

THE TELLING SILENCE OF PAUL - WHY DOES HE TALK AS IF THERE WAS NO JESUS HISTORY

All Paul, the top Christian writer and provider of the oldest Christian writings, says about Jesus is that he was born of a woman, under the Law, had King David's blood in him, was crucified and died and rose again and has been appearing since and will one day come to earth. If Jesus had appeared and that was all there was to it these other things would have been assumed. There is no evidence that Paul claimed evidence other than visions for these events.

Paul does not say when Jesus died and rose but only talks about when he appeared. He said that after Peter and James and the apostles and so on Jesus appeared to him as if he were an abortion!

He means abortion as in a birth poorly timed - he calls himself premature. Some say that he means he was chosen to be an apostle without being with Jesus or knowing him personally unlike other apostles who had that experience. But he does not say what he means. The best explanation is that somehow his experience of Jesus as risen was not as good as theirs. They are the apostles but he is the miscarriage almost surviving. This would mean we have nothing at all from anybody who saw Jesus properly. He is the only eyewitness who wrote about the resurrected Jesus experience for us.

When a person like Paul who would know about Jesus and his life and does not use this information when he needs it we must realise that the story that has come down to us in the gospel did not exist then for he did not believe it. Paul never met Jesus and he would have if he had lived in Jesus' day. He would have taken part in the execution of Jesus for Paul hated what Jesus stood for. Arguments from silence are risky. If a man never mentions an event that may not mean the event never happened. But if there are too many silences that make no sense and we find silence where we would expect a mention of the event we can be sure the event was a fiction. Also, silence entitles us to think that the events never happened if we so wish.

If Jesus had said marriage was sacred as the gospels say, Paul would have been able to give better than his own opinion that it was okay for virgins to wed (1 Corinthians 7:25). He despised guessing instead of looking into God's word. He hated boasting and he had to say that he should be listened to for he is trustworthy. Paul would have used the words of the Lord instead of resorting to this. He knew that Jesus had never said that marriage was holy and divorce was wrong or at least that there was no record or evidence that Jesus dealt with this topic.

Colossians 2:20-23 uses terribly weak arguments against the view that certain foods should not be eaten instead of quoting Jesus who rejected unscriptural taboos about eating. It argues that since we are no longer under the world's regulations we cannot be expected to keep unscriptural food laws. But the conclusion does not follow from the premise which indicates that the author was really stuck and had to make do with this argument for there were no others. There were no words of Jesus to do the trick.

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul admitted that he had no clever arguments for his religion except the evidence of God's power to change lives with the gospel. That the converting power of the apostles' testimony was considered evidence goes without saying. But people becoming Christians and changing a bit here and there is not evidence for a religion or gospel being true. Paul knew that blind faith was immoral and would not have resorted to advocating it unless there was no alternative. Listen to what he is saying in that. That Jesus' life, death and resurrection is not evidence for the gospel. They would be if there was evidence for them but there is not. All there is testimony and this testimony is feeling that God is changing you from within and communing with your soul because of the atoning death and saving resurrection of Jesus.

This is strong evidence that Paul thought his Jesus lived in the distant past or in another world or that if Jesus lived in his time not much could be learned about him for sure. Nobody uses weak evidence if there is stronger.

In the context of condemning philosophy, Paul said that the elements of the gospel are absurdity to the natural or unsaved man (1 Corinthians 1,2).

Does this mean that the gospel is absurd when logically tested and that he doesn't care for he puts faith before reason?

Does this mean that that the gospel is absurd but not to the Christian person to whom God gives light so that they reason correctly that the gospel is true? This would mean that the gospel is compatible with correct reason and the natural philosopher cannot see it for he doesn't have light from God.

Paul means that belief of any kind in the gospel be it mere intellectual belief or faith which is belief coupled with commitment and openness to grace is folly to the natural wise man.

How do we know this? Because he doesn't say it is only a particular kind of faith or belief that is stupid to the unsaved man.

Say you take belief to mean living according to that belief and accepting the grace of God and not just intellectual belief then the natural man with mere intellectual belief that does not change his heart will not see the gospel as absurdity but his own refusal to turn to God as absurdity. Paul then cannot be thinking of unconverted believers who know Christ is saviour but won't turn to him. Paul is thinking of faith as an intellectual function only. He means only those who agree with the faith but won't turn to it. But obviously if this is absurd so is it when it seeks the grace of God to live out the faith. So is faith in the fullest sense.

