

Our Adversary the Devil - His Ministers Cont

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[0 : 00] All right. All right. Well, thank you for all you welcoming me and us back from a week away at teen camp.

I don't feel like I'm quite 100% feel wore out and I wasn't even playing the games. I think it's just 45. You're just going to have to find a youth guy because it's staying up late, getting up early and out in the sun, out in the water and all of that.

It's a lot of fun, but it's enough. I'm dragging, so we'll try to hold it together. What we're going to do is get back into our study on our adversary, the devil.

We're on the sixth category, his ministers, and what I sought to do, I kind of stepped into this going through 2 Peter 2, which is just a broad chapter really analyzing details and characteristics of his ministers.

And I kind of was going through that phrase by phrase, but I wasn't content to do that. I tried to step back and restructure it, and I'm working that way to kind of outline this study. So we may kind of backtrack a little today, and I'll fast forward through the material that we have already covered in some of the verses, but it's probably a good time to do this since we took a week off of it.

[1 : 25] So we're studying his ministers, the very end of our study here on our adversary. And the question came up, if Satan has ministers, and let's just turn to 2 Corinthians 11 to begin.

2 Corinthians 11. And let me point out something or start much earlier in the chapter.

And I'll start, because this will kind of tie into some of the material we ended on last time. Verse number 3, Paul says, But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

For if he that cometh, that's a man, that shows up in Corinth, if somebody shows up, if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, whom ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted.

And he kind of sarcastically is attacking them, saying, You'd put up with him. You'd let him preach in the pulpit. You'd invite him back. You might well bear with him. And that's not the way it's supposed to be.

[2 : 45] He's concerned about this church. So later on, verse 13 is where we get this thought of his satanic ministers. Verse 13, Now the thought comes up of if Satan has ministers, as the apostle Paul declares that he does, and that there will be a man showing up preaching something, and it's not the truth, or it's not according to the truth, or it could be just a slight beguiling and a twist on what's correct, and it's corruption, like what Satan did with Eve.

If he has these men, and there's somebody that Paul is telling this church to be on the lookout for, because he could show up at any day, then what are these men going to look like?

And could we spot them, or are they visible, or are they present in our world today? And I believe absolutely, and there's plenty of scripture, and there's plenty of these apostles that write about it, Paul, Peter, Jude, John.

They all write, and they all declare something about some ministers of Satan, and some men that the believers need to be aware of. They're called false apostles here.

They're called deceitful workers. They're fakers. They are transforming themselves to look like someone they're not. Christ talked about wolves in sheep's clothing.

[4 : 25] That's what these are. Now, the first thing, we covered a little bit of this. I want to kind of backtrack, and I'll give it to you by the outline form, is their identity. That is, what are these men identified as in the Bible?

And we saw in 2 Peter, they're identified as teachers. But before that, here in this chapter, they're identified in verse 13 as false apostles. They're called apostles, but not apostles of Christ.

They're false apostles. But they would feign themselves to be apostles of Christ, and they would claim Jesus Christ. And then we saw in Revelation chapter 2, the church at Ephesus were commended because they tried these apostles and found them to be liars.

They said they're apostles of Christ, and they found them to be false apostles. And so these men are deceived. In the words of Paul to Timothy, he said that they are evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, meaning themselves are being deceived, being beguiled by the devil to work for him.

Now, Jesus Christ warned in Matthew 7 about false prophets. And take your Bibles and go to 1 John chapter 1, no, chapter 4. Christ warned in Matthew 7 about false prophets.

[5 : 50] He told them by their fruits, ye shall know them. And he even said that these false prophets would show up to the Lord and say, Lord, Lord, in thy name have we done many wonderful works.

We've cast out devils in thy name. And so these false prophets, claiming to be prophets of Jesus, Christ ends up saying, I never knew you.

