

Jesus quotes Paul

(Comparing a passage in Matthew 5 with a passage in 1 Corinthians 4)

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Version 1.3

1. Introduction

The perceived problem: Matthew – or rather Jesus – quoting Paul does not fit the received paradigm. If Matthew relies on Paul, Matthew is not relying on oral tradition. The gospel of Matthew is therefore a literary work and Jesus is a literary character. Although Matthew could be using Paul only in this instance and otherwise be relying on other material and/or oral tradition. This then begs the question – why? Why would Matthew feel it necessary to enhance his narrative with borrowed material? If this is the case, we must doubt the reliability and honesty of Matthew as a recorder of actual events. Furthermore, if Matthew found it necessary to use Paul as confabulation maybe he used other sources in the same way.

2. Background

Challenging the received paradigm – dating the gospel of Matthew and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

Before discussing a possible literary dependence between two works it is first necessary to establish a temporal relationship between them. Otherwise we have the problem of deciding who borrowed from whom.¹

A. the genesis of the gospel of Matthew

¹ The other possibility is that both authors borrowed from a common source. To date no common source has been found for the texts under review.

a. Popular thinking

Matthew was an eyewitness of events in Jesus' life, and was the author of the gospel.

Down through the ages the Christian churches have considered all the New Testament books to be "apostolic". . . to have been written by eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry (relatives and disciples) and Paul. ²

This idea was also current amongst the ancients.

b. Ancient thinking

Eusebius³ reports that Matthew, the disciple mentioned in the gospels and Acts ⁴, was the author of the gospel of Matthew.

Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence.⁵

² Duling et al, 1994, p. 100

³ Eusebius (c.300CE) probably follows Irenaeus (c.160CE), "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church." Adv Haer 3.1.1

⁴ Matthew 9:9, Acts 1:13 NOTE: All Biblical references from the NRSV.

⁵ Eusebius, *Church History*, Book 3.24

Based on the scenario presented by Eusebius, and if Matthew was about 30 when he was an eyewitness, he could have written the gospel anytime between about 30 and 60CE. This also assumes the ministry of Jesus was about 30CE. ⁶

c. Modern scholarship

Ehrman states that,

It does not appear that the authors of the early Gospels were eyewitnesses to the events they narrate.⁷

Duling et al state that "dating the four gospels is now mostly derived from allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70CE." ⁸ In Matthew's gospel we have Jesus' prediction recounted in chapter 24.

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."⁹

It appears that Matthew (and Luke and Mark) were written to give credence to the prophetic powers of Jesus. It is now recognized that the writer of the Book of Daniel employed the same technique to add verisimilitude to his prophecies.¹⁰ Therefore, a terminus a quo for Matthew is 70CE. We should also remember that Matthew was

⁶ Unless we countenance the testimony of Irenaeus who stated that Jesus was alive into his fifties. *Works*, Book 2.22

⁷ Ehrman, 2012, p.75

⁸ Duling et al, 1994, p.101

⁹ Matthew 24:1-2

¹⁰ Schurer, 1972, pp 49-53

originally circulated as an anonymous composition.¹¹ The author is not stated. There is no internal clue as to authorship.

B. Paul and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians

a. Dating Paul using Acts

Dating Paul is taken from a combination of two sources, the Acts of the Apostles and the Gallio inscription. According to Acts 18:1,12 Paul was in Corinth when he was brought before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia. An archaeological inscription from Delphi, combined with other evidence from Rome shows that Gallio was proconsul from 51 to 52CE.¹²

b. Dating Paul using 2 Corinthians

The other piece of documentary evidence dating Paul is from 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 where Paul states that, "In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands."

