



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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JERUSALEM: THE MOTHER OF US ALL

By Wayne Camp

A CONTRAST OF LAW AND GRACE

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The verse that I have used as a text for this short message is sometimes used to support the doctrine of a **“mother church.”** With no desire to be offensive to any who have used it in that manner, I must say emphatically that this is not the idea which Paul and the Holy Spirit had in mind when this verse was penned. One must totally remove the verse from its context to use it to teach that it means that the church at Jerusalem was the **“mother church”** of all other true churches.

AN ALLEGORY

Paul tells us that he is using a figure of speech that is called an allegory. An allegory is a story that may use real or imagined things to represent something else for the purpose of illustrating and teaching a lesson.

To use the expression **“mother of us all”** to teach the **“mother church”** as some do, one must totally ignore the allegorical use of this by Paul. Moreover, in this allegory, Paul contrasts the Jerusalem on earth which, at the time of this writing, was in bondage to the Roman Empire in contrast with the Jewish idea of the heavenly Jerusalem, **“Jerusalem which is above,”** the city for which Abraham and other people of faith were looking. ***Hebrews 11:10 For he looked***

THE COVENANT OF LAW AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The church is not under consideration in this passage and especially in this allegory. Paul makes it very plain that this is the case. ***Galatians 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.*** One does not have to wonder what the people and places used in this allegory represent. They represent the two covenants, the covenant of law and the covenant of grace. The covenant of law was given at Mt. Sinai; the covenant of grace came from heaven.

Paul first uses Ishmael and Isaac to represent the two covenants. ***Galatians 4:22-23 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.*** Ishmael was born to a bondwoman and, in Paul's allegory, he represents the covenant of law, the ministration of death written in stones, the covenant of bondage. Isaac was born to Sarah, a free woman; he represents the new covenant, the

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covenant of grace that has made us free from the law of sin and death.

Sarah and Hagar further represent these two covenants in the allegory. Hagar, the bondswoman symbolizes the covenant of law and works and the bondage associated therewith. Sarah, the freewoman, stands for the covenant of grace and the liberty of the sons of God under the covenant of grace.

Mt. Sinai, also represented by Hagar is representative of Jerusalem as it was at the time

of the writing. It was in bondage, as I pointed out earlier. Not only was the Jerusalem in Judea at the time of Paul's writing under the bondage of the Roman Empire, it was the center of Judaism and still under the bondage of the law. It was from Jerusalem that certain men had come to Antioch and sought to bring the Christians in Antioch back under the bondage of the law. ***Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*** Such men had also come to Galatia and were teaching the Christians in Galatia that they must get under the law to be saved; they must be circumcised after the manner of Moses. Many of the Christians in Galatia had been bewitched into believing these Judaizers. In this book Paul is calling on them to stand fast in the liberty which was theirs under the covenant of Grace. ***Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.***

The "***Jerusalem which is above,***" in Paul's allegory, stands for the covenant of grace. It stands in contrast to the Jerusalem that then was and which was represented by Mt. Sinai, Ishmael, and Hagar. In the covenant of grace we were, in eternity, made to be seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. ***Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*** In the covenant of grace, represented by the "***Jerusalem which is above***" in the allegory, we were blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. ***Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*** It was in heaven, before the foundation of the world, that we were chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4). It was in heaven, before the foundation of the world, that we were predestinated to the adoption of sons (Eph. 1:5). It was in heaven before the foundation of the world that we were chosen to salvation (II Thes. 2:13). It was in heaven that the three Persons of the Divine trinity entered into the covenant of grace and

made us its objects. Therefore, it is fitting and understandable that Paul would use the **“Jerusalem which is above,”** the heavenly Jerusalem which is free, to represent the covenant of grace in which we have been made free and in which both Jew and Gentile are given liberty from the ministration of death which was written in stone.