He says, depart from me. But they're false. They're deceived. They're even walking around. They even are so deceived. So what I'm trying to get you to see is these aren't like some devilish, I even hate to say demonic, because it's not a Bible word, devils in flesh that are like, you think they're some satanic evil force from the darkness, the rulers of the darkness of this world, or some spiritual wickedness in high places.

No, these are men. These are born on the earth, walking around, putting on a suit and a tie, carrying a Bible, claiming the name of Jesus Christ, and believing that they're working for God. They're deceived. So there are false apostles. Christ warned about false prophets. Notice, what did I tell you? 1 John 4, verse 1.

[7 : 07] Believe not, beloved, believe not every spirit. Notice that. We'll talk about that some other time. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

And he's going to warn, even back in chapter 2, and we'll cover this later, about a spirit of Antichrist, and it's already in the world, and it's already working, and it's working through men.

And so he says, believe not every spirit. What do you mean spirit? Are we supposed to see these things? He says, oh, there's false prophets that are gone out into the world. There's a spirit that's working in them, deceiving.

And he tells us to try them. Paul says, to prove all things, and to hold fast to that which is good. And so the spirit-filled believer is going to have to know his Bible.

He's going to have to try and weigh everything according to the word of God. Now we've got false apostles. Here's false prophets. And then slip back to 2 Peter chapter 2, where we saw there were false teachers.

[8 : 13] 2 Peter chapter 2, verse number 1. This is kind of where we began with their identity a few weeks ago. 2 Peter chapter 2.

But there were false prophets, Old Testament. There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you. So they're identified as teachers.

Not just teachers, but false teachers. So there's a quick little small list here of apostles, prophets, and teachers. I don't know if this is ringing a bell in anybody's head yet, but come to Ephesians chapter 4.

And notice the offices that God gave to the local church, to the body of Christ. He gave specific offices to grow the body, to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry.

Ephesians chapter 4. We came through here in Sunday school several months ago. And there are gifts. These gifts are listed as offices within the body of Christ in verse 11.

[9 : 18] And he gave some apostles. We just saw apostles that are false apostles. And some prophets. We just saw there's false prophets. And some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.

Now, based on the semicolons in the verse, you've got four categories, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers together.

So there's four. We've seen false apostles. We've seen verses against false prophets. We even see them against false teachers. The evangelist one, not really sure.

I think we could make a case, if we really wanted to, to say that Satan uses his ministers to convert or to draw men away. Men have departed from the faith. He writes about them having swerved and

having turned aside.

You could kind of, but I don't really know that in the truest sense of evangelism, evangelizing, I don't really see that that's a necessary office for Satan to be even imitating or working in, in the truest sense of what it is, if that makes sense to you.

[10:31] An evangelist that is preaching the gospel. He'd be preaching another gospel perhaps, and maybe we could make that case with the guy that we kind of looked at in 2 Corinthians 11.

But at any rate, we also have this last category, pastors and teachers, and we have been warned, and we've studied this already, that teachers are going to be the thing of the end times, and how they're going to heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and how Paul said, I suffer not a woman to teach, and yet, lo and behold, there's cults that have risen from the teachings of women, and there's women pastors today, and we've already covered some of that.

So, the identity of his ministers, they're identified as apostles. This is, once again, having studied his method of imitation, there it is again, imitating the work of God, imitating the offices that God has given to the body of Christ, and there's his ministers, imitating them, almost down to the very category.

So, there's their identity. At least three out of the four that are given to the body of Christ are counterfeited by Satan. So, secondly, then, let's study their fruit.

Their fruit. And we already looked at some thoughts about them bringing in damnable heresies from 2 Peter chapter 2. We've studied from 1 Timothy chapter 4, some of these false doctrines, and some of the things of the cults.

[12:01] We covered a little bit of that material the other week, and gave you some thoughts about that, and some of the things that Paul warned about. Sounds just like what's coming on the scene in this last century of cults that have arisen here in this land.

