

# WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Jon Macon

The apostle Paul battled against servants of Satan who had infiltrated the church at Corinth. These ministers of Satan were deceiving some of the disciples in Corinth by presenting themselves as righteous. Paul said, *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness”* (2 Cor 11:13-15). These ministers of Satan were wolves in sheep's clothing.

## **How Satan works**

Satan does not try to make evil look evil. He is very subtle and crafty and tries to make evil look good. Satan deceived Eve by making the forbidden fruit to look like it was “good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen 3:1-6). In this way, Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, though there is nothing good in him (John 8:44). Satan was operating on the Corinthians in the same manner. Paul wrote them: *“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”* (2 Cor 11:3). Satan was trying to corrupt the Corinthians by getting them to follow “another Jesus, “another Spirit,” and “another gospel” (2 Cor 11:4). Satan was using his ministers, these false apostles, and made them look like ministers of righteousness. Jesus warns us about this in Matthew 7:15-20: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*

## **The fruits of wolves**

Judging only by the outward appearance, there is no way to tell a real sheep from a wolf that is in sheep's clothing. Sadly, many of the

# WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

(continued)

Christians in Corinth were looking on things after the outward appearance (2 Cor 5:12-17; 10:7-10). Therefore, they were accepting the false apostles because they could not see the difference. But a man's works are his fruits, and they come from the heart (Luke 6:42-44). Only in judging by the heart and inspecting their fruits would the Corinthian brethren be able to discern that these "apostles" were imposters. (In contrast, the Ephesians were able to successfully discern lying so-called apostles in Revelation 2:2). Such an examination would reveal that they were not preaching the same Jesus and the same gospel that Paul was (2 Cor 11:4). And they were boasting in the flesh (2 Cor 11:12,18-22), which is not God's way (1 Cor 1:31; 4:6-7; 2 Cor 5:14-17; 10:17). Their fruit was corrupt, and, therefore, they were corrupt. Paul was not like them. Paul's fruits were only good (1 Cor 2:1-5; 4:9-17; 10:33; 11:1; 2 Cor 1:12; 2:17; 4:1-2; 5:9; 6:3-10). Therefore, he was a "good tree."

## **What will become of wolves**

In spite of the fact that false teachers wear sheep's clothing, and profess to be sheep, they are in fact wolves, and God will judge them and punish them eternally for their wicked works. God knows the fruits of these wolves, and He says their "*end shall be according to their works*" (2 Cor 11:15). False teachers "*bring upon themselves swift destruction*" (2 Pet 2:1), and their "*judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not*" (2 Pet 2:3). As God will punish the angels that sinned (2 Pet 2:4), and as He destroyed the wicked world in the days of Noah (2 Pet 2:5), and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Pet 2:6-8), God has reserved these "the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet 2:9). The "mist" of darkness" is reserved unto them forever (2 Pet 2:17). To them is "*reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him*" (Jude 13-15).