Now, note verse 26 in association with verse 28. **Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.**

THE JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL

It should be apparent to all that the Jerusalem which is above and which is the mother of us all does not represent the church at Jerusalem. This heavenly Jerusalem is not the church but stands in the allegory for the blessings that are ours as the children of the covenant of grace. **Galatians 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**

Paul makes a similar statement in another place. **Hebrews 12:18-22 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.**

I should point out also that this allusion to Jerusalem as mother is not a New Testament representation. It is borrowed from the Old Testament. Consider the mother figure of Jerusalem found in this passage. **Isaiah 66:10-11 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye**

may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

THE ADMONITION

Since we are the children of the covenant of grace, and since the Jerusalem above is the mother of all the elect, be we Jew or Gentile, in this allegory, what should we do? **Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**

This superiority of the new covenant over the old that is illustrated in this allegory has been Paul's theme throughout the book of Galatians. **Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** Again, **Galatians 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?** And, again, **Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.** Once more, **Galatians 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

In the light of the theme of this book and the lesson of the allegory in which our text is found, it is difficult for me to comprehend how anyone could mistake the lesson of the allegory and call the **Jerusalem which is above** and **is the mother of us all**, the church at Jerusalem. In Galatians 4:26 one cannot find the **“mother church”** idea. The **Jerusalem which is above** and **is the mother of us all** is allegorical language used by Paul in teaching the blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace when contrasted with the covenant of law and bondage. In its immediate context (the allegory) and in its broader context (the book of Galatians) it is obvious that it represents the covenant of grace, not the church of Jerusalem.

WILL THERE BE A BAPTIST POPE?

Part IV

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENSE OF LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

By Wayne Camp

INTRODUCTION TO PART IV

In recent issues of the paper we have been reviewing an article called "**Mother Churches and Daughter Churches**" and then showing that there is a cloud of witnesses that would disagree with a number of statements made in that article.

There can be no doubt that the churches of the New Testament period were independent of each other. Though there are those who would tell us otherwise, they were free from any authority except that of their Head and Founder, the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the pastors and churches with which I am acquainted boldly proclaim and faithfully practice this precious biblical and Baptist principle of church independency. But, occasionally there comes word that churches do have authority over other churches. Such an instance is the article and tract called "**Mother Churches and Daughter Churches.**" In that article and tract, the author states his thesis clearly and unmistakably, "But I intend to demonstrate from the Scriptures that there were Churches in the apostolic age which DID HAVE authority over other Churches! And in so demonstrating this authority one over another, I will demonstrate that some of these Churches were viewed, not as sisters and equals but as "mothers" and as having authority over the younger Churches! I submit that if I can demonstrate this authority of one Church over another, I can demonstrate the concept of 'Mother Churches and Daughter Churches!'"

Again he wrote, "The Jerusalem Church exercised authority over those Churches organized out of her in similar fashion as a mother exercises authority over her young daughters!"

I will not comment on the statements. They speak for themselves. The reader may draw his own conclusions. They are pretty self-explanatory.

THE INDEPENDENCY AND AUTONOMY OF THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

In the last issue I showed some of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ on the independency and autonomy of local churches. In this message I want to direct attention to the independent and autonomous nature and actions of the church at Antioch. The church at Antioch came into being when baptized believers were scattered under persecution. **Acts 11:19-21** *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.*

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH ADMONISHED TO CLEAVE TO THE LORD

When the church at Jerusalem heard about the great blessings of the Lord in Antioch, they sent Barnabas down to look into the report of the spread of the gospel in that part of the world. **Acts 11:22** *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* When Barnabas came to Antioch and saw what had happened and was happening, he admonished the disciples to cleave unto the Lord. **Acts 11:23**

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

To understand what was meant when he told them to cleave unto the Lord, we need to look at the word **cleave**. According to Strong's Lexicon the Greek word translated **cleave** is **prosmeno** {προσμενω} and is translated in the KJV, **continue with** 1 time, **continue in** 1 time, **be with** 1 time, **cleave unto** 1 time, **tarry** 1 time, **abide still** 1 time for a total of 6 times. It means, according to Strong, **1) to remain with, to continue with one; 2) to hold fast to: the grace of God received in the Gospel; 3) to remain still, tarry, stay**. It does not have in it the idea of starting something new, such as a church. Rather, it has in it the idea of continuing on in the very manner in which they were going, remaining with what they were already doing, holding fast to what they already had and were doing. But Strong is not alone in his definition and explanation of **cleave**.

