

98-09-11a Colossians

Let's begin our study of the Word of God together this evening with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the many blessings that you have bestowed on us. We thank you for your sustaining grace, your protection and provision, and the fellowship of believers of like mind that we enjoy.

We thank you for the challenges that have come our way, the difficulties that we have faced, and the nature of the faith that you call us to that enables even things that initially look dismal, or look depressing, or look negative, are worked together through the counsel of your will for good. We pray that as we study your word this evening, that the principles and the truths that we observe will be meaningful to us, that they will be something God the Holy Spirit can use to transform us and renew us, and bring us to the divine perspective of life that enables us to see everything as a part of your plan, whether bad or good, and to see the way in which it is woven together to reflect your glory and bring us ever closer to the standard of our Savior Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name.

Amen. As I mentioned a few moments ago, it's been a very eventful week. The great pressing issues that are observable throughout the world have taken a back seat to some sensational ones.

You have the Home Run record being broken. You have the results of the independent counsel investigation. You have lots of things that are prominent.

And then there are other very important issues, such as the changes in the Soviet Union and the changes that are needed in some portions of our government and financial dealings and support for the elderly and so forth. Military retirement, there are bills before Congress that have a profound meaning for military retirees and government retirees that are invisible in the hoopla of some of these more sensational media-covered events. But it's very comforting to remember that whatever we see around us, whatever the media pushes at us, or what is the popular topic of conversation in social life, that we have a citizenship that is heavenly and not earthly.

We have an identity that reaches beyond the visible world into the invisible. In the last few weeks of our study in Colossians, we have noted in particular the language found in Colossians chapter 1 that Paul uses as he reminds believers of the grace of God in the person of Jesus Christ. We've seen the threefold presentation of Christ in the central part of chapter 1, presenting him in his divine identity, looking earthward, what the divine nature of Christ means to us.

He is the creator and sustainer. He is the originator and the purpose for which those things were originated, that we see in the universe. He is also the God-man.

And on the human side, we see that his humanity also serves a purpose. And from the standpoint of earth-looking heavenward, the humanity of Christ in it, all the fullness of deity dwells. And

through the physical life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has reconciled all things to himself, in verse 20, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

And we've seen in some detail now that the blood of his cross is a reference to the death of Christ with emphasis on the divine side, God's perspective on the work of Christ. What does it mean to God when he looks at the work of Christ on the cross? Then, in verse 21, we turn to what the other side of Christ's work encompasses. What we see when we look at the cross.

He says, And you who were once alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh. And the term, body of his flesh, reminds us that there is also another component to the death of Christ on the cross that is represented or signified by that phrase. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

And he suffered in the flesh for us. He lived a life, a human life in a human body and died and was raised again to eternal human life by the power of God and was declared to be the son of God in that resurrection. So, we see that we can be sensitive to this and watch.

When we see references to the blood of Christ, we're going to be looking for an emphasis on God's perspective on the work of Christ on our behalf. When we see references to the body of Christ or suffering in the flesh, anything referring to the physical side of his death, burial and resurrection, it has much more to do with emphasizing our perspective, what it means to us. And we've documented this in some detail and I'll give you a few passages tonight on the body of Christ.

But this is a key. It has seemed to me, I will confess, that even though I find it very significant and very important, I have felt like maybe in my presentation of it over the past few weeks, it may have been a little bit dry or not really intellectually stimulating. It's just something to observe and say, well, that's interesting.

But it is a key to what we're about to see in the next section of Colossians. There's a very puzzling statement or two or three that Paul makes in the latter portion of chapter one. And a great deal of study has been done trying to figure out what did Paul mean.

And I think the reason is that people have sort of glossed over it. They've said, well, here's the preeminence of Christ in creation. Here's the preeminence of Christ in the earth.

Here's the preeminence of Christ in the church. You go to almost any commentary or any outline of Colossians and the section beginning somewhere after verse nine and going through verse 23 is broken up into the preeminence of Christ under three headings. His preeminence in heaven, his preeminence in creation, and his preeminence to the church.

