

My topic has been assigned. It is entitled, Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit in the Shadowlands. Now, of course, the word shadowlands probably rings in our ears with the movie, C.S. Lewis, et cetera, and so on. But it's more a reflection of the fact that the book of Hebrews, especially, also the book of Colossians, refers to the Old Testament to its ceremonies as copies or as shadows of heavenly realities of the true realities. And so, we're looking at the Holy Spirit in the shadow lands, or in other words, what was the Holy Spirit doing before the day of Pentecost? Now, the expected answer, is probably quite varied among people and that is because it's easy to draw their own conclusion about the work of the Holy Spirit. If we don't have a full knowledge of the scriptures, it would be easy for us to read a passage like John chapter seven and draw the wrong conclusion about the Holy Spirit. In John chapter seven at verse 37, We read, on the day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. Now pay attention to this. Now this he said about the spirit. whom those who believed in him were to receive. For as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. For as yet the Spirit had not been given, because as yet Jesus had not been glorified. Many have read that, not having much acquaintance with the Old Testament, and have concluded that prior to the glorification of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was not at work in the world, was not present in the world, had not yet been given, that that would come at Pentecost, after Jesus had been glorified, after He had been raised to the right hand of God, where He Himself said when He was King of Kings, He would pour out the Spirit in fulfillment of the prophecy. But as I said, we would only draw that particular conclusion that the Spirit had not yet been given, meaning by that was not yet in the world or present in the world or at work in the world. We would only draw that conclusion if we hadn't read our Old Testament. Unfortunately, many people have not. But if we do get into our Old Testament, we will find that you don't go two verses in the Bible without running into the Holy Spirit. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." You haven't gone two verses and already you've met the Holy Spirit. Now beyond hovering over the waters, it's not clear to you what he is doing there. You just know that he is there. And to be honest with you, the rest of Genesis doesn't explicitly tell us what he was doing. But do remember this, that while Genesis 1 is reporting to us what happened at the beginning of the world, The account of that was not written until the time of Moses. So we ought to ask the question, what would people in the time of Moses have understood by that? What would they think with this statement that the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters? Well, they'd have to think hard because the word that's translated is hovering. is only used two other times in the Old Testament. One of those is in Deuteronomy chapter 32. The others in Jeremiah, it describes the shaking of bones, so it's a word that gives the idea of some kind of movement and shaking. And so it gets translated as hovering because there seems to have been some localized presence of the Holy Spirit hovering in some way over the waters. But that word is used in Deuteronomy 32 to talk about how the Holy Spirit was hovering over the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 32 at verse 10. He, that is God, found him in a desert land and in the howling waste of the wilderness. He encircled him. He cared for him. kept him as the apple of his eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its

wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, the Lord alone guided him. No foreign god was with him. He made him ride on the high places of the land. He ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock, curds from the herd and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of bashin and goats, with the very finest of the wheat, and you drank the foaming wine made from the blood of the grape. It is a picture of a great eagle fluttering over its young to protect them, to care for them, to nourish them, to suckle them on the finest of the wheat and the milk, in order that Israel might be preserved in the wilderness in order to inherit the promised land. That's what the Holy Spirit was doing at the creation. He was present and there to accomplish the work of God in order to bring forth the purposes of God. Those waters over which he fluttered would have to be subdued in order that dry land might appear. And why was that important? Because you were to stand upon that dry land and God wasn't going to make you capable of swimming for that long. You were not to be a fish. God intended you to stand upon the land and so the Holy Spirit was there to execute the Word of God in order that his purposes might be accomplished. Psalm 33 tells us that by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all their host. Well that's a quick summary of Genesis. By the word of the Lord. Later scripture tells us that Jesus is the word of the Lord. That Jesus was there in the beginning. That he's the one who sustains the world, the universe, in his loving hands. He fills all things and keeps them, and the Holy Spirit executes His Word in the world by the Word of the Lord. The heavens were made by