

DECEPTION IN GALATIANS 3:1-4, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
CHRISTIANS

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## ABSTRACT

The struggle of the church against deception is from the time immemorial and the wile of the devil has not changed. Deception has been a major problem not only from the Garden of Eden but also in the contemporary church. The goal of this research is to apply the method of Paul in fighting the Judaizers heretical teachings in the Galatians' church into our contemporary time. The research method of this thesis is purely exegetical in nature and various implications shall be drawn from it. The implication of these findings cuts across the life of a believer and the church at large. The implications drawn are for the Nigerian Baptist Convention, proliferation of churches in Nigeria, moral implications, liturgical implications, and for ministers of the Gospel.

As a result of this implication, recommendations were drawn and these includes; sound theological training for Pastors, correct biblical preaching in the church, and avoidance of pluralism in our liturgical worship as an African Christian.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Paul's rebuke of the Galatians was so sharp due to their early defection from faith. They were so gullible to have fallen into the pit of deception that the legalists had dug for them. And that was the reason why in Galatians chapter three Paul used some strong words to correct the Galatians. Contemporary Christians should be ready to defend the faith that was delivered unto them by the past heroes and preserve the truth of the gospel for the generations to come.

Paul's action has been commended by a host of scholars, such as Bruce, Lightfoot and others because they believe that without the book of Galatians, there might be no defense against the onslaught of the legalists both then and now.

In view of the exegetical study of Galatians 3:1-4, the writer would list some recommendations for consideration:

## 5.3 Recommendations

➤ Jesus' atonement is perfect and is the only avenue to be righteous before God.

Any other means or teaching that contradicts this is false and deceptive. Faith

in Christ plus nothing is the only pre-requisite to have the right standing with God and not self righteousness or a set of rules and regulations.

- The Baptist as a denomination must rise up to this onerous task of speaking on issues that encourages false doctrine and that can lead her members astray through deception.
- There is no human made law and traditions that is good enough to complement the scriptures as the basis of faith and grace and should not be embraced at all. Also, any man made law and human traditions that negate the Biblical principles is not acceptable at all. The Baptists as a denomination must be careful that God's standard on faith is not lowered or watered down to denominational teachings and doctrines.
- In opposition to false teachings, Paul stood up during his time to refute his opponents. Religious leaders of our time must rise and stand for the truth, and wage war against false teachings and must not allow it to raise its ugly head.
- The church must promote, embrace and encourage sound biblical teachings of the scripture in churches. False teachings and doctrines must be corrected in view of these following reasons:
  - (a) Errors make a person foolish, lazy and thoughtless.
  - (b) Errors deceive a person
  - (c) Errors promote disobedience
  - (d) Errors lead a believer away from Christ.
- Religious leaders and teachers of the Word must be good transmitters of God's word to His people. The conveyers must prepare very well, coordinate and articulate in delivering the message. These must be done under the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Paul the Apostle was vast in the scriptures.

He used many analogies from the Old Testament to refute the legalists. Therefore, religious leaders and pastors must not shun or ridicule learning as they move on in the ministry. Training and retraining of themselves and others should be encouraged.

- The church should not be quiet on heretical preaching and their peddlers in our time. The writer has watched, with his breath in his mouth, how the church in Nigeria refuses to speak on major biblical doctrines.
- Roadside pastors and theologians should be checkmated by the appropriate church authority.

If the above recommendations are well considered, Christians in this century will be firm in their faith and will no longer be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.