

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition
Part XII: Responding To Challenges Of One's Ministry Calling From God, 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:14
2. Exposing The Works Of False Ministers
(2 Corinthians 11:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. Incredible as it may seem, Paul claimed some ministers do not serve God, but Satan, 2 Cor. 11:14-15!
- B. That being so, it becomes necessary for believers to have the works of false ministers contrasted with that of the true for their protection and edification, and 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 provides that insight as follows:

II. Exposing The Works Of False Ministers, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15.

- A. The Apostle Paul expressed concern that though he had disciplined his Corinthian Christian readers to be like a spiritually chaste virgin to Christ, he feared that, like Eve, Satan might have enticed them by cunning deceit to disobey God, 2 Corinthians 11:1-3b. Paul was concerned that the false apostles had corrupted his reader's thinking to adopt error versus sticking to God's simple, pure truth, 2 Cor. 11:3c-4.
- B. To be specific, Paul noted three ways the false apostles, who were really unsaved ministers of Satan (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), had appealed to the Corinthians to trick them to adopt error, 2 Cor. 11:5-12:
 - 1. First, "these false teachers apparently associated themselves and their mission with the original apostles" to get the Corinthian believers to follow them, 2 Cor. 11:5; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 578:
 - a. Paul's term, "super-apostles" (2 Corinthians 11:5 NIV) in this context is an apparent reference to Christ's original earthly disciples, a group of which he was not a part, Ibid. (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)
 - b. The false apostles had apparently hoped to derive their authority before Paul's readers from their association with Jesus' original disciples in carrying letters of commendation from them, 2 Cor. 3:1.
 - 2. Second, the false apostles appealed to the Corinthians by their oratorical abilities, 2 Cor. 11:6a; Ibid.
 - 3. Third, the false apostles appealed to the Corinthians in supporting themselves by accepting the financial support of the Corinthians to whom they ministered, for Jesus had directed His disciples in His earthly life to do this (Luke 9:3-5) and Christian missionaries typically did so (1 Cor. 9:4-6) unlike Paul's team who earned their own livelihoods, 2 Cor. 11:7; Ibid., p. 579. The false apostles thus sought to persuade Paul's readers that he was not practicing what was as upright as were they!
- C. However, on each issue, Paul gave an answer, exposing the error of these false apostles, 2 Cor. 11:5-12:
 - 1. On the association of the false apostles with the "super-apostles", Jesus' original disciples, Paul claimed he was not in the least inferior to them, 2 Corinthians 11:5. Paul later proved this point in 2 Corinthians 11:22-12:10 where he reported of his great missionary track record and even his experience of being caught up to God's heaven to hear words unlawful to utter in this earthly life!
 - 2. On the effort of the false apostles to appeal to Paul's readers via their oratorical abilities, Paul admitted he was unskilled as an orator (2 Corinthians 11:6a), but that he far exceeded his foes in Biblical knowledge, in the spiritual facts he taught, a truth Paul's readers could abundantly verify, 2 Cor. 11:6b!
 - 3. On the false apostles' appeal to their means of support from their listeners' donations as was first practiced by Jesus' disciples, and was the normal practice of other missionaries, Paul claimed he supported himself out of his godly effort to inhibit his critics from charging he was working for money with greedy motives, 2 Cor. 11:7-12; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Corinthians 11:12.

Lesson: Paul revealed that (1) his false apostle foes sought to deceive believers to follow them by way of (a) their apparent commendation by Jesus' original disciples, (b) by their rhetorical skills and (c) by their way of making a living that aligned with the original, typical practice of Christ and other Christian missionaries. (2) However, Paul revealed his credibility came (a) via his great track record of effective service, (b) his undeniably superior Biblical knowledge of God's truth (c) and his extensive efforts to minimize any grounds for criticism for greed in how graciously he supported his livelihood.

Application: May we discern FALSE from TRUE ministers of God by observing whether they falsely try to gain a following by associations and acts that appeal only to externals or carnal lusts or whether they function in selflessness, abundant good works and exhibit a significant knowledge of God's truth!