

Colossians 1, Part 3 (Conrad Bowman) (May 28, 2006)

We were on a course that took us from Ephesians – we've marched though all the first part, and now of other epistles, and we were in Ephesians. And then we moved into Titus. And our course was to go to Titus and then 1st Timothy and then 2nd Timothy, and then to move on from there. But Titus is so much like 1st Timothy that Joe and Phil – and we talked about it. And they took a look at it and decided we'd insert Colossians into the middle of this thing, and see if it didn't give us a break from that Titus to 1st Timothy to 2nd Timothy. And, so here we go. We're in Colossians, and its not going to be a break. [Laughter].

Colossians is a continuation – actually Colossians is a seed letter for Ephesians and Titus and 1st and 2nd Timothy. Paul's preparation of the Church for the end of his life and his departure – those thoughts started in Colossians. They're growing out of Colossians. Now the German theologians of the late eighteen hundreds began to argue among themselves whether Paul even wrote Colossians and Ephesians. They had a lot of fanciful ideas. And they made some arguments against the Pauline authority – authorship rather – of both Colossians and Ephesians, and gave some arguments against it. They even were wishie-washie about the authority of Colossians, and the authenticity of it, and whether it should be included in the canon of Scripture. They were influenced to a large extent by the Catholic Church and the fact that Colossians and Ephesians and Philippians and some of the others – especially Titus and 1st and 2nd Timothy – directly opposed the hierarchy and organization of the Catholic Church and other liturgical churches. And they were nervous about it, so they started this movement to de-authenticate these Books. And they questioned the ecclesiological organization of the Church and the way Paul addressed it in both Colossians and Ephesians. Well, it's apparent when you get into it as you'll see, I think, that there's an absolute consistency in Paul's presentation and his view of the Church. And because he views it as a Body whose head is Christ who recognizes no human head, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, it would make any organization that's run from the top down very nervous. Because the first thing it questions was their authority to do what they were doing. So I can understand – first I can understand the German framework of thought in opposing this, because they tend to like organizations that have strong leadership top down to run them. And that's a national trait as well as a theological trait of the German theologians. And as we see this thing develop, I don't think there's any question about Pauline authorship. There was some question as to whether Colossians was written after Ephesians. But then Ephesians – in Ephesians – he references his letter to the Colossians. So I don't

think that's even valid. So we'll move further from that. And I want to start with the first verse and just launch into this thing and see how far we can get into that first chapter this morning. Alright.

Paul starts out as he does in several others by addressing in his letter – he starts out by referring to himself as an apostle. The apostle. "Of" is a genitive of possession. So when he says, I'm an apostle belonging to Jesus Christ. By the will of God and Timothy, our brother – he's writing on behalf of himself and Timothy. He repeatedly acknowledges and recognizes that the Father's will is what placed him in his position. That the work of Christ was the means by which the Father's will was done. Now this is important – see I told. I told you she was going to do it [a side comment].

Alright. So what we have here is a recognition by Paul of the supremacy of the Father in terms of making these decisions. Today the Father is the forgotten member of the Trinity. In today's Christianity, we don't recognize the Father. And the Father, as Paul says – it's the will of the Father, though he's an apostle who belongs to Jesus Christ – it's the will of the Father that's being expressed in his ministry. Now you think about this. The entire Pentecostal charismatic segment of Christianity today operates with its focus and its eyes firmly fixed on the Holy Spirit. They acknowledge the Spirit. They worship the Spirit. They pray to the Spirit. Their whole life revolves around their focus on the Holy Spirit. Now the Son, before He ascended, and too His rightful place in heaven, said very carefully and clearly, that the Spirit is going to come as He leaves. And when the Spirit comes, He'll speak of me, He said. He'll never speak of Himself. He does not call attention to Himself. He calls attention to the Son, who calls attention to the Father in everything, so that the Father has recognition and pre-eminence and is the object of our prayers and worship. Now this is very important. We are what we say we are. Okay? Now if we're not careful, we've got this half of the Church focused on the Holy Spirit. **The other half of the Church is largely focused on the historical Jesus. Not the ascended Christ. But the historical Jesus. They're watching the Man from Galilee in His approach to the cross.** And they're trying to pattern the Christian life after His approach to the cross as the Messiah of Israel. If they do that, they're worshipping the Messiah of Israel on His way to death and our redemption. Our focus has to be on the ascended Christ on His throne in heaven from which our life today flows. Our life today does not flow from the other side of the cross. [Christ on His way to the cross]. **It flows from this side of the cross [after Christ's death] and the ascended Christ on the throne. There's a huge difference in that.** Because if you try to go back, even one day prior to the cross, even the day on the cross when