How badly we need the word of God to discern truth, and between error and truth, the spirit of truth, the spirit of error. But then we closed last time in 2 Peter 2, where it says, By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Meaning the result of their false teaching, the fruits of all of their ministries, is that the way of truth is going to be looked down upon as if that's wrong. And they're going to have a way to do that.

And the trouble that we all have, I know we all have this trouble, is seeing a man that apparently God is using. That God has, I mean he took him from nothing, from just one little Sunday school bus, to now he's running a church of 1,200 people.

And now there's 40 Sunday school buses, and there's people getting saved every week. And God is using that man, and so how can he be teaching false doctrine, and writing it in books, and teaching it in a college?

[13:13] How can that be of God, when God's using him mightily, and things like that? We wonder, we got champions of Christianity, and wonder how is it that they can be so messed up on something, yet seemingly so successful in something else?

And we don't want to attribute their success to the devil, but we don't know how to handle where they're wrong, and where they're false doctrine, where they don't have a King James Bible for one. I'm blown away. When I was a young man, I could not, I was so, I just couldn't wrap my hands, my mind around, how can these men that are so much smarter than me, be so deceived about the word of God?

I get it. How can they not get it? They have to have been exposed to it. They've had to have been, studied it or seen it. Don't tell me this is new to them.

If I can understand it, where the heirs are, and see the truth, and have my eyes opened, why can't they? And that would bother me. I'd think, I'm not better than them.

[14:17] I know I'm not smarter than them. It's not an intellectual thing. It can't be. But how can they have these massive ministries, and yet be promoting these garbage Bibles, and along with some of their false teachings?

That would bother me. And I just think, well, maybe there's some kind of money in it. Maybe they're getting some kind of kickback somewhere. Maybe there's some kind of success, something they won't let go of, in order to admit it.

I don't know. I would never understand that. And then last week, we looked at Peter. And we saw that Peter, in Matthew 16, Jesus Christ says that he has a special revelation, a holy father in heaven, revealed to him personally, that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God.

And he said, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And then a half a dozen verses later, that same man that received special revelation from God in heaven, takes Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.

And Christ said, get thee behind me, Satan. So Satan can be using a man, that is as close to Christ as they get.

[15 : 35] He can get in, and deceive, and use a man, and use his passions against him, or whatever the case. Then we saw that Peter, and this is where we closed last time, we saw that Peter, in Galatians, the book of Galatians, when Paul gets revelation from Jesus Christ, of the gospel, and he goes to Jerusalem, and he sits down with these pillars, these men of reputation, James, John, and Peter, and he pulls them aside, doesn't want to do it publicly, doesn't want to make a show, but he pulls them aside, and he expounds to them, what God had revealed to him.

And they try to get things in order, because things are transitioning in this time, things are changing, and Paul has revelation from God, it's his job, to get them in on it, get it all balanced, so they know how they can go forward, and not be working against each other.

And they get it squared away, next thing you know, a little bit later in Galatians chapter 2, Paul shows up on the scene where Peter is, and he's separating, withdrawing from the Gentiles, that God had already told him, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common, and he had already gotten light, he had already gone to Cornelius, in Acts chapter 10, and said, of a truth, I perceive that God has no respect of persons, Jews, Gentiles, I get it, but then when Peter gets around these other Jews, he starts to pull away from the Gentiles, and Paul shows up, and he said, I withstood him to the face, why Paul, for he was to be blamed, what was Peter to be blamed, well he was not walking according to what Paul says, the truth of the gospel, and Paul declared that the gospel, and the truth, and the simplicity of it, and the purity of it, and to keep any confusion, about Jew, Gentile separating, and the works of the law, we got to keep all of that down, it doesn't matter what your reputation is,

