

Galatians 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Analysis

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? Paul's passionate rebuke begins with *anoētoi* (ἀνόητοι)—'foolish, senseless'—those who have lost their minds. The verb 'bewitched' (*ebaskanen*, ἐβάσκανεν) evokes the evil eye superstition, suggesting demonic deception has clouded their judgment. Paul had *proegraphē* (προεγράφη)—'publicly portrayed, placarded'—Christ crucified before their very eyes, as if painting a vivid billboard.

The phrase 'evidently set forth, crucified' translates one Greek participle *estaurōmenos* (ἐσταυρωμένος)—perfect tense, emphasizing the abiding significance of Christ's completed work. Paul's preaching had been a visual drama of Calvary. To abandon justification by faith for works-righteousness is to reject this graphic display of grace. The rhetorical question implies demonic agency behind the Judaizers' success in Galatia.

Historical Context

Written around AD 48-49 to the churches of Galatia (central Turkey), this letter addresses Paul's first major crisis: Judaizers teaching that Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law for salvation. Paul had founded these churches on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). The letter is possibly

Christianity's earliest epistle, predating even the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), where this very controversy would be formally addressed. The 'foolish Galatians' were likely Celtic tribes conquered by Rome in 25 BC, known for being easily swayed.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'bewitching' influences in your life tempt you to add works to Christ's finished work on the cross?
2. How does Paul's vivid 'placarding' of the crucified Christ inform how you should preach or share the gospel?
3. In what ways might you be acting 'foolishly' by trusting in your own religious performance rather than Christ's perfect sacrifice?

Interlinear Text

Ὥ οἱ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
O foolish Galatians who you hath bewitched G3588 the truth
G5599 G453 G1052 G5101 G5209 G940 G3588 G225

μὴ πείθεσθαι, οἵς κατ' ὄφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
not obey whose before eyes Jesus Christ
G3361 G3982 G3739 G2596 G3788 G2424 G5547

προεγράφη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐσταυρωμένος
hath been evidently set forth among you crucified
G4270 G1722 G5213 G4717

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 11:3 (References Christ): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Revelation 2:20 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Galatians 1:6 (References Christ): I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

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?

Hebrews 11:8 (Parallel theme): By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

2 Peter 2:18 (Parallel theme): For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

Galatians 3:3 (Parallel theme): Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 4:9 (Parallel theme): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Hebrews 5:9 (Parallel theme): And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