They say, well, here's Paul saying that Christ is preeminent. Well, it's a mighty long way around to

just make those simple points. But if we don't observe exactly what Paul is saying here, which we have tried to do, well, once you get to verse 24 and verse 25, verse 26, you are unprepared to comprehend what Paul is saying and why he is saying it.

So I hope by paying attention to these seemingly straightforward statements in the earlier verses, it's going to help us understand this. Because this is chapter one. This is the introduction.

Paul is building his momentum to make his case to the Colossian believers about their standing in Christ and what this life is really all about. It's a timeless message for any of us, anywhere in the church age. But, as you know, it's like if you tune into a movie on TV or you walk into the theater late and you've missed the first 15 minutes, especially if it's a spy movie or it's a mystery or something.

I used to hate this if I wouldn't be able to get back and see the beginning of Perry Mason. It would come on at 12.30 or 1 in the morning and I might be studying or have to shut down the computer or something. I can finally get up there and want to watch an hour of Perry Mason to just unwind.

But if you miss the name of the case or the first few minutes, the rest of it is very difficult to decipher because all these people are giving testimony and Perry is dragging information out of them and you think, well, what for? I don't know. Why is this significant? Why is this important? Well, you didn't see the crime committed in the first five minutes. And so the rest of it is very difficult to understand.

So we're trying to do our five or ten minutes of observation up front in Colossians because the rest of the book is going to make a great deal of sense to us as we see Paul move from one point to another, emphasize one doctrine after another in this framework. So my encouragement is to not be discouraged as we go through these earlier sections because there are some fascinating things later on in the book that are going to be much easier for us to get a grip on. What we want to do is, last time we met, we looked in detail at the blood of Christ, which Paul mentioned as being the basis for reconciliation and peace in Colossians 1.20. God has reconciled everything, everything in heaven, everything in earth, because he has made peace through the blood of the cross.

And the more you think about this, the more interesting it gets. How can God reconcile things in heaven? He says all things. You could say, well, maybe there are believers in heaven and that's what he's talking about.

He says all things in heaven, all things in earth have been reconciled. So we spent a little time looking at that concept of reconciliation. What does it mean? It means that there are no unresolved issues.

There are no objections that have not been answered. There are no questions that haven't been met with the answer that is satisfactory for all observers. God might pronounce judgment on

Satan and the angels for their rebellion in heaven and an objection might be raised.

Well, why must it be so? Why can't we just be given our own little corner of the universe to live in and to live apart from God? Why is it that it's necessary for us to suffer in the lake of fire forever and ever? I don't understand, and even the unfallen angels may not be clear on exactly why the justice of God has to be manifested in this fashion. Why is it that it is necessary for there to be salvation and restoration? There may or may not have been an offer of salvation to the angels. I have found nothing in the Bible that says anything about that.

But looking at the pattern of grace before judgment that does appear throughout our scriptures, if there has been a judgment in heaven, we cannot help but suspect that there was grace offered before that and that it was rejected on the part of those who are headed to the lake of fire. But what this passage tells us is whatever went on in the heavenly realms, and apparently it's not important for us to have a great deal of detail, but whatever that was, objections that were raised, obviously there's a gap between the passing of sentence and the preparation of the lake of fire for the devil and his angels and the execution of that sentence. God pronounced that on their heads, and yet it hasn't taken place.

And human history is in that intervening period, so it's logical to assume that somehow human history, or something that happens within human history, is a part of the answer to the appeal or the answer to the objection that was raised when this rebellion took place and God's justice pronounced sentence. The sentence has not yet been carried out. But in some way human history and the incarnation of Jesus Christ within it and his work on the cross answers that, settles it, resolves that conflict.

And this is what Paul is referring to here. All things have been reconciled to God. There are no unreconciled issues.

It doesn't mean everyone has a wonderful, healthy relationship of blessing and peace with God. It means that there is peace. You may have an uprising in the kingdom and send the army and put it down.

That's been reconciled. Now, the people who have been put down and brought into subjection may not be happy, may not be friendly, but there's no unresolved issue. That has been reconciled.

And this is the nature of the reconciliation being spoken of here. But this is accomplished through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the heavenward emphasis of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

What does it mean in heaven? But now we find ourselves in verses 21 and 22. You, meaning Gentile believers who were once alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works. And this gives the idea of evidence by wicked works.

