

1Tim 23-11-19b

We are in the book of 1st Timothy. We're looking at Paul's claims as an apostle, a preacher, and a teacher specifically to the Gentiles. I raised this issue, introduced it a little bit last week, and I want to continue and conclude it in this session.

Back to the GutQuestions.org article on Pauline Christianity, those who theorize about a separate Pauline Christianity tell a different story than our view, which is that the New Testament is an inspired collection of books, that they are all breathed by God, communicated by God, they are all profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, as is the Old Testament, the New Testament presents the Lord Jesus Christ and the details of his earthly life, ministry, and teaching. The epistles are explanatory, looking back on the meaning and scope of Jesus' work and show us its application. We also recognize that the teaching of the Lord Jesus is, in my view, certainly, I think in our view, co-extensive with the Old Testament.

It was delivered before the expiration of Daniel's 69th week. It is part and parcel of, and in many ways a fulfillment of, the Old Testament record, the Old Testament revelation, Jesus' perspective, the content is the extension, and in many ways completion of, the Old Testament revelation of God. It is its culmination.

He comes at the apex, at the most important part of the ages, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in his life and in his death and resurrection, is the most important event in human history. But I want to run an idea by you that just, I don't know why it's taken me this many years to think of it, but it occurred to me in the course of working on these concepts and this passage in particular, the position, the sequence of the work and ministry and teaching of the Lord Jesus. Let's just think about that for a minute.

We've got the four gospels as a witness and testimony to those things. So the Lord Jesus is born, and except for his appearance in Jerusalem at the age of 12, the first 30 years of his life are almost completely unknown to us. We have a great many revelations and supernatural events at the point of Jesus' birth.

Then there is a 30-year silence, except for the brief interlude there found at the temple at the age of 12 by his parents when he goes missing. Then another period of silence until the age of 30. And then Jesus essentially is baptized at the Jordan, begins assembling the group of 12 disciples, and then for the next three years travels Galilee and Judea.

He even goes through Samaria and preaches and teaches. He goes across the Sea of Galilee down to Gadara or Gerasa and takes the Legion out of the demon-possessed men and returns, stills the storm, walks on the water, and so on. All of these things with his disciples.

At the end of that time, he allows himself to be arrested, tried, falsely convicted, crucified, three days in the heart of the earth, rises early in the morning on the third day, and then for 40 days appears to his disciples by many confirming signs and proofs that he is raised from the dead, appears to upwards of 500 at one time, according to Paul, and then ascends. But when you look at the work of the Lord Jesus, here's something you may not have thought of. I certainly never thought of this.

If the work of the 12 apostles, you lose Judas, of course, but if the work of the disciples, who are going to be apostles, is to launch Christianity, why isn't the crucifixion at the beginning of Jesus' adult ministry and not at the end? Everything that Jesus exposes them to, the parables that he tells, the parables of the kingdom, talking about the kingdom, the wheat and the tares, the good and bad fish, the those who are least in the kingdom, greatest in the kingdom, all of this is in the age of Israel. And he doesn't say, we're launching a new movement. We are going to create a whole new mechanism of faith.

He doesn't tell them during this time, Philip, these Greeks that you're talking to, bring them over here. Let's incorporate them. Let me get a couple of Greek disciples, because this thing is going to go to the nations.

The more you think about it, the more unusual a thought it is that Jesus makes virtually no preparation for the church age before the upper room, the night that he is betrayed and the night before he is crucified and laid in the grave. That teaching concentrates exclusively on Israel. I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.

You have heard it said is not, but I say those those statements, you have heard it said, but I say does not cancel. You have heard it said. It explains how what you have heard said is a misuse and a misapplication, a distortion and perversion of the law.

He doesn't cancel it. He corrects its application. He corrects its use, particularly its personal application.

You have heard it said, thou shalt not murder. I say hatred in your heart is as damaging to relationships and to people as an outright murder. And you'll be in danger of judgment for so doing.

You're worried about these overt, superficial sins and you applaud yourself for not killing anyone. But this hatred that you express is just as bad. That's pretty much Jesus point.

But he's referring back to the law and saying, if you understood the law, you search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life. It is they, the Old Testament scriptures that bear witness of me, Jesus tells the Pharisees and the scribes and the religious leaders. Old Testament economy is preached to the Old Testament people of God all the way through Jesus' ministry.

