



# The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

\*\*PUBLISHED AS A MISSION PROJECT OF PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH\*\*

## ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

*Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church*

3084 Woodrow • Memphis, TN 38127

**October 2-4, 1998**

### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

#### FRIDAY EVENING

- 5:30 Evening Meal
- 7:00 Singing
- 7:25 THE HOLINESS OF GOD  
Eld. DAN COZART
- 8:05 Singing
- 8:15 THE JUSTICE OF GOD  
Eld. Bill Van Nunen

#### SATURDAY MORNING

- 9:45 Singing
- 10:00 THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD  
Eld. Lee Roy Dutton
- 10:40 BREAK
- 10:55 Singing
- 11:15 THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD  
Eld. Jack Duplechain

#### SHORTLY AFTER 12:10—LUNCH

(Our Ladies will be staying in service and will need a few minutes.)

#### SATURDAY EVENING

- 5:30 Evening Meal
- 7:00 Singing
- 7:20 THE VERACITY OF GOD  
Eld J. C. Settlemoir
- 8:00 Singing
- 8:10 THE LOVE OF GOD  
Eld. Jimmie Davis

#### SUNDAY MORNING

- 10:00 Singing
- 10:15 THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD  
Eld. Brooks Glenn
- 10:55 BREAK
- 11:05 Singing
- 11:20 THE ETERNALITY OF GOD  
Eld. Bill McDaniel

#### 12:00 NOON—LUNCH

(Conference ends when lunch is over)

The Martinez Family from Godfrey, Illinois, will be singing during the conference. At this time we are also waiting for confirmation from the David Lee family of Star, Mississippi.

THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR (USPS #000476) is published monthly (subscription free) by the authority of Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127. Periodical postage paid at Memphis, TN 38101.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127

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**IF YOU ARE IN MEMPHIS** we invite you to attend our services:

Bible Study 10:00 A. M. Sunday

Worship Service 11:00 A. M. Sunday

Evening Service 5:00 P. M. Sunday

Mid-Week Service 7:00 P. M. Wednesday

*You Are Welcome!*

## PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

October 2-4, 1998

SEE FRONT PAGE FOR PROGRAM

## ANOTHER NEW TWIST IN THE KJV ONLY DEBATE

*By Wayne Camp*

Some time ago I published an article that was titled something like this one. In it I pointed out the fact that there was now a ***Korean King James Version*** of the Bible which is an oxymoron because even if the only manuscript consulted was a KJV of the Scriptures, any translation into another language cannot be a KJV. The KJV is an English version. I learned, also, that there is a Japanese KJV and a Spanish KJV. Again, both are oxymorons.

On another occasion I wrote an answer to an article that took seven different versions (the originals and translations totaling seven) up and including the KJV and advocated that in each translation the originals were purified until in the AV 1611 a pure version of the Scriptures was finally achieved. I called that article, ***The Word of God Pure but Never Purified***. The article I was answering gave the following seven steps toward the purification of God's word:

A Hebrew O. T. Written in Hebrew (1500-389 B. C.)

Parts of the Hebrew O. T. Written in Aramaic (1500-500 B. C.)

A N. T. Written in Koine Greek street language (40-90 A. D.)

An Old Syriac translation of those texts into Syrian (120-150 A. D.)

An Old Latin translation of those texts into Latin (140-200 A. D.)

A German translation of those texts for the beginning of the Reformation (1500-1560 A. D.)

An English translation (A. V. 1611) for the end of the Reformation (1525-1611 A. D.)

Since there have been a number of other translations before the AV 1611 such as Tyndale's and the Geneva Bible, one wonders how the brother who came up with these seven versions as the seven purifying steps. How was he directed to these specific seven versions. Was he inspired to choose these seven?

I have no desire to be a part of the "higher

# THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

*By Wayne Camp*

**TEXT: 1 Peter 3:18** *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

## INTRODUCTION

This is one of several messages I have preached from the text in the Sunday morning services at Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church. In past messages we considered ***The singleness of Christ's sufferings*** based on the words "***once suffered.***" To the Jewish Christians this must have been a marvelous thing. One sacrifice forever to put away sins. They had been accustomed to sacrifices that were repeated over and over again.