The evidence of that alienation and separatedness from God is in the wicked works. Yet now he has reconciled. But he doesn't go back and refer to the blood of the cross, does he? He doesn't say, and that blood has also reconciled you who were alienated and far off.

Because now we're looking at the earthly side of the work of Christ. What does it mean to us? It means that we no longer have to persist in enmity or in alienation from God. The work of Christ to us means that there is a way.

There is a way through the veil, through that which separates us from God. There is a way to break down the barrier of guilt and identity as a sinner. Corruption in Adam and so forth.

And he says, you who once were alienated and wicked, he has reconciled. And this actually, there's a little bit of a textual problem here. But apparently in the original, this is in Aris tense.

And it says, he reconciled you. It's a point in time type of thing. And it's looked at at the point where Christ was on the cross.

When I say point in time, we're talking conceptually, not chronologically. But in God's mind, the way is paved. The opportunity for us to be reconciled and to resolve this status of enmity and alienation was accomplished once for all at the cross.

And that's what the Aris tense indicates. We're not looking at the point of each person's individual salvation. We're looking at the point that Christ accomplished this work.

So everything centers on the cross. The blood of the cross reconciles everything in heaven and earth, including us. But when we come back to view the work of Christ, now we're looking at it from the human standpoint.

And it's in the body of his flesh that he reconciled us. Through death, and there is a purpose for it. The purpose here is to present you, that's us, holy and blameless and above reproach in his sight.

If indeed, and there is a condition on this, we may not necessarily be presented holy, blameless, and above reproach. This is not a reference now to salvation, but to presentation. It is the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ that he present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

But the will of God in this regard is not always fulfilled. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But that doesn't happen, does it? It tells us that God can desire something, God can in essence will something, and yet it doesn't come to pass.

It isn't the will of God, it's not the desire of God that any should perish. But there are some who will perish. It is not the will of God that any of his creatures, it's not his desire, and of course you get into semantics, what does the will of God mean? It seems like if his will be done.

But what is the prayer that Jesus prays, the model prayer for the disciples? He says, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That's a prayer. You know what that tells you, doesn't it? The will of God is not done on earth the way it is in heaven.

In heaven, the will of God always happens. On earth, the will of God does not always happen in this sense of the will of God. It is a sad thing.

In the same way that we don't want to see any of our fellow human beings, we don't want to see family members or loved ones condemned to the lake of fire for eternity. But we can't make their decision for them. We can't drag them kicking and screaming against their will into the presence of God, into relationship with God, and God himself cannot and will not do that.

It is his desire. God loved the world and gave his son so that whoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life. But his desire that all come to repentance and come to saving knowledge of Christ obviously is not fulfilled.

Right now, God's will in the world is not accomplished. Satan has a measure of rulership in this world. Jesus calls him the ruler of this world.

Obviously, if you have Satan ruling, there are going to be things happening that are outside the perfect will of God. But there will come a day when God's will will be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. That's the prayer that Jesus prayed.

So, it is the desire, it is the will of Christ that all of us be holy and blameless and without reproach in his sight on the day that we are presented. But unfortunately, it's not going to happen. Not all of us are going to be holy and blameless and above reproach.

And this is why we need to know the way that that can happen. How can we make sure that we are in fact wearing the wedding robe of white and are qualified to remain in the presence of God? Well, he gives us the key here in verse 23. If you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast.

These two words, grounded and steadfast, are interesting because they suggest to the mind the picture of a building. Both of these adjectives have verb and noun cognates that refer to the foundation of a building and to the structure of a building. When you say grounded, that's the word in its noun form that's used for a foundation.

The foundation on the rock, if you will. And then the steadfast is a word that has a cognate that's used for a sound structure of a building. See, the foundation is laid and firm and then you have the structure on it is sound and square and properly constructed.

So we have the option, the opportunity, to continue in the faith grounded and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel. Paul says, you heard this gospel, it's been preached to every creature under heaven of which I, Paul, became a minister. This is the exploitation or taking

advantage of, reaching out and seizing hold of the benefits of the work of Christ on the cross for us.

