

II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS

III. The Apostle Paul's Vindication Of Himself, 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:10

C. Paul's Exposure Of The False Apostles' Satanic Influence (2 Corinthians 11:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. False teachers, claiming to be apostles, had entered the Church at Corinth, and they had tried to promote their own views while discrediting the person and message of the Apostle Paul. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552)
- B. This was a difficult situation for Paul: his readers were immature believers who had been saved out of corrupt backgrounds in a city known for its vice, so they were easy prey for false teachers, and Paul had to be careful how he handled the situation lest his readers think he was being unjustly defensive and thus discredit himself.
- C. Paul had saved his most trying task for the last part of his letter, that of addressing the false apostles who had opposed him, and in opposing him, they had opposed Christ's true apostle, and thus Christ Himself.
- D. 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 presents Paul's exposure of the false apostles' Satanic influence, exposing the high level of spiritual conflict that involved his readers, so we view the passage for insight, application and edification:

II. Paul's Exposure Of The False Apostles' Satanic Influence, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 ESV.

- A. Immature believers ("little children," 1 John 2:18-27) like Paul's readers at Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1) have not yet overcome the Evil One unlike what maturing believers ("young men") have done (1 John 2:14b).
- B. Paul thus exposed the spiritual damage that Satan was accomplishing through false apostles in the thinking and actions of Paul's spiritually immature readers, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15:
 1. The apostle asked his readers to bear with him in the folly of comparing himself with the false apostles to reveal his superiority over the false apostles to the immature Corinthian readers, 2 Cor. 11:1; *Ibid.*, p. 578.
 2. Paul did not fully indulge in that folly until 2 Corinthians 11:16, but he took the opportunity that this subject presented to explain the damage Satan was achieving in the Corinthian believers, 2 Cor. 11:2-12:
 - a. The apostle had figuratively espoused his readers to Christ as their spiritual husband, seeking to present them to Christ as a spiritually chaste virgin in practical holiness, 2 Corinthians 11:2.
 - b. However, Paul feared that like Satan in the serpent in Genesis 3:1-5 had deceived Eve to go astray that Paul's readers had been led away by the false apostles from a sincere, pure devotion to Christ, 2 Cor. 11:3.
 - c. Paul explained that if someone had come and preached another Jesus unto them than what he had preached, if they had received another spirit from the one they had received, or if they had accepted another gospel from the one they had accepted, Paul's readers would have readily tolerated it, 2 Cor. 11:4.
 - d. The apostle then addressed one of the claims of the false apostles, that he was not inferior to the "super-apostles" (NIV), what either was what the false apostles called themselves or an "ironical portrayal of the Twelve (or of Peter, James, and John; Gal. 2:9)," *Ibid.*; 2 Corinthians 11:5.
 - e. Paul added that though he was unskilled in speech as compared to the false apostles, in every way his ministry team had made it obvious that he was not inferior as to spiritual knowledge, 2 Corinthians 11:6.
 - f. Another charge by the false apostles was Paul's neglect of receiving financial support from his readers like the false apostles did (2 Cor. 11:7), and Paul explained that he figuratively "robbed" other churches of their support better to serve the Corinthian believers by undermining the claim of the false apostles at Corinth who boasted that they worked on the same terms as Paul's ministry team, 2 Cor. 11:8-12. The false apostles were typically greedy of financial gain (cf. 1 Timothy 6:5), so Paul tried to contrast his gracious attitude with that of the false apostles' greed to demonstrate his credibility to his readers.
 3. Paul then charged the false apostles of being the messengers of Satan, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15:
 - a. Paul's opponents were false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as Christ's apostles, v. 13.
 - b. This was not surprising, for even Satan himself disguised himself as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:14.
 - c. Thus, it was not surprising that Satan's servants, the false apostles at Corinth, had disguised themselves as servants of righteousness, but their end would correspond to their evil deeds, 2 Corinthians 11:15.

Lesson: *The false apostles who opposed Paul before his immature readers were Satan's servants sent to obstruct Paul's godly ministry, and the false apostles had spiritually harmed the immature Corinthians by their proud deceptiveness. Paul countered their efforts by living righteously before his readers in contrast to the false apostles.*

Application: *(1) May we mature in Christ that we might no longer be misled by Satan's servants. (2) If we disciple others, may we realize that we face opposition from Satan in the process, and may we respond by living uprightly.*