

What has caused them to be so foolish?

Witchcraft, Paul implies. Someone has “bewitched” them. The verb Paul uses means “to exert an evil influence through the eye” ... While it is unlikely that Paul means to say that the Galatians are under a spell cast by a sorcerer, his choice of this word does suggest that the Galatians’ turnaround in their thinking can only be explained by recourse to an evil spiritual influence. [Moo, D. J. (2013). *Galatians* (p. 181). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.]

As is clear from a study of the word “foolish” or “senseless” ... the original indicates an attitude of heart as well as a quality of mind. It refers not to bluntness but to a sinful neglect to use one’s mental power to the best advantage. The Galatians, in lending a listening ear to the arguments of the legalists, must be considered not necessarily dull but thoughtless, not ignorant but senseless, not stupid but foolish. [Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Galatians* (Vol. 8, p. 111). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.]

But Paul was probably not thinking about the sorcerer who had brought the Galatians under the baleful influence of his evil eye, but rather of the Judaizer who had cast a spell upon them not by means of his eyes but by means of his words, his teaching; specifically, by telling them that faith in Christ must be supplemented by Mosaic ritualism.⁷⁸ And the Galatians, by yielding to this influence, **had failed to understand that a Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted.** [Ibid.]

Yet more than just a reprimand, it

expresses Paul’s deep concern, exasperation, and perplexity (cf. 4:11, 20). It is not a lack of intelligence on their part that grieves Paul but a failure to exercise even a modicum of spiritual discernment. [Longenecker, R. N. (1998). *Galatians* (Vol. 41, p. 99). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.]

Anoetos (foolish) does not connote mental deficiency but mental laziness and carelessness. The believers in Galatia were not stupid; they simply failed to use their spiritual intelligence when faced by the unscriptural, gospel-destroying teaching of the Judaizers. They were not using their heads. [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). *Galatians* (p. 63). Chicago: Moody Press.]

Defection and desertion are contemptible because they involve disloyalty and betrayal. Few things are more tragic or disappointing than a Christian who deserts the purity of the gospel for a false form of Christianity that presumes to improve on the finished work of Christ. Yet that is what many believers in the Galatian churches had done or were in danger of doing because of the Judaizers. [Ibid.]

The Galatians were not victims of a magical spell or incantation, but were misled pupils of teachings they should have instantly recognized as false. They were willing victims who succumbed to the flesh-pleasing works righteousness of the Judaizers. They had been convinced that faith was not enough, that something was lacking that could be fulfilled by returning to the ceremonies and requirements of the Old Covenant. [Ibid.]

