

Preacher's Pen points

THE GOSPEL IS CREDIBLE!



The Gospel is the power of God to save to those who believe it (*Ro. 1:16*), but what evidence do I have for faith in the Gospel? A lot! And many different kinds of evidence.

One evidence of the credibility of the Gospel is the converts who accepted it. The infidel is obligated to explain upon what basis people first accepted the Gospel if it is not true or believable. Were they gullible? Deceived? Psychologically disposed to accept it? These are some of his assertions. But just hear the converts themselves refute every argument he makes and affirm the believableness of the Gospel. Let's examine three converts that affirm the credibility of the Gospel.

Thomas, the Disallowing Skeptic

When Thomas first heard of the Lord's resurrection, he was a disallowing skeptic. In fact, he even disallowed what was, and is, a valid basis for faith: the testimony of others who did see. (*Jn.20:29*). Thomas would not even accept the testimony of his closest friends that Jesus was alive saying, "unless I shall see . . . I will not believe." (*Jn. 20:25*). However, this unconvinced objection eight days later turned into an uninhibited confession, "My Lord and My God" (*Jn 20:28*)! The infidel says the Gospel was first received because people were gullible and naïve. How then can we explain the faith of this disallowing skeptic? Thomas believed; he helps my faith.

Simon, an Arrogant Deceiver

In Acts 8 the Bible reveals in Samaria a man occupied with the deception of others, Simon the sorcerer. So effective was his trickery that the whole town from least to greatest was under his deceiving spell ascribing to him the name "the Great Power of God". But now, look what a great change was wrought in this man! He con-

fessed his deceit, gave up his following, believed, and was baptized. Why? Because he saw the miracles performed by Phillip that confirmed that his message was true (*Acts 8:6; Mk 16:20*). Now, the infidel says that men first accepted the Gospel because they were deceived or tricked. But, who would know more about deceit and trickery than Simon, the arrogant deceiver? Simon knew the miracles of Phillip were not tricks and believed. He helps my faith.

Saul, an Ardent Adversary

The story of Saul of Tarsus is one of tenacious opposition to Christ. Acts 8, 9, 22, and Galations 1 show how unrelenting and severe were the works of Saul against the Way. What great efforts he made to destroy the church of the Lord! How then can we explain Saul's unexpected conversion to and advocacy of the Jesus he once persecuted? Indeed, "he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy" (*I Co. 15:8*). And thenceforth proclaimed in the synagogues, "He is the Son of God"! (*Acts 9:20*) The infidel says the Gospel was first accepted by those who were psychologically disposed to accept it — those who would have believed in anyone who would promise deliverance from their problems. But, how then can Saul's conversion be accounted for? His conversion helps my faith.

Let the infidel raise any argument explaining why the Gospel was first believed besides it being true and we can raise a convert to refute it. The Gospel was accepted in the first century because it was true. Honest and sincere hearts succumbed to the power of a message historically real and supernaturally confirmed. The Gospel should be accepted for the same reasons today.

— Johnny Felker