The last king named Aretas died in the year 40.¹³

Problems with dating Paul

¹¹ Perhaps until about 150CE. Duling et al, 1994, p.10

¹² Duling et al, 1994, p. 101

¹³ al-Salameen, 2011, p.217

1. Using Acts to date Paul

Acts appears to be unreliable as a chronicle on the life of Paul. ¹⁴

a. Paul never mentions the martyrdom of Stephen despite being present at his execution.¹⁵ Furthermore, Paul contradicts Acts and says that in bearing the vicissitudes of persecution *no believers had been killed*.¹⁶ The late Epistle to the Hebrews ¹⁷in chapter 11 lists *Jewish* martyrs, but no *Christian* martyrs. In Hebrews 12:4 we read, "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of *shedding your blood*." [italics added]

b. In the aftermath of Paul's conversion, Acts says "Barnabas took Saul, [and] brought him to the apostles,"¹⁸ but Paul in Galatians says "I did not go to ask advice from any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me."¹⁹

c. There are three different and contradictory accounts of Paul's conversion experience recorded in Acts.²⁰ The notable differences between the three versions are these.

1. What Jesus says. Versions A and B differ substantially from the long discourse of Jesus in Version C.

2. Falling to the ground. Versions A and B have the others NOT falling to the ground. In Version C they also fall to the ground.

¹⁴ "The place of Acts alongside the Pauline letters in the Christian canon is the result of competing attempts in the second century to construct Christian origins; it is not indicative of some form of Pauline Christianity as descriptive of a movement or communities connected to Paul in early Christianity." Mount, 2002, p.9.

¹⁵ Acts 7:58

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 6:2-10

¹⁷ The Epistle to the Hebrews is dated to the last decades of the first century. Mason, 2008, p.2,5

¹⁸ Acts 9:26-30

¹⁹ Galatians 1:15-22

²⁰ A. Acts 9:3-9, 17-18, B. Acts 22:6-13, C. Acts 26: 12-18

3. What Ananias says. Versions A and B differ substantially.
4. What Paul says. Version B differs from Versions A and C.

d. Paul says in one of his letters that he was beaten three times ²¹ but in Acts he brandishes his citizenship in order to *avoid* a beating. ²²

e. Paul was in Jerusalem schooled under Gamaliel, according to Acts ²³, about the time of Jesus ministry, yet appears to have had no contact with Jesus, or with any of his followers.²⁴

f. Paul in Acts is described as receiving letters from the whole council of elders and the high priest addressed to the brothers in Damascus to "bind those [Christians] who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment." ²⁵ Maccoby points out the difficulty of explaining "what kind of jurisdiction . . . the Jewish High Priest [had] . . . over the non-Jewish city of Damascus that would enable him to authorize arrests and extraditions in that city".²⁶

2. The problem with linking Paul and Aretas

a. Some scholars regard the Aretas passage in 2 Corinthians as an interpolation, which is "out of context, out of style and quite out of connexion." ²⁷ Ehrman states that errors and alterations to the manuscripts occurred and that many were deliberate and had a theological purpose. ²⁸

²¹ 2 Corinthians 11:25

²² Acts 22:25

²³ Acts 22:3 Yet Paul himself, in his letters, never mentions that he was a pupil of Gamaliel, even when he is most concerned to stress his qualifications as a Pharisee. Maccoby, 1986, p.7

²⁴ Wenham, 1995, p.1

²⁵ Acts 22:5

²⁶ Maccoby, 1986, p.8

²⁷ Betz and Windisch. Harris, 2005, p. 820

²⁸ Ehrman, 2006. p.3,4 "The texts of the Christian Scriptures in particular are used and always have been used to promote certain aspects of Christian faith and practice." p.394

b. The Aretas passage has a redundancy – the word *Damascus*, which indicates tampering. "In *Damascus* the ethnarch of Aretas the king was watching the city of *the Damascenes*, wishing to seize me..." (YLT)

c. Aretas IV had no authority in Damascus. An inscription found in 2010 in the region of al-Ḥussayniah, north of Ma'ān, in southern Jordan lists the places where Aretas IV was active and Damascus is not mentioned.²⁹ It seems that around this time the Romans under Vitellius and later Cassius Longinus were presidents of Syria and therefore had control of Damascus.³⁰

d. In Acts we have *a different version of events*. Here *the Jews* were watching for Paul. The source of the story seems to be the reference in Corinthians, which has been improved.³¹

After some time had passed, *the Jews* plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.³² [italics added]

