

Paul's Credibility

(Rom 1:1)

- Read introduction- Rom 1:1-15
- I. Paul is introducing himself to the Romans and it is crucial that he establishes his authority as an apostle, commissioned by the Lord, not only because of the doctrine he is going to teach, but because of the prevalence of false apostles
 - A) Rev 2:2- Has tried them which say they are apostles and has found them liars
 - 1. Then there must have been a criteria known to try them by
 - B) 2 Cor 11:13- False apostles
- II. Paul lays claim to the office of apostle and proves it throughout all his epistles by showing that he met the requirements of an apostle
 - A) Acts 26:16-19- Paul was commissioned by the Lord Himself as were the 12
 - 1) The Lord appeared unto Paul not only to save him, but to appoint him an apostle with a unique ministry
 - B) Paul was taught by the Lord Himself as were the 12
 - 1) Gal 1:11-12- Paul received the gospel from the Lord
 - i. He spends 2 entire chapters in the Galatian Epistle proving this, because if it was not so, then he was not an apostle
 - a) Paul went to see Peter as an equal, not for instruction
 - 1. 2 Cor 1:5- “Not the least whit behind the chiefest apostle”
 - b) 1 Cor 15:3- “That which I ALSO received”
 - c) 1 Cor 15:8- “Whether it were I or they...”
 - 2) 1 Cor 11:23- Paul received the Lord's Supper teaching from the Lord
 - 3) 1 Thess 4:15- Paul taught concerning the resurrection by the Lord
 - C) With these points proven, Paul's words will be received by the Romans as the words of Christ Himself, since this man is a called apostle
 - 1) Gal 4:14- Paul received as Christ (His official ambassador)
 - 2) 2 Pet 3:15-17- Peter substantiates Paul's authority
 - II. False doctrine of “apostolic succession” proven false by marks of an apostle
 - A) Rome bases all of their claims upon this false teaching, so do many Episcopal and Church of England churches
 - B) Other groups teach “ordained succession,” “baptismal authority” by succession, and even the indwelling spirit by succession and laying on of hands
 - 1) 1 Cor 15:8- Christ appeared “last of all” to Paul and not again
 - C) No need for apostles once the New Testament was compiled
 - 1) Apostles were the authority prior to the written authority
 - 2) Eph 2:19-20- Foundation of apostles and prophets

- B) Remember Paul is validating his authority before the Romans
- 1) “My authority is from God the Father Himself from before the foundation of the world”
 - i. Separated- “set apart” seems to be a play on words by the apostle, as he had been the ultimate “separatist” having segregated himself as a Pharisee
 - a) Pharisee- “separated one,” “one set apart or divided from the others”
 - ii. Perhaps his thinking is “I once separated myself in self-righteousness, but the truth is that God had actually separated me from before I existed”
 - a) Gal 1:13-16- Ye have heard of my former separation, but then came the true
 - b) God picked me and prepared me to do this work, including the writing of this epistle to you
 1. “Separated from my mothers womb”
 - (a) Jer 1:5- God said the same of Jeremiah
 - (b) John the Baptist was “filled with the Spirit from his mother’s womb
 - (c) Consider also Moses, Samson, Samuel, and many others
 - c) The Roman epistle is full of this teaching on the foreknowledge and predestination of God
 1. Rom 8:29-30 & Rom 9:10-13
 - iii. Acts 15:18- Known unto God are all His works from the beginning
 - a) Paul’s call was no afterthought, nor was it a reaction to Israel’s rejection of Christ
 - b) God had been preparing Paul for this ministry from before his birth
 1. No coincidence that Paul was born in Tarsus, a center of union between the Greek culture and the Jewish religion
 2. No coincidence Paul was a Roman citizen
 3. No coincidence he was educated as he was
 4. No coincidence he was trained in the Law
 - c) All of this is actually the ultimate defense against the “Johnnie come lately” accusations many were making against Paul
 1. There also is no coincidence in the timing of Paul’s call, and the fact that he was allowed to blaspheme and persecute
 2. This is all to the glory of God and His power of effectual calling by grace
 - (a) For certainly no one could argue that Paul “decided” for the Lord, or even desired to become a Christian

- (b) And yet by the power of the sovereign and almighty God, the worst of men was made the best of apostles
 - (1) Election is only troublesome when we consider ourselves (men), rather than simply focusing on the power of God
 - (2) When we only consider things from God downward, election is the only thing that makes sense
- 3. This ought to be not only the most amazing, but the most humbling things for a Christian to consider, that God knew me and chose me before the world was, and has been preparing me from my mother's womb and laying out my course before me
 - (a) "I can hardly believe the truth concerning myself, but I have no problem believing it concerning God" - MLJ