the thief said, "Lord, when You enter, when You enter, Your reward – when You enter Your position of authority, remember me." And Christ said to that thief, "this day you will be with Me where?" "In Paradise." Okay. Where did Christ go when He went into the grave? He went right there in Abraham's Bosom. He went to Paradise. He went there to announce His victory over sin and the release of all of those. Remember we studied it in Ephesians. What is it, but that He who ascended first descended into the lower parts of the earth where He lead captivity – that's all of those in Abraham's Bosom, awaiting His arrival – captive to Himself. He wrapped His arms around them just like a mother to a child. He drew those captives close to Him. When He came out of the grave, they came out of the grave. When He walked on earth for those next thirty or forty days, they walked on earth. When He ascended, ten days prior to Pentecost, they ascended. He took them with Him into heaven as friends of the Groom. They are not the Bride. That wasn't the beginning of the Church. That was the reward of those Old Testament saints who had waited for their Messiah. Here He was. The Kinsman Redeemer. Caught them all to Him and took them to His wedding. He deposited them at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. At the appropriate time, He'll leave them there. He'll come back here. He'll gather His Bride. He'll take His Bride to Her wedding – that's the Rapture of the Church – where they'll be celebrated by those out of Paradise. Isn't that clear? I mean, that's just a clear delineation of where those Old Testament saints are and where they're going. And it recognizes that we worship today an ascended Lord on His throne at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb ready to return for His Bride.

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the [will of the Father] will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ ...

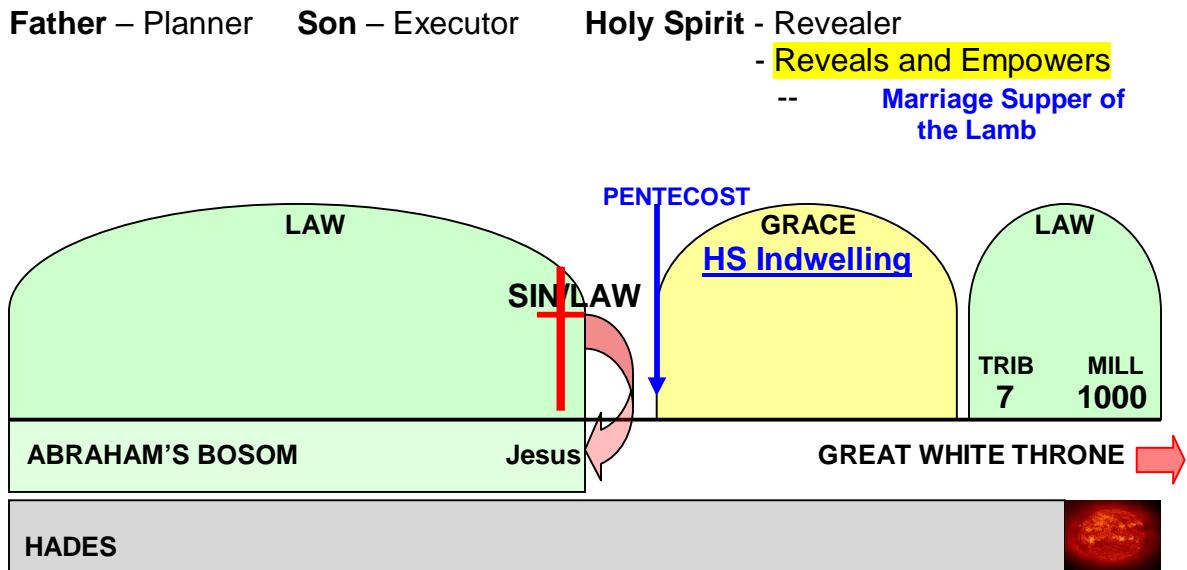
Saints is *hagios* – that means set apart ones. *H-A-G-I-O-S* is the word. And

2. ... and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

This is the standard Pauline opening. Grace always precedes peace. Why? Its because God the Father who loves us infinitely put His Son on the cross.

He who knew no sin – did not bear our sins. He was made to be sin for us in order that we might be made to be the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Corinthians 5:21].