We then noted ***The cause of Christ's sufferings.*** He suffered "***for sins.***" He came to lay down his life to save his people from their sins. ***John 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.***

The third message had to do with ***The substitutionary nature of Christ's sufferings.*** He died the "***just for the unjust.***" He did not die for his own sins for he was impeccably sinless. He did no sin; he could not sin. To sin he was not able and he was able not to sin.

In a future message we will look at ***The boundaries of Christ's sufferings.*** He was "***put to death in the flesh.***" There was nothing of his deity that suffered in his death. The purpose of his incarnation was to have a body, blood, and a soul that could be offered to God for sin. ***Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.*** It was his human soul that was made an offering for sin. ***Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*** It was his human body that was broken for us. ***1 Corinthians 11:24***

***Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*** It was his human blood that was shed for many for the remission of sins. ***Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

In another message we will look at ***The victory of Christ in and over his sufferings.*** The Spirit sustained him in his humanity so that he could endure what was necessary for the salvation of his people. The Spirit quickened him because it was not possible that death should be holden of him. I still get a thrill every time I read those triumphant words of Jesus, "***It is finished. It is accomplished.***" And, after three days in the grave during which his body saw no corruption, he was raised up by the same Spirit's power who will also quicken our mortal bodies. There was victory for Jesus and we have victory in Jesus.

In this message we well be looking at the portion of the verse which shows ***The Purpose of The Death of Christ.*** It gracious, glorious and grand purpose was "***That he might bring us to God***" Roll those words around on your spiritual tongues as you would roll a delicious peace of perfectly seasoned and cooked steak over your tongue so that the taste buds can savor ever bit of its savory deliciousness. "***That he might bring us to God.***" What a wonderful blessing is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## THIS SPEAKS OF A GREAT SEPARATION THAT EXISTS BETWEEN GOD AND THE SINNER

If you doubt that a great gulf separates the sinner from the Holy God of heaven consider the cost of bringing us to God. The eternal Word must cloth himself in the likeness of sinful flesh to bring us to God. The one who must humble himself to behold things in heaven and earth must suffer the infinite humiliation of being made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The one who knew no sin must

endure the contradiction of sinners that he might bring us to God. This infinite price which he paid in his humiliation, deprivation, suffering, and death speaks of the vastness of this gulf that separates the sinner. If any would be saved we must be brought to God by none less than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that sin has separated us from God. **Isaiah 59:2** *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* Sin has caused God to hide his face from us. **Deuteronomy 32:19-20** *And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. 20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.* Sin has caused God to be far from us. **Proverbs 15:29** *The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.* Sin has caused us to be far from God. **Psalms 73:27** *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

This utter separation that exists is exemplified in the state of our Gentile forefathers. **Ephesians 2:12** *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* I tremble inwardly each and every time I read the passage in which our verse is found. For at least four thousand years of human history God left our Gentile forefathers to themselves and the imaginations of their own evil hearts. They were without Christ, without God, and without hope. They were strangers from the covenants of promise and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel.

But, thank God it is not so today. **Ephesians 2:13** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* We Gentiles are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Why did he suffer? **"That he might bring us to God."**

This also suggests the enmity that exists

between God and man because of our sins. In our natural, unregenerate state we are in opposition to God and he to us. **Psalms 34:16** *The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* The carnal mind of man is enmity against God and is in such rebellion against him and his law that we, in our natural state, could not even be subject to the law of God. **Romans 8:7** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* This enmity caused us to be incapable, in our natural state, of pleasing God. **Romans 8:8** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

This also suggests our perilous and perishing condition before we are brought to God through Christ. We were without spiritual life. **John 5:40** *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* We were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. **Ephesians 2:1** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* We were condemned. **John 3:18** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* We were alienated and enemies of God. **Colossians 1:21** *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.* We were alienated from the life that is in God. **Ephesians 4:18** *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* We were by nature the children of wrath even as were the non-elect, those vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. **Ephesians 2:2-3** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

### THIS SPEAKS OF THE RECONCILIATION THAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED

This portion of our verse—*"that he might bring us to God"*—speaks of the reconciliation that was accomplished in the death of Christ. We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. **Romans 5:8-10** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* We were enabled to inherit the kingdom of God through the death of Christ. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* We who were foreigners are now fellowcitizens with the saints and are in the household of God because of what Christ accomplished in his death. **Ephesians 2:19** *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

