

1Tim 23-09-24b

We are in the letter of Paul to Timothy, the first one, looking at chapter one, verse 20 and chapter two, verse one, and this very fascinating and helpful juxtaposition of the concept of apostleship. And it comes up in verse 20 because Paul says, I have delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan. I think we can all agree that none of us feels that we are qualified to deliver another human being to Satan, that we would in some form or fashion commit someone to Satan's hands.

And I believe that this is an apostolic function that is unique to the apostles and the apostolic age. It is useful and helpful to see what the characteristics of an apostle are and why they were appointed and how they functioned in that first generation and the disappearance of that gift after the first century. So we've already seen that they were chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ, not by human beings, posting candidates and casting lots.

They were uniquely related to the Lord Jesus Christ. They were all eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. Not all eyewitnesses were apostles, but all apostles were eyewitnesses.

Otherwise we'd have upwards of 500 apostles, but they were personal eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. And they were commissioned by him to make disciples of all nations. If you are still in the book of Acts, looking at chapter one, we have reviewed this a time or two, maybe three or four, but the Lord Jesus in Acts 1.8 says, you shall receive power after that in the King James, or when in the new King James, the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, until the end of the earth, until, haos, until the end of the earth, you will be witnesses to me.

What's fascinating to me about this is these men all have earthly lifespans. Peter had a question about John. What about him, Lord, as they're walking? And Jesus says, what is it to you if he should continue on until I come? There is a sense in which many of the apostles have continued on and will continue until the Lord comes and indeed until the end of the world.

It is the apostolic witness. Paul the apostle with his many letters, and I think Hebrews is part of his canon as well, for several reasons, the apostle Peter, the apostle John, there were those who were sort of loosely numbered with the apostles in a kind of vague fashion. Apollos is referenced by Paul in a context that says, we apostles are suffering for your sake.

And the we in that context is he and Apollos. And he seems to include Apollos by association. James, the Lord's brother is loosely numbered with the apostles in sort of an implied fashion.

And the one thing you can say is if there were others who were considered to be a part of the apostolic witness, they were always closely associated with a living apostle. Apollos with Paul, James with the Lord himself and with the 12 in those early days of the church. But there were no apostles at all after the last living apostle passes away.

And that would be, to the best of our knowledge, John the apostle in exile on the Isle of Patmos. But the apostolic witness and those who are closely associated with an apostle, such as Timothy, such as Apollos, such as Barnabas, such as even Titus and that very first generation of pastors personally trained by Paul communicate the apostolic witness. And we have seen over and over again, Paul tell Timothy, the things that you have heard and seen in me, what you have heard me testify to, what you have heard me teach, you pass that along.

That is the inspired truth of God. And to the extent that any teacher, any pastor presents and emphasizes and explicates and interprets and suggests application for the apostolic witness, to that extent, you are entering into that unique function and its reflection and its lasting effect goes all the way down to the end of the world. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me.

To whom is Jesus speaking in Acts 1.8? Look at verse 2. After he had through the Holy Spirit given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen. Who are the apostles whom he had chosen? The eleven. I haven't yet had the Matthias Joseph episode.

The eleven whom he had chosen. To whom he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them, the eleven, during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Things pertaining to the kingdom of God, such as, I suspect, its delay.

The fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to Israel of a kingdom with a Davidic king on the throne have been put on hold until the body of Christ is fully formed. That is one of the truths of the kingdom of God. We do not currently have the Lord Jesus sitting on the throne of his father David.

People try to say that sitting at the right hand of the father is the same thing. It is not. It is an earthly kingdom.

Jesus made predictions about what would happen when he sits on that throne. He will gather the nations before him and the sheep and the goats judgment will take place. He will weed out of his kingdom all things that offend.

That has manifestly not taken place. If this were the kingdom, as some people want to think of it, many of Jesus' statements would have to be false. Being assembled together with them, in verse 4, he commanded them, the eleven, not to depart from Jerusalem.

Jesus appeared to his half-brother James. He appeared to a number of others. He

appeared to ladies in the garden and afterward.

