

Simplicity That Is In Christ

2 Corinthians 11:3 [King James] *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

We are given a clear warning, that our Christian life could be corrupted as Eve’s was.

What is Paul saying to the Corinthian church and all Christians in general?

The Greek word translated “*corrupted*” is “*phthēirō*” to spoil, ruin, defile or destroy.

The Greek word translated “*simplicity*” is “*haplōtēs*” sincerity, single mindedness.

The sincere and pure devotion to Jesus Christ as their only Saviour was being threatened by false teaching.

Paul did **not** want the believers to lose their single-minded love for Jesus Christ.

Keeping Jesus Christ first in our lives can be very difficult with all the many distractions threatening to sidetrack our faith in Jesus Christ, His sacrifice and promises.

Just as Eve lost her focus on God by listening to the serpent [Satan – see **Revelation 12:9**], we too can lose our focus by letting our lives become overcrowded and confused.

Satan was offering a different message to Eve that sounded so true to what she had heard from God, but had a very subtle twist to it.

Let us examine the false teaching that Satan used to seduce Eve.

Genesis 3:1 [King James] *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”*

The Hebrew word translated “*beast*” is “*chay*” living being. Satan had been created by God as Lucifer [see **Isaiah 14:12-14**] his name meaning morning star, or light bringer, [Hebrew “*hēylēl*”].

God renamed Lucifer when his pride caused him to believe he could take over God’s throne.

Lucifer’s new name was Satan, the enemy of God.

Satan still retained his brightness and it was this that attracted Eve and Satan used this to deceive Eve by offering her a half-truth.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 [NIV] *“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

Paul warns the Corinthian church that Satan was using his same deception as he used to seduce Eve.

Satan’s human ministers look so good and their message so true as to deceive the majority of humans.

Genesis 3:1 [NIV] *“... did not God say you must not eat from any tree in the garden.”*

The statement was **not** quite true, Eve gave the corrected version.

Genesis 3:2-3 [NIV] *“The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”*

Satan’s first attack using a half-lie to distort God’s command had failed, so he followed this up with a more powerful attack.

Genesis 3:4-5 [NIV] *“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**”*

Satan’s attack was to put doubt into the mind of Eve as to what God had said.

Satan also used what is a weakness in every human, pride and ego.

The barb that made this attack strike home and stick was *“you will be like God.”*

Undoubtedly God has told Adam and Eve the very reason for their existence, to become his created children, already created in His image but eventually in His likeness.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

Note that as yet Adam and Eve were **not** created in the likeness of God, beings with the same character as God.

Satan was offering a short cut to obtaining this *“likeness”* of God, but was really offering to make them into his *“likeness,”* that of a rebel who disobeyed God’s Word.

This placing of doubt in human minds is a very powerful tool that Satan has always used.

Matthew 4:1-4 [NIV] *“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, **“If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”** Jesus answered, **“It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”***

Notice the word *“if”* to try and place doubt in the mind of Jesus the Son of Man, used again in **verses 6 and 8.**

Genesis 3:6 [NIV] *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”*

By appealing to our physical senses sin always seems pleasant at first, unless our eyes are opened to see the end result.

1 John 2:15-17 [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world.** The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

Satan’s society has always made disobedience to God’s Word attractive as it appeals to the physical senses.

Satan also appealed to Eve’s intellectual vanity.

Satan offers today grand buildings and self-elevating offices and ranks to detract from the simple lifestyle that the early Christian church adopted.

It was **not** until after what is called the “*dark age*” of the Christian church when it emerged worshipping in grand buildings, similar to the Pagan temples, full of idols and icons.

Acts 2:42, 44, 46-47 [NIV] *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” ... “All the believers were together and had everything in common.” ... “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*

As mostly Jews the new converts were still attracted to the temple, but mostly the church met and fellowshiped in each other’s homes.

The same places of fellowship continued as a basic feature of the early church as it spread throughout the Roman world.

2 Corinthians 11:4-6 [NIV] *“For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles”. I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.”*

A different Jesus Christ – antichrist? A different spirit – Satan? A different gospel – one with physical rewards, a “*health and wealth*” gospel.

A church led by professional speakers and the intellectual elite.

Acts 4:13 [NIV] *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”*

Not like the early church that was led by Holy Spirit filled humble men and women.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 [NIV] *“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

This was the context and leadership of the early Christian church, totally dependent on the Holy Spirit and led by Him.

1 John 4:1 [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*

We need to test the spirit that is influencing those who preach to us, the Holy Spirit or the spirit of Satan.

James 1:7-8 [NIV] *“That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”*

The Greek translated “*double-minded*” is “*dipsuchōs*” literally two spirited, vacillating in opinion.

It is very easy to be influenced by the Holy Spirit and then the spirit of Satan on another occasion.

Not being single-minded in Jesus Christ, the “*simplicity*” of Jesus Christ.

If we perceive the above two spirited in anyone who is speaking or preaching to us, be warned of the danger.

Avoid the teaching of anyone who:-

- a) Places doubt in God’s Word, the Christian Bible or God’s love and compassion for all human beings.
- b) Those who appeal to our human senses, even our fleshly desire for wealth, pleasure and happiness, instead of an inner joy in God’s presence.
- c) Those who appeal to our intellectual vanity, make us feel “*righteous*” and self-satisfied.

Take care, for the mind behind such teaching is that Satan who is trying to seduce us away from the singleness of our devotion to our Saviour, Jesus Christ.