He doesn't in any way inaugurate the church until the night before he's crucified. He anticipates it. He talks about some future things.

But again, it's hidden, it's incipient, it is unrevealed in its details and its emphasis. And so we do believe that the New Testament is a unified whole, but we, at least I, believe that the four gospels and the first chapter of Acts, if you will, really are Old Testament age, teaching, preaching, and the first and foremost recipients. And those who were supposed to take that to heart are the Old Testament people of God.

It is Israel. This is why Pentecost happens in Jerusalem and not in Rome. So we do find that this teaching is brought across in the way that we bring across all Old Testament examples and teachings.

We study Old Testament Israel because there is the revelation of the work and person of Jesus Christ, and that is essential truth as a part of our identity, but our revelation goes beyond that. It incorporates it. It is harmonious with it, but it expands and extends and explains much of it and universalizes it beyond Israel.

Israel is the first recipient. Israel has the first opportunity to be the people of God and to live in a way that reflects God's glory and shines a light to the nations. That light eventually extends to the nations and the nations are incorporated into the formal plan and purpose of God.

So you have Matthew chapter 28 will give you the facts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul in 1 Corinthians explains the significance of that resurrection to present company. So those who theorize about a separate Pauline Christianity tell a different story, and this is back to the Got Questions article entitled Pauline Christianity.

So here's the spiel, and I want to offer you this pretty much in its entirety because this is an example. When you understand how this works and how it came about, many other things align. Many other things are similar in their origin and in their perpetration and their application.

So here's what people say, and when I say people, this is not just scholars. Scholars work in seminaries and colleges and universities. They teach people who become masters and doctors and go out and begin to preach this from pulpits and in Bible colleges and across the land.

And this is now, from an academic standpoint, the truth. This is what you get if you go to almost any university that has a Bible program and many seminaries and even Bible colleges. Here it is.

Jesus, a great teacher, considered himself to be the long-awaited Messiah for the Jews. True or false? It's true. Did Jesus say, I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly? Did he object and tell somebody they were wrong when they called

him son of David? Jesus, a great teacher, considered himself to be the long-awaited Messiah for the Jews.

He believed that God would overthrow Rome and bring his kingdom to earth. Now that's nothing Jesus ever said. In fact, he tells Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world.

But he believed that God would overthrow Rome and bring his kingdom to earth. In preparation for this, Jesus taught a message of unconditional love, tolerance, and nonjudgmental acceptance of everyone. Alas, Jesus' mission of inaugurating a new earthly age failed when the Romans crucified him.

Jesus' followers, believing that God had raised their rabbi from the dead, continued to meet in Jerusalem under the leadership of James, Jesus' brother. Their intention was to await the still-coming kingdom and continue observing Jesus' brand of enlightened Judaism. But along came Saul of Tarsus, who faked a conversion in order to infiltrate the church.

Peter and James and others who had actually known Jesus were suspicious of Saul who had never met Jesus. Saul, who started calling himself Paul, had a stroke of genius. He artfully combined traditional Hebrew ideas with those of pagan Greek philosophy, creating a new religion that could appeal to both Jews and Gentiles.

He began preaching that Jesus was actually God, that Jesus' death was linked to the Jewish system of sacrifice, that one could be saved simply by believing, and that the Mosaic law was obsolete. Paul's zealous missionary activity and persuasive writings took his new quote-unquote gospel around the Roman Empire. The Jerusalem church, including Peter and James, disowned Paul as a heretic and cult leader.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Jewish church lost authority, but the Gentile church, founded by Paul, increased its influence. One of Paul's fervent followers wrote the book of Acts, which gave Paul legendary status with its glowing portrayal of him as the hero of the church. Later, four unknown writers gathered scraps of information about Jesus and wrote books they called quote Matthew, quote Mark, quote Luke, and quote John.

But Paul's theology, already dominant in the church, tainted those writers' perspective. Thus, Paul's religion won out over Jesus' religion. This answers a question that I have raised in my own mind in the past and have mentioned in class, how can people in the modern day who believe that Jesus is totally non-violent, non-judgmental, is never going to perpetrate the sheep and goats judgment, never going to set anybody into eternal fire, how can they account for Jesus' explicit teachings on those subjects? Well, the gospel writers found authentic scraps of Jesus' teaching and ministry, but it was tainted.

