

Week of August 12-18

## COSTUME PARTY

**Scripture Reading:** Read 2 Corinthians 11

For a number years after I first came to Cobleskill, our church hosted a Hallelujah Night (a Halloween alternative harvest party) as an outreach to our community. Folks were encouraged to dress up as biblical characters and the night was filled with games, plenty of food and candy, and a message about Christ. One year, the prize for best costume went to a young man who dressed up as the prophet Jonah. If someone looking like this showed up in your city and called you to repent, you would, wouldn't you?



Costume parties, like our Hallelujah Night, can be enjoyable times and lead to a lot of laughs. What isn't funny, however, is the masquerade Satan and his associates attempt: *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

Often, Satan is portrayed as a red-skinned devil with goat legs, cloven hoofs, horns, and carrying a pitchfork. The only problem with this portrayal is that the image owes itself more to fanciful artists and authors than it does to Scripture. If such a creature approached us, we would probably run the other way since it would be quite obvious that he was not from God.

But what if he appeared as Paul described him, as “an angel of light”? What then? Would we be so quick to recognize him or his work? The Corinthian believers certainly weren't. They failed to see the masquerade of the false teachers or understand its source in Satan and, as a result, were taken in by false apostles who exploited them and taught them false doctrine. This is why Paul wrote as strongly as he did in II Corinthians chapters 10-13. He was afraid they were going to be led astray from their *“sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”* He wanted to pull the mask off Satan's schemes and have the church see the “angel of light” as he really is...the father of lies.

Satan hasn't stopped his tricks. In fact, Paul said that it's only going to get worse as we draw closer to the return of Christ (1 Tim 4:1). That's why it's so important to know the truth, love the truth, and live the truth of God's Word so we don't fall for his masquerade.

**Action Step:** Read 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12 to see what Paul has to say about Satan's masquerade and the importance of not only knowing the truth but loving it too!

**Prayer Focus:** Pray for God's discernment to see under the mask.

**Take-a-way:** *Don't be fooled by the “angel of light.” Underneath the costume, he's still the king of darkness!*