the breath. The Hebrew word ruach means breath, wind, or spirit. And so oftentimes the Spirit is represented as the breath of God. So, you remember in the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit is identified as the Lord and giver of life. In the Nicene Creed, actually that's an amendment to the Nicene Creed, the Nicene Creed in 325 was primarily written to deal with the Arian heresy that was afflicting the church at that time, and so most of it was addressed to establishing the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So it gives a rather full statement of that. However, from the time of the Council of Nicaea, till later in the century, we had a similar controversy break out over the Holy Spirit. That was known, pay attention, as the New Mammachian Controversy. You'll think I'm speaking Polish. The New Mammachian Controversy was from the word pneuma, which means spirit, And macho, maybe if you know Spanish, macho, it's belligerence. It's fighting. It's those who fought against the Spirit. So just as there were at the beginning of the century, those who said the Lord Jesus Christ was a creature, was not a divine being, was not God, so through the fourth century there were those who were saying the same thing about the Spirit of God. He was not a distinct person. He was not God. So when we get to the Council of Constantinople in 381, and then all the way to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the church had to take its stand with respect to the Holy Spirit. And so they added to what the Nicene Creed had said. The Nicene Creed had been like the Apostles' Creed. What does the Holy, what does the Apostles' Creed say about the Holy Spirit? I know, you gotta start from the beginning, run through to the end. What does it say? It says, I believe in the Holy Ghost. Well, what do you believe? What does it say? That just says you believe that there is a Holy Ghost. But it became necessary, as creeds tend to do over time. You gotta add to them because you get more errors that have to be corrected. You get more false teaching that has to be suppressed. And so they add to it that the Holy Spirit doesn't just exist. He is the Lord and the giver of life. He is the Lord and giver of life because he was the breath that was breathed into Adam. He brought Adam

alive when he was just a lifeless pile of dust that had been formed and shaped into a human body. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. That was an action of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Job, Chapter 33, we have a similar comment being made. Job chapter 33, verse 4, the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. It's the Spirit of God who brings physical life into us. It's also the Spirit of God that brings new and spiritual life into us. You remember in John chapter 3, oftentimes it is the New Testament that gives you greater light on the Old Testament than the Old Testament itself. But in John chapter 3, Nicodemus comes to Jesus. He's convinced that Jesus is a teacher sent from God. Why? Because he's seen the miracles of Jesus. He knows that nobody could do those works unless God were with him, so Jesus must be a teacher sent from God because he's got the credentials only God could give him. And if he is indeed a teacher that has been sent from God, then his teaching has been authorized and certified by God. But if that's true, Nicodemus has a problem, because Nicodemus is a great teacher in Israel. In fact, Jesus will actually call him THE teacher in Israel. He must have been a man of some standing and importance in the city of Jerusalem for Jesus to say, Are you the teacher of Israel? Nicodemus was confused as to how Jesus' teaching could fit with his understanding of the Bible. He was utterly in the dark. And I think that's why John says that he came to Jesus at night. It just didn't happen to be the time of day. It was the state of his heart and mind. He was in the dark. Now he could see that Jesus was a teacher sent from God. What he couldn't see was that that teaching had come from the Scriptures. And so Jesus said to him, You must be born again. You have to be born from above in order to see the Kingdom of God. In other words, you will need the Spirit of God to give you a new heart in order that your eyes might be opened, that your mind might be enlightened, so that you will be able to see and ultimately enter the Kingdom of God. Now, by the grace of God, I think we see that happen in Nicodemus' life. He's a little bit of a substory running along underneath Jesus in the Gospel of John. We see him in chapter 3, still in the dark, still confused, but in chapter 7, the Sanhedrin is meeting. Controversy has been stirred up. They're trying to figure out what to do with Jesus. They're trying to figure out how they can kill Him. And Nicodemus, well, he's a bit of a disciple by this point. He throws a wrench into the works. He stands up and he says, our law doesn't permit us to condemn a man unless it is first heard from him. Well, they quickly turn on him. They're not gonna be tied down to judicial procedure. Are you also one of his followers? Look and see in the scriptures, no prophet comes from Galilee. Well, people in powerful places intent on doing wicked things can easily overlook things, and they did on that one. Jonah happened to be from Galilee. So there was one prophet that had come from Galilee. But Nicodemus apparently was slapped down, and we don't see him again until Jesus has died. When Jesus died upon the cross, All the disciples had fled, but John. John stood at the foot of the cross with the mother of Jesus, witnessing this execution. Jesus would commit the care of his mother into John's trust at that point in time. Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother. But when Jesus was died, Joseph of Arimathea, all four Gospels report this. It must be important. Joseph of Arimathea went and asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus came with him in John's gospel, and together they take down the crucified body of Jesus and give him a burial fit for a king. Nicodemus had been born again. Jesus was crucified at the season of Passover. There wasn't a holier time of year. These were two members of the Sanhedrin, Pharisees. There was nothing in the law more unclean than touching a dead body. You add to that that it's the dead body of a

crucified man, knowing that the law says, cursed is he who hangs upon a tree, There is nothing that could be more defiling in all of Judaism than to touch the dead body of a crucified man. Yet Joseph and Nicodemus do it because they know that the Passover lamb was there. They would put away with copies and shadows. The reality had come. When you come to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, that, as in the case of Nicodemus, is a work of the Spirit of God. Your heart must be changed. Your mind must be illuminated. You must be able to see yourself as a sinner desperately in need. You must be able to see Jesus Christ as sufficient to that need. And you must love him and come to him. That is the work of the Spirit of God. And that was as true in the Old Testament as it is today because the need was as great in the Old Testament. Old Testament saints were born in sin just as saints in the New Testament are born in sin. They are the slaves of sin. Unless the Spirit of God changes their heart, they will not come to Christ. They could see all the miracles in the world, and they wouldn't come to Christ unless the Holy Spirit changes their hearts. So, if there were believers in the Old Testament, and there were believers in the Old Testament, if you don't believe me, look at Hebrews 11. It'll give you a long list of believers from the Old Testament. They were believers because of the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Not only did he bring people to faith in Jesus Christ, though Christ himself was presented to them in copies and shadows. He was the seed of the woman. He was the promised seed of Abraham. He was the seed of David. He was the suffering servant of Isaiah. They had Christ presented in copies and shadows. But it takes the Holy Spirit to open the heart to see. Remember, in John chapter 8, we have this remarkable statement about Abraham. Jesus has been in controversy with the Jews. At the beginning of this controversy, we're told that they actually came to believe in Jesus. But John's gospel has already warned us that that little statement doesn't necessarily mean conversion. It comes at the end of John chapter two, for example. Pastor's already taken us through this. While Jesus was in Jerusalem, many believed on his name, beholding the signs that he was doing. And you're thinking at that point in time, hallelujah, revival has come to Jerusalem. It's just that when you start shouting hallelujah, you notice Jesus isn't shouting with you. The text goes on, but Jesus on his part was not entrusting himself to them because he did not need anyone to bear witness to him concerning what was in man, for he himself knew all men. They believed on his name, beholding the signs that he was doing. But Jesus didn't believe in them. There's actually a little play on words. We translate the word, Jesus did not entrust himself. It's from the same verb for believing. So if you turn it around, they believed in Jesus. He didn't believe in them. He didn't believe it was real. They were moved by signs and wonders. They were not moved by repentance and faith. So Jesus had nothing to do with them. You move into chapter three, and there was somebody he did have something to do with, that was Nicodemus, because he was going to be different. But, back to John chapter eight, Jesus is again in controversy with the Jews, and again we are told that many believed on his name. Jesus said, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. And that sets it on. Now this, supposedly, is to the new members class in Jerusalem. Jesus had been there working, preaching, teaching. Many believed on his name. Well, it looks like the inquirer's class has come to Jesus. And lesson one is, if you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. And suddenly you find there's pushback from the inquirer's class. They say, free? We're the children of Abraham. We have never been enslaved to anyone. They must not have read the Old

