

2 Corinthians 11:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Analysis

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Paul's fear (*phoboumai*, φοβοῦμαι) is not anxiety but pastoral vigilance. The Genesis 3 typology is striking: the false apostles play the serpent's role, the Corinthians are Eve, and the threat is corruption from Christ-centered simplicity.

The verb *exēpatēsen* (ἐξηπάτησεν, 'beguiled') means 'thoroughly deceived' by cunning (*panourgia*, πανουργία, 'craftiness'). The serpent's strategy—questioning God's word, offering alternative wisdom, promising godlike status—parallels the false apostles' methodology. They corrupt *noēmata* (νοήματα, 'minds/thoughts'), targeting the intellect with sophisticated arguments.

The simplicity that is in Christ (*haplotētos tēs eis Christon*, ἀπλότητος τῆς εἰς Χριστόν)—some manuscripts add 'and purity'—describes undivided, single-minded devotion. The gospel is not complex philosophizing but straightforward faith in Christ crucified. The false apostles' elaborate teachings moved beyond this simplicity, adding requirements and boasting in human wisdom.

Historical Context

Gnostic-type teaching that valued esoteric knowledge and added requirements to simple faith in Christ plagued early Christianity. The 'super-apostles' likely

promoted circumcision, special visions, Jewish credentials, or philosophical sophistication as necessary additions to the gospel. Paul consistently opposed such corruptions (cf. Galatians, Colossians).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What contemporary teachings subtly move believers away from simple, wholehearted devotion to Christ by adding requirements or emphasizing secondary matters?
2. How does Satan's strategy in Eden—questioning God's word, offering alternative wisdom—manifest in modern challenges to orthodox Christianity?
3. In what ways might you have allowed your mind to be corrupted from simplicity in Christ through sophisticated arguments or complex religious systems?

Interlinear Text

φοβοῦμαι	δὲ	μήπως	ώς	ό	ὄφις	Εὕαν	ἐξηπάτησεν
I fear	But	lest	as	G3588	the serpent	Eve	beguiled
G5399	G1161	G3381	G5613		G3789	G2096	G1818
ἐν	τῇ	πανουργίᾳ	αὐτοῦ	οὕτως	φθαρῇ	τὰ	
through	G3588	subtly	G846	so	should be corrupted	G3588	
G1722		G3834		G3779	G5351		
νοήματα	ὑμῶν	ἀπὸ	τῆς	ἀπλότητος	τῆς	εἰς	τὸν
minds	your	from	G3588	the simplicity	G3588	that is in	G3588
G3540	G5216	G575		G572		G1519	

Χριστόν

Christ
G5547

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:8 (References Christ): Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Galatians 1:6 (References Christ): I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Colossians 2:4 (Parallel theme): And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

1 John 4:1 (Parallel theme): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 Timothy 2:14 (Parallel theme): And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Hebrews 13:9 (Parallel theme): Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Revelation 12:9 (Parallel theme): And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Genesis 3:13 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

John 8:44 (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.