The upshot of this discussion is that Acts is unreliable and therefore cannot be used to date Paul, and since the Aretas reference is not reliable either we are left with the certain terminus ad quem of c.160 when Irenaeus mentions Paul and quotes his writings. (Justin of Caesarea is oddly silent.) Clement of Rome, Ignatius and 2 Peter are less certain but probable witnesses which date Paul before 100CE.³³

²⁹ al-Salameen, 2011, p.216

³⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 15

³¹ "*Conscious alterations* are the results of someone's attempts to improve on a text he or she judged to be faulty in some way." Hull, 2010, p.19

³² Acts 9:23-25

³³ Duling et al, 1994, p.131

There is another way to date Paul and that is to associate him with one of the heresies. Irenaeus says that the Ebionites repudiated Paul.³⁴ According to Epiphanius. (c.320-c.400) they flourished just after the Jewish War of 66-70CE. He says, "Their origin came after the fall of Jerusalem."³⁵

Hence we can place Paul with some confidence as contemporaneous with or predating the early Ebionites. Concerning the Gospel of Matthew which is first quoted by Ignatius³⁶ the generally accepted view is that "the Gospel of Matthew was written about 85 to 90 C.E."³⁷ Hence even if we posit a very late date for Paul, we can be reasonably confident that Paul's ministry predated the publication of Matthew.

Literary dependence of Paul upon the Gospels

1. Paul never quotes from the Gospels or the direct words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.³⁸ (See Appendix 1 for discussion of this point.)
2. Therefore, the gospels were not written when Paul wrote his letters OR Paul did not know about them OR Paul chose to ignore them.

As the gospels relate to what Paul was doing in the missionary field, even if he regarded them as spurious, it seems unlikely that he would have ignored them. It seems equally unlikely that he would have not known about them. The only reasonable conclusion is that the gospels were not published during the active ministry of Paul.

³⁴ Irenaeus, Works, Book 1.26.2

³⁵ Panarion Book 1.30.2.7

³⁶ *Smyrneans* 1:7 [Matt 3:15]; compare also *Polycarp* 1:17 [Matt 10:16]; *Ephesians* 19:2-3 [Matt 2:2]

³⁷ Duling et al, 1994, p.11.

³⁸ Even when doing so would have settled an argument. An example is the question of divorce, discussed in 1 Corinthians 7. Paul makes no reference to the teaching of Jesus recorded in Matthew 19:1-12.

3. If the Gospels were published after Paul's letters and reasonably surmising that Paul's writings were highly regarded in the early days of Christianity³⁹ we should expect to find literary dependence in the direction of Paul to the Gospels.

³⁹ "You are fellow-initiates with Paulus, who was made a holy one, who died a testifier, who deserved to be blessed, in whose footsteps may I be found when I attain God; in whose every letter there is a mention of you in *the* Anointed-One, Jesus." Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, 4.7

3. Argument

The triplet in 1 Corinthians 4:12-13

When [1] reviled, we bless; when [2] persecuted, we endure; when [3] slandered, we speak kindly.

The triplet in Matthew 5:11

Blessed are you when people [1] revile you and [2] persecute you and [3] utter all kinds of evil against you falsely*.

* Other ancient authorities lack *falsely*

Table 1: Analysis of borrowed and source text⁴⁰

Source	Greek	Transliteration	Translation
1. INSULT, REVILE			
Paul	λοιδορούμενοι	loidoroumenoi	being reviled
Matthew	όνειδίσωσιν	oneidisōsin	they shall insult
2. PERSECUTE			
Paul	διωκόμενοι	diōkomenoi	being persecuted
Matthew	διώξωσιν	diōxōsin	shall persecute [you]
3. SLANDER			
Paul	δυσφημούμενοι	dysphēmoumenoi	being slandered
Matthew	εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν [καθ' ὑμῶν] ψευδόμενοι	eipōsin pan ponēron [kath' hymōn] pseudomenoi	shall say all kinds of evil [against you] lying*

*Other ancient authorities lack *falsely*, ie lying

Analysis:

