

Romans 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Analysis

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ—the Greek *ēuchomēn anathema einai* (ηὐχόμην ἀνάθεμα εῖναι) uses an imperfect verb suggesting 'I was wishing' or 'I could wish if it were possible.' Paul echoes Moses: 'blot me out of thy book' (Exodus 32:32). The term anathema denotes being 'devoted to destruction,' cut off from Christ—the ultimate horror for one who declared 'to live is Christ' (Philippians 1:21).

For my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh—Paul identifies Israel as family (*syngenōn*, συγγενῶν, 'relatives') while distinguishing physical descent (*kata sarka*, κατὰ σάρκα) from spiritual. This sets up the coming argument: ethnic Israel alone doesn't guarantee salvation. Yet Paul's willingness to be damned for their sake reveals how election magnifies love, not diminishes it.

Historical Context

Paul's offer mirrors Christ's substitutionary atonement—the righteous for the unrighteous. First-century Jews believed Abrahamic descent secured salvation (Matthew 3:9). Paul's radical statement—that he'd forfeit his own salvation for Israel's—shows how seriously he took their unbelief.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's hypothetical self-sacrifice reveal about the character produced by election theology?
2. For whom would you be willing to forfeit your salvation if it were possible?
3. How does distinguishing 'according to the flesh' vs. spiritual descent reshape our understanding of the church?

Interlinear Text

ηύχόμην γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀνάθεμα εἴναι ἀπὸ τοῦ
could wish **For** **that myself** **I** **accursed** **were** **from** **G3588**
G2172 G1063 G846 G1473 G331 G1511 G575

Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου
Christ **for** **G3588** **brethren** **my** **G3588** **kinsmen** **my**
G5547 G5228 G80 G3450 G4773 G3450

κατὰ σάρκα
according **to the flesh**
G2596 G4561

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 32:32 (Parallel theme): Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Romans 11:14 (Parallel theme): If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

Esther 8:6 (Parallel theme): For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

Galatians 3:10 (Curse): For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Acts 13:26 (Parallel theme): Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

1 Corinthians 12:3 (Curse): 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.

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

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org