

2 Corinthians 11:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Analysis

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. If Satan masquerades as light, ou mega (οὐ μέγα, 'it is no great thing') that hoi diakonoi autou (οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ, 'his servants/ministers') do likewise. Metaschēmatizōntai (μετασχηματίζωνται, 'be transformed') echoes verse 13-14—this is the family business of deception.

As ministers of righteousness (hōs diakonoi dikaiosynēs, ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης) describes the disguise: they appear to serve righteousness, preach morality, promote religious devotion, speak of God's standards. Yet they are actually Satan's agents. The counterfeiting of righteousness is more dangerous than obvious wickedness because it deceives the elect (Matt 24:24).

Whose end shall be according to their works (hōn to telos estai kata ta erga autōn, ὃν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν) pronounces eschatological judgment. Despite their disguise, their works will be exposed at Christ's judgment seat. The contrast is implicit: true ministers are saved by grace despite their weakness; false ministers are condemned by works despite their impressive appearance. God sees behind the mask.

Historical Context

The concept of servants of Satan disguised as servants of righteousness would resonate with warnings against false prophets in Israel (Deut 13:1-5; Jer 23:16-32) and Jesus's warnings against false teachers appearing as sheep but inwardly ravening wolves (Matt 7:15). The early church needed vigilance against this perennial threat.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do 'ministers of righteousness' who are actually Satan's servants differ from genuine ministers—what distinguishes them upon close examination?
2. In what ways might emphasis on moralism, religious performance, or self-righteousness be Satanic even when appearing righteous?
3. How does the certainty of future judgment according to works provide hope when false teachers seem to prosper and deceive many?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	μέγα	οὖν	εἰ	καὶ	οἱ	διάκονοι	αὐτῶν
it is no	great thing	Therefore	G1487	also	G3588	ministers	his
G3756	G3173	G3767		G2532		G1249	G846
μετασχηματίζονται	ώς	διάκονοι	δικαιοσύνης	ῶν	τὸ		
be transformed	as	ministers	of righteousness	whose	G3588		
G3345	G5613	G1249	G1343	G3739			
τέλος	ἔσται	κατὰ	τὰ	ἔργα	αὐτῶν		
end	shall be	according	G3588	works	his		
G5056	G2071	G2596		G2041		G846	

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:19 (Parallel theme): Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Jude 1:4 (Parallel theme): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 9:11 (Parallel theme): And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

2 Corinthians 3:9 (Righteousness): For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.