They were writing after Paul got his stuff off the ground. And so Paul's judgmental view

and Paul's apocalyptic eschatology sneaked in there and put words in Jesus' mouth that he never said. So the gospels are only inspired in spots.

And only I am qualified to tell you those spots, say these scholars. In short, Paul was a charlatan, an evangelical huckster who succeeded in twisting Jesus' message of love into something Jesus himself would never recognize. It was Paul, not Jesus, who originated the, quote, Christianity of today.

Commonly, those who hold the above theory. Now remember, once you give this idea some credit and you say, well, you know, maybe that, that would certainly account for things. This is your Bart Ehrman foot in the door.

So commonly those who hold to the above theory also believe the following, and this is a progressive Christian development. You progress from questioning the authority of the New Testament scriptures in part, you progress, you become progressive. Have I said that enough for you to make the identification? To this, number one, Jesus was not divine.

He never claimed to be God and he never intended to start a new religion. So I and my father are one. Jesus never said that.

That's the Pauline corruption that filtered into these, that we're trying to write the story of Jesus, that shouldn't be in there. If you've seen me, you've seen the father. No one has seen the father except the son and those to whom the son reveals him and so on.

These largely Johannine passages, this is all Pauline corruption. Number two, the Bible is not an inspired book and is riddled with contradictions. None of the Bible, except possibly the book of James was written by anyone who knew Jesus.

There are fragments of Jesus teachings in the gospels, but it is difficult to discern what he really said. Remember decades ago, they had the search for the historical Jesus. That was the fruit of this, this simmering pot, which has now come to a full boil.

Number three, Paul was never a Pharisee and was not highly educated. His quote conversion was either a personal hallucinogenic experience. Some people say an epileptic fit or an outright fraud.

His claims to be an apostle were attempts to further his own authority in the church. This connects to our passage and to others, the beginning of this book, the beginning of many other books. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by divine appointment, according to divine authority, personally called and appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself on the Damascus road.

But Paul was never a Pharisee. Conversion is a fake. His claims were just an attempt to further his own authority in the church.

Number four, Pauline theological inventions include one, the deity of Jesus, Jesus never claimed to be God, Paul did that. B, salvation by grace through faith. Paul invented this, Jesus never said it, which in a way is true.

You don't see Jesus saying, believe on me and you will have eternal life. And I will come back and get you after I go to prepare a place for you and so on. All of this has been intruded once again, 14 is in John, right? Chapter 14, I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you and all of that.

John is heavily infected with Paul. So we don't like John, we like the synoptics. Salvation by grace through faith.

C, salvation through the blood of Jesus, that it is the sacrificial atonement. The blood of Jesus Christ, his son cleanses us from all sin. This is why you've got to throw out the Johannine epistles, 1 John in particular, that talks about the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing.

John is just right out, that's not an authentic book. Another Pauline invention and infection of these other books. D, the sinless nature of Jesus, that Jesus was sinless.

That's an invention of Paul. E, the concept of original sin. In Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive.

Original sin, that's right out. Man is intrinsically good. We're made in the image of God and it's only the environment and bad people that corrupt that image.

And if you could just take a baby and insulate them from bad things in the environment and bad people, their divine natural image would shine forth. So we've got to go out and create the kingdom so that little children can grow up in it and be nice. F, the Holy Spirit.

You know, the Holy Spirit is nowhere mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. How do you account for this? Well, Paul invented this whole Holy Spirit thing. And remember John in 14 and 15 talks about, I will send you another comforter, the Holy Spirit.

He will convict. Sin, righteousness, and judgment. All of this is another infection of Paul's ideas in this gospel of John.

And so out of these five points, Jesus is not divine. The Bible is not inspired. Paul was never a Pharisee, made his whole thing up.

His inventions include deity of Christ, salvation by grace, salvation through blood, sinless nature of Jesus, concept of original sin, and the whole idea of the Holy Spirit. Remember, once again, Jesus talking about the Holy Spirit is in what gospel? John chapter three with Nicodemus. The wind blows where it will and so on.