According to A. T. Robertson the word, as used in this verse, means "to keep on remaining loyal."¹

W. E. Vine says the word has the idea of **abiding**, to **abide longer**. It means to continue in a thing. Paul and Barnabas used it in this manner. **Acts 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.** It is obvious that The word translated **continue** in this verse is the same as translated **cleave** in Acts 11. Paul and Barnabas are not admonishing them to **START** in the grace of God. They were already in it. They were admonishing them to continue in what they were already doing, to carry on as they were already, to abide longer in that in which they were already abiding.

Paul uses the word again in this same manner. **1 Timothy 5:5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.** The idea is that a widow, to be

classified as a "**widow indeed**" must have already been supplicating and praying night and day. She must continue on to fit into the number of widows who are cared for by the church.

According to Thayer the word means "**to remain with, to continue with, to be steadfastly devoted to, to hold fast to, to continue in, to remain still.**"²

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary gives the word cleave one meaning. It means "**to adhere firmly and closely or loyally and unwaveringly.**"

Matthew Henry says the word has the idea of "**not to fall off from following him, not to flag and tire in following him.**"

The evidence is overwhelming. Barnabas did not encourage them to start something that was not there. He simply encouraged them to continue on as they were, an independent, self-governing body of scripturally baptized believers fervently working together in the Lord's vineyard, a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next few chapters make it clear that Barnabas was received into the membership of that church. There is no indication whatever that they consulted with Jerusalem about receiving him. They did not have to get permission from her to receive him. Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have the biblical authority to receive members. **Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.** No other church or pastor has the right to govern nor dictate to another church in this matter. Therefore, Antioch acted independently and autonomously in the matter of receiving Barnabas. He began preaching for them and teaching them. Though Scripture does not precisely say so, at some point he apparently became an elder of this assembly for he is so named in Acts 13. The congregation of the church in Antioch continued to grow at a rapid pace. **Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.**

ANTIOCH GROWS RAPIDLY, PASTORAL HELP NEEDED AND FOUND

With the rapid growth at Antioch, more assistance was needed in the preaching and

teaching work of the assembly. Without any evidence of consultation with the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas went to Tarsus to get Paul to assist him in the work at Antioch. **Acts 11:25-26** *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* There is absolutely no indication that Barnabas or the church at Antioch consulted with Jerusalem or any other church in this matter. They acted independently of any other congregation. They were completely autonomous in this matter. There is no indication that a letter was sent to Jerusalem asking permission to get Paul for this work. There were no letters of authority from Jerusalem telling Barnabas and the assembly to go and get Paul. It just seems that if Antioch were still under the authority of Jerusalem at this time, and Barnabas and those at Antioch were still members at Jerusalem, there would be some indication that they consulted with Jerusalem before Barnabas went to get Paul.

THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN ANTIOCH RECEIVES AN OFFERING FOR JERUSALEM

By the time we get to time period in which Acts 12 is set, the church at Antioch is large enough that they receive an offering for the brethren in Judaea. When the offering was complete, the church asked Paul and Barnabas to take the offering to Judaea. Again, all indications are that Antioch acted totally independently of the church at Jerusalem. There is not the slightest indication that they consulted with Jerusalem on the matter.

1. They were not told by Jerusalem to take up the offering.
2. Jerusalem did not tell them how or by whom they should get the offering to Jerusalem.

The church was acting independently and autonomously in this matter. The church at Antioch was not under any other church's dominion or authority. All indications are that when this prophesied dearth came during the

days of Claudius Caesar, the church at Antioch, without any outside interference or commands, raised this offering and sent it by the men whom they independently chose to take it there.

THE INDEPENDENT, AUTONOMOUS BODY AT ANTIOCH SENDS FORTH MISSIONARIES

Then we come to Acts 13 and again we see the church in Antioch acting independently and autonomously. By this time Paul and Barnabas have returned from Jerusalem bringing the young preacher, John Mark. In addition, as the church has grown, there are more elders among them, sharing in the pastoral responsibilities. **Acts 13:1** *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* There are six named brethren who were prophets and teachers in this assembly. There was at least one other there named Silas who was later chosen by Paul to accompany him on his second missionary journey.

Surely this large assembly that is at least two or more years old and that has six named elders working in the teaching and preaching ministry there in the church is not still under the authority of Jerusalem. It is almost staggering to think that someone would suggest that such a large church with a multiplicity of elders would still be under the authority of the church in Jerusalem. But, that is what we are asked to believe.