1. the word *revile* in Paul has been replaced with the synonym *insult* in Matthew
2. the same root *diókó* (meaning put to flight, pursue, by implication persecute) is used for *persecute*⁴¹
3. the word *slander* in Paul is paraphrased by Matthew as *speaking evil against*
4. some MSS of Matthew have added *falsely* which is missing in Paul

⁴⁰ <http://biblehub.com/text/matthew/5-11.htm>, [/1_corinthians/4-12.htm](http://biblehub.com/text/1_corinthians/4-12.htm), [/1_corinthians/4-13.htm](http://biblehub.com/text/1_corinthians/4-13.htm)

⁴¹ <http://biblehub.com/greek/1377.htm>

The source of the saying in Matthew is clearly Paul, and Matthew has attempted to conceal the fact by 1. replacing a verb with a synonym, 2. paraphrasing and 3. changing the mood from indicative to subjunctive.

The direction of the borrowing is from Paul to Matthew, and not Matthew to Paul because of the temporal relation between the two works. Paul does not attribute the saying to Jesus, and this point is decisive.

Other uses of the saying

The apocryphal Gospel of Thomas has the following passage which appears to be taken from Matthew 5:11 (and not from Corinthians) because it is subjunctive.

Jesus says: "Blessed are you when(ever) they hate you (and) persecute you. But they (themselves) will find no place there where they have persecuted you." ⁴²

As the sequence of attribution from the above analysis is from Paul to Matthew this indicates that the Gospel of Thomas post-dates Matthew and Paul. It therefore cannot be used as evidence for the sayings of an historical Jesus. ⁴³

The Hebrew version of Matthew has the following,

Blessed are you when they persecute and revile you and say against you all kinds of evil for my sake, but speak falsely. ⁴⁴

⁴² 68:1-2

⁴³ Hippolytus links this work to the sect called Naassenes. *Refutation of all heresies*, Book 5.2

⁴⁴ אשריכם כאשר ירדפו ויגדפו אחכם ויאמרו אליכם כל רע בעדי ויכזבו. Howard, 1995, p.16-7

which is substantially the same as the Greek version, with the order of *revile* and *persecute* reversed. Note also that the addition of *falsely* indicates copying from a later edition of the Greek Matthew. Hence the Hebrew version of Matthew which we now have was translated from the Greek version. Matthew may originally have been based on a Hebrew source as Irenaeus and Eusebius assert, but the Hebrew version we now have is not that source.

Reading Age analysis ⁴⁵

The writer of 2 Peter laments, "There are some things in them [Paul's letters] hard to understand, ..." ⁴⁶ The triplet in Matthew measured in the English translation (NRSV) has an average grade level of 8.9, while the triplet in Corinthians measures 9.6. As a translation, this is a rough guide only to the readability in the original Greek. However, from Table 1 we can see that Paul uses longer Greek words than Matthew. It seems that to address a wider and less literate audience than Paul, Matthew has adopted simpler language.

Textual criticism

Our thesis is also supported if we apply the same principles that textual scholars use to recover the earliest variation of a Biblical text. One of these principles is that "the reading that is less harmonized, grammatical, and theologically "correct"—is more likely to be original."⁴⁷ In the first century the letters of Paul *as expressing the thoughts and*

⁴⁵ Readability Score website at <https://readability-score.com>. A grade level of around 10-12 is roughly the reading level on completion of high school. Text to be read by the general public should aim for a grade level of around 8.

⁴⁶ 2 Peter 3:16

⁴⁷ Ehrman, 2006, p.7, Transcriptional Probabilities

words of Jesus would have been regarded as less than perfect.⁴⁸ However from such material Matthew was able to extract the pure words and actions of Jesus.

Powell makes Matthew 5:10-11 a very late addition to the gospel. This means that it was likely not part of the original Hebrew text, but was added later.⁴⁹ This agrees with our thesis that it came from another source – in this case Paul.

Other scholars have found a disconnect between Matthew 5:10 and verses 11-12.