Not only in securing our salvation from the lake of fire, but working out our own salvation day by day in fear and trembling. Why should we have any fear and trembling? If it's all secure, if everybody will be happy over there, no more pain, no more tears, no more sorrow, doesn't matter how badly I messed up, I'll get there and be just as happy as the greatest saint that ever lived. Me and the Apostle Paul, arm in arm, dancing ring around the rosary on the throne of God.

If that were the case, why do we have the exhortations that we have? Why do we have the encouragements and the warnings that we have in scripture that not only talk about consequences in this life, but consequences in the next? We've reviewed many of those passages in the past and it's not our purpose to cover them. At this point, we will see, this will come up again a little bit later in Colossians. But the point here is, we can, it is possible for us to be presented holy, blameless, and above reproach.

This holy and blameless, these words were used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to translate the terms used for the unblemished sacrifice that was without defect, was whole and complete and acceptable in God's sight, acceptable for worship, acceptable to be laid on the altar and given as a burnt offering. It deals with lack of defect, lack of disqualification to be holy, to be blameless. There's no grounds for recrimination, there's no reason for guilt or shame or blame or any other negative factor.

You're perfect and whole and complete as you stand before God. It's possible for us to enjoy that status. How? Interestingly, it doesn't say if you have confessed all your sins, if you have made sure that at the point of your death you had listed to God everything that you've ever done and had felt appropriately contrite or whatever.

What does it say? It says, if you continue in the faith, confession of sin is a part of the faith, but so is walking in the light, so is walking in love, so is denying oneself and taking up the cross and following Christ, so is presenting yourself a living sacrifice, so is presenting your members as instruments or weapons of righteousness to God. So are all of the things that comprise the gospel, which Paul now refers to, so that you're not moved away from the hope of the gospel. It tells us that the hope of the gospel is more than just a ticket to heaven, or a ticket away from the lake of fire.

The hope of the gospel is this hope that is referred to here as being holy and blameless and above reproach in his sight, of being qualified and having the capacity to appreciate standing in his presence, having the white robe and the new name and the stone and the hidden manna and all of the other things that Jesus promises to the overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3. It's a wonderful and exciting prospect. And it is not presented like the publisher's clearinghouse sweepstakes, where only one in a million have any real expectation of making it. This is

something that is within our grasp.

Remember the Old Testament scripture that Paul quotes in the New, in Romans when he says, it's not up in heaven that you must say who will ascend and go up there and get it. It's not down in Sheol that you have to descend and say who will bring it up. It is near you.

It's in your heart. It's proximate. It's possible.

It's a real doable thing for each one of us. It's not distant. It's not unattainable.

It's not even unlikely if we just understand it and care enough about it to reach out and seize it. It's not God's intention to put an impossibly high, unattainable goal in front of us that only a few apostles and evangelists are going to reach. This is the calling.

This is the mission. If you were a military commander giving the five-paragraph order and saying, this is what we're going to accomplish on this operation, your expectation is we're all going to do this. We're going to get it done.

We're all going to march up and take this piece of ground. You don't say, well, I expect maybe two out of a hundred to get there. All of us ought to view this as not only possible, but probable, likely, our goal.

It's as achievable, attainable, and as something that it is our duty and our privilege to achieve. I think a lot of times we think, well, but you know, I know myself too well. I've got a sinful nature.

I'm subject to this and that and the other. I fail all the time. I'm constantly having to go to God and acknowledge all these places where I've failed and so forth.

This isn't talking about the frequency of our failure, how often we avail ourselves of the grace of God. This is talking about the fact that we care enough to avail ourselves of the grace of God and to be found in Him without spot and without blemish. It doesn't mean we never spotted ourselves or we never blemished ourselves or we never failed.

It means that we cared enough about God and His plan. We had enough of a grip on the heavenly hope to pick ourselves up and by God's grace have ourselves dusted off, cleaned up, and move forward again. This is God's fervent desire for us.

He has gone to a lot of trouble to make it possible for us. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest to us or to encourage us to think, well, it's just unattainable. I shouldn't even try.

