened hearts.

Historical Context

Habakkuk originally addressed skeptics who couldn't believe God would judge Judah through Babylon. Paul applies this to those refusing to believe God's salvation through Christ's cross - both seemed incredible yet were divinely ordained.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does this warning teach about the danger of skepticism toward God's surprising ways of working?
2. How might you be tempted to reject God's work because it doesn't match your expectations?

Interlinear Text

Ἴδετε	οἱ	καταφρονηταί	καὶ	θαυμάσατε	καὶ	ἀφανίσθητε		
Behold	G3588	ye despisers	and	wonder	and	perish		
G1492		G2707	G2532	G2296	G2532	G853		
ὅτι	ἔργον	ἐγὼ	ἐργάζομαι	ἐν	ταῖς	ἡμέραις	ὑμῶν	ἔργον
for	a work	I	work	in	G3588	days	your	a work
G3754	G2041	G1473	G2038	G1722		G2250	G5216	G2041
ὧ	οὐ	μὴ	πιστεύσητε	ἐάν	τις	ἐκδιηγῇται	ὑμῖν	
which	G3756	G3361	believe	though	a man	declare it	unto you	
G3739			G4100	G1437	G5100	G1555	G5213	

Additional Cross-References

Habakkuk 1:5 (Faith): Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

1 Peter 4:17 (Parallel theme): For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Proverbs 5:12 (Parallel theme): And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;