

Galatians 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Analysis

And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Paul recalls their gracious reception. "My temptation which was in my flesh" (ton peirasmon hymōn en tē sarki mou)—better translated "your trial in my flesh" or "my condition that was a trial to you." Paul's physical affliction could have tempted them to reject his message. Ancient culture saw physical infirmity as divine disfavor or demonic affliction. His weakness was a test of their spiritual receptivity.

"Ye despised not" (ouk exoutheneēsate, οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε)—you didn't treat as nothing, you didn't disdain. "Nor rejected" (oude exeptysate)—literally "nor spit out," suggesting visceral disgust they could have felt. Instead, "ye received me as an angel of God" (hōs angelon theou)—as a divine messenger. "Even as Christ Jesus" (hōs Christon Iēsoun)—the ultimate comparison. They recognized that despite Paul's weak vessel, Christ spoke through him (Matthew 10:40). Their initial reception testified to the Spirit's work. Now Paul implicitly asks: what changed? Have you lost spiritual discernment?

Historical Context

In Greco-Roman culture, philosophers and orators were judged by physical appearance, rhetorical skill, and impressive bearing. Paul apparently lacked these (2 Corinthians 10:10, 11:6). His physical weakness could have been grounds for

dismissing his message. That the Galatians initially received him as Christ Himself demonstrated supernatural spiritual discernment—seeing beyond the messenger to the message and the God behind it. Their current drift suggested they'd lost this Spirit-given insight.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Do you judge spiritual truth by the messenger's appearance and eloquence, or by the message's content and the Spirit's witness?
2. How did you initially receive the gospel and those who brought it to you, and has your attitude changed?
3. What does it mean to receive Christian teachers 'as Christ Jesus'—recognizing Christ speaks through imperfect vessels?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	τὸν	πειρασμὸν	μοῦ	τὸν	ἐν	τῇ	σαρκί	μοῦ
And	G3588	temptation	my	G3588	which was in	G3588	flesh	my
G2532		G3986	G3450		G1722		G4561	G3450
οὐκ	ἐξουθενήσατε	οὐδὲ	ἐξεπτύσατε	ἀλλ'	ὥς	ἄγγελον		
not	ye despised	nor	rejected	but	as	an angel		
G3756	G1848	G3761	G1609	G235	G5613	G32		
θεοῦ	ἐδέξασθέ	με	ὥς	Χριστὸν	Ἰησοῦν			
of God	received	me	as	Christ	Jesus			
G2316	G1209	G3165	G5613	G5547	G2424			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:40 (Parallel theme): He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (References God): For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Hebrews 13:2 (Parallel theme): Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Zechariah 12:8 (References God): In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (References Christ): Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Malachi 2:7 (Parallel theme): For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

2 Samuel 14:17 (References God): Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

2 Samuel 19:27 (References God): And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.