

New Morning Magical

Some people act like serpents

Today, we'll move into Chapter 10 of the Apostle Paul's 2nd published letter to the ecclesia in Corinth, which was, and is today, located in southern Greece, about 60 miles from Athens:

- 3 For, walking in flesh, we are not warring according to the flesh.
- 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful to God toward the pulling down of bulwarks;
- 5 pulling down reckonings and every height elevating itself against the knowledge of God, and leading into captivity every apprehension into the obedience of Christ,
- 6 and having all in readiness to avenge *[or punish]* every disobedience, whenever your obedience may be completed.

The key point here is found in verses 3-5: We're engaged in a war, but it isn't outward. We aren't battling people, or maybe I should say we don't have to battle people. If you find yourself in a battle with a person, you've gotten pulled into something you don't have to be involved in; those kinds of battles are mere distractions.

The *"bulwarks," "reckonings,"* and *"[heights] elevating [themselves] against the knowledge of God"* practically surround us in the media, academia, politics, and elsewhere, where the name of Christ is a derisive epithet, and where the name of God is scorned. You don't have to wage war with them; you only need to recognize that all those realms are governed by spirits that pose no threat so long as you stay focused on the Father, on Christ, who you are to Them, and your purpose. When you follow the simple principles that we've looked at together in these Morning Magicals, you'll have no trouble spotting the lies, deceptions, and utter distractions that these spirits use to accomplish their goal of destroying the Father's credibility. We'll see more about why that is and how it works when we get into Paul's letter to the Ephesians; you don't want to miss that!

Skip down now to verse 17:

- 17 Now he who is boasting, in the Lord let him be boasting.
- 18 For not he who is commending himself is qualified, but whom the Lord is commending.

Verse 17 is a simple enough instruction: don't take anything to yourself, but always be giving God the glory; it's all His anyway.

Verse 18 is an observation that you and I can watch out for today. One of our pet peeves, Barbara's and mine, is when people in the ministry call themselves evangelist so and so, prophet so and so, or apostle so and so. Paul would never have introduced himself as Apostle Paul. Isaiah would never have introduced himself as Prophet Isaiah. Billy Graham always introduced himself only by his name. The point is to beware of people who make themselves into something by virtue of a title, as opposed to those who simply allow their calling to make their authority or office speak for itself.

Now down to Chapter 11, verse 3:

3 Yet I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deludes Eve by its craftiness, your apprehensions should be corrupted from the singleness and pureness which is in Christ.
4 For if, indeed, he who is coming is heralding another Jesus whom we do not herald, or you are obtaining a different spirit, which you did not obtain, or a different evangel, which you do not receive, you are bearing with him ideally.

Yeshua said, *"Beware what you are hearing,"* in Mark 4:24, and Paul is echoing the same thought here, as if to say, *"Watch out for others preaching something other than what I have taught you, lest you get entangled with another spirit, or a different evangel than what I brought."* Paul's concern was so profound that he invoked the original deception in the garden of Eden when Eve entertained a conversation with the serpent, as a result of which she was deluded by its craftiness, and we all know what happened after that. Paul says that this same delusion can come upon you when you entertain present-day *"serpents"* who herald *"another Jesus,"* who entice you into accepting *"another spirit,"* or a *"different evangel"* from Paul's.

At first, the idea of hearing about, let alone believing in, *"another Jesus,"* accepting *"another spirit,"* or a *"different evangel"* seems almost preposterous; but, while I looked at these phrases, I realized that clear back in 1971, I almost went along with *"another Jesus,"* accepted *"another spirit,"* and a *"different evangel."*

I've told you the story before about the preacher whom I'd been listening to early in my walk with the Lord. He was a fire-breather with quite the following. I was attracted to his authoritative way of speaking and teaching. I was about to travel with a group of people to Lubbock, Texas, to hear this man in person until I learned of another man, whose message that included the salvation of all mankind caused the loss of his church.

The folks going to Texas were very unhappy with me when I told them that I was staying in Denver to hear what this man had to say. You may recall the person's final words to me over

the phone: *“Well, you know, there is no new revelation.”* They were basically accusing the man coming through Denver that weekend, of doing what Paul warned about. At the time, I didn’t know anything about Paul’s unique ministry, but the threat from other people was that if I even listened to someone whom they were accusing of preaching heresy, I would be committing a grievous sin. The truth was that these same people were acting like serpents, *“heralding another Jesus whom we do not herald, or you are obtaining a different spirit, which you did not obtain, or a different evangel, which you do not receive.”* They had no idea that they were doing it, but I realized as I went through this section of 2 Corinthians that this is *exactly* what was happening; and it had the power to delude me as surely as the serpent deluded Eve.