As they minister to the Lord, the Holy Spirit commands the church at Antioch to separate Barnabas and Paul to do the work to which he has called him. **Acts 13:2** *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* Let me call a very important fact to your attention. If, in fact, this was an unorganized assembly that was still under the authority of Jerusalem, it seems that the Holy Spirit would have instructed the church at Jerusalem to send out these missionaries.

According to the popular tradition, if Antioch were not an independent church at this time, Paul and Barnabas would still be members at

Jerusalem. If, in fact, Antioch was not truly a church at this time, the entire assembly, according to the tradition, would be members of the international church that was headquartered in Jerusalem. Antioch would only be a branch of the body in Jerusalem. Therefore, it seems the Holy Spirit would have instructed Jerusalem to send forth these missionaries whom he had called.

What does the Holy Spirit do? He instructs this assembly in Antioch to do this. He instructed the assembly in Antioch, not Jerusalem, to send forth these missionaries. Whatever they were, they could carry out the command and commission of the Holy Spirit without any evident input or instructions from Jerusalem.

In the light of the traditional law, this raises a some very important questions. If, in fact, the folks at Antioch were still **NOT** an **ORGANIZED** church, by what authority were they sending forth missionaries? If this group of baptized believers did **NOT** compose a **TRUE** church at this time, by what authority were they sending forth Paul and Barnabas? If, in fact, the baptized believers who were assembling in Antioch were members in Jerusalem, what qualified them to send forth missionaries separate and independent of Jerusalem? I would like to know if an unorganized group of baptized believers had the authority to launch what proved to be the most momentous mission effort of the entire church age?

The Holy Spirit was evidently satisfied that Antioch was a true, organized, independent, autonomous church that needed no directions, commands, or authority from Jerusalem to send forth missionaries. Dear Reader, please notice that they received their authority, yeah, their command, to send forth Barnabas and Paul directly from the Lord, not from Jerusalem.

We further note that they did not hesitate to act independently in this matter. They apparently never even considered consulting with Jerusalem on the matter. When they received the command by the Holy Spirit they fasted, prayed and then laid hands on them and sent them away. **Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.** They had a direct

command of the Holy Spirit to obey and needed no authority from any other church in this matter.

It is also noteworthy that Paul and Barnabas did not see any need to consult Jerusalem on the matter. In the past both had been members there but were no more. They were members and pastors in Antioch. Now, called by the Holy Spirit and separated to that work in obedience to the command of the Holy Spirit, they immediately set off to do the work to which God had called them. **Acts 13:4-5 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.**

The missionaries separated from Antioch go forth to the work. For several months, perhaps more than a year, they travel, preach, and baptize. Churches are organized and pastors are ordained in those churches they organize. When the journey is over, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (not Jerusalem) and make known to the church what happened with them on that journey. **Acts 14:26-27 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.**

What marvelous simplicity when mission work is done as the Lord directed! They had gone from Antioch to Selucia, to Salamis in Cyprus, to Paphos in Cyprus, to Perga in Pamphylia, to Antioch in Pisidia, to Iconium, to Lystra, to Derbe, back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, to Perga, to Attalia and finally back to Antioch of Syria from which they were sent. In several, if not all of these places, they had seen the establishment of churches—independent, autonomous, local churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had apparently not even contacted Antioch, much less Jerusalem, during their journey. And, believe it or not, this was all accomplished without even a month spent in deputation work raising support for the trip.

ANTIOCH ACTS INDEPENDENTLY IN SEEKING ADVICE FROM JERUSALEM

While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch after their successful journey, a problem arose concerning circumcision and other Jewish customs which some desired to force onto the churches and believers among the Gentiles. When a strong disputation arose between these Judaizers and Paul and Barnabas, the independent, autonomous church in Antioch determined they should seek the advice of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. **Acts 15:2** *When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

When they came to Jerusalem they were received of the church there. When the matter was fully discussed the church at Jerusalem, with the apostles and elders, sent a letter giving their recommendation in the matter. **Acts 15:22-23** *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.*

In the matters recorded in Acts 15 we have one independent, autonomous congregation that desired the advice of another such assembly in which there were several people, including the apostles, who had companied with Christ during his personal ministry and were personally acquainted with his teachings.

