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## 2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

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SESSION 21 | 2 CORINTHIANS 11:4-20

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### 2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-12:13 | PAUL'S BOAST OF APOSTOLIC CREDENTIALS

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- Verses 1-3 on session 20
- Verse 4 -
  - Likely the **he that cometh** is the same man of 2 Corinthians 10:7, 10-11, the man that was Paul's enemy, and the reason that Paul is now giving this defense of his apostleship.
  - The "if+subjunctive" rule comes into play here. When any form of the Greek words for **if** are used with a *subjunctive* verb, they are true "if/then" statements. However, when they are used with a non-subjunctive verb, then they are "since" statements. In this case, the verb is a participle (a statement of ongoing fact).
  - Therefore, the man has come **preaching another Jesus** and **another spirit** and **another gospel**. The problem is that the Corinthians were allowing this to take place beyond what they should have allowed.
- Verse 5 -
  - Paul says **I suppose** (that is, *I make a logical conclusion*) that he is not a **whit behind the very chiefest apostles**.
    - The word **behind** is ὑστερέω [hystereo] from which we get *history*.
    - The Greek word μηδείς [medeis] is translated **not a whit**. The Greek word has the meaning of being *behind a person*. The obsolete word **whit** (sometimes spelled *wight*) also relates to a *person*. The Oxford English Dictionary gives one definition of the word as "A human being, man or woman, person." Thus, Paul says "I am not even *one person behind*..."
    - Paul is not behind **the very chiefest apostles**. The word for **chiefest** here is λίαν [lian] which is *exceeding*. It is *not* the word used in 1 Timothy 1:15 where Paul claims to be the **chief** sinner saved by grace (that is, the first). Had Paul wanted to say *exceeding* in 1 Timothy 1:15, he easily could have done so.
- Verse 6 -
  - Paul was **rude in speech** (that is, *plainspoken, not refined and polished*) but **not in knowledge**. One cannot always judge a man's **knowledge** by the refinement of their speech.
  - In both **speech** and **knowledge** Paul (and companions) were **thoroughly made manifest among you** (that is, there were no secrets, no hidden agendas in speech or knowledge).
- Verse 7 -
  - Paul is speaking boldly and brings up the fact that he **preached to you the gospel of God freely**, making reference to the fact that he humbly did not charge the Corinthians for his labors.
  - Paul was a tentmaker while in Corinth. It seems that Paul's enemy was now using this itself against Paul, likely in the sense that "Paul was never our Pastor...just check the check register and you'll see there is not a single check written to him."
  - Paul was **abasing myself that ye might be exalted** (recall that he has asked us to **bear with me a little in my folly** - 2 Cor. 11:1 - thus he is speaking in exaggerated terms).
- Verse 8 -
  - It is interesting that Paul uses the word **robbed** when he speaks of **taking wages of them, to do you service**.
  - This is again exaggeration of words (as he begs excuse in verse 1), for those who supported Paul did so out of missionary motives (see Phil. 4:4-16). However, Paul is pointing out that the church at Ephesus had received a *windfall* in his ministry.
  - It is true that one's enemies are often the ones for whom you've gone to great expense to bless.
- Verse 9 -
  - Sometimes there is blessing in not being financially beholden to any party.

- In Paul's case, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied and Paul worked hard to keep from being burdensome unto you and intended to continue to do so.
- Paul doesn't teach this as a fixed principle for all churches (compare 1 Tim. 5:17-18), but uses this to show his love for Corinth and the sacrifice he has made there, against the accusations of his enemy.
- Verse 10-12 -
  - Paul continues in his **boasting**, pledging that he will not stop.
    - Why? So that he may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion for creating havock.
    - At times, being very blunt (**rude** - v. 6) is the only way to cut off occasion for those who create such occasion.
  - The last phrase of verse 12 can be confusing. Paul is saying "let them live with the things they boast about, just as we do." It is a way of saying, "the proof is in the pudding."
- Verse 13 -
  - An apostle is often defined as *one sent forth*, which is only partially true. An apostle is actually *one directly sent forth*. Thus, the false apostles are transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, therefore they are **deceitful workers**.
  - Note that the church only has *one apostle*, and that is the Apostle Paul (the 12 were apostles for Israel). Therefore, any *modern-day* apostles are **false apostles**, and **deceitful workers**.
- Verse 14-15 -
  - These are Paul's strongest words yet, for he says that the **false apostles** (still considering the man who brought the oppositions against Paul) are Satan's **ministers** (v. 11).
  - How can these fakes appear to be on God's team?
    - Because their master, **Satan himself** is able to be transformed into an angel of light.
    - This is a play on words from the name we give to Satan based on Isaiah 14:12, **Lucifer** (Hebrew for *light-bearer*).
  - Note: Because Satan is transformed into an angel of light:
    - We should beware of people and things which are *too good to be true*. Good spirituality involves a healthy degree of skepticism.
    - We should not be surprised that *people too* can be fakes. Deception is part of our fallen world.
- Verse 16 -
  - Paul says, "I'm not fool, but if you want to consider me such, then let me speak folly." This is in line with the context of the passage.
  - It would be along the lines of "If you think I'm foolish, I'll be more than happy to show you foolishness!"
- Verses 17-18 - In verse 16 Paul offered to show foolishness. In these verses, Paul delivers, boasting **after the flesh** as others had done.
- Verses 19-20 -
  - Paul is playing the part of a fool because the Corinthians **suffer fools gladly** (though, apparently, were much more critical of true apostles).
    - The word **suffer** is "to endure."
    - The Corinthians will endure **if a man bring you into bondage or devour you or exalt himself or smite you on the face**.
  - Sadly enough, many in the Christian world today fall into one of two categories:
    - Those who allow the *bullying* of men like Paul describes
    - Those who teach others to *turn the other cheek* but do not rightly divide those words of Jesus with the dispensation in which they are given.
  - May you and I be in neither group!