

The Witness of Paul

Introduction:

- A. Tell of charismatic man I studied with who believed he knew of a man who had been raised from the dead. - liar? fanatic? deceived? truth?
- B. Paul claimed to have seen the raised Lord.- Acts 22:6-9; 26:12-15
- C. Paul presented the fact of the resurrection of Christ as the grand and final proof He is the Son of God.- Romans 1:3-4
- D. Did Paul actually see and hear the risen Lord, or was his testimony false? - 1 Corinthians 15:8

I. Was Paul a liar?

- A. There is no testimony to contradict his claims.
- B. Did he have ulterior motives?
 - 1. Was it to gain wealth?
 - a. As an unbeliever, he had a promising, lucrative career. - Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:13-14
 - b. He abandoned this to espouse a cause that brought him great hardship.- 1 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 12:14-15; Acts 20:33-35
 - c. Are his dying words those of a greedy man? - 2 Timothy 4:13,21
 - 2. Was it to gain fame, popularity, prestige or reputation?
 - a. He left these behind.-Philippians 3:4-6; Galatians 1:14
 - b. By following Christ, he lost all these.- Philippians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 4:9-13
 - 3. Was it to gain power?
 - a. This he had as an unbeliever.- Acts 22:4-5
 - b. He sacrificed this to follow Christ. - 2 Corinthians 4:5
 - 4. Was it to gratify fleshly lust?- e.g., Joseph Smith
 - a. He controlled his fleshly passion.- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - b. He espoused a noble moral standard.- Galatians 5:19-26
 - c. He scathingly denounced immorality.- Romans 1:18-32

II. Was Paul a fanatic?- e.g., Mehmet Ali Acga, convicted assailant of the pope; Acts 26:24-25

- A. Paul remained calm while his detractors raged.- Acts 21:26 - 22:24; 23:1-10; 26:24-29; Philippians 4:5
- B. Paul had no illusions of grandeur.- 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:15
- C. He was never illogical.- Acts 17:1-3; 24:25; Romans 1:20
- D. He was cheerful under terrible circumstances.- Acts 16:16-25; Philippians 1:12-18; 4:4,9-13
- E. Saul of Tarsus did not “see what he was looking for.”- Acts 26:9-13

III. Was Paul deceived?

- A. By what words could they fool such a man?- Acts 7:58 - 8:3; 9:1-2
- B. By what clever device could they produce such an effect? - Acts 9:3-1; 26:13

IV. Did Paul tell the truth?

- A. His testimony has “the ring of truth.” - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:1
- B. Paul willingly, cheerfully suffered for his convictions.- 2 Corinthians 11:23-30
- C. The only reply the unbelieving Jews had to Paul's testimony was the unrelenting effort to persecute and to kill him.- Acts 9:22-25,28-29; 13:49-50; 14:4-7,19; 17:5,13; 18:12-13; 20:3; 21:27-36; 22:22-23; 23:10,12-15; 24:1-9; 25:7
 - 1. They were the ones who knew his former life best.
 - 2. Among them were his companions on that fateful journey to Damascus.

Conclusion:

- A. Paul claimed to be an eyewitness of the raised Lord.- 1 Corinthians 15:3,4,8
 - 1. His testimony is true.- 2 Timothy 1:12
 - 2. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.- 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - 3. He is the Son of God.- Romans 1:3-4
- B. The salvation of your soul depends on your faith in and obedience to the Christ whom Paul preached.- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 5:8-9