

2 Corinthians 11:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Analysis

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Paul's biting irony reaches its peak: the Corinthians tolerate false teachers proclaiming *allon Iēsoun* (ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν, 'another Jesus'), *pneuma heteron* (πνεῦμα ἔτερον, 'a different spirit'), and *euangelion heteron* (εὐαγγέλιον ἔτερον, 'a different gospel'), yet balk at Paul's self-defense!

The triple formula—another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel—exposes the comprehensive corruption introduced by the false apostles. Their 'Jesus' was not the crucified Messiah but perhaps a triumphalistic wonder-worker. Their 'spirit' was not the Holy Spirit of power-in-weakness but a spirit of worldly impressiveness. Their 'gospel' was not salvation by grace alone through Christ's substitutionary death but works-righteousness or experiential elitism.

The conditional 'if he that cometh' suggests itinerant false teachers arriving with impressive credentials. Paul's sarcastic 'ye might well bear with him' (*kalōs anechesthe*, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε) can be read as indicative ('you put up with him well enough!') rather than mere possibility. Their misplaced tolerance of heresy while questioning Paul's orthodoxy reveals inverted priorities.

Historical Context

The 'super-apostles' likely claimed connection to the Jerusalem church or eyewitness apostles, promoted Jewish exclusivism or Greek sophistication, emphasized visions and ecstatic experiences, and demanded financial support as proof of their status. Their 'different gospel' may have included elements of proto-Gnosticism or Judaizing (cf. Galatians 1:6-9).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How can we distinguish 'another Jesus' from the biblical Christ—what are the telltale signs of a false portrayal of Jesus?
2. In what ways does contemporary Christianity sometimes proclaim 'a different gospel' that retains Christian vocabulary but abandons salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?
3. Why are churches sometimes more tolerant of false teaching that sounds sophisticated than of biblical truth that sounds simple or offensive?

Interlinear Text

εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν ἐκηρύξαμεν
if G3303 For G3588 he that cometh another Jesus preached
G1487 G1063 G2064 G243 G2424 G2784

ὁ οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν ἢ πνεῦμα ἔτερον ἐλάβετε ὁ
which not preached or spirit another if ye receive which
G3739 G3756 G2784 G2228 G4151 G2087 G2983 G3739

οὐκ ἐλάβετε ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἔτερον ὁ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε
not if ye receive or gospel another which not accepted
G3756 G2983 G2228 G2098 G2087 G3739 G3756 G1209

καλῶς ἡνείχεσθε
well bear with
G2573 G430

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 3:11 (References Jesus): For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 (References Jesus): For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;