Testament either. For a Jew to claim they had never been enslaved to anyone, they were slaves in Egypt, they were conquered by the Assyrians, they were conquered by the Babylonians. After that, they fell to the Greeks, and in the time of Jesus, they were under the thumb of the Romans. They've let pride get away from them. We are the children of Abraham. We have never been enslaved to anyone. Jesus said, if you were the children of Abraham, you would do what Abraham did. Well, they come at Jesus. I mean, if you can't out-duel him, you attack his person and character, and they say, we were not born of fornication. That may well be an indication that the suspicious surroundings of the birth of Jesus Christ continued to live on. That his mother had been great with child before she came together with Joseph so they say we were not born of fornication well that moves the conversation in a different direction and Jesus is soon to call them the children of the devil that they are doing the works of the devil because they are seeking to kill this is the new members class He wouldn't be the first preacher to find out that people who started out being enthusiastic about your ministry were ready to run you off in a few years. Wouldn't be the first minister to whom that happened. John Calvin got run out before there were two years elapsed. They regretted it, they called him back, and God was gracious to them, but Calvin had been run off. And so Jesus is thick into it. And so the debate goes on, they're claiming, we are the children of Abraham. Jesus said, you're not, because you don't do the works of Abraham. Then Jesus makes this staggering claim. Before Abraham was, I am. Now why would he say a thing like that? Well, he had actually indicated, Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He sought and rejoiced. You're not older than our father Abraham. Before Abraham was, I am. When did Abraham see Jesus? Jesus didn't say he saw him, he said he saw his day. He looked forward from where he lived all the way into the future. Well, I'll tell you one place where you can find it. I don't think it's the only place, but here's one that's quite obvious. When he was to sacrifice Isaac up on Mount Moriah, and God intervened by providing a ram and holding his knife back, Abraham came down from that mountain, and he called it what? Yahweh Yihreh, or older translations, Jehovah Jireh. Interpret it means on the mountain of the Lord it shall be provided it is a future not a past Abraham was not commemorating what had just happened the gift of a lamb in place of his son he was looking forward from where he was all the way to the crucifixion of Jesus because on that mountain it would be provided where was that mountain Well, 2 Chronicles chapter three tells you it was in Jerusalem. That's where David built the temple on Mount Moriah. Abraham, from his day, was looking down the road into the future and seeing the provision of God's Son as the Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. That was illumination that came by the Holy Spirit. First Peter chapter one, verses 10 to 13, tell us all the prophets who were of old spoke by the Spirit of Christ that was in them. What was the Holy Spirit doing in the Old Testament? Well, among other things, he was writing the Old Testament. He was inspiring the authors of the Old Testament. The prophecy that came through Moses was passed on to later writers in the scripture because they all spoke by the Spirit of Christ. Not only did he speak and make himself known and make Christ known in the Old Testament, but the Holy Spirit came with power at times to deliver the people when they had gone into bondage. The book of Judges is in many ways a terrible book to read because it is one disaster after another for the people of God. The book ends with two long stories that are received a rating of X. It is not GP. You can't read this to your kids. It's just awful things happening in the people of God. And yet that book is in many ways the book of Pentecost in the Old Testament because the saviors that

came. at the mercy of God. When the people had fallen once again under the oppression of the enemies that remained in the land, we have one judge after another, beginning with Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, etc. The Spirit of God comes upon them. In fact, the Old Testament says the Spirit of God rushed upon them. They were men anointed by the Spirit of God to do great feats of battle in order to overcome the enemies of God that the people of God might be delivered. So the Holy Spirit was at work in delivering them from oppression. But of course, it wasn't going to be the final deliverance. It was, however, foreshadowing the final deliverance. Because Isaiah would tell that one day, chapter 42, there would be a servant of God appear, and the Spirit of God would be upon him. He would be anointed with power by the Holy Spirit in order that he might bring forth justice to the nations. He would not fail or be discouraged until he had brought forth justice to the nations. There would come a day when there was a greater Deliverer who would appear, and it would be the servant of Yahweh who turns out to be Yahweh. Isaiah would provide the language for Paul's great hymn in Philippians chapter 2, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. That comes right out of Isaiah 45. It is telling us that Jesus is that name, Jesus is that one, because He was the one who was anointed with power in the Holy Spirit. But God had not left His people just to wallow in continual oppression throughout the whole of the Old Testament period. He sent deliverers, and then He sent kings. Even Saul was anointed with the Spirit of God in order that he might kill thousands of Philistines who had come against the Israelites. And David would follow up, likewise being anointed by the Spirit, that he might kill his ten thousands in order to bring the people of God into a time of peace, so that God could hand off to Solomon a kingdom