He appeared to upwards of 500 in one place, according to the apostle Paul in Corinthians. Jesus did not speak these words on those occasions. He specifically commanded the twelve.

When you go back to, and this is an apostolic function, to bear witness to the resurrected Christ is something these apostles were specifically commissioned to do. You shall be unto me. This is the resurrected Christ speaking.

Paul, of course, is going to see him on the Damascus road. You have a similar situation at the end of the gospel of Matthew. Verse 16 of chapter 28 of Matthew, then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

Once again, Jesus calls the eleven to a mountain. It is the eleven to whom he speaks. How easy would it have been for him to deliver these words at the ascension from the Mount of Olives, where there is a large cloud gathered, cloud of witnesses, so to speak, and Jesus is received up into a cloud.

How easy would it have been when he appeared to upwards of 500 in one place to deliver these words and to give a jump start to this idea. But Jesus speaks to the eleven, even though some doubt. He spoke to them, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

It is the authority of the Lord Jesus to choose and commission apostles. And in the same way that Paul invokes his apostolic authority in telling Timothy what he is to preach and teach and practice in the Ephesian church, Jesus states his authority in commissioning these eleven. All authority has been given to me.

Obviously, if it is given, there is only one greater than the Lord Jesus who could grant such authority. And it's not acclamation. It isn't recognition by the church or Israel or crowds of people.

This authority is given by God, the Father in heaven and on earth. You, eleven, go and make disciples of all the nations. This had to be kind of a eyebrow raiser for the eleven as they heard it, because they would have expected disciples to be made in Israel.

Isn't he going to say Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria? But here he says, make disciples from all nations. When it says of, this is an interpretive choice. Are you going to make all of the nations disciples of the Lord Jesus? You can't.

It is not the will of God that any should perish, but a lot do. It is the will of God that all men repent and come to a knowledge of the truth, but not all men do. Here, make disciples from all the nations.

And this is an anticipation of what Peter is going to see later, some years later, with the sheet being let down with clean and unclean animals representing both Israel, who is unique in having the list of clean animals, and the rest of the nations. And these animals are put for all of humanity. One thing you can notice about that, just as an aside, we're not going to look at the sheet let down, although it's a fascinating passage.

Peter did not eat them all, did he? Arise, Peter, kill and eat from the collection. You can choose. It's like telling Adam, of all of the trees of the garden, you may eat.

Adam and Eve did not eat every piece of fruit off of every tree. They will partake as needed from any of the trees, but one. And they're even going to eat from that tree.

But it isn't universal. There is a huge movement toward universalism in the modern day. One of the passages we're going to see, either this morning or next time, is the passage I just quoted.

It is the desire of God that all men believe, repent, come to a knowledge of the truth. But not all do. Well, if it's God's will, and you're a Calvinist or Reformed theology type, how can God want a thing, desire a thing, and it not come to pass? And there comes to be sort of a Midas syndrome in this view of God, that if God thinks a thing or wishes a thing, it comes to pass.

Like Midas, anything he touches turns to gold. It's involuntary. Whether he wants it or not, it's going to happen, really.

And that if God thinks a thing or wishes a thing or desires a thing, well, there's no desire of God that will not come to pass. And this is an assumption that has no scriptural support whatsoever. In fact, quite to the contrary.

The Old Testament pictures God as holding out his hands all day long to a disobedient and stiff-necked people. If God is holding out his hands in appeal, how is it that Israel doesn't flock to him? Is he posing? Is he play-acting? Is he doing some deceptive piece of theater? If God is holding out his hands, and the people remain disobedient and stiff-necked, so much so that he eventually sends them into captivity, all day long, God says to a disobedient and stiff-necked people, God can have a desire that is not fulfilled. In the same way that the Lord Jesus can have a desire that is not fulfilled.

Lord, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, which is to let this cup pass from me. The Lord Jesus, who never sinned, had a desire to not drink the cup.

Not my will, but thine, be done. So, make disciples from all the nations, in Matthew 28,
19, not exclusive to Israel, whosoever will may come. Remember the end of the verse,
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verse, end of the verse, and the end of the verse, and the end of the verse, and the end of the verse, and the end of the verse, and the end of the verse, and the end of the verse, confused by the complexities.