Everything in Scripture says it's your hope, it ought to be the focus, it ought to be the motivation every day to be walking the worthy walk and to be presented holy and blameless and without reproach and in sight. But you have to have a hope. A hope has to be realistic.

You have to have a confident expectation that it's achievable. You can look at that in any area of

life, unless you have a reasonable expectation. See, this is the problem with my garage.

When I look at my garage and I look at all of the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of computer parts that are in there and I look at all of the boxes of books and the boxes of stuff that we have accumulated together for 11 plus years, when I walk through the door and I turn on the light and I look in there, my hope of ever parking a car in there evaporates. I have no confident expectation that I'll ever be able to pull a car into that room. It does not seem doable.

It does not seem possible. And the more time passes, the less likely it seems. But that is not the nature of this hope.

This is a doable thing and the reason it's doable is that it does not depend on us. Now, if I had a divine promise that I could claim where the power of God would claim my garage, it would be a confident expectation. If all it took was claiming the grace of God and claiming the power of God and believing a promise of God, I could go home tonight and my garage, I could park three cars in there and it's only a two-car garage.

But this is a realm where we have the grace of God through the work of Christ. Because he bore our sins in his body on the tree, because we have been reconciled and we are no longer alienated, we are no longer enemies, God has already done this. It's an Aorist tense.

It was done at the point of the cross. It's a done deal. The earnest has been put forward.

The proof is there. We are encouraged. In fact, we are commanded to think in terms of this hope.

We are challenged. We are required. We have a mandate and a calling from God to be presented holy and blameless and above reproach.

And it's doable because it's the grace of God and the power of God that accomplish it as much of it has already been done at the cross. So we just can't afford to let ourselves be moved away from that hope. Paul says, don't let yourself be moved away from that hope.

That's the hope of the gospel. He's going to tell us more explicitly as we get further into Colossians, he's going to state explicitly what the hope of the gospel is. Do you remember that verse? What is the hope of glory? Christ in you.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. That's the hope of the gospel. The indwelling of Christ is potential and possible and a real opportunity for each one of us.

But it is that. It is a potential and it is a possibility. It's not automatic at the point of salvation.

It is something that we experience by continuing in the faith. Jesus described it back in John. We've gone to that passage many times.

The one who loves me has my words and keeps them. He is the one who loves me. I will come to him and my father and I will make our home with him.

We will dwell with him. That's Jesus' promise. He makes it in the upper room and it's after John 13, 40.

It's a church age truth and it's real and possible for each one of us. So don't let anyone take that hope away. We don't have to worry about the hope of making an impact in society, making an impact in government, making an impact in ministry, making an impact in the annals of anything other than the heavenly books.

And to seize and lay hold of this hope and to pursue it day by day by day just by continuing in the faith in the small things, we experience one of the greatest privileges. Did you ever think about this? As near as I can tell from the scriptures, no angel has ever experienced the indwelling of God. As great an existence as they lead and as all the things they have access to, there's no evidence in my Bible that any angel has experienced the indwelling of God.

That's our privilege. We've been made lower than the angels and yet we are elevated and crowned with glory and honor because in Jesus Christ we are identified eternally with God and we have the opportunity for Him to dwell in us. More on that when we get to chapter 2. But all of this, Jesus Christ stands as the bridge.

He is the bridge between God and man, between earth and heaven. And having emphasized these things in what he has said in the first 23 verses here, in verse 24 Paul continues his thought. I actually need to go back to 23.

He says, If you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. He doesn't say of which you all have become ministers, does he? He doesn't say of which me, Epaphras, Apollos, and all these others became a minister. He says, I, Paul, became a minister.

You know why he says that? Who else is writing this letter? You've got Timothy and Epaphras. When we get to the end of the letter you see that there are other people who are going to send their greetings and are sort of looking over Paul's shoulder, if you will, talking to the people here. You have Luke, the beloved physician, and Deimos, and so forth.

Epaphras all kind of chiming in here. And Paul says, I and the people who are with me here greet you, we pray for you, and so forth. But when he gets to this part of the letter, he says, this gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, is a gospel of which I, Paul, became a minister.