None of these new doctrines was accepted by Jesus' true followers. That's the

contention. And then finally, the Gnostic gospels are closer to the truth about Jesus than are the traditional four gospels of the Bible, gospel of Thomas, the sayings gospel, and so on.

These are closer because they just record Jesus' words. So the concept of Pauline Christianity represents an outright attack on the Bible as the word of God. Adherents of the Pauline Christianity theory misrepresent Jesus' teachings.

Of course, anytime you say they're misrepresenting it and you go to an example, they say, well, Jesus never said that. It's real convenient that anything that doesn't fit the theory, I just throw it out. I do not treat that as a fact.

Do you see a similarity in other areas? Anything I don't like, I throw out. I'll take some of the Old Testament. I don't want to say that the Old Testament is completely spurious because I believe Jesus represented Judaism, but Jesus clarified Judaism and threw out the misrepresentations of the Old Testament.

So only portions of the Old Testament are inspired and the rest of it is expired. And so the Yeshua for whom Jesus was named, you go to the book of Joshua, but the conquest of the land, that was a misunderstanding. Joshua screwed up.

He wasn't supposed to go in and kill the Canaanites and take their land away from them. He wasn't supposed to go in and attack the Palestinians and drive them out of land that they previously occupied. That biblical example is false.

We can't have that, especially not its application to the modern day, that in God's eyes, it is justified for a nation to take historic land that used to belong to them, but they were carried away because of famine or because of captivity or whatever. And when they return, they're not allowed to take their land back. They're not allowed to make treaties with those who are willing to coexist and drive out those who are not.

That's not a biblical concept. Joshua is just right out. Although Jesus is named for him.

They just, I don't want to talk about that. So, they believe Jesus' words on love, but deny his teachings on judgment, like Matthew chapter 24, which we recently studied. They insist on a human Jesus denying his divinity, although Jesus plainly taught his equality with God in passages such as John chapter 10, verse 30.

Well, John is infected with Paul, so I can dismiss that. It doesn't fit my theory. They want a loving Jesus without having to accept him as Lord and Savior.

They want to follow his earthly policies of love, acceptance, non-judgmental cooperation, and so on. Anytime a skeptic finds a disagreeable doctrine in the Bible, he is likely to say that passage has been corrupted or Paul wrote that and we know he was a liar. Paul faced that in his own day and in his own lifetime.

And that's why he over and over again has to emphasize his apostleship and defend it and tell Timothy, I am telling the truth. I am not lying because you're going to hear people saying that I'm not telling the truth and I am lying. Paul couldn't even get out of this earthly life before that started happening and it's been happening ever since, but very much so in the last 200 years.

Where the gospels teach a Pauline doctrine, such as Jesus' atonement for sin in John 1, verse 29, the skeptic dismisses it as inserted by devotees of Paul. In reality, the skeptic's only basis for such a selective approach to scripture is a personal bias against the idea of Jesus' atonement, which is rife in postmodern Christianity today. Interestingly, Paul's credentials as an apostle were attacked, even in his own lifetime, by those who desired to lead the church into legalism and other errant ideologies.

Paul defends himself from spurious attacks of false teachers in 1 Corinthians 9. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me and question me. What is Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 9? There are people who are going to tell you I'm not an apostle, but you are my workmanship in the Lord.

If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. What does that mean to us? Have the doctrines and principles and promises that we have learned from the New Testament teachings of the Apostle Paul, have they not made a difference in our own lives, in our own fellowship, in our own hearts, in our own power to overcome sin and endure suffering with joy and peace? Have they not drawn us closer to God through Christ? Have they not enhanced our appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ as more than a teacher of nice things, but our Lord and Savior, the person that we represent on this earth as his body, the one who is our example of faith and patience by living through every word that proceeds from the mouth of God and enabled and empowered by God's Holy Spirit to do extraordinary things? Have we not experienced that at first hand? Are we not the seal of Paul's apostleship, just as the Corinthians were? I know it's true because it works. I know it's true because I have experienced its reality.

You can argue, well, you believe in the resurrection. You haven't seen a resurrection. Nobody knows about a resurrection.