Maybe it's just because I don't understand it. It has always seemed very simple to me, as I've mentioned before. God, in the singular, is God incorporated.

It's like the board of a company or a foundation. And you can say, the board has set this policy. The board has made this decision.

The board of directors has come to this conclusion, and it's board singular. And you've got an idea. You've got a suggestion.

You've got something. I'll take it to the board. I'll present it to the board.

I'll see what the board says. God incorporated. But that board has three individual, co-equal, co-eternal members, the Father, Son, and Spirit.

So the name, singular, this is God. But they have adopted and assigned to themselves specific roles and functions. The Holy Spirit is no less than the Son or the Father.

The Lord Jesus is no less than the Father in terms of quality or value. But they have assigned functions, and they have established an order of authority. All authority has been given to me.

If Jesus is God, why doesn't He already have all authority? Because within the board, there is all authority. But that authority is assigned, and functions are assigned. God the Father did not die on the cross.

God the Holy Spirit did not die on the cross. And it is confusing to some that people, there's even a sort of a swear word that used to pertain in the old English days, they would say God's blood, thinking that, well, it's God who bled on the cross. It was the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ that bled.

And not understanding that something can be a unity and yet have components such as the incarnate Christ, who is perfect deity and true humanity combined in one person. There are aspects that only pertain to His humanity. God doesn't get tired.

The humanity of Christ did. God doesn't bleed. The humanity of Christ bled, et cetera.

Jesus could hunger and thirst. It's mentioned more than once that He was hungry. Whether it's the fig tree at the end of His ministry or the desert after 40 days when He's being tested by Satan, it says He was hungry.

Well, is God hungry? Does deity and divinity get hungry? To distinguish and understand that a thing can be a unity and yet have individual parts and there are unique

characteristics to those parts is important. Sometimes it says the 12 did a thing in the early days of the church, or Jesus sent forth the 12 to witness. He sends forth the 70.

And they are sent as a unit. You can talk about the 12, you can talk about the 70, or you can talk about individuals within that group who had experiences that other individuals did not have, who were given assignments that others did not have. We are body of Christ, but we are not all the same member.

There are many parts. Paul extends that metaphor. One part can't say to another, I have no need of you because I'm body of Christ just as much as you are.

In the same way that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in their rebellion could not irrigate to themselves the functions of the Levites or the function of Moses in leadership and say, well, we're all Israel. Distinguishing these things is important. So all authority has been given to me.

And Jesus is now about to exercise that authority in this commission to the 11. You go and make disciples of all the nations, from all the nations, baptizing them in the threefold personality that is God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, teaching them. Disciples are made by teaching.

And the beauty of this is teaching is something that can descend past the apostolic age. The disciples become apostles. Having been taught by the Lord Jesus, the apostles are primarily teachers.

Remember in Acts chapter five, when there is a dispute about the widows, I'm sorry, it's chapter six, five is Ananias and Sapphira. That's part of my Satan coverage. In chapter six, the number of disciples was multiplying and there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Greeks because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

So the 12 summoned the multitude of disciples and said, it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. What is the problem? Trying to go out and make sure that these functions of fairness and equity between the Hebrew and Greek widows is not our function. So the 12 are going to exercise their authority and delegate this function to others.

It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God. This is reflecting on it, meditating in it, understanding it, discussing it among themselves, teaching it, teaching them to observe the things I have commanded you to teach them, teaching them to observe the things I have commanded you. Not every single command, go forth and take no staff.

Jesus gave that command to his disciples. That's not something they tell everyone to go on a pilgrimage and take nothing. Don't take a second pair of shoes and so on.

That's a command of the Lord Jesus. The apostles do not teach that command. Remain in Jerusalem until you receive power from on high.

That is a command from the Lord Jesus to the 11. That's not something they are to pass on and teach to others. There are things that are unique to the apostles, commands from the Lord Jesus.

I can give you many, many examples. They do not pass those on to everyone else in the church. Jesus said, teaching them to observe the things I have commanded you to teach them.