Bivin & Blizzard aver,

When we look closely at the text, we notice a sudden shift in the pronoun (in verses 11 and 12) from third person ("they," "theirs") to second person ("you," "yours"). This is a clear indication that these verses were not originally a part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, but a part of another context or story. They were probably placed after Matthew 5:10 by the editor of Matthew's source because of the word "persecution," which appears in both passages. Actually, Matthew 5:11-12 does not deal with the same theme as Matthew 5:10.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Paul's letter writing per se was highly regarded. "I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present." 2 Cor 10:9-11

⁴⁹ Powell, 1994, p.9

⁵⁰ Bivin & Blizzard, 2002, Kindle loc 610

4. Other literary borrowings

1. Other literary dependence between Matthew and 1 Corinthians.⁵¹

a. mountains, moved by faith

If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains . . .

1 Cor 13:2

If you have faith . . . you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move.

Matt 17:20

b. possessions, giving away

If I give away all my possessions . . .

1 Cor 13:3

If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give [the money] to the poor

Matt 19:21

Wenham notes that,

The Matthean version of the story (though not Mark's or Luke's) uses the same Greek word for "goods/possessions" (*hyparchonta*) as Paul uses in 1 Cor 13:3 — Paul's only use of the word, though it appears frequently in the Gospels.⁵²

⁵¹ Wenham, 1995, p.81

⁵² Ibid p.84

c. God's hidden wisdom, be as infants

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

1 Cor 2:7

Brothers and sisters, . . . be infants in evil

1 Cor 14:20

I thank [OR praise] you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Matt 11:25

2. Literary dependence between Matthew and other Pauline letters⁵³

In these examples, it is worth noting that the borrowings are often betrayed by fragments of the same linguistic structure and phraseology from the text in which the borrowed ideas are imbedded. And Jesus is not the only beneficiary of Matthew's literary borrowing. In example (g) we see that Matthew has borrowed from Paul to form the words of John the Baptist.

⁵³ For a full discussion of many literary links between Paul and "Jesus," Wenham is recommended reading.

a. Yes and No

Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards [Gk *according to the flesh*], ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time?

2 Cor 1:17

Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one. [OR evil]

Matt 5:37

b. forgiveness, the Lord does it – therefore you

Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord [OR just as Christ] has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Colossians 3:13

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. . . for if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matt 6:12-14

c. all the law/the whole law, love your neighbour

For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Galatians 5:14

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matt 22:39-40

d. I warn/tell you, will not enter/inherit the kingdom

I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:21

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 5:20

e. you have heard/it is written, but I say . . . love your enemies

It is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
No, [I say] "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; . . . [italics added]"

Romans 12:20

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' *But I say* to you, Love your enemies . . . [italics added]

Matt 5:43-44

f. the day of the Lord, the thief in the night, stay awake

For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. . . so then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake . . .

1 Thessalonians 5:2,6

Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of

the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake . . .

Matt 24:42-43

g. the failure of the Jews, the pride of the Jews (call yourself/say to yourself), the punishment of the Jews – the metaphor of the tree

(1) the failure of the Jews

(2) the pride of the Jews

(3) the punishment of the Jews

They [the Jews] were broken off [from the olive tree] [3] because of their unbelief [1], but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud [2], but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches [3], perhaps he will not spare you.

Romans 11:20-21

But if you *call yourself* a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God [2] . . . You that boast in the law [2], do you dishonor God by breaking the law [1]? [italics added]

Romans 2:17,23

Bear fruit [1] worthy of repentance. Do not presume [2] to *say to yourselves*, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit [1] is cut down and thrown into the fire. [3] [italics added]

Matt 3:9-10

Why literary dependence between Paul and the Gospel of Matthew is disguised

Matthew often claims to be quoting Old Testament scriptures. The phrase "it is written" occurs nine times in his gospel. This practice shows how Jesus and the events surrounding his life were predicted by ancient revered writings.

In respect of more modern or recent sources Matthew pretends to be relating the actual deeds and words of Jesus and therefore cannot reveal any sources which might jeopardize that illusion.

Another example of borrowing by a gospel

The Christian-Islamic *Gospel of Barnabas* which surfaced in 1709 may be based on an older gnostic gospel.⁵⁴ In this gospel, the words of Jesus are unashamedly taken from New Testament letters.