What does this mean? It means that Christianity is anti-logic and anti-philosophy. Luther was right when he decided that reason was the tool of the Devil and inaccurate even when logical tests said it was accurate. The faith cannot be intellectually justified. This is a position called Fideism, the view that faith has nothing to do with evidence, which was condemned as heresy by the non-Christian organisation the Roman Catholic Church in 1870 at the Vatican Council.

It has been answered that Paul did not condemn reason but a selfish perverted reasoning. But no hint of that meaning is given in his writings at all so it must be discarded despite what Reimarus who denied the view that Paul was a hater of reason concluded (page 184, *Miracles in Dispute* – which gives no proof for Reimarus' interpretation). 2 Corinthians 10:3 says that the Christians do not carry worldly weapons but spiritual ones which tear down arguments and proud barriers to the love of God and make every thought captive to Christ. Reimarus thought that Paul meant that Christians use reason to destroy the objections of their enemies (page 185, *Miracles in Dispute*). But that interpretation cannot be proven. The context of Paul's teaching on reason disproves it. If Paul meant arguments from reason he would have said so CLEARLY and when he based his refutations on divine power and our experience of its transforming power and not reason it shows that human reason was considered to be futile and defective. And no wonder when Paul thought that Jesus died for sinners in their place and loads of other things that made no sense and which he could not have defended with success and without blushing. For example, he accepted the absurdities of the God of Judaism including the view that God was right to command parents to kill their layabout drunkard sons.

Paul complained that the Jews were looking for signs (1 Corinthians 1:22) to determine if the wisdom of God as understood in Christianity and the cross of Christ was true. So there were no miracles he could tell them about to please them. He even said it was folly to look for signs. If you consider the miracles to be signs then it was not folly because they were signs and it would be blasphemy to say they were folly. He said Jews meaning all Jews for he would have written some Jews otherwise. Christians would reply that he means the Jews want to see signs themselves first hand before they will consider believing. But you can look for signs without seeing them. For nearly everybody it is enough to check out the information and interview and cross-examine the witnesses. He never said they just wanted to see it all themselves.

The Jews accepted most prophets without miracles for the law said miracles were useless anyway except to get people's attention. They just observed if their predictions came true and if the prophet was a true believer and that was enough (Deuteronomy 18). So they did not want to see the miracles themselves. They found no evidence of prophetic ability in Jesus or in the Church which was to witness to him. The gospels never say that the Jews pestered Jesus for proof of prophetic powers showing that they were made up. They could have discredited him on that line and we do not read what he said about that. Jesus did make prophecies but none that were seen fulfilled the time Paul was writing and none which might have been more than educated guesses. What Paul is indicating as well is that Jesus did no miracles as a sign that he should get attention for his prophecies for he made none that were known to have been fulfilled. When Jesus then did not attract attention to himself as a prophet through using miracles that means he made no prophecies either. Paul's Jesus was not a prophet or a miracle worker.

Paul said that we including himself live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Paul confessed that he needed to stay alive for the sake of the Christians though he would like to die and go to Jesus (Philippians 1). This informs us that nobody could do his job for him though he had plenty of helpers – this indicates the laziness and lack of faith in the Jerusalem apostles. He had made his testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus so it could still convert sinners without him. He is suggesting that he was the only reliable witness to the resurrection. We have his testimony that the Judean Church which founded the roots of the gospel is not to be trusted.

He is also inferring that Jesus did not raise people from the dead for if he did these testimonies could back up Jesus' own claim to have risen but Paul could not use such arguments. The best Paul could do was use the apostles testimony and say that if Jesus did not rise the dead must be lost and that is unbearable so Jesus must have risen!

Paul said that Jesus was revealed as the Son of God by his resurrection (Romans 1:4) which shows that he did not manage to reveal this by his miracles (indicating that he never did any) and the resurrections he performed during his ministry (GA Wells Replies to Criticisms of his Books on Jesus). Why does he stress Christ crucified even above Christ risen and

triumphant?(1 Corinthians 1:22-23). This implies that the resurrection was needed to prove that Jesus had died to save sinners – vicariously I might add for had it been anything else it would not have been stressed so much – and it was not great proof when it could not be brought to the fore. It was selfish of Paul to care more about Jesus dying than rising. This stress on the cross suggests that Jesus never worked any wonders.

Paul is good evidence that the gospels were made up and if the gospels were lies even the Christians did not care. It was the later Church that gave importance to those books.

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