When the Father decreed that the Son is the Kinsman Redeemer to take believing man into Himself, He who knew no sin was made to be sin. He went into the grave with that sin. He left it there. This is Paradise. This is the great gulf fix [between Paradise and Hades] and here is Hades.



In the grave, He announced Himself to all these in Paradise, gathered them together with Him, and when He ascended, they ascended with Him. He took them to heaven where He sits on His throne here – at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Okay? Now, when He's finished, He's going to come back, because when He ascended, the Holy Spirit descended [ten days later]. **And the Holy Spirit** then empowers the Church until the Son returns for His Bride. When He does that, He'll take all of the believers from this Age right here, and those who have died in belief and have gone right to the Rapture – He's going to take all those believers, and all those who have died, with Him to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Now you have the Bride – you have the friends of the Groom – and the Wedding Supper is taking place during the seven years down here which includes the seven years of Tribulation. At the end of that time, the Bride and the Son who reign together – rule together. We are in Him as He rules over the earth. This thousand year reign, the Kingdom Age, occurs. At the end of the Kingdom Age, Satan, who has been bound for this thousand years, is released to deceive all whom he will. He'll deceive most of the people, and – the Second Battle of Armageddon – Great White Throne Judgment of all unbelievers. That's the scene that's going to occur. Paul is preparing his Church for these events. And he starts in Colossians. He starts to tell them, "I'm not going to be with you very much longer." You need to be ready for this. Because

the onslaught of the enemy is going to be on the Word of God, which is His revealed will. Remember, Word of God to Paul did not mean New Testament – Old Testament Scripture printed in a black book. They didn't have that. Word of God meant God the Father's will revealed to them as apostles and passed on to the New Testament Church – to the believers. We tend when we see Word of God – we tend to impose on that Word this organization. Wasn't so. Wasn't so. We have to remember that. Its God's will revealed. And the reason I'm saying that, is because God has always revealed His will to His remnant. Brothers, we are marching toward the end of this Age as the remnant of God. The tree of Christendom is exploding in terms of its growth. And what we know about that tree from Christ is big. It houses the meat eating birds of the air. That's the emissaries of God's own enemy. We don't need to look for our enemy across the street. We need to look for our enemies within the church and its organization. I'm not saying this church is evil. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying, when you take the universal church, and look at it as a whole, there's the house for God's enemies. Satan is not in the business of building bars – we've said – how many times? This keeps coming up. He doesn't build saloons and crack houses and bars. He doesn't make movies. That's not his business. What he does is build churches. And they look like churches. And smell like churches. And act like churches. And they've got church buses. And they've got summer camps. And they've got everything that churches are supposed to have today. What they don't have is the true Word of God. **CONTENT IS EVERYTHING**. And Paul is going to say that over and over as we move through Colossians.

To the saints – or set apart ones in Ephesus. The word "saint" itself means one set apart to God's purpose. It's a culling process. So when you see the word "saint," it's talking about a remnant operation.

2. ... and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus who are at Colossae:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Grace is the extension of God's love to you on an unmerited basis. Peace is the fact that the Spirit, when you accept it, takes you as you are, moves you into Christ, who is our peace. He is our peace. Its ground. Its location. Its locative in the Greek sense of the word. He takes you from where you are and moves you onto the ground of peace. On the ground of peace, God the Father is not mad at you. He's not aggravated with you. His attitude toward you is the attitude toward His Son. That peace then comes from God our Father, and that's what Paul is recognizing. When you move into the Son, the greatest gift of all is the gift of peace between you and the Father. In other words, you've been reconciled in

Him. If you've met the ministry from Romans – we studied there – we've been given the Ministry of Reconciliation. That's what's going to a foreign country to deliver. The delivering the Ministry of Reconciliation. Okay? That's what we do when we evangelize people in our own personal evangelism. We give them the Good News that they have been reconciled to God. They're at peace with God. He's at peace with them. He doesn't expect anything from them. He expects to be able to give them everything that He is. We give thanks to God then as a natural response.

3. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

There's three times in those first three verses that he calls attention to the Father.