There are teachings that transcend this moment, that transcend these circumstances, that are definitional and that are universal for believers. Pray, have faith, fear not, look to hope, believe the resurrection, and so on. Not every single command that is given to the disciples is a command, because what is the next word? Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever.

All things? Seriously? Go to Galilee, Jesus tells them, through the angel at the tomb. Tell my brethren, go to Galilee. Do we go? No.

You say, well, those are somewhat obvious that we wouldn't do. Does all mean all? Or not? All the ones that make sense to you, pass on. All the ones that don't imply you are living in first century Israel.

That's not what Jesus said. All things, whatsoever, is very emphatic. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

That's at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and he is emphasizing it to his apostles at the end. Teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you to teach, that I have instructed you in, so that they could be passed on. These were inculcated and imparted with the goal of passing them on.

You make disciples of all nations, from all nations, and you do it by teaching. Teaching is what makes disciples. And over and over again, when you look at the witness of Peter, of Paul, of John, their emphasis is always the truth.

The pillar and ground of the church is the truth. The truth, imparting the truth, teaching the truth. So that is an apostolic function to inculcate this teaching.

They did it in person in the first century church until they all passed away. At that point, that teaching is in writing, and it is the written word, the record of Jesus' teaching, and the apostolic witness to that teaching, and the expansion and explication of it in the New Testament epistles and the Revelation. That is what makes disciples.

The word, whatsoever I have commanded you, teach. Make disciples teaching them. You

immerse them in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

If you want to do that with actual water, that's great, but the idea is not, they're not going to be a disciple unless they get dunked. The idea is they should be immersed in the name, the reputation, the acts, the words, the works of God Himself, and the unique persons within God incorporated. Immerse them in knowledge of the Father.

Immerse them in knowledge of the Son. Immerse them in knowledge of the role and function of the Holy Spirit. They need to be wet with it.

They need to be soaked in it. Soak them in the word of truth that details the name. When you compare that to a simple immersion, or a ritual, or a sprinkling, or an effusion, or whatever other form of baptism, it is a sad comparison.

Show me somebody that got dunked, like I did at the age of seven, and show me someone that is soaked in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the latter is the one that is going to be a disciple, soaked in it. That witness of the word, that witness to the words, the words of the Lord Jesus, all authority has been given to me from the Father, and I am giving you not personal authority, whatever you say goes. The authority is in the word, and the beauty of the witness to the word is the word has the authority.

It is the word of the Lord Jesus that is imparted to the apostles. That is what they communicate. And that's why in our Timothy passage, turn back to 1st Timothy, you remember that Paul is going to, in chapter 1 verse 14, that good thing which was committed to you, there is something that has been transferred.

The Lord Jesus committed it to the apostles, and in this case to Paul in particular. That thing which was committed to you, the content of the word, the opportunity, the responsibility, the authority to present and teach that word, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. It has been committed to you, keep it.

And he is going to go on to say, take these words and commit them to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Take the authoritative word of Christ. It is the word that has the authority.

In the hands of the Holy Spirit, it has double divine authority. Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, the living incarnate word, capital W, of John chapter 1, that became flesh and dwelt among us, the witness and the testimony to the Lord Jesus himself. The Lord Jesus has authority, all authority.

And it is his words as the ultimate agent, and the apostles as the immediate agent, the intermediate agent, and those who teach the word to the extent that someone teaches the word, that message has authority. The authority does not come from the teacher, it comes from the word. And the emphasis is on the presence of God in and through his

word.

The presence of God in and through his spirit, this makes disciples. This is an apostolic function. It is an apostolic authority granted directly by the Lord Jesus himself before he left.

That is an apostolic function. The writings, therefore, of the apostles were recognized as authoritative. They don't say everything Paul wrote is authoritative, right? He probably had correspondence of other types and kinds, but that which is authoritative in the New Testament comes from an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle.

The authority of the Lord Jesus is present in the apostles and those that work with the apostles closely, Luke, Apollos, Timothy, and so on. And those were quickly recognized as something to preserve and what we call a part of the canon of inspired scripture. There yet is a division among that apostolic witness.

