

Handout: 2 Corinthians Lesson 5

In 11:5-6, Paul defends himself and his ministry against the accusations of the visiting ministers. He begins by making the first of several points in his defense:

1. He is not inferior to the so-called “superapostles.” Paul does not state but infers that, after all, he was personally commissioned by the resurrected Christ to carry His Gospel to the Gentiles. It is a claim the others cannot make.
2. Even if he is untrained in rhetoric, he has received knowledge directly from Christ and the authority to preach the Gospel of salvation.

Paul makes three accusations against the men who he writes have tried to mislead the Corinthians:

1. They are false apostles.
2. They are deceitful workers.
3. They are those who falsely present themselves as true apostles of Christ.

In 11:22-23, Paul asks a series of three rhetorical questions followed by his answers in comparing himself with the false teachers:

1. *Are they Hebrews? So am I.*
2. *Are they Israelites? So am I.*
3. *Are they ministers of Christ? (I am talking like an insane person.) I am still more, with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, far worse beatings, and numerous brushes with death.*

Since Paul identifies the false ministers as Hebrews and Israelites, they are probably Ebionite Messianic Jews. The Ebionite movement existed during the early centuries of the Christian Era. The Ebionites accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah, but they rejected His divinity and insisted on the necessity of continuing to follow the old Sinai Covenant laws and rites. They revered St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, and the only Gospel they accepted was the Gospel of Matthew. The movement died out in the late 2nd century.

Miracles associated with Paul that he refers to in 12:12:

- He struck the magician Bar-Jesus blind as a sign of God’s authority (Acts 13:11).
- He healed a man crippled from birth (Acts 14:8-10).
- He cast out demons spirits (Acts 16:16-18).
- Face cloths or aprons that touched Paul’s skin and applied to the sick cured their diseases and evil spirits came out of them (Acts 19:11-12).
- He raised young Eutychus from death (Acts 20:9-12).

Paul’s goals for his third visit to Corinth:

1. He wants to follow through on his promise to spend an extended period of time with them (1 Cor 16:6-7).
2. He wants to collect their contribution for the Mother Church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1-9:15).
3. He wants to see if the Corinthians have rejected the trouble-making false apostles (2 Cor 10:1-12:13). → over

4. He wants to see for himself if the Corinthian Christians have repented and rejected their sinful ways (2 Cor 12:-13:2).
5. He wants to deepen his reconciliation with the community that his “tearful letter” and Titus’ mediation have set in motion (2 Cor 7:5-6).

Paul’s Trinitarian formula in 13:13, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*

Jesus’ theological Trinitarian formula in Matthew 28:19, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in*

1. *the name of the Father*
2. *and of the Son,*
3. *and of the Holy Spirit*

Jesus’ Trinitarian formula reflects the revelation of the Trinity in Salvation History. The Church Fathers identified the Trinitarian order in Revelation and 1 Peter as a liturgical order in naming the Most Holy Trinity as opposed to the theological order in Matthew 28:19.

St. Peter’s liturgical Trinitarian formula in 1 Peter 1:2 is a Trinitarian formula to explain how God calls Christians to believe in Christ:

1. *in the foreknowledge of God the Father*
2. *through sanctification by the Holy Spirit*
3. *for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ*

Peter’s Trinitarian order is the same as in Revelation 1:4-5:

1. *He who is and who was and who is to come* = God the Father
2. *from the seven spirits before His throne* = God the Holy Spirit
3. *Jesus Christ the faithful witness* = God the Son

In the Liturgy of the Mass, we follow Peter’s and the Book of Revelation’s liturgical order in addressing the Father, the Holy Spirit, and God the Son:

1. We begin our worship by addressing our prayers to **God the Father**, and we continue with prayers to the Father until the Eucharistic prayer.
2. In the Eucharistic prayer, the priest calls upon **God the Holy Spirit** when he prays: “Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”
3. It isn’t until the rite of the “Sign of Peace” that the priest finally addresses a prayer to **God the Son**: “Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: ‘I leave you peace, my peace I give you.’ Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.” From the Sign of Peace onward, we continually direct our prayers to God the Son.