

Preacher's Pen points

Paul Bashing!



As our society has become more liberal and religious groups have become more liberal, there has also been an escalation of “Paul bashing”. Here’s what I mean. Paul’s writings often comment about issues that are being discussed in today’s society. For example, Paul, in writing to churches, wrote about the role of women in the home and in the church and about what is proper moral behavior. His viewpoints challenge the ideas of people today concerning such matters. Consequently those who disagree with him resort to bashing him. The arguments go something like this: Paul hated women or he was a jilted lover. Therefore his views of women are colored by his bad experiences. Or, it may be said that Paul did not properly understand the teaching of Jesus; but instead “high jacked” and misled the church to accept OT standards of conduct that Jesus had rejected. So what shall we say to these things?

Paul's Claims

Paul in his letters makes three significant claims:

- That he was a personal witness of the resurrected Lord (1 Cor. 15:8) and was commissioned by Jesus to be an apostle (Gal. 1:1).
- That his teaching did not originate with himself; but instead came by the revelation of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 2:12-13).
- That he had proven the authenticity of his claims to speak for Jesus by performing signs in Jesus’ name (2 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:18-19).

If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. (1 Cor. 14:37)—Apostle Paul

The Church's Corroboration

Many of the NT congregations were established by Paul on the basis of the foregoing claims and proofs that he offered. If Paul did not see Jesus, then how can we explain his conversion to Christ? If he did not receive his message by revelation and if he did not perform miracles, then how was he successful in persuading others to listen to his message? Would he have suffered the many persecutions he endured for what was a known lie? Would it make sense, in view of his teaching on honesty, that he built his whole ministry on lies!? Clearly the early church’s acceptance of Paul’s claims to apostleship and their careful collection of his writings makes clear how credible and esteemed he was in the early church. Yet today the great apostle is disparaged and ridiculed for his “out of date” ideas!

Paul and Jesus Can't Be Separated!

Ironically those who speak disparagingly of Paul are eager to embrace Jesus. Yet consider

this! If Paul cannot be trusted in his statements about women and morality, then he can’t be trusted in his statements about Jesus either! When Paul’s integrity is undermined, then the message of gospel itself is also undermined! Jesus and Paul stand or fall together!

The truth is, what Paul wrote came from Jesus! Those who truly love and respect Jesus will not only accept what He said while on earth but also what He has said while in heaven through His apostles. To refuse to do so is to not believe in Jesus at all!

—Johnny Felker