Nobody's come back from a resurrection to talk about it in a credible fashion. Well, I know not when my Lord may come, but I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded he's able to fulfill these future promises because I have experienced firsthand, me, myself, and I, the fulfillment of those promises in my own life.

Those who have overcome addictions that people say you can never overcome that, and yet they have by the power of God through the Holy Spirit and through the word of God

as preached by the apostle Paul, the salvation in Jesus Christ who delivers us even now in this present evil age, not just pie in the sky by and by. And there is power from God in his word and in his spirit. This is what we learned from the apostle Paul.

Jesus did not dwell on the power of the word. In fact, he often mentions the fact that the Pharisees thought they were soaking themselves in the word of God, and they went egregiously astray. They perverted and distorted the scriptures, and Jesus corrects that.

But that's not yet the day of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was available. These men had not availed themselves of that availability, and with the word alone, that knowledge puffed up.

They never got to the love that builds up. They say Jesus is the one that preached love. Have you read 1 Corinthians 13? Who expands and explains and shows how that love is attained and expressed, internalized, and made a part of us? Who is it that explains, as Romans 5 does, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not by wishes and idealism, but by the Holy Spirit, who indwells us and can fill us and enable and empower us to do the extraordinary and the supernatural? That's Paul in Romans 5. That's Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.

You throw out Paul, and you go back to the Sermon on the Mount, and you say, Jesus says, blessed are those who have arrived at these conditions of poverty of spirit and humility and seeking peace and so on, but the how-to isn't there. The promises to those who have figured that out from the Old Testament Scriptures are there, because Jesus is preaching the fulfillment of promise, the coming of the kingdom, the potential. The kingdom is in your midst.

The king is here, if you will only accept it. But there were not 10 righteous in Sodom. So, Paul has to defend himself against these attacks, those who say, I'm not an apostle, in 1 Corinthians 9. Same thing in 2 Corinthians 12.

I must go on boasting. There's nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know there's people that won't be convinced, because it's my testimony telling you something that you can't verify.

Have you seen these news reports? Well, they say that the Shiva Hospital or whatever is a giant Hamas headquarters, but we cannot independently verify that. We only have the word of the Prime Minister of Israel and reporters that have gone in there and soldiers that have seen it and video that's been taken. But we can't independently verify, therefore we don't believe it.

Did you see there's people waving signs that say that the infants that were slain and put in ovens and burned alive and so on during the October 6 attacks. A lot of the heinousness of that attack has not been revealed to the public because it is too

horrendously shocking. And there is video proof that they will not show.

It's just too grotesque. And so people are now carrying signs saying those babies are fake. There was no loss of infant life or children.

These people that were murdered on October the 6th in Israel, that's all faked up. That was just propaganda so that Israel could invade the open air prison and squash it. It's just crazy.

So Paul faced this in his own lifetime. There's nothing to be gained by it. I'm going to go on boasting.

I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. And he talks about hearing things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. And Paul says, I will boast in those revelations.

Now, is this the Lord Jesus who came back and personally taught Paul? Is it Paul himself caught up in vision to the third heaven? It's hard for us to know. He's speaking very obliquely here. If I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, he says.

Galatians chapter one. I'm an apostle, not from men or through men, but through Jesus Christ and God, the father who raised him from the dead. That is my authority to you in the region of Galatia.

I'm astonished that you're so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel. And the entire book of Galatians is a reply and contesting this distortion of the truth to the church. Paul's apostleship is attested to by the miracles that he performed.

Romans is one of the few books that the skeptical scholars will accept as genuinely authored by Paul, mainly because they don't understand Romans. And they figure, well, it must've been written by Paul because now they don't necessarily think Paul was a good guy, but they do believe the actual historical Paul wrote it. But Paul mentions that his apostleship is attested by the power of signs and wonders by the power of the spirit of God.

So that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum, I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. Romans 15, 19. The training that he received, and you go to Galatians 1.15-20, he says, he who set me apart before I was born and called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

Revealed to preach to the Gentiles. You can read that. Peter is not an enemy of Paul as the fiction, as the theory would have us believe, Peter writes in 2 Peter 3.15-16, we've seen this many times.

Our dear brother, Paul wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters, his letters containing things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures. You begin by distorting some scripture, you're going to move on to distorting others, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3.15-16. How do they solve this problem? 1 and 2 Peter weren't written by Peter. They're spurious. They're inauthentic.

