

“And Even If Our Gospel Is Veiled ...”

“... it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Paul grants a concession in these verses — “our gospel is veiled to some.” It is not certain at this point that Paul had false teachers in mind at Corinth as some presume. Such teachers were there and later will come under severe rebuke from Paul (2 Cor. 11:13-15). One thing is clear. The blindness of some was the work of the “god of this world”. But more on this later.

The words “our gospel” is found in one other place in Paul’s writing (2 Thessalonians 2:14), but his “my gospel” or “the gospel which I preach” is found more. In neither case, however, is the apostle to be understood as claiming to be the originator of the gospel: simply that the gospel message had been entrusted to his and all the apostles’ care.

When he wrote “even if our gospel is veiled” (the KJV has “is hid”), he is referencing back his discussion of the fact that just as the fading glory on Moses’ face was not discernible to his countrymen because the veil on his face concealed that truth, and in like measure the fact that the first covenant was (in fact, had) faded away was hidden to most of his fellow Jews by a veil which lay on their hearts.

Although Paul did concede that his gospel was “veiled to some,” he was not willing to acknowledge that obscurity was the fault of either the message or the messenger: it was the “god of this world” who had blinded the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor. 4:4). While Jesus speaks of the coming of the “prince of this world” (Jn. 14:30), both are to be recognized as referring to Satan.

Satan hates God's word because of what it is able to do. It gives understanding and light (Ps. 119:104, 105). It is God’s seed which has life in it (Jn. 6:63). It is able to save our soul (James 1:21); it is the means by which we are cleansed (Jn. 15:3); sanctified and is food (Jn. 17:17; 1 Pet. 2:2). It is God’s standard by which we will be judged (Jn. 12:48). Because of its power, Satan does his best to keep the word out of men’s hearts. He steals it (Mt. 13:19). Perverts it. Denies it (Gen. 3:4-5). He knows that faith can only be produced by the word (Rm. 10:17); thus he tirelessly tries, with remarkable results, to keep the word from men’s hearts. He blinds men’s minds to the gospel. When Jesus healed the blind man He said, “... For judgment came I into this world that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind. Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and said unto him, Are we also blind? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye would have no sin: but now ye say, we see, your sins remaineth” (Jn. 9:39-41). There were those who saw Jesus’ miracles and perceived, as did the blind man, “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (Jn. 9:33). But the Pharisees who sat on Moses’ seat were teachers of the law (Mt. 23:1-2), looked at Jesus works and said, “We know God hath spoken unto Moses; but as far as this man, we know not whence he is” (Jn. 9:29). The astonishment of the blind man was great:

“Why herein is the marvel (he said), that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes” (Jn. 9:30). Truly Isaiah’s words were fulfilled in Jesus’ generation — a people that saw, yet did not see! Why did the Pharisees not see? Because as with later Jews, Satan had blinded their minds. So the generation of Jews in Paul’s day were of the same sort. They could not see the law was taken away. They could not see the exceedingly glorious nature of the new covenant and of the Lord’s church. They could not see because their minds were blinded by the god of this world who wished to keep them where they were: lost, perishing.

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