Peter is primarily an apostle to the Jews. Jesus directly spoke to him and said, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, until the end of the world. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul attempts to present it to the Jews. He goes to synagogues first. But since you have not considered yourselves worthy of receiving this truth, Paul says, we go to the Gentiles.

And that is a part of his ministry. Paul was an exception in the sense that he didn't see the resurrected Lord before the Ascension. He saw him afterward.

But if you go to 1 Corinthians 15, verse 8, Paul says, he appeared last of all to me, having detailed those previous resurrection appearances. The gift of apostleship ceased after that time. So what happens to the apostolic commission? It moves forward through the gift given to the body of Christ.

He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. Teachers. And you read Ephesians about the building up of the body and which every joint supplies and so on.

It all is accomplished through teaching. And that is why Paul has such an emphasis in Timothy on teaching, on adhering to the word, on removing and correcting and rebuking anything that tries to pass itself off as the truth. This is the greatest threat to the health of the church is deceitful teaching, false teaching.

And that's why you're going to find Paul talking about the transfer of these responsibilities to those who are going to be teachers in the future. You get down to chapter 4, verse 15 and 16 of this same letter. Meditate on these things.

Give yourself entirely to them so that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to

yourself and to the doctrine. Take heed to yourself and to the teaching.

Continue in them for in doing this, you will deliver both yourself and those who hear you. Teaching of the truth delivers and keeps on delivering those who listen, those who hear. So the conclusion, you get over to chapter 6, verse 3. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, if anyone will not listen to the words, and he emphasizes it, these are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all authority has been given.

To whom was that authority passed? The apostles. And to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, obsessed with disputes and arguments, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings, men of corrupt minds, destitute of what? Destitute of love? Destitute of faith? Destitute of hope? Destitute of the truth. Without the truth, you can't get to the triad of Christian virtues.

Destitute of the truth, who have a false supposition. They've got a wrong-headed view of godliness. You, O man of God, verse 11 of that same chapter 6, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

You get the idea he's alluding to the fruit of the Spirit. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, for which you were called, have confessed the good confession, presence of many witnesses. Verse 14, keep this commandment without spot, blameless until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Goes on to give another one of those, he breaks out in praise when he starts thinking about the Lord Jesus more than once. And again in the second letter, he's going to talk about committing these things. Chapter 2 of 2 Timothy, you therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. The descending commission is to teach. It is the teaching that will deliver people, enable them to become disciples.

Teaching them to observe all of the things I have committed to you to teach. To do that, you're going to be in a warfare, you're going to receive opposition, you're going to endure hardship. Do it as a good soldier.

Verse 7, consider what I say, may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Unique to the apostles is this commission. Unique to the apostles is the content of this truth, which they were to pass on to others who could in turn pass it on to faithful men who would teach.

The power is in the truth as always. The Word of God and the Spirit of God, that's where transforming power resides. Well, we have much more to say about this.

Satan is a topic unto himself. And when we come back after next week, we're going to see Satan is mentioned 38 times in the New Testament scripture. We don't always give sufficient weight to the role of Satan and God allowing him to be the God of this world, to be present and a force in our lives.

What is he allowed to do? What is he constrained from doing? And that is a fascinating study. And when Paul, on two occasions, delivers someone to Satan in Corinthians for the destruction of the flesh, in Timothy to learn not to blaspheme, what is the relationship between the body of Christ and Satan? I will submit to you first and foremost, that only apostles have the authority to turn someone over to Satan. We don't.

We don't have the authority to ask God to bind Satan. It's a wrongful prayer. Satan is not going to be bound.

Jesus said he roams the earth. Even when he threatened Peter directly, Jesus didn't say, but I have bound Satan that he will not harm you. He will not be able to attack you.

The antidote and the solution is faith. We'll see that next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the presence and power of your Holy Spirit to enable us to understand it. Thank you for the constant fulfillment of your promise that if we ask, we will receive.

If we seek, we will find. And if we knock, you will open the door to us. We pray that as we reflect on these truths, your Holy Spirit will give us enlightenment and understanding so that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified both now and in ages to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.