And this goes on to extend to other ideas, and if you want, you can go to Wikipedia. I'm not going to rehearse it, and it's not necessarily profitable for our instruction, but there is an article in Wikipedia, which I commend to your attention, if you are interested in understanding the current perspective, the origins and foundations of the Bible. Progressive Christianity and the Deconstruct Reconstruct Movement.

How do they get around these clear teachings of scripture? Read an article in Wikipedia called Authorship of the Pauline Epistles. And they give you the history of the disassembly of Paul's authority as an apostle, and in a nutshell, there's a chart there that says the undisputed or authentic Pauline epistles are only 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, and Romans. So you've got seven authentic epistles of Paul.

Now, whether Paul had any business saying what he said is a separate question. They believe the historical Paul wrote those letters. Those that are, their opinion is sharply divided and you can't come to a consensus, Ephesians and Colossians, which are the two letters sent in the same mail pouch, and 2 Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians they think is not authentic. The ones that are probably not authentic are our book, 1 Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus. The pastorals they believe were written very late, probably not authentic.

And Hebrews is manifestly not authored by Paul. It makes no claim to being authored by Paul, but I think it was. And here's what I alluded to earlier.

Having partial facts convinces us of something being true and other things being false. I offer for your consideration Mark Twain, Samuel Clemens. If you could go to the cemetery, he may be in Hannibal, Missouri, buried there, and you could bring him back to life.

They used to have a program about a guy that made pies and he had this weird lightning struck gift where he could touch somebody that was dead and they would come back to life for two minutes. And if he left them alive any longer than two minutes, he had to touch them again and they would go back being dead. What's the name of that? Elizabeth left.

She remembers the name. Anyway, the guy was the pie maker. But suppose you could do this.

Suppose you could bring back Mark Twain from the 1800s, late 1800s, and you say, Sam, let me tell you something. Right now in the world in which I live, I've got a device no bigger than a pack of playing cards and I can talk to anybody in the world. I can instantly tell what's going on anywhere in the world.

I can talk to anybody who is alive and in contact. I can know exactly where I am within a few inches in the middle of the sea, in the middle of the desert, in the middle of a wilderness, a trackless forest. I can know exactly where I am.

What would he say? And this thing doesn't plug into electricity. It doesn't run on a steam engine. It has no wires.

It has no pipes. It has no visible power source of any kind. I can see a picture of any painting ever made, any person that's ever been photographed, I can see their face instantly.

I can talk to people and see them and hear them, though they are thousands of miles away in real time. What would he say? Not on your tin-type, Tessie, is what my dad used to say. There's no way.

That is not possible. It is utterly impossible. That can't happen.

By what possible means? Could you show me something the size of a large playing card and I can see pictures and hear sounds and derive information about myself and others worldwide that it's inconceivable. It is beyond the realm of possibility. No.

And yet that's all true, isn't it? He would never be able to understand it unless and until you provided additional information. Well, since the time of your death, here's what has happened. We have learned to store electricity and batteries.

We have learned to seed the sky with satellites. We have learned to send communication streams invisibly through the air. We don't need a telegraph wire to communicate anymore.

It can fly through the atmosphere. Et cetera. And by supplying enough additional information, what is inconceivable and is branded an outright fantasy and lie becomes incontrovertibly true.

Now, how do we know that these things are true where Sam Clemens would never believe it? How do we know it's true? Reach into your pocket or pick up off the table. You've experienced it, right? We live in a world where these are facts that are taken for granted and often not even thought about in terms of how extraordinary they are in the

thousands and thousands of years that human beings have been on the planet. Only in the last 50 years has this been true.

Honestly, in the last 30 years, has this become true? And yet we don't give it a second thought. Well, yeah, of course it all works unless I forget to charge my phone. I say that to say this, the smattering of extant surviving evidence that comes from the first and second centuries of this era is such that we only have fragmentary lists of Bible books.

We have partial copies of the earliest collections of inspired New Testament scripture. You look at the Muratorian Canon or the Muratorian Fragments of the New Testament or the papyrus copy that contains books that are authored by Paul. Oddly enough, that includes Second Thessalonians.