UNINSPIRED WITNESSES

I would like to call some uninspired witnesses on this very matter. What have Baptists historically held on this matter? Do others agree or disagree with the idea that this was an independent church at Antioch or was it an unorganized body in a subordinate relationship to the church in Jerusalem.

Of that situation recorded in Acts 15, E. T. Hiscox comments, "The course pursued by the Church at Antioch, in Syria is suggestive. When a difficulty arose pertaining to the engrafting of Jewish customs upon a Christian polity, respecting which they were in doubt, they sent a delegation to the Church at Jerusalem, as being not only at the seat of the Jewish *cultus*, but of the earliest Christian knowledge as well, besides having in their fellowship the apostles. From this source, therefore, they would obtain authoritative instruction.—Acts 15. This deputation, including Paul and Barnabas, on their arrival did not appeal to any select company of officials, not even to the inspired Apostles; but to the *whole Church*, inclusive of these. **"And when they came to Jerusalem they were received of the Church, and of the Apostles, and elders."**—v. 4. After a full statement and discussion of the case, and an expressed opinion by James, the pastor of the Church, they agreed on what reply to make to the Church at Antioch. **"Then pleased it the apostles, and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas."**—V. 22. In addition to this delegation they sent letters also conveying their judgment in the case. And these letters recognized the Church in its three estates. **"The apostles and elders and brethren greeting, unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch."**—V. 23. And they added, **"It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord."** And **"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to US."**—VS. 25-28.

One independent Church, wishing advice, sought counsel of another independent Church, in whose experience and wisdom they had more confidence than in their own. And the Church appealed to, in the exercise of their independence, gave the advice sought. Nor did the Apostles, though inspired, assume to dictate in this matter, or to act without the cooperation of the elders and brethren. Nor yet did the Apostles and elders assume to act alone; **"all the multitude,"** and **"the whole church,"** were present to hear and act with their leaders."³

It is unequivocally evident that Hiscox held they were an independent, autonomous body.

They were not subordinate to Jerusalem.

In a similar manner, another brother has written, "The action of the church at Antioch is suggestive of church independency. When a difficulty arose about the influence of Jewish customs upon Christian doctrine, the Antiochian church **'determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question'** (Acts 15:2).

"This company did not appeal to a select company, but to the complete church in Jerusalem: **'And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them'** (Acts 15:4).

"After a fair hearing of the case and proper consideration of the matter, the Jerusalem church replied to the church at Antioch: **'Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas. and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia'** (Acts 15:22-23).

"Here we see one **INDEPENDENT CHURCH**, wishing advice, seeking counsel of another **INDEPENDENT CHURCH** whose wisdom and experience they trusted (Emp mine, RWC). The Jerusalem church acting as a sovereign, autonomous, independent body gave the advice sought. The Apostles did not dictate this information. They acted in cooperation with the elders and the whole church."⁴

THE MISSIONARIES REPORT TO ANTIOCH FROM WHENCE THEY WERE SENT

We have seen that the church at Antioch acted independently and autonomously in a number of matters. I have not mentioned (in this article) that the missionaries returned and reported to the church at Antioch. It is apparent that there was no consultation with Jerusalem

as to where this report should be given. If the folks at Antioch were actually members in Jerusalem, and if the church at Antioch was really not an organized true body of Christ, one wonders why the missionaries did not report to Jerusalem instead of Antioch. They did not go to Jerusalem. After the last stop on their journey, they headed straight to Antioch where they reported. **Acts 14:26-27 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.**

CONCLUSION TO PART IV

It was from Antioch, not Jerusalem, that the missionaries were sent forth to do the work to which God had called them. And, it was to Antioch that they returned and reported. It was the independent, autonomous body in Antioch that sent a delegation to Jerusalem seeking advice. It was to an independent, autonomous body in Antioch that the congregation in Jerusalem sent its advice. It is unequivocally evident that the church in Antioch was a local, visible, independent, autonomous body carrying out the Lord's work, not some distant part of a dissected, divided, international body headquartered in Jerusalem.

No association, no mission board, no presbytery, no convention, and no church, not even Jerusalem, had any governmental authority over her. She was independent as far as any outside intrusion into her affairs was concerned. The position that she was still under the **"motherly authority"** of Jerusalem, if it could be sustained, and if it were tolerated by Baptists, would pave the way for the first Baptist Pope.