4. since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which you have for all the saints;

For all have been set apart. So they've expressed their faith in Christ. And they're recognized for it. And now Paul's heard of it, and he begins to pray for them. It's interesting, because when you win someone to Christ, you take on a burden of prayer for them. You don't – evangelism is not a hit and run operation. It's not. Its more in the vein of the good Samaritan who found man in need. He delivered him to a place where he could get his help. And he continued to pray for him and think about him, and came back by to check on him. Well, that's what we do. When you evangelize someone, the first thing that happens is that they go to the top of your prayer list, and you pray for them – continually. Continually. You don't forget them. You don't send missionaries out there half way across the world and then say, give us a call in six months and let us know how you're doing. It does not work that way! When we send them, it's as if we went ourselves. And we are responsible – duty bound to God – to remember them in our prayers.

4. since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus ...

We give thanks continually, he says. Always praying for you.

5. because of the hope laid up for you in heaven,

Here again, that hope is their salvation, the promise of which is on deposit here, where Christ is. Okay? Their hope which is laid out – the hope of you

5. ... laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the Gospel

So Paul identifies the Gospel as the word of truth. Now, that's another way Paul says, content is everything. Okay? The word that is truth is the Gospel. The Gospel then is the grace and peace from God our Father that has been offered because they have accepted the Good News and the glad tidings of deliverance. Okay? So there's a connection between the Gospel – the word of truth. Grace and peace from God our Father. That all goes into the content of the Gospel.

6. which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;

And "in truth" ties it back to the truth of the Gospel. That's a Gospel with content. There's an interesting side venture that starts in verse 6 because Paul says the Gospel is heard in all the world. Now it's been six or seven years since he wrote Romans. And in Romans he referenced the Gospel that was displayed in the heavens universally to all mankind. And we studied that somewhat at that point. I'm not going to go back through that today. But you might want to take your Romans notes and go back and reference the Gospel in the stars presentation that was there in Romans. Okay? And that's the fact that in the heavens above us, there's the story of Christ coming. The Father's work. Satan's attack on Him. His victory over that that's told in the heavens over the head of every man. And Paul referenced that in Romans, and went into it in some detail as he recalls from Old Testament on that thing. In verse 6, he just touches on that just a little bit because when he says, that

6. which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing,

In other words, God's testimony in the heavens – it spins off of Romans 1:18, 19 and 20. The invisible things of Him are from the creation of the world clearly seen and are understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that every man is without excuse. Okay? That's another reference to that same thing. And Paul says, that testimony is constantly bearing its own story. Okay? We like to believe that we are the singular depositories of the Gospel. And if we don't get there, it don't get there. Well, that's not true. God honors our faithfulness to gospelize and evangelize. He honors that. He blesses

that. It just tickles His heart, and heaven rejoices when we do that. But we never want to slip over, just to let that needle move two more points to where we believe that if we don't do it, God can't get it done. Because that's not true. The call of every man is the work of the Spirit of God caused by the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sent to the heart of that individual to draw them to the Lord who bought their freedom. And that's a contract between the Father and the sinner. Okay? We are privileged by our efforts to be on site when He does that. And God bless it when it happens three thousand – ten thousand miles away. Okay? It's all the more sweet for us. But it happens whether it's the guy across the street or whether it's the guy two countries away. He privileges us to be on site when He does His work. And it's His work. And that Gospel which has come to you in verse 6,

6. ... just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing,

Even as He has been doing in you since the day you heard of it, and understood the grace of God in truth.

7. just as you learned it from Epaphras,

So Epaphras has – he's been the front guard in here and kicking the doors down with the Gospel.

7. ... our beloved fellow bond-servant,

The word "bond-servant" is *doulos*, or fellow slave.

7. ... who is a faithful servant ...

And that word is not *doulos*, but the second servant word is *diakonos*. First he is a servant – a beloved fellow slave and servant, who is also a fellow deacon

7. ... of Christ on our behalf,

So this guy Epaphras is performing a deacon's service to Paul and Timothy as they're coming in here, and he's forming an "owned" servant relationship to God Himself.

8. and he has also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

9. For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled ...

Here. What did he ask for? Relief? Abundance? No. He asked for these beliefs that they be filled

9. ... with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

First prayer. First prayer. Okay? I want you to remember that. When you pray for me, the tendency is to pray for relief from pain. Okay? Pray for my understanding. There's a reason for pain. Pain teaches us some things. Okay? I don't want to have to do this again. I don't want to miss this lesson. You pray for my understanding. Okay? I need to know what God is doing in my life and why, much more than I need relief from physical discomfort. Let's pray according to what Paul has laid down for us. Alright? I love your prayers. And I love your prayers and the heart that's behind them, for relief. But let's move beyond that now, and pray with God's understanding in the Spirit's infusion of truth. Okay?