of peace, secure in its borders, its enemies subdued, able to live prosperously in the world, to become the envy of the nations. The Queen of Sheba would come up out of Africa to witness the glory of this kingdom, and when she got there and saw it, she said the half had not been told her. All of that was the working of the Spirit of God, anointing the servants of God in order that God's people might dwell securely. Well, with such a full resume of works of the Holy Spirit, we do have to ask the question, just what did Jesus have in mind when he said the Spirit had not yet been given? Well obviously it is a comparative statement rather than an absolute statement. He's not contrasting the time past and the time to come by way of saying that in the time to come the spirit would be given whereas the spirit had not been given in times past. He had already given the Spirit in times past. The Spirit had given physical life. The Spirit had worked the purposes of God that creation might be ordered in order for us to live. The Spirit of God had worked a recreation in the nation of Israel that the people of God might live, that they might be carried through the wilderness and enter into the promised land. While they lived in the promised land, He raised up prophets and raised up judges and deliverers for them. He would at last raise up kings for them. So He has been mightily at work in times past. So what is left to be done? Well, the language that is quoted on the day of Pentecost, Acts chapter 2, is from the prophecy of Joel. And notice that in this line, we get an indication of just how the New Age will be different. And in the last days, it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall see dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and

vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. A day is coming when he will pour out the Spirit of God upon all flesh. The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is not a difference of kind, it is a difference of degree. By comparison with the Old Testament, the New Testament will become a time when the Spirit of God is poured out. And it's also a difference in degree because of the fact that the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. Not just Jews, but Gentiles too. Not just men, but women too. Not just certain select servants, like the great judges of the past, the kings or the prophets who spoke. But the whole body of Christ. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit descended not as a single localized visible presence, as had come down in the tabernacle, as had come down in the temple, but flames of fire to be distributed upon each of those who had been waiting. And they would be able to speak to their neighbors around in Jerusalem of the wonderful things of God, speaking to people who had come from other parts of the world, who spoke other languages. People would be receiving the Spirit of God and being able to speak in a language they had never learned, so that people who didn't know the language of the Bible would at last be able to hear the wonderful things of God. Now I can tell you there's many a missionary that wish that that gift persisted. The long years that have to be spent in learning the languages of people who have not yet received the gospel or the Bible in their languages are very long and difficult years. I'd have to tell you that one of the most fascinating afternoons I ever spent was during a class I was filling in for the systematic professor at CIU. It was the missions emphasis week and all the professors were urged to invite missionaries into their class that were in residence at the school at that time. I was teaching a class on the Holy Scriptures. I saw on the list of available speakers there was a missionary who had lived in Papua New Guinea for more than 25 years translating the Scriptures. So I thought, well, I'm teaching the Bible, this guy's translating the Bibles, this looks like a marriage made in heaven for me. So he came in, and I just sat there in utter amazement, okay, at the challenges that they had to face. Take one of them. He was in the jungles of Papua New Guinea. You know what? I didn't know this. The only four-footed mammal in that jungle is a pig. Now, that's a problem if you're trying to translate John's gospel, because very early you find a statement that says, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. These people have never seen a lamb. What do you do? Well, if all you were gonna translate was John's gospel, you might have said, well, pig, but okay. Behold, the pig of God who takes away the sin of the world. If you're gonna translate more than John, if say someday you're gonna translate Leviticus, ah, you can't use pig. Oh, what did they do? Oddly enough, they brought in children's books to show them that there were other animals. So there was a sheep. Interesting what happened in their language because a sheep to them became a sheep pig. See, a pig to them was not just a particular mammal, but a four-footed mammal. And if they learned there was a lamb or a goat, that was a lamb pig, a goat pig, a cow pig, and that leaves you with pig pigs. amazing things how wonderful it would have been that God had simply poured out a tongue of fire upon that missionary he didn't have to learn the language of that tribe of people he didn't have to teach his language to another member of that tribe so that he could find out whether what he was saying was actually what they were what he was trying to say was what they were hearing but all of that could have been put aside it wouldn't have to spend 25 years Trying to translate the

