

# Praising and Boasting about Religious Leaders

We read in the Scriptures that we are *not* to exalt ourselves above other people, but that we are to exalt God instead. We are all *equals* under God. He is our Father; we are brothers. Jesus is our teacher; we are all learners. A person who wants to "seek first the Kingdom of God" will not want to build his own little "kingdom" of admirers and followers.

Yet in this present world, it seems that there will always be people - "church-goers" - who choose to ignore this, and who *want* to focus on humans. Such people will be like "thorns in the flesh" to those who love God and who want to exalt God above all else.

No servant of God wants smothered with praise, or wants a building named after him! They know they are nothing, and that God is everything. Instead of being like the religious leaders who Jesus condemned, they would rather have the attitude of the apostle Paul, who claimed that it was *Christ* (not the apostle Paul) who deserved the attention! Though many people today take offense at his statement, the apostle was just being *honest*, when he claimed that he was the "worst of sinners" - 1 Timothy 1:15. He knew that there was absolutely *no* good in him, except for the good that Christ had put there.

Godly people don't want buildings or objects named after them. It's the people who focus on *themselves* who want this! And it's the people who focus more on *humans*, than on the "kingdom of God," who are willing to do it. (Anyone who might want this type of attention has stopped serving God, and is living contrary to his original calling. Compare to Matthew 6:1.)

The apostle Paul (or any other apostle) would have *never* endorsed the idea of naming something after him. This type of attention was "rubbish" to him - the type of thing he abandoned, when he turned to Christ! (Compare to Philippians 3:8.) Instead, he would have rebuked those who wanted to do it, and told them to direct their boasting to God, where it belongs! (1 Corinthians 1:31, etc.) And if they *really* wanted to boast about Paul, at least they could be *honest* and boast in how weak he was (2 Corinthians 11:30)!

Sadly, those who focus on *people* will continue to do so. And those who want others to give *God* the glory he deserves will continue to be frustrated by the actions of such people. But the Day of Justice *will* come, and all this will change. Those who love God with all their heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22: 37) can rejoice in this!

## The disciple's attitude

Who then is Apollos, and who is Paul, but servants through whom you believed; and each as the Lord gave to him? I planted. Apollos watered. But God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:5-7)

## The non-disciple's attitude (and Jesus' rebuke)

But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad, enlarge the fringes of their garments, and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi, Rabbi' by men. But don't you be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23:5-12)