Some examples from 1 Corinthians will suffice to show this.

Jesus rebuked them [his disciples], saying: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees of our day, for a little leaven marreth a mass of meal. (165b) . . . comes from chapter 5v6.

Of these delights said Isaiah the prophet: "The eyes of man have not seen, his ears have not heard, nor hath the human heart conceived, that which

⁵⁴ Ragg, 1907, p. xlv

God hath prepared for them that love him." (185a) . . . comes from chapter 2v9.

5. Conclusion

The triplet in Matthew 5:11 and also in 1 Corinthians 4:12-13 provides solid evidence that the writers of Matthew borrowed from Paul. It also indicates that Matthew, in what amounts to pious fraud, ⁵⁵ attempted to disguise the dependence. Other echoes/allusions between Matthew and 1 Corinthians and other Pauline letters exist which confirm a pattern of literary dependence. Therefore, we can be reasonably confident that Matthew is a literary work depending on at least two sources (Paul and other material upon which Luke and Mark also relied ⁵⁶). It is not a biography.

⁵⁵ As Daniel, the Letter of Aristeas, correspondence between Paul and Seneca, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, etc. Many other examples of the genre from that period could be tabled.

⁵⁶ Arguments for Mark's reliance on Paul are presented in Crossley, 2004, p.47-55.

APPENDIX 1

Paul never quotes from the Gospels or the direct words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.⁵⁷

Ehrman states that 'Near the end of the first century, Christians were citing Jesus' words and calling them "Scripture" (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:18).⁵⁸

Analysis of 1 Timothy 5:17-18

Paul writes to Timothy,

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, [OR compensation] especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and, "*The laborer deserves to be paid.*" [italics added]

Is Paul (or the writer of 1 Timothy⁵⁹) quoting Jesus? In Matthew 10:9-10 we have,

Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for *laborers deserve their food.* [italics added]

⁵⁷ "One of the most embarrassing facts for those who see Paul as a follower of Jesus is his failure to refer much to Jesus' life or teaching. In his letters Paul refers very frequently to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but as for Jesus' birth, baptism, miracles, parables, transfiguration, etc., there is a deafening silence." Wenham, 1995, p.3

⁵⁸ Ehrman, 2012, p. 10

⁵⁹ Theologians are not agreed as to the authorship of this letter. See Duling et al, 1994, p.487

In Timothy, we have "*The laborer deserves to be paid.*" In Matthew, we have "*laborers deserve their food.*" The two sayings are not identical.

In the first proof text Paul is clearly quoting from Deuteronomy 25:4 (*You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.*) and for the second proof text, he appears to be paraphrasing⁶⁰ Leviticus 19:13 (*...you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning.*)⁶¹ The two texts appear to have been taken from the Torah.

Other passages

Literary dependence of Paul upon Jesus is put forward for three other passages.⁶²

To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband . . .⁶³

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.⁶⁴

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. . ."⁶⁵

As Paul had no (physical) contact with Jesus, and as Paul vehemently protests that he received nothing from the "pillars" who had gone before him⁶⁶, the only way these

⁶⁰ Paul treated other Old Testament passages in a cavalier fashion to make a (creative) theological point. For example, 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 as discussed in Harris, 2005, p.277.

⁶¹ In fact, the dependence seems to be in the opposite direction. Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles gives advice on missionary demeanour in 2 Corinthians 2:17, and 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 and other places, which appears to have been summarized by Matthew in 10:5-15.

⁶² Wenham, 1995, p.4

⁶³ 1 Corinthians 7:10

⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians 9:14

⁶⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

⁶⁶ Galatians 1:1, 2:6

commands could be conveyed to Paul would have been by revelation. And this is what he, in fact, asserts in Galatians 1:11-12.

For I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul says "God, who set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to *reveal* his Son to [Gk *in*] me,"⁶⁷ and, "Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that *what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord*. Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized."⁶⁸

The message to the early Christians from Paul was that Jesus speaks through Paul. Paul was not rehearsing what he had heard from others. Jesus was speaking directly to the believers through him.

⁶⁷ Galatians 1:15-16

⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 14:37-38

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