Let me make one other point here: The serpent I faced in 1971 was easy to dispatch: All I had to do was remain true to what I felt in my spirit. Once I spoke it, the serpent went on to Lubbock while I remained in Denver. If I had gone the other way, my life would have turned out entirely differently and I don’t even want to go down that road!

You have probably faced crossroads like this in your life. Thank God for the choices we made with a spiritual wisdom that we didn’t even know we possessed!

In the first verse of Chapter 13, Paul writes this:

1 Lo! This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses, and three, shall every declaration be made to stand.

Paul is reciting an Old Testament principle that operates to this day: *“At the mouth of two witnesses, and three, shall every declaration be made to stand.”* It was part of the Mosaic Law that two or three witnesses were necessary for any charge against another to hold.

Here’s Deuteronomy 19:15:

Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

Long before the Law was given, the precedent was set that something happening twice should catch your attention. You may remember the story of Pharaoh calling for Joseph to be brought from the dungeon to interpret two dreams; here’s the part of the story that establishes the significance of the number two, from Genesis 41:32:

The reason the dream was repeated to Pharaoh, given twice, is that the matter is already established with the One, Elohim. And the One, Elohim, will make haste to do it.

OK, so why do we care about this today? If an idea comes to you twice; if someone asks you something twice, or you're asked the same thing by two different people, pay attention. At least don't slough off these kinds of repetition. When the third person asked me to start a Bible study, back in March 2010, I said yes. All I'm saying here is watch for repetitions in your own life, wherever and however they may come; the Father may be communicating to you in His own, sometimes cryptic way.

Let's move to verses 4-5 of Chapter 13:

4 For even if He [**Christ**] was crucified out of weakness, nevertheless He is living by the power of God. For we also are weak together with Him, but we shall be living together with Him by the power of God for you.

5 Try yourselves, if you are in the faith; test yourselves. Or are you not recognizing yourselves that Christ Jesus is in you, except you are somewhat disqualified?

Verse 4 is simple enough to grasp, especially the second half: *"For we also are weak together with Him, but we shall be living together with Him by the power of God for you."* Don't take for granted the power of God, which, even if you don't see it in your life today, His power will resurrect you out from among the dead, or cause you to rise to meet the Lord in the air, and in both cases, transform your mortal bodies into immortal ones. Yeshua called Lazarus forth from the grave, but it was the Father Who raised Him. You may feel weak, and even look weak to others, or to yourself, but what's important is Christ living in you; it's His strength that matters anyway, not yours. In the end, in what Paul calls *"that day,"* which is *"the Day of the Lord,"* God's power will arrive inside you in a way that is hard to understand, and even harder to describe, because none of us have seen it before.

Finally, we close 2 Corinthians with verse 11 of Chapter 13:

11 Furthermore, brethren, rejoice, adjust, be entreated, be mutually disposed, be at peace, and the God of love and of peace will be with you.

- Rejoice: That's simple, but not always easy. We don't like everything going on in our lives, let alone in the world. Nevertheless, this is Paul's instruction: Rejoice; get over it and get on with it.
- Adjust: This actually means to get yourself in tune, or attune yourself, get your mind right and, while you're at it, get your life right.
- Be entreated: Listen to the call of the spirit within you, be teachable, change where you need to change without being stuck in your pride.

- Be mutually disposed: Be of the same mind as those with whom you walk in the Lord. This can be a major challenge and, frankly, Barbara and I have both found it untenable in more than one relationship or situation. You can be agreeable, to the extent that agreement is even possible, but don't compromise who you are and what you know to be true (so long as what you know IS true).
- Be at peace: Now this you can do always. This does not require getting along with everyone, but being at peace within yourself, because here, Paul says, *"the God of love and of peace will be with you."* How do you *"be at peace"*? You become unmovable in your resolve to follow the Galilean with nail prints in His hands; though none go with you, you keep going through the *"cramped gait"* and walk along the *"narrowed path"* that leads to life. Others may come along or not. If they ask you to share your faith, give it to them humbly and as completely as you are able; but, if not, don't stop walking, don't look behind you to see who's following, and, for Heaven's sake and your own, don't reach back and try to bring someone along who isn't willing to go by themselves. Finally, be at peace knowing that God is Sovereign and He will win everyone to Himself in the end; it's not your job to do it for Him.

That's a good place to stop for today, so until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN