

Don't Be Led Astray

2Corinthian 11:1-4

Paul is reluctant to talk about himself & all he's done for church--lots of behind the scene things--the labor, hardship, cost. **Yet** heretics have come in slandering Paul & commending themselves gaining a following. So Paul defends himself & his ministry although it **shames** him to do so--Then he goes after deceivers who are distorting & changing the Gospel.

*1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I **betrothed** you to one husband, that to **Christ** I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. 4 For if one comes and preaches **another** Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.*

There is good jealousy over wife, kids, church—*betrothed* - Churches relationship to Christ is like that of a bride & bridegroom relationship in marriage in that day. There were friends of bride & friends of groom. Friends of bride would watch over her make sure no con artist, defrauder take advantage of her and end up defiling her. They made sure she was safe, chaste & pure before the wedding. So Paul wants the church pure in doctrine, guard against fraudster who compromise & lead believers astray.

There is a great effort on the part of some in the Church for unity at all costs. They say only when there is unity among believers will revival come. They tell us we need to drop our differences & come together in love. I think they have it backwards--when revival comes then comes unity. Yet in reality there is no genuine love or unity w/o the glue of God's word which makes unity & love real. ***How can two walk together unless they agree.*** What is disturbing w/in the evangelical community is a push for unity, *primarily*, at the expense of ***Biblical inerrancy***. Uncompromising commitment to the word of God is basis for harmony of relationships.

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Ken Smith 'I really want to get to know you.' Wanted me to submit to him as self proclaimed apostle of Islands & our church to come under his authority. He had a lot of quirky beliefs & aberrant theology.

Paul defends his ministry & in so doing points out **flaws** of certain ministers & deviant doctrine they teach. When you do what Paul is doing you open yourself up to criticism. *Paul's just mad because he's not as good a communicator, **or** he doesn't like it that they're having great success in ministry, **or** Paul is taking pot shots to make himself look better, **or** he's just jealous cause they have a big following.*

Barna Research Group- A trend has reached crisis proportions: American Christians are biblically illiterate. Although most of them contend that the Bible contains truth & is worth knowing & most of them argue that they know all of the relevant truths & principles, our research shows otherwise. And the trend line is frightening: the younger a person is, the less they understand about the Christian faith. By & large kids parrot what their parents teach them. Sadly, w/ fewer & fewer parents teaching their kids much of anything related to matters of faith young people's belief system is a product of the mass media. Today people are oblivious to committed study of the Bible...churches have de-emphasized Bible teaching; families have become too busy & have demoted Bible learning as a family endeavor & priority...messages derived from cultural communications often directly conflict w/ biblical messages, causing confusion or an outright rejection of biblical themes. I would add—especially in our woke culture

So today as in Paul's day, ignorance is not bliss when it comes to biblical truths--many Christians become prey to the influences of false teachers *'not all who come in the name of the Lord are of the Lord.'*

*2 Cor 11:3,4 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches **another** Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.*

Paul is not puting down others to promote himself--but *Godly jealousy* drives him. He is concerned for the spiritual welfare of the church. *Cotton candy* won't promote health or physical growth nor sweetmeats of heretic.

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Another Jesus of a different kind--not the same kind. Jesus said I will ask the Father & He will send you *another* helper—one of the same kind as Me

Alan Redpath says we start our Christian life spiritual and move toward carnality. *'No Christian is ever carnal when he begins his Christian life, but he can sink into carnality.'* Blessings out of Buffetings.

Paul recalls how they started out in purity & simplicity when first betrothed to Christ but now as the *serpent* w/ his trickery deceived Eve Paul fears for them. Led away from true devotion to Christ :3 into pseudo-religious experience—a different Jesus—different spirit---different gospel.

Fake fruit may look real, wax or plastic--fine for decoration but lacks essential vitamins & minerals to sustain health. So too fake religion.

'It should be obvious to any man who is not one himself, that the land is overrun w/ messiahs. I refer not to those political quacks, who promise in one election to rid the land of evil, but rather, to those inspired holy men who promise to reduce the diaphragm or orient the soul thru the machinery of a cult religion. Each of these has made himself the center of a new theophany, has surrounded himself with a band of zealous apostles has hired a hall for a shrine and then set about busily to rescue truth from the scaffold, and put it on the throne.

A quote from **Charles Ferguson** penned some 90+ years ago in '**The New Books of Revelation**'1929 as he saw the invasion of false religious systems in America and described them as 'the modern Babel'. Christian Science, Mormonism, J.W., Bahai, Unity, Scientology (Tom Cruise), Unitarianism, Spiritism, Budism, Islam, Kabbalah (Madonna)—etc...

Lesser sophisticated theopanies run amuck in America today-Jesus of pop culture cool to wear a cross

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Gullible impressionable people run after what is not God and are led astray

Lake Arthur, New Mexico-Maria Rubio was making burritos when she noticed a 3X3 inch face of Jesus burned into the tortilla she was cooking, She saved it, framed it & built a shrine in her living room. To date over 11,000 people have visited it.