What a change has been wrought; we were strangers, foreigners, not citizens. In Christ, the just one, being put to death for us, the unjust one, we are now fellowcitizens with saints. We who were children of disobedience and wrath are not members in the household and family of God. We who were foolish, disobedient, who lived in malice and envy hating one another have been made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **Titus 3:3-7** *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating*

*one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

God was in Christ reconciling an alienated world to himself through the death of his beloved Son. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20** *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*

### THIS SPEAKS OF A WONDERFUL PEACE WHICH HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO US

This portion of our verse also speaks of the wonderful peace that we have with God through Christ's substitutionary death. There is no peace with God except through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:1** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* We have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:8-11** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

In bringing us to God Jesus has slain the enmity and reconciled us to God. **Ephesians 2:16** *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.* Through his reconciliation, we who were sinners and enemies are now

presented holy and unblamable in his sight. **Colossians 1:20-22** *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.*

It was sin that separated us and alienated us from God and it was reconciliation for those sins that enabled Christ to bring us to God. **Hebrews 2:17** *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

#### **THIS SHOWS US THAT THERE IS BUT ONE WAY TO GOD**

That Christ suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God shows that there is but one way to God and that is through the substitutionary death of Christ. *"That he might bring us to God."* There are not ten ways, five ways, nor two ways. There is only one way to God and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is he who suffered *"that he might bring us to God."*

The very necessity that he so suffer indicates that there was and is no other way. **1 Peter 3:18** *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* I think of those words of God to the Galatians. **Galatians 2:21** *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* If there were any other way for us to be brought to God the death of Christ was vain, useless, worthless, without purpose. But our text speaks otherwise. He must suffer and die for sins that he might bring us to God.

Therefore it is written that one cannot deny the Son and still have the Father. **1 John 2:23** *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath*

*not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* It is also declared that one cannot have life without the Son. **1 John 5:10-12** *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

Moreover, it is written that one cannot know the Father except through the Son. **Matthew 11:27** *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* Except the Son reveals the Father to us we would never know the Father. We are shut up to but one way and he has died *"that he might bring us to God."*

God has decreed and determined that there shall be no salvation except through his Son. **Acts 4:12** *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* He has determined that there shall be no access to himself except through the Son. **Ephesians 2:18** *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Those seek to come to God any other way will be lost; those who come to God by him are saved to the uttermost. **Hebrews 7:25** *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Through him we can draw near to God with a true heart full of assurance. **Hebrews 10:19-22** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

The only way our hope can be in God is through the foreordained death of Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 1:18-21** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* Let us be reminded once more that there is no way to sing with the redeemed in glory except through the redemption that is in Christ. **Revelation 5:9** *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

### CONCLUSION

It is he, and only he, who can bring us to God. Being brought to God is a wonderful blessing. And none can be or will be brought to God except through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 3:18** *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* Without him we can do nothing to come to God.

If you have sought to come any other way you are lost for no one comes to the Father but by Jesus Christ. Come to Christ and he will bring you all the way to the Father.

Once more, remember that Christ died, the just, being put to death in the flesh for the unjust **"that he might bring us to God."**

criticism" group. I am not a KJV basher. I love the KJV and have never, in 41 years of preaching, ever preached from any other version. I read it and declare it to be the word of God with no qualms or doubts.

But, there are some who hold the KJV in such reverence that it is a little sickening to read some of their claims. In the first article mentioned above, I pointed out that if the AV 1611 is absolutely the only version that is pure, we ought to preach from the AV 1611, not a revision of it. I said that most of us preach from the 1769 revision of that AV 1611. A person, reading that article on the Internet recently, sent to me the following letter.

Yes we do use the 1769 revision of the KJV . . . know what? That was the SEVENTH and FINAL revision seven being God's number of COMPLETION the KJV is not the Bible for every language . . . it is the Bible for the ENGLISH speaking people God hold us responsible for the proper version given in our language. Most people around the world use English as a second language anyway. The revision we use is a revision only in spelling and grammar . . . the text was not messed with. I have study after study on this . . . you will answer one day for putting this in people's minds . . . for challenging the KJV. The other translations may be CLOSE to the truth but you want to know something? The closer Satan can get to the truth the better he likes it!!!! It is harder to detect ... and he sure is getting the American people on here and he's sitting around laughing about it too.

