

A Creator Of Dissension

When the apostle Paul was arrested and put on trial before Felix, Tertullus said of him, "For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). In modern terms, Paul was said to be a "trouble-maker!" Was this true? Did Paul's actions or attitude warrant such accusations? We submit to you that Paul was of high character and deserved only commendation for his service to the Lord and Savior, not condemnation. So, why did men despise him? He taught the truth and exposed their error!

Paul was constantly battling the Jews, teaching that Jesus was the Christ, and for this they sought to run him out of town or to kill him (Acts 9:20, 23; 13:44-46, 50-51; 14:19). The problem was not Paul who spoke truth, but it was the ones who could not stand the light of truth (cf. Jn. 3:19-21). Instead of honorably discussing and debating the issue at hand, they sought to stop Paul by whatever means were necessary.

Today there are religious people who react to truth in the same way as the Jews. Instead of open and honest discussion, they cast aspersions and act as if they exist on a higher plane--sort of like the scribes and Pharisees (cf. Lk. 18:11-12; Jn. 7:45-49; 9:34).

For the sake of numbers and a pseudo-peace, some will seek to appeal to all men, not just lovers of the truth. Jesus addressed those who were liked by all men--"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Lk. 6:26). When a person stands for truth, most people will not like him (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). Paul said, "...For if I pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). If your church or preacher is liked by the masses, there is a problem!

We at the Loop 287 church of Christ are seeking to please God first and foremost--not men. We love our fellow-man and therefore seek to teach him the truth (Gal. 4:16). Often this brings great criticism upon us, but does not "put us out" because Paul and others experienced the same thing. If you are one who desires to follow Christ and His gospel above all others, then won't you study with us? We will point you to the Bible alone, giving book, chapter, and verse for all we do or teach.

Steven F. Deaton