Peter, it doesn't matter how high you are, how much you're used of God, if you're to be blamed in this, the gospel is higher, than your reputation, and what people think about you, so he rebuked him, he called him out, and it was the right thing to do, but here's the point, Peter was being deceived, or you might say, swerving aside, from the way of truth, in his ministry, and he was the man, if there was a man, that was used of God, in the early church, it was one man, it was Peter, before Paul came on the scene, and as Paul shows up, he rebukes him, and that just gives me warning, that even great, great men, even the biggest name, in that age, of a minister of Jesus Christ, can be deceived, can be guilty, can be blamed, and cause confusion, and dissimulation, is the word that's used, in Galatians 2, and so, Satan's involved, in deceiving, and using even, God's men, to teach, and preach things, that are false, to cause confusion, he did it there, he'll do it here, and so don't be, surprised by that at all, that's the fruit, of these ministers, is the heresies, and then even, speaking evil, of the truth, as he says, in 2 Peter chapter 2, now let's move on, to something else, look at 2 Peter chapter 2 again, and we're going to look at today, their speech, some of the speech, I want to show you, this is, this will go in two extremes, with one being, surely more dominant, than the other, their speech, so in 2 Peter 2, we're in verse number 3, and we're going to flip around, a little bit here, so be ready, verse number 3 says, and through covetousness, shall they with feigned words, make merchandise of you, feigned words, are coming out of the mouth, what's feigned words, well, you don't even have to look up, a dictionary, you can find it in the Bible, but it means to be fake, or to be pretending, remember David, when he was on the run, from Saul, he ended up at Gath, and he says, he feigned himself mad, he let his, his spittle, his drool, come down on his beard, and he's scrapping, on the gates of the, or the bars of the gates, he's pretending, to be a lunatic, it was all a fake show, so that he could survive, and get out of there, with his neck, and I think he, if I recall, he even had the sword, of Goliath on him, at that time, when he was running from Saul, and there he shows up, at Gath, wrong place, wrong time, and so he feigned himself, to be a lunatic, all right, feigned means fake, it means pretending, and these, false teachers, are using, pretend, or fake, feigned words, to accomplish a goal, so, they're showy, they know how to work a crowd, they know how to please an audience, they know how to talk the talk, [20 : 39] Paul says, having a form of godliness, in the church at Ephesus, they found them liars, but they were saying something else, with their mouths, so feigned words, that's an important thing, to consider, let's come back to Romans chapter 16, look what Paul says about them, Romans 16,

I'm also going to catch a verse in Jude, in a minute, see if you can get yourself in Jude, gets set up there, Romans 16, when Paul closes this epistle, he closes with a warning, and it's in verse 17, and 18, Romans 16 verse 17, now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions, and offenses, contrary to the doctrine, which ye have learned, and avoid them, for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts, of the simple, so they're self-serving, and Peter said the same thing, that they're with feigned words, making merchandise of you, they're through covetous practices, they're just, they're in it for one other reason, not their own, we'll see that later, but their speech is good words, fair speeches, fake talk, positive language, instead of helping, they're, you can leave church, every Sunday, just, just feeling like, you got a massage, just, that just,

I feel good, I just feel good, that was nice, and that felt nice, and what they didn't realize, is that, they're, in verse 17, they're causing divisions, and offenses, contrary to the doctrine, which ye have learned, so they're going to have to, wipe away a whole lot of truth, and a whole lot of Bible, in order to give you, that just good feeling, that's coming forth, and, the Lord talked about it, with his people Israel, in the Old Testament, he says, my people love to have it so, they just love to hear, the good stuff, now look over at Jude, here's how he promotes, or declares it, in verse number 16, these guys, just to give you the context, he tells them, in verse 4, there are certain men, crept in unawares, so these aren't these, demonic, devilish, forces from out there, no, these are just men on earth, that Satan's using, and deceiving, and ministering, or working, they're his ministers, in verse 16, these are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lust, and their mouth, speaketh great, swelling words, having men's persons, in admiration, because of advantage, so they're getting kickbacks, they're, they're padding their pockets, and man,