This writer goes to a new extreme on this matter. He suggests that the 1769 revision of the KJV was **"the SEVENTH and FINAL revision seven being God's number of**

**COMPLETION.**" In other words, according to this writer, the AV 1611 was not complete or perfect. It had to go through seven revisions before it was perfect and complete.

These two KJV Only men do not agree on how the Word was allegedly purified. The first says it was purified in seven steps beginning with the originals and then became the pure word of God in the AV 1611. The one cited just above, says the AV 1611 was not complete or perfect when it was finished and presented to King James. It had to be revised seven times before reaching its **complete** state in the 1769 revision.

He mentions that the 1769 revision had to do with spelling and grammar. I wonder, if he is an authority on this perfection or completion of the AV 1611 which was achieved through seven revisions, could he tell us what each revision was to accomplish?

Now, I have no doubt the revisions were needful. The King James translators themselves declared that revision and correction would be

necessary. In fact, they wrote: **"If anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place."**

The writer also claims that the 1769 revision was the final revision. He wrote, **"the SEVENTH and FINAL revision seven being God's number of COMPLETION."**

Surely he must have been asleep. There have been at least one or two revisions since the 1769. How does he know there will not be future revisions? Maybe some future generation, if the Lord does not return soon, will see a need to revise some of the spelling and grammar.

I am not criticizing the KJV. I am critical of those who are extremists such as the two referenced in this article. They themselves do not agree with one another.

## WILL THERE BE A BAPTIST POPE?

### Part III

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

*By Wayne Camp*

#### INTRODUCTION TO PART III

In the last two issues of the paper we have been reviewing an article and tract titled **"Mother Churches and Daughter Churches."** Let me state again that, although I prefer to not use the terminology of the article, this review is not an effort to refute the extra-biblical terminology of "mother church" and "daughter church." My purpose in these articles is to show that the thesis of the article is in direct contradiction of the Scriptures and representative Baptists—past and present.

In our last article we called on Bro. Milburn Cockrell as a witness in the defense of local

church autonomy and independency. From 1976 to 1981 we saw that he faithfully championed the doctrine of the independency and autonomy of each and every local church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I pointed out last issue, from 1976 to 1981, Bro. Cockrell believed, in fact, that Antioch was an organized true church. "The church at Antioch acted as a sovereign autonomous independent body in sending out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries."<sup>1</sup>

In contra distinction, in his letter of explanation, the author of **"Mother Churches and Daughter Churches"** wrote, "I believe, preach, and practice local, independent,



autonomy under Christ for each and every New Testament Church. I believe all true Churches are "sisters" and equals." In his next paragraph, he further declared, "I apologize to any and all Brethren who may have thought that I advocated that one organized Church [had] any authority at all over another Church!" Yet, in his article he advocated that Antioch and those churches started on the first missionary journey were all under the authority of Jerusalem. In other words, he did not believe that Antioch or any of those churches started on that first journey were either organized or true churches when the group from Antioch journeyed to Jerusalem to discuss the problems referenced in Acts 15. His letter of clarification, when harmonized with his article, classifies Antioch as an unorganized, untrue church.

Bro. Cockrell held the church at Antioch was and independent, autonomous, organized, and true church when she sent forth Paul and Barnabas to the work to which God had called them. We say a hearty "Amen!" to that.

Contrariwise, the author of **"Mother Churches and Daughter Churches,"** desperately trying to "scripturalize" the terms "mother churches" and "daughter churches", denied that Antioch was either a true church or an organized church when she sent forth the missionaries, Paul and Barnabas. Does an untrue, unorganized church have the authority to send out missionaries? I suggest not!

I will now call as my second witness,

### **THE HEAD AND FOUNDER OF EACH LOCAL CHURCH, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

There are two distinct instances set forth in Scripture that show that Jesus Christ intended that his churches be independent and autonomous in church polity and government. The first is seen in his instructions on church discipline. **Matthew 18:15-18** *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee,*

*then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

The latter part of this passage is especially applicable to our discussion. After the first two efforts at reconciliation had failed, the Lord instructed them to **"tell it to the church."** He did not tell them to tell it to the apostles or the pastor. He did not instruct them to take the matter to their "mother church." He did not instruct them to tell it to the synod, the convention, or the association. The instructions are simple. They were to tell it to the church of which they and the offending brother were both members.

