

Was Paul a Heretic?

Commentary for August 15, 2014 — If Not, Was He Even an Apostle?

QUESTION: Hello David, I have been listening and learning from the askelm site for several years now, but I have never written you until now.

I have come to believe the salvation of all and many other wonderful things over the past few years, but the big problem with this doctrine is that it comes almost exclusively from the mouth of Paul. I have always taken for granted the truthfulness of his testimony and his apostleship, but a video really threw me for a loop, which has since opened up a big can of worms and sent me all over the internet looking for more on this subject.¹

If it can be shown that Paul is not a true Apostle of God, wherein does our hope lie? Are we still subject to the Law?

I don't know why, but this really knocked the wind out of my sails and so many tenets of my faith are left in limbo.

Do you have any thoughts on this matter? Have you looked into this questioning of Paul's apostleship? Thank you,

ANSWER: Read everything on the ASK website about the subject of the Mystery. Read [Restoring the Original Bible](#), which deals with the formation of the New Testament canon from within the New Testament documents itself. It also shows how Peter and John first rejected and then accepted the Mystery.

Then read [Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#), which discusses in detail, and better than I have found anywhere else, exactly what the Mystery is, and how it differs from the New Covenant. If you cannot buy a copy, then read it online, or print it for yourself.

Regarding your statement that the teaching of universal salvation comes mostly through Paul, the Gospel of John is the gospel of the Mystery. The Gospel of John teaches universal salvation, without doubt. This is why it is so different from the other three canonical gospels. The Mystery was first sent to the apostle Paul, then later accepted by Peter and John. John at first rejected the revelation of the Mystery, as did all the *ekklesias* of Asia ("**all they which are in Asia be turned away from me,**" 2 Timothy 1:15), toward the end of Paul's life.

Peter wrote:

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some

¹ The questioner provided the link to the video, but there is no value in repeating it here. The information presented in the video quickly deviated from presenting biblical information.

things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

• 2 Peter 3:15-16

Was the apostle Peter crazy when he termed Paul "**our beloved brother**"? This does not declare Paul a heretic. Remember, Second Peter was written after Paul confronted and corrected Peter in Galatia. Furthermore, Peter praised Paul after he was dead in Rome.

This positive mention of Paul by Peter tells us several things:

1. The Galatian event occurred as Paul describes in Galatians 2:11–14, otherwise Peter would have refuted it. When Peter wrote his epistle of Second Peter, by then he agreed with Paul about what happened in Galatia (and Galatians is one of the central Pauline epistles, its authenticity undisputed).
2. Peter praises Paul and all his writings, equating Paul's writings with "**other scriptures**," meaning the words of the Old Testament.
3. In Galatians 1:11–2:10, Paul presents his qualifications for being an apostle, and there is not a hint in Peter's praise that would say otherwise. In other words, Peter agrees that Paul is an apostle!

You ask, "If it can be shown that Paul is not a true Apostle of God, wherein does our hope lie? Are we still subject to the Law?" Well, good luck keeping the law:

- Remember what James said, the law was a "**burden**" (Acts 15:28).
- Peter called the Law a yoke, "**Now therefore why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**" (Acts 15:10).
- Paul said the same thing as did Peter. Paul wrote, "**Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage**" (Galatians 5:1). He was talking about the Law of Moses! It was a "**yoke of bondage**" upon the people of Israel.

If the Law was a burden to James and Peter, and a yoke of bondage to Paul, then maybe they are all heretics!

No. Paul was an apostle. His writings are secure and were approved by Peter, all of Paul's writings (as Peter says "**ALL his epistles**"). We all need to grow in grace and knowledge.

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RESPONSE FROM QUESTIONER: David, Thank you for the lengthy response. I will reread Dr. Martin's books. I have already tried the Messianic route. The Law is impossible, hence my feeling that the wind was knocked out of my sails. It was Dr. Martin and your work that ultimately loosed me from that bondage. Thanks again, ...

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