9. For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

10. so that ...

So that introduces a purpose. For this purpose.

10. that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects,

What did we learn about walking from Ephesians? Do you remember? We are to walk in the works prepared beforehand by Him that we should walk in them. We don't walk in our own works. Before the foundation of the world, God looked down here at you, and He saw me right down here – okay? And my life stretches out for this little period of time right here. And the works that I walk in here are works that are prepared for me by God Himself before the beginning of time that I should walk in them. **He's not looking for your work. He doesn't need your work. He doesn't need your production. He doesn't need your faith. You need that faith. You are to walk in the works that He has performed for you. That's what Ephesians told us. Okay? Now He's laying the groundwork**

right here. Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. When He writes Ephesians, He's going to say, those works have been prepared since before the foundation of the world that you should walk in them. So you take that foot and you pick it up and you put it down on the next step He shows you. And you take the next step. And the next step. Do we know the outcome of those things? Rarely. Rarely. Do we know the means by which He is going to do in our life? Rarely. Okay? That's where faith comes in. That's where faith comes in. We trust Him to do absolutely marvelous, incredible things in our life. To please Him in all respects,

11. bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

If those works are His works, and fruit is being born in those things, and we see that fruit, doesn't that increase our knowledge of the Father and how He works in His mercy and the extent of it and how **BIG** our God is. How absolutely **BIG** our God is. **He's huge. He's huge**, and we're bowed by some of the challenges that come to face us on a daily basis. And sometimes it's – and sometimes it's somebody on the other end of the phone who is just so aggravate about something that's disappointed him. We can't let that begin to control us, and control our situations. We have to be able to respond to them in grace, because that's the way God responds to us when something happens in our life; and we just go ballistic. And we're angry with God. And we're angry with one another because of that circumstance. And He expects us to react as He reacts. And He's poured all these assets into us,

11. strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might,

That's us. We are

11. strengthened in all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

12. giving thanks to the Father,

I looked for a picture yesterday for two hours and couldn't find it, and Daryl said he would send it to me. The picture I wanted to put in the Notes – right there – joyously giving thanks, because the word is over – it's just exuding abundant joy. What I wanted is a picture of a baby in bathwater. And I searched on the internet for two hours. You can't find a picture of a baby in bathwater anymore.

It used to be you could do it. But there's so much rottenness out there today that nobody would dare put a picture of their baby on the internet playing in water. It just wouldn't happen. But can't you see the picture? You can just see it. There's nothing like a sixteen month – fifteen month old kid in a tub of water. And a duck. [Laughter]. And that's about all it takes. And you don't even need the duck to get the picture of what God is talking about right here. [Laughter].

11. ... joyously

12. giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Okay? Now that walk is in light. I'm not going to take this any further than this today. Because the next segment gets into sore illustrations and what-have-you, and I don't want to cut that short. I'd rather stop here. Do you have any comments or questions?

Betijean Kennerly. We walk in the light. We can't walk in darkness.

Conrad Bowman. We can't walk in darkness. Why? Because we are light.

Betijean Kennerly. We are the light.

Conrad Bowman. We are light. We are light. Interestingly in that verse, it says – because you are light. It doesn't say, you are the light. Okay? It says you are light. The absence of the article in front of it, calls attention to the quality of the light. "You're such a light," is what is said. "You're such a light." Okay? It's great. Ray?

Ray Johnson. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. **There's only one unforgivable sin, and that's rejection – it says blasphemy of the Spirit – that's rejection of the Spirit's presentation of the Son. When the Spirit says, here is the answer. Here's truth. Here's grace and peace. Here ye am receiving. And you reject that? You're dead. You're spiritually dead.** There it is. You know. Suicide is just one more. Just one more. Yes sir?

Gentleman. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. We'll move into the rest of Colossians, and thank you, Evelyn. So much, for making those other copies for us today.

Father, we thank You for the way You work in our lives. We thank You Father for being so very, very patient with us, and for continuing in spite of that – just in spite of who we are, and how we work, to shower us with Your love. And the abundant grace that we have in Your Son. We thank You. Commit the time in our walk in Your keeping. In Christ's name, Amen.

Thank you so very much.

[This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].