

Parson to Person
2 Corinthians 11
(Warning Against Complacency – Part 2)

“Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!” (2 Corinthians 11:1–4).

For our first lesson in chapter 11 we learned that Paul was indignant with the false apostles and clear about the need to rid the Corinthian Church of the liars. He wrote that he was, *“ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled”* (2 Corinthians 10:6), and that the false apostles should be prepared for Paul’s arrival, writing, *“Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present”* (2 Corinthians 10:11). He was going to be sure these men were removed from the church.

It is apparent that the Corinthians were lax about the wicked men (allowing them to influence them) and demanded they take a hard look at their condition—and do what they needed to do. Paul saw himself as “a father of the bride” keeping his daughter pure for the day of her wedding, writing, *“I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (vs. 2). His “fear” was that the Corinthians’ “purity” would be tarnished. They were being “seduced” (drawn away) by “another man” (the false apostles) who were preaching a false Jesus, manifested through

the agency of a deceiving spirit, leading toward a false gospel. This week we will address these three specific concerns.

As a foundation, we must address the first-century concerns:

Another Jesus

The Gnostic Jesus. The Gnostics believed that Jesus was a phantom, possessing no physical body. They taught that “matter is evil, but spirit is good.” Therefore, they denied Jesus’ physical/human nature and, consequently, the incarnation. However, we know that Jesus was fully human and fully God—a hypostatic union of the two perfect natures (see John 1:1–14).

A Different Spirit

The “*false apostles*” were being “led” by a deceiving spirit in order to undermine the Apostle(s) and the true gospel they proclaimed. The “spirit” behind and influencing these “*false apostles*” was not the Spirit of God. Even if they thought they were “*doing God a service*” (John 16:2), they were deceived and being used to deceive others.

This too may have related to the Gnostics—but scholars are unclear about the specific issues with these false apostles/false prophets. Whatever the case, these men, like the Gnostics, claimed to possess an elevated knowledge, a “higher truth” revealed to a special class—think modern-day Mormonism. They believed that “this knowledge” was given via some mystical higher plane of existence—think Hinduism, Buddhism and the practice of Yoga.

These heresies take us back to the Garden of Eden, where Satan questioned God, His words, and deceptively twisted the truth (see Genesis 3:1–5 and 2 Corinthians 11:3). Satan is a deceiving spirit!

Another Gospel

Inasmuch as we are a bit unclear about the specific false apostles addressed in Second Corinthians, we are certain that during the first century (and beyond) there were false teachers who were preaching a merger of the Old and New Covenants. These men were known as “Judaizers.” In the modern era I can’t help but align their lies with the lies of Seventh Day Adventism. Obviously, the Gnostics proclaimed a false gospel.

Today

Today we will take a very brief look at the errors of Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, and Seventh Day Adventism.

Foundational to these false teachings is a failure to understand Biblical Dispensationalism. In fact, a recent upsurge against Dispensational Theology has been prompted by the highlighting of antisemitism worldwide.

A failure to “*rightly divide the word of truth*” is the at the root of nearly all false teaching. Therefore, I contend for the model we embrace here at Candlelight. It will answer many theological questions and solve many theological problems.

Briefing

On Roman Catholicism: we will see their proclamation of a works-based gospel, the errors of purgatory (which is intended to bring full sanctification/purification to the believer—only to diminish the complete work of Christ), Eucharistic sacrifices (celebrating the literal and perpetual dying of Jesus), and the adoration/veneration of Mary—declaring her role as co-redeemer. Add to these the fact that Roman Catholic doctrine is Amillennial and Supersessionist.

On Mormonism: we will see their proclamation of multiple Gods, that Jesus is a created being—as spirit brother of Lucifer, and

a works-based false gospel. Add to these the fact that Mormon doctrine is Amillennial and Supersessionist.

On Seventh Day Adventism: we will see their theological confusion about the nature and deity of Jesus, a false gospel based upon the blending of Old and New Covenant teaching, and a severely legalistic eschatological application. Add to these the fact that Adventist doctrine is Amillennial and Supersessionist.

Deceiving Spirits and The Doctrine of Demons

All false doctrine is assisted and manifested by deceiving spirits. Paul did not want the Corinthians influenced by *“another spirit,”* and I certainly don’t want to tolerate it here. Therefore, we contend for the faith, speak the truth in love, and call out the errors present in our day.

Peter wrote, *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed”* (2 Peter 2:1–2).

Therefore, we can be sure false teachers are around us—or we must conclude that Peter (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) was wrong. My friends, these evil workers are around, must be identified, and rejected.

May the Lord give us grace and discernment.

Love you all,
Pastor Paul