I can't even say that, without, I'm sure of it, if you have, if you've been alive, in the last couple decades, you've seen these fools on TV, and you've seen their ministries, and they all name their ministry, after themselves, and it's, it's incredible, and you just do a little search online, to see the wealth, the net worth, of these men, and their women, and see how much money they got, and if this, these passages, are not just pointing the finger, at some of them, then we're, we're missing something here, come back to Matthew 23, look at Jesus Christ, making some comments, about the men of his day, Matthew 23, so their speech is, it's false, it's fake, it sounds good, that reminds me of something, let me read this quick, in Matthew 6, verse 5, when thou prayest, thou shalt not be, as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men, and so there they are, getting their reward, for faking it, look at Matthew 23, in verse number 3, all therefore whatsoever, they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not, they say to do something, but they're hypocrites, they're not doing it, they're not living it, look at verse 14, woe unto you scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows houses, and here's the word, for a pretense, make long prayer, for a pretense, to, oh it's time to pray, and they fake, a big long prayer, very religious sounding, wonderful words, of the God of Abraham,

Isaac, and Moses, and the God, that parted the Red Sea, and the God, that led us, and spake unto us, his holy oracles, and waxing eloquent, for a pretense, so that they can steal, the property, right out from underneath, a poor widow, to get money, they're using God's name, and religion, to pad their pockets, these filthy wicked men, they're doing it, to get paid, they're fakers, they're fakers, they're fakers, they're fakers, now that's one side of it, they use positive, great swelling words, good words, and fair speeches, to deceive, they're positive talkers, there's plenty of that, I could almost like, take some time, and start showing you, video clips, of some of these fools, and the stuff, that they're putting on people, upon the thousands, of people, just love to hear it, but there's another side to it, look at Matthew 23, there's another side, of their speech, it's the other extreme, chapter 23 verse 4, it says, for they bind, heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay them, on men's shoulders, now they're not doing it, with their hands, they're doing it, with their words, they're putting a, a load, upon the audience, that they can't bear, they're heavy, with their words, and with their speech, this is the opposite, the other extreme, of being so nice, and fluffy, and everything's wonderful, and Jesus loves you, and we're just gonna, live for Jesus today, and on the other side, they're just saying, you're a piece of trash, you can never, add up to God, you're never gonna make it, you're, you need to be this, this, this, and you're such a filthy sinner, and pushy, and pushy, and pushy, verse number 15, of chapter 23, he says, woe unto you scribes,

Pharisees, hypocrites, you come past sea, and land, to make one proselyte, so they're making a proselyte, after themselves, not to God, not to the word of God, not to the truth, but to their religion, which is heavy, and grievous, and when he is made, you make him twofold more, the child of hell, than yourselves, so they're not making disciples, of Christ, they're making proselytes, to their religion, which is do this, do this, you have to do this, and if you're not doing more, you're not truly saved, I doubt your salvation, how would you like me, to say that every other week, if you sin this week, I doubt whether you're saved, I wouldn't want to die, with your salvation, I've heard men say that, from the pulpit, how does that make you feel, you know what that, I've even as a saved teenager, growing up in church, thought, I better check, and make sure I'm saved, I better, Lord, if there's a chance, that I'm not saved, just a little,

[28 : 40] I want to make sure, that's fear, that's stupid, that doesn't have any place, in the pulpits, better check your salvation, well you know the context, you know what, you better check your salvation, if you're lost, and on your way to hell, but the context is, what you're doing, what you're doing, what you're doing, what you're doing, how you're living, you better check your salvation, that's not, that's not sound doctrine, check, just check it by the Bible, for instance, check it by the Apostle Paul, see if he talked like that, if he did, then we'll go with it, look at 3rd John, 3rd John, all the way back there, all the way back there, I might say, check your relationship, with Jesus Christ, check your heart, 3rd John, here's a case, here's a case, where a man, in a local church, is lifting himself up, and lording himself, and running everybody off, look at verse number 9,