Oral Roberts said he saw a 900 foot Jesus at the City of Faith in Tulsa, 'Jesus reached down put His hand under the city of Faith & said *see how easy it is for me to lift it*. Seven years later Roberts said God again appeared to him demanding \$8 million dollars from his followers to complete the city of Faith or God was going to kill him. They gave \$9.1 million. A few years later the project went bankrupt & was sold to a secular organization.

How do you know when it's God & when it is not? How do you know when it's another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel.....of a different kind?

Matt 7:15-23 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

How to spot-

1 Followers rally around the leaders own unique interpretation of scripture-always aberrant & deviating from historic Christian interpretation.

2 Pet 1:20-21 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

2 Tim 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Bible is the final authority to determine correctness of teaching. It is the plumb line to measure accuracy of faith and practice.

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American Banking Assoc used to have a training program that sends hundreds of bank tellers to Washington DC in order to teach them to detect counterfeit money because of the tremendous loss of revenue each year to the Treasury Dept. During the entire two week training no teller touches counterfeit money. Only real money passes thru their hands. The ABA is convinced that by being familiar w/ the real thing you will not be deceived by the counterfeit no matter how authentic the forgery seems to be.

Cults & false teachings flourish in the Christian church because they capitalize on the failure of Churches to teach the bible & equip the saints to know, identify & refute false belief systems.

2 False doctrine vigorously opposes mainstream Christian teaching. In particular the person & work of Christ for salvation (faith alone). 2 Cor 4:4..***the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

False teachers always make Jesus less than He really is. ***1 Jn 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.***

3 Draw away unstable souls—they attract the shallow, naïve, immature believers. ***1 Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.***

2 Tim 3:6-7....those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

4 False teachers are antagonistic & use personal attacks to justify their position. Not only do they reject your point of view but reject you. ***Stephen Acts 7:54;57 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse.***

Cults believe they have liberated people from oppressive orthodoxy, bible bigotry, dogmatic doctrine—But theirs is a mush pot of philosophical sayings w/o absolute truths, feel good religious gobbledygook

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5 Organizationally stubborn-intolerant of any position but their own. They allege extra biblical supernatural inspiration. They hold sway over their people by claiming evidence of miraculous revelation, visitation or supernatural disclosure by God. The scripture is secondary

Charles Taze Russell declared his writings were indispensable to the study of the Bible for JW and to study the Bible apart from his inspired comments was to go into spiritual darkness. He also taught that studying his writings, over & above the Bible would most certainly lead one into deeper spiritual illumination w/in 5yrs

Mary Baker Eddy required her followers to regard her book 'Science and Health w/ Key to the Scriptures' as a divine revelation. Her religion was a 'higher, clearer and more permanent revelation than that given to the followers of Jesus.' She said she would blush to write of Science & Health as she did if she apart from God were it's author

False teachers & cults start w/ authoritarian pronouncements coming from God. Then structure added & it becomes organized belief system--requiring faith in the supernatural authority of those who initiated the revelation.

LA Times reported new prophets emerging in the 21st C. Identifying 1,100 new groups—from space aliens who are about to cleanse the earth to the 'yeller sect' who interprets the Bibles declaration that Jesus will return w/ a shout as meaning that, they must go around constantly screaming His name at the top of their lungs to spark Armageddon. Cults thrive on conformity, ambiguity and novel beliefs.

6 Isolation and heavy handed authority-

3 Jn 1:9-10 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church.

7 Keep followers in state of denial. Adherents live in a state of denial (**tho deny**). Leaders can do no wrong even in face of obvious inconsistencies

JF Rutherford leader of JW declared Abraham, Isaac & Jacob would return to earth before the close of the 1920's. The JW proceeded to buy a home in San Diego, Calif. for the patriarchs to live in called Beth Sarim- 'the house of princes.' They never came & the house was eventually sold, yet adherents tenaciously hold to their leaders claim of prophetic inerrancy.

Joseph Smith founder of Mormonism prophesied of moon men 'The inhabitants of the moon are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being about 6 feet in height they dress very much like the Quaker style & are quite generally in style, or the fashion of dress w/ stove pipe hats. They live to be very old; coming generally, near a thousand years. This is the description of them as given by Joseph the seer and he could 'see' whatever he asked the father in the name of Jesus to see.

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Today we have modern day prophets who claim to speak w/ inerrancy-- whose words are on par w/ the bible

8 Emphasize money – give to get, cancel debt, 100 fold blessing, release salvation for loved one, break thru in finances. As if heaven was cosmic slot machine and God a rich uncle willing to give us whatever we ask.

1Thes 5:21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (NKJ)

2 Tim 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove (**convict of errors**), rebuke (**severely charge on pain of penalty**), exhort (**call to ones side**), w/ great patience and instruction

2 Cor 1:12 For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

1-Rally to leaders aberrant teaching, **2**-Oppose mainstream Christianity, **3**- Draw unstable souls, **4**-Antagonistic & attacking, **5**-Cult stubbornness, **6**- Isolation & heavy hand, **7**-Adherents in denial, **8**-Money emphasis.