And he emphasizes that. He doesn't say Timothy and I. Epaphras and I would be a really

convenient place for him to say me and Epaphras. It would be bad grammar, but he could say that.

Epaphras and I have become ministers of the gospel. But he only includes himself there. Why? There's a very good reason, and it is the transition out of this section we just studied into verse 24 and beyond.

Because Paul is here invoking his apostleship. The twelve apostles, the eleven that accompanied Jesus during his earthly ministry, and Paul, are uniquely commissioned, uniquely entrusted with the witness of Jesus Christ and with the propagation of the gospel. It is unique and specific to the apostles.

It is only through the apostles that inscripturation of the New Testament takes place. It is only through the apostles that the gospel is preached in Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria, not in that order, and the uttermost parts of the world. Misunderstanding this, you would think, well, okay, Sam, that's not really a profound observation.

It may not be profound, but it is often overlooked. Just look at the emphasis throughout Christendom, both historically and currently, on the quote-unquote great commission of Matthew 28 and 19. If you turn back to Matthew 28, just for a moment, you remember when Paul is talking to the Corinthians, and he talks about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and he gives a list of all of his post-resurrection appearances.

He says he appeared to the ladies in the garden. He appeared to the men on the road to Emmaus. He appeared to the disciples in closed rooms on a couple of occasions.

At one point, he appeared to upwards of 500, and he appeared before crowds after his resurrection. It is significant, I think, that when you get to Matthew 28, the occasion on which Jesus speaks these words in Matthew 28, 19, and 20 is not when he's in front of the 500. It's not when he's on the Mount of Ascension with a host of witnesses standing by.

It's not with Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, and his mother, and all of the others who could by rights be in the vicinity when he would speak general words of commission or of mission. Instead, what does it say in verse 16? See, everybody memorizes Matthew 28, 19, and 20. They don't go back to verse 16.

What does it say in verse 16? Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for whom? For them. Jesus appointed a mountain for the eleven. Jesus told the eleven.

He didn't even stay in the community. They're out in the wilderness. They've climbed a mountain.

There are exactly eleven men meeting with Jesus on the mountain. No more, no less. And it is to these eleven and to these eleven alone that Jesus speaks the words in verse 18, 19, and 20.

Jesus came and spoke to them, to the eleven, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. You go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. Now, people try to say, well, okay, he only spoke to the eleven here, but he told them to go preach the gospel to every creature, so to speak, and they're supposed to teach everybody else everything that Jesus taught them.

And so, therefore, they're supposed to go and make disciples of all nations and baptize and so forth. That somehow these two verses are also able to be devolved and passed on to others. But that's not what Jesus says.

He says, You go, you make disciples, teach them to observe the things that I have commanded you. The teachings, the doctrines, the principles, the promises that Jesus has made, the teaching that they have observed in him and from his lips in the last three and a half years or so, all of the things that he has inculcated them with, they are to go and teach to the world. But he commissions them to go and make disciples.

He doesn't say anything here about, and once they become disciples, then teach them to make other disciples and teach them to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature and so forth. That language, by the way, of go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature from Mark 16 is in a section that isn't even in the earliest manuscripts. It's an addition.

Somebody lost the last page of the original Mark. Somebody came along many years later and thought, this ends awfully abruptly, let me just make up an ending. They will play with snakes and drink poison and it will not harm them.

These signs will follow those who believe. That's all spurious. It's not a part of what Mark wrote.

Oddly enough, people who know that very well in seminaries and evangelistic organizations freely quote, you can look at the doctrinal statement of some of the best exegetical seminaries in the country and you will find references to Mark chapter 16 verses after verse 9 that they know good and well are not even canonical and not inspired. But it is so difficult to sustain the belief or to document the idea that everyone has the commission to go and make disciples, everyone has the commission to go and preach the gospel, that they are willing to use this spurious stuff that's in the Bible to try to bolster that claim. So what are we talking about here? Well, we're going to take a break and when we come back we're going to examine the nature of apostleship.

What is it that attaches to apostleship that is unique, that is not necessarily a part of the day-to-day life of all the rest of us who are not apostles? We'll see that when we return.