I wrote unto the church, but deatrophies, who loveth to have the preeminence, among them, receiveth us not, receives not John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, like this guy's, better than John, has he done more, has he got more experience, does he know something, John doesn't know, to have a better relationship, with God, but God's writing, John's writing, he's trying to reach him, and this guy's, ripping up the letters maybe, verse 10 says, wherefore if I come, I'll remember his deeds, which he doeth, prating against us, with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself, receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them, out of the church, he's running people off, with his overbearing, hard speech, it's not helping anybody, it's not healing anybody, it's not building anybody, up in the faith, that's barking at them, and pounding them, and when the apostle John, whom Jesus loved, comes with his tenderness, and you read John's epistles, he's not a hard guy, he's not a tough guy, he's not Peter, and he's not Paul, he's not rude in speech, and he's not aggressive, and this guy, probably has that alpha personality, whereas John probably doesn't, and this guy says, get out of here, he's that heavy handed preacher, he's that big guy, that tough guy preacher, that thinks that, he's the guy that says stuff like this, if you don't agree with me,

I'll meet you out in the parking lot, if you ever hear somebody say that, in the pulpit, you should just run them off, because that's flesh, that's big tough guy, I'm tougher than you, so I'm going to mouth off, that's not helping anybody, and there's a bunch of that junk, going on around, Bible believe in Christianity, and it's pathetic, so there's the two positive side, that doesn't give you the negative truth, and then there's the two negative side, that doesn't give you the positive truth, that you need, and so what's the best, it's a balance, it's a balance right down the middle, you don't want to go to church, and get your back scratched every week, and feel like that was just nice, and just leave chill, just chill for Jesus, but you don't want to go to church every week, and get your teeth kicked in either, you'll never match that standard, you'll never live up to that kind of preaching, and you'll give up, you'll get so frustrated, just say forget about it,

I can't live that life, and so you can see both extremes, in the churches today, I say by far the positive message, is overwhelming, those life coach kind of ministers, and motivational speakers, that's by far more popular, but those hardcore, overbearing legalists, they have their presence too, and so come back to Ephesians chapter 4, and here I think is a good verse, to help us with a solution, if we could put it into one phrase, what should we be looking for, Ephesians 4, this is the passage, where we were earlier, with the offices given to the body of Christ, and I'll come through that passage, starting in verse 12, the reason they were given, was for the perfecting of the saints, not the beating down of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying, of the body of Christ, now Paul could have said, reproving the body of Christ, and rebuking the body of Christ, but he said, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature, of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind

of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but here's the phrase, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, speaking the truth, absolutely, truth, truth, truth, above all things, whether it helps, or hurts, or what, truth, but there's that other thing, the fruit of the spirit, is love, and if it's being done of God, and in the spirit, it's going to be done, in the right spirit, in love, speaking the truth in love, is what the speech ought to be, it doesn't matter, if it's loud or quiet, it needs to be the truth, and it needs to be done in love, for the glory of God, not man, not money, not numbers, not popularity, not a following, for the glory of God, and for the hearer, to grow, that's the passage, the whole passage, to grow up into him, to come into the unity, of the faith,

I don't think people, grow too well, getting screamed at, like a drill sergeant, they might obey, they might do what they're told, yes sir, they might fall in line, but that's a different thing, isn't it, doing it out of fear, than out of love, and out of love, for the word of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, so there's speech, there's speech, there's more we could say here, but we'll stop, and next week, I think I want to give, two more points, on these ministers, I want to show you, their motivation, which we've already hinted at, this covetousness, and this money thing, and then I want to also, show you their inspiration, and that is, the spirit, that popped up a few times, I want to show you, those verses, and try to show that, some have been seduced, by a spirit, they're good men, that were in the faith, and it says that, they departed from the faith, giving heed, to seducing spirits, so it is a spiritual thing, going on, how these, at one time, good men, have been turned aside, and have fallen, into sin, or into error, and erred from the faith, as Paul says, so we'll take a look, at that next week, and we've got 15 minutes, we'll take a break there.