But you can read this article to get the gist and the controversy of the evidence pro and con, Marcion and the other early writers who quote Paul. But here's the point. If you don't like a message, you attack the messenger.

That's as old as mankind outside the garden. In fact, inside the garden. The woman gave to me and I did eat.

This idea, well, the serpent beguiled me. I accepted a bad message, but it's the messenger's fault. So those who don't like Bible truth will find a way to discredit its source.

And that is what has happened. And it was happening in Paul's lifetime. What is the application of all of this? People are marching in favor of entities that are at war on either side without a to obtain those facts from an objective source, it is best to reserve judgment, to be frugal with opinionating and judging and a wild eyed support of one side or another in a conflict that is by anyone's informed admission complex.

There are complexities in any human situation. There are going to be some injustices on both sides. There are going to be some excesses and abuses on both sides.

You can look no further than a marriage. There's no perfect husband. There's no perfect wife.

And you can't necessarily judge the quality of that relationship by the observation of one dispute over one issue or a couple of disputes and a couple of issues. There is much more going on in that entire situation than meets the eye in a short and brief observation. And we should be reluctant to draw hard and fast conclusions about things about which we don't know a great many facts.

What I do know is my situation. I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded he is able to fulfill his promises.

And the faith that I have committed to him against that future day, I have unqualified faith in God that he will not only redeem and vindicate and resurrect and enable and empower me in the future, but he is with me now. He is able to be my savior now and in the future. I go with what I know.

I know that Paul is an apostle because I know the effect and the impact and the nature of the experience that I have that God has ministered to my heart and my soul through these inspired pages. And you will never convince somebody who has personally experienced a thing that something else is actually true to find one of the families who lost loved ones on October 6th in Israel and tell them that it was all propaganda fake to give an excuse to launch an attack on Gaza. Do you think those people who experienced it, who watched it happen, who survived it, are ever going to be convinced that it's all just a convenient lie? Sorry, I was there.

I've seen with my own eyes. And if you talk to someone like that and you become convinced of their testimony because why would they lie? What is their stake in some future outcome? We know the apostleship of Paul the way the Corinthians knew it in 1 Corinthians chapter nine. We are the authentication and the proof that these things are so.

Because they have been used by God to transform and change and enable and empower and comfort and bless us. And I go with what I know because of that, what Paul says in this passage about prayer and about the role of men and women, you can see where this is going. If people don't like the Pauline description of the role of men and women in the body of Christ, they're going to go back and attack, shoot the messenger and discount and dismiss Paul because he says things they don't want to hear.

Well, we'll see this as we continue through chapter two and conclude in this final section that men are to be men of prayer, not full of wrath and not full of doubts and that women are to adorn themselves as the description goes. We have to first of all authenticate the source of this divine truth so that we can then accept its authority and live in its light. So I think it's important to address this widespread postmodern dismissal of Paul as inauthentic, therefore these scriptures have no traction, have no application, and I'll tell you what should and shouldn't happen in the church.

Don't listen to this faker Paul. This is such a successful tactic. It is being used in many, many areas of human life in our day, just amplified by technology.

Well, much more to see in this, but we can be thankful to the Lord God in heaven that he has given us scriptures, he has personally authenticated them, and he continues to authenticate them in our hearts. The Holy Spirit bears with our spirit. This is Paul talking.

The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. That essential truth is communicated by Paul, and we know this to be true. I know I'm a child of God because

the Holy Spirit that Paul preached is in my heart, authenticating that scripture and many others.

Well, points to ponder. We'll continue here and finish up chapter two next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for the fact that your power, your word, and your spirit transcend the deceit and the doubts and the prevarications of those who are not willing to submit themselves under your mighty hand, suppress the truth in unrighteousness, who refuse the evidence of your eternal power and Godhead, as we see Paul talking about it in Romans chapter one. And we're so grateful that the Lord Jesus Christ lives and abides and is available to live and abide in our hearts. You yourself are willing to come and make your home with him in our hearts as we have your words and keep them.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, that the comfort and the insight and the illumination of your Holy Spirit will be active and prevalent in our souls. Help us to see what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong, and to so live that our lives reflect your glory, that others are drawn to you through our lives and through the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that your will, that all men everywhere be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, can have its maximum potential in and through us. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.