¹ *Word Pictures in The New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 158.

² *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 548.

³ *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches*, Edward T. Hiscox, P. 153-154..

⁴ *"The Independency of the Church,"* Eld. Milburn Cockrell, *The Baptist Examiner*, Vol. 50, No. 10, March 15, 1980, Pp. 3, 5, 6.

"We are relaxing our resistance against the dreaded foe just in proportion as he grows more formidable. It has become the fashion to condemn controversy and to affect the widest charity for this and all other foes of Christ and of souls."

Bouquets and Brickbats

OKLAHOMA: These negative attacks against you for your stand against Promise Keepers are amazing. Seem as though our so-called Protestant brothers have only been reformed in their beliefs. Maybe they need to examine their heart if it has been truly regenerated, changed from stone to flesh. Blindly accepting what the majority of ecumenical Christianity offers from the P.K. movement is a scary thought. Do they ever consider the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked- who can know it. Their high doctrine is one endless story-telling and psycho-babbling. Where is the love for the truth as set forth in God's holy writ? Keep pressing on.

NEW MEXICO: Really enjoyed the last issue. The letter from Jack Duplechain was very, very appropriate. There aren't very many of "us" in New Mexico but we are well represented in the **GP & P**.

TEXAS: I support you in your opposition to the Promise Keepers. It is an evil, ecumenical organization.

GEORGIA: May I offer a few comments about Baptist popes? Surely you speak the truth when you infer that there are men who travel far and wide to interfere with other churches. Someone told me years ago that the mark of a false teacher is that he desires a following. But these minipopes could never do anything unless spineless churchmen permitted them. What sort of pastor would even want to associate with one of these popes. I have confronted a modern day Diotrefes several times in my ministry. I

have been quick to remind them that I do not ever mind being swallowed by a whale but I despise being nibbled to death by a bunch of minnows. Anyone who knows the slightest bit of church truth is aware that Christ Jesus is the one who places the candlestick in His churches. And HE is the only one who can remove it. We all know of churches which were started by the letter of accepted orthodoxy but they have ceased to exist. What happened? Either Christ removed the candle stick or else it was never placed there to begin with. Sometimes out of necessity a church was organized by baptized people from different New Testament assemblies. Because of various and sundry reasons, no "mother church" was present to extend an arm. Yet Christ placed His candle stick in these places, souls were saved, people learned the truth about grace and Christian living on a practical level. A.C. Dayton used the analogy of Adam and a true church. We know we are members of Adam's race because we greatly resemble our father Adam in many respects. When a church practices New Testament policy, observes the ordinances as the Apostle Paul set them in order, why should a Baptist Pope come along and disavow the assembly where Christ has placed His name and established a New Testament church which is the pillar and ground of the truth. I am curious about these popes of which you mention. Probably if the truth was known, they have 2 or 3 members over whom they can lord. They profess to be contending for the faith. Poor fellows, they are poor, blind, wretched, miserable and are in dire need of spiritual eye salve. My advice to any young fellows who want

to find a Baptist Pope is this. Pastor your own church, preach the gospel to everyone you can, be a witness in your sphere of everyday influence. God will honor this effort and bless your ministry.

ALABAMA: brickbat (which probably won't be published) It's sad to see the attitude you have taken with your paper. I will start by saying that I agree with you on the promise keepers movement --- whole heartedly. But, you'll never win these brethren over by offending them week after week. You need to learn to speak the truth in love. That's an area in which you are considerably lacking. Also, you have, for the past two years, meddled in other people's business and have done little or no missionary work (of the gospel) with your paper. You are missing out on a very good opportunity. You are a troublemaker and have got a lot of people convinced that what you say is truth. You and I both know you have misrepresented Bro. _____, Bro. _____, and now, even Bro. _____. I have spoken with Bro. _____, and Bro. _____ and asked them if what you say is true. Bro. _____ said you totally turned around what he said. All three brethren believe in church authority. Isn't that really what you deny? The church at Antioch gave Paul and Barnabas authority to go and baptize and organize. This is all the authority that was necessary and these brethren believe that. Again, I have spoken with them --- and, I know you know what they really believe. You owe them as well as your readers an apology. Why don't you concern yourself with the commission given to the church by our Lord, and, forget these arguments. You're a great debater--you know how to misrepresent. So, start debating with the lost about Christ and don't misrepresent Him. You need to learn to spend your time more wisely. I think all your readers know how you feel about church authority and the promise keepers. You needn't keep on month after month. This is meant in love, brother. I hope the Lord convicts you, but, I fear, as with others, you will only be angered. That has come out in many of your articles. Your brother in Christ

