

2 CORINTHIANS LESSON 20

Chapter 11:15-12:5, Satan's Ministers Compared to God's Ministers

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Vs 15 Satan's ministers are **"transformed as the ministers of righteousness."**

- They may be nice people who perform various righteous deeds, but since they're working for Satan, they don't care what the bible says.
 - Their religious practices and beliefs are not biblical.
 - They will beguile people and mislead people just like Satan did Eve.
 - They teach people to ignore what God said and to be their own authority (god).
 - Follow your own opinion, your own will, instead of the word of God.

16-18 Paul knows boasting is ungodly, but he must do it to correct those questioning his authority.

19-20 Paul criticizes these believers for allowing themselves to be abused by false teachers.

21-27 Here Paul lists all the physical troubles that he faced as a minister of God.

28-29 Paul also had emotional difficulties in the ministry. His care for people, feeling their weakness, burning with anger when the people he cared for were offended.

30-33 Paul mentions more perils that he faced in his journeys as a true evangelist.

CHAPTER 12

1-2 **"I knew a man in Christ..."** Many bible teachers surmise that this "man in Christ" is Paul himself.

- If Paul was speaking of himself, he would have said so. That's what he did in chapter 11.
- **Whether in the body...out of the body, I cannot tell..."** There are two possibilities:
 - The man that Paul knew was caught up to heaven. Paul didn't know if the man was in his body of flesh or not.
 - Another possibility is that Paul didn't know if he himself was in his body or not when he saw this man who went to the third heaven (Acts 14:19).
 - We cannot be certain of the precise meaning of Paul's words here.

"...caught up to the third heaven." There are three heavens:

- First heaven: Earth's atmosphere.
- Second heaven: Outer space containing planets, stars, moons, comets, etc.
- Third heaven: The dwelling place of God beyond the solar system.
 - Enoch was caught up to the third heaven (Genesis 5:24).
 - Elijah was taken to the third heaven (2 Kings 2:11).
 - Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father (John 20:17, Acts 1:11).

3-4 **"...he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."**

- Many books have been written by people who claim to have died and visited heaven. If they had, they would not have been allowed to repeat anything they had heard there.
- John the Apostle is the only man God allowed to report what he saw and heard in heaven (Revelation 1:11, 22:18).

Vs 5 **"Of such an one (the man he knew in Christ) will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory** (So, the man caught up to heaven in this verse was not Paul).