Bible. But God was doing upon that single day. A work that would foreshadow all that would be done in the history of the church, and it would be done by an empowering of the Holy Spirit in order that the Word of God might go forth. Because in the new creation, just as in the old creation, by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their hosts. That the Holy Spirit would accomplish these powerful works in the church. That's what he came to do, to equip his people with power. Now in a little bit of time that's left, there's one great distinctive work that I think we need to mention before we go on. When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, we had brought into being something we did not have before in the world. That is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now you say, you mean the church was born on that day? No, there was a church in the Old Testament. Stephen speaks of the church that was in the wilderness, the Ekklesia, the assembled people of God, et cetera. Yes, there has been a people of God. God had a covenant people in the world. The church is a covenant people in the world. So we've had a church since there were ever believers in the world, because they are the ones who are set apart from the world as the people of God. new and different after the day of Pentecost. We'll go back to the Joel prophecy. It's poured out upon all flesh. It's not just that preachers or prophets or kings or judges are going to possess the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God is going to deliver gifts and graces to each member of the body so that they can be brought together as one so that in the church they might grow up to all the fullness of God, grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that through the church there might be glory." to God, to Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, forever and forever. Amen. We are not just to be a nation of people under a common government. We are to be bonded together by the Holy Spirit as one body, ministering to one another according to the power that is given to each one. men and women, young and old, according to the gifts and graces distributed among us, that we might be a people united together in Jesus Christ to accomplish his purposes in the world. That is what the world awaited. It awaited the coming of Jesus Christ to accomplish the work that saved us from our sins, saved the Old Testament saints from their sins, but they were receiving it through copies and shadows. We get it in the fullness of its truth and revelation. And we get not only the fullness of Christ, we get the fullness of the work of the Spirit also revealed to us. He is populating every book of the Old Testament by His words. In some of those books, His work is clearly revealed. Isaiah 63, to take an example, identifies Him as the movement of God through the wilderness ahead of the people. So the Holy Spirit was the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud that went before the people. God had put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them to lead them. My friends, he is now creating a worldwide body of Jew and Gentile so that we might grow up into all the fullness of Jesus Christ to exhibit his character and purposes in the world and be the emissaries of his kingdom gospel to every nation on the face of the earth. B.B. Warfield had said, great contrast here, is that in the Old Testament, the great mission of the Spirit of God was the preservation of true religion in the world. In the New Testament, His mission is the propagation of true religion throughout the world. Through times past, before Pentecost and beyond, God had confined His saving work largely, not entirely, but largely to the people of Israel. All the nations were permitted to go their own ways, living in the darkness of sin and idolatry. All that comes to an end with Jesus Christ. Now Paul says God is commanding people everywhere to repent and to come to Christ. He is sending his missionaries out into the world because Christ's kingdom will be



extended throughout the world. he will gather himself a people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. He has come with greater power because his mission has been expanded. Before, it was confined to the people of Israel, localized in the Middle East. Now, it is expanding throughout the world that everybody everywhere will hear the summons of the Lord Jesus Christ to come. And by the power of His Holy Spirit, as the Word goes forward, hearts will be changed, people will be born again, the truth of God will enter the heart, and the church will be increased by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God. Let's pray. Our God, our Heavenly Father, how we pray. But you will indeed fill this church with your Holy Spirit, that we might be altogether submissive to your purposes and engaged in your work, that we might be found faithful in the commission that has been left to us. we might indeed go forth corporately, and in many cases by individuals sent from us, to make disciples of all the nations, so that Jesus Christ might have the worship and adoration that is due to his name, for he is indeed the Lord and Savior of the nations. All this we ask in his name. Amen.