[Editor's note: I have printed this Brickbat

exactly as sent to me by this brother except that I have left out the names of the Brethren he charges me with representing. I do not know that they have charged me with that. He is charging me, not they, as far as I know. Therefore, I have no desire to print their names. I have asked this brother for proof and evidence that I have misrepresented what these brethren have written. If he produces the proof of my guilt, I will gladly retract it with a private apology to them and a public apology to the readers of this paper.]

NEW MEXICO: Another great issue of TGP&P.

WWW: Just a short note to say that I was blessed with your article on Promise Keepers , "Is This Hatred" I truly believe the church needs more men like you who are not afraid to CONTEND for the faith as delivered by the apostles. God bless you and keep up the good work.

CALIFORNIA: I thank you for your stand for The Truth. Your WebSite is a CONSTANT blessing of encouragement to me!!!

WWW: It is a shame that you do not have the faintest idea what you are talking about. The AV 1611 has been translated into hundres, if not thousands, of languages. It has been translated into other languages almost as long as it has existed. You, Sir, are a false teacher.

NEW MEXICO: Really enjoyed the last issue.

The letter from Jack Duplechain was very, very appropriate.

WWW: Good Job! I plan on showing your article to some dear friends that I know are saved. They have been fooled into following these people and organizations. Thank you so much.

From a Marine: Yet another twist in this sad controversy. I wish we could just concentrate on getting the gospel out and get over this issue. Many people turn off Christianity because of the attitudes portrayed by many Christians. I hope that someday this will just blow over. Thanks for a good article.

OUT EAST: Bro. Camp, I appreciate your views. I am a pastor that has been battling the PK movement for quite some time. I just took on a new church a few months ago, and I have several men who are PKs, though they are immature in the faith. I will continue to preach

truth with the hope that these will come to see the error of the PK movement. I believe that Jesus ordained and instituted the local NT church, and He works through His Church. PK believes that the church (the same church that Jesus said the gates of hail would not prevail against it) has failed, and that God has now begun a new movement to correct the problem, and revive the men in America. I believe if God would establish another institution besides the Church, it would have been mentioned in the Bible.

My "hard-heads" are going to a PK rally this weekend in Columbia, SC. I will not go, and they just cannot understand why. They will go and get strung out emotionally, and will be "on fire" for about two weeks. Then, when they come off their emotional high, they will sink into a depression, and wonder what has happened, and why God has moved away

from them. Then I will have to deal with their disappointment. I will encourage them to stay faithful and study the Word, but in their minds the only way to correct their blues will be another PK fix. And this will go on and on and on. It is and addiction. The sad truth is, they have everything they need via the local church and the precious Word of God. If our men would submit to the Word, they would see the foolishness of these false movements. Thanks for taking a stand.

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Annual Bible Conference

Oct. 22-25 1998

Theme: "Encouraging The People Of God & His Pastors"

Thursday October 22, 1998 7:00 P.M.
 Speaker- Bro Garland Johnson
 Speaker - Bro Royce Smith

Friday Oct 23, 1998 9:30 A.M.
 Speaker - Bro Dan Hillard
 Speaker- Bro David Phelps
 Speaker- Bro Paul Brown

Friday Night 7:00 P.M.
 Speaker- Bro Kyle White
 Speaker- Bro Orval Heath

Saturday Morning Oct 24, 1998 9:30 A.M.
 Speaker- Bro Daniel Pope
 Speaker- Bro Joe Maldonado
 Speaker- Bro David Lee

Sunday Morning Oct 25, 1998 10:00 A.M.
 Speaker- Bro Pat Horner
 Speaker - Bro Laurence Justice

Lunch at Fellowship Hall
 Conference adjourns till next year the Lord willing...

Pastor: Eld. Jack Duplechain
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