If, when the church spoke, and churches can speak by church action, he did not hear the church he was to be treated as **"as an heathen man and a publican."** As with the incestuous man at Corinth, the offender was to be put away from among them and denied the privileges of church fellowship. Until he repented he could not participate in the business or partake of the Lord's Supper with the church. The church had the authority to carry out this discipline without consultation with any other body, be it another church, an association, a synod, a council of pastors, or any other body or person.

The independency and autonomy of the church is clearly spelled out in this message of Jesus. He closes it with words that unmistakably prove the church to be independent and autonomous. **Matthew 18:18** *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* Dear Reader, there is no indication in these instructions that there could ever be a "church" that was not independent and autonomous in nature. If an body is qualified to have the appellation of "church" it can carry out the discipline taught by our Lord Jesus Christ

without consulting any other church in the matter.

Second, the messages of Christ to the seven churches of Asia show the independency and autonomy of each and every local church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I encourage you to read the first three chapters of the book of Revelation in connection with what I am going to say. But, these three chapters show unequivocally that every church belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ is independent and autonomous in nature. There is not a atom of evidence that any of these churches were subject to any other church. Since all these churches "came out of" the church at Jerusalem, one wonders why the church at Jerusalem did not write them a letter commanding them to correct all these errors which were rebuked by Jesus. According to **"Mother Churches and Daughter Churches"** she would have had "motherly authority" over them. One wonders why the Lord did not simply appear to the Jerusalem church and rebuke them for not keeping their daughters on the straight and narrow in their church life.

The reason is simple. Every individual church in New Testament times was independent and autonomous in matters of polity and government. They were answerable to no one but the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why it is he who was seen walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks. **Revelation 1:12-13 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

As one reads the first three chapters of Revelation, it is apparent that Jesus regarded every church named as an independent, autonomous body. The independent nature of these churches is especially evident when Jesus addressed their faults.

When Jesus addressed the church at Ephesus, he pointed out her faults and commanded her to repent. He did not threaten to report them to their "mother" church in Antioch, nor to their "grandmother" church in Jerusalem. They were not subject to any authority from those two bodies though they were older. When Jesus commended Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, he made no mention to this church that Pergamos also had problems with that doctrine. Ephesus was responsible to the Lord, not to Pergamos and Pergamos was responsible to the Lord, not Ephesus. And neither were responsible to Jerusalem. Ephesus had left her first love and Ephesus must repent or her status as one of the Lord's churches would be removed. The Lord addressed this church through her pastor, not through the pastor of Jerusalem nor the pastor of Antioch. Each and every church is answerable only to the Lord Jesus Christ. No pastor or church had any business meddling in what was going on at Ephesus.

In the August issue, we saw some instances of churches and pastors meddling in the affairs of other churches and pastors. That should not be so and proper respect for the independency and autonomy of each and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ—ours as well as others—would prevent this intrusion into the autonomous purview of others. Though it is used in a different context, I wonder if there might not be a message for some who meddle in the church life of other bodies in 2 Thessalonians 3:11. **For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.**

Pergamos was a church that had some who had gone deeply into some doctrinal error. They seemed to be tolerating those who taught the doctrine of Balaam, and that is serious compromise. They also had those who were teaching the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. But, I notice that Jesus made no mention of these problems at Pergamos to any other church. I note also that he did not instruct the other churches in Asia to call a council and investigate Pergamos as I recall some churches in Arkansas doing about 35 years ago. Nor did

he instruct the other churches to censor Pergamos. These problems at Pergamos were between Pergamos and her Lord. It is he who is the examiner of his churches. It is he who is the corrector of his churches. It is he who disciplines his churches. It is he who removes the candlestick from his churches when they do not repent. It is he who spews his churches out of his mouth when they do not repent. Therefore, he makes no threat to Pergamos that she will be disfellowshipped by other churches unless she repents. Other churches had not one whit of authority over what was going on in Pergamos. She was a local, independent, autonomous body answerable to no man or body outside her own membership. What a vivid illustration of the independency and autonomy of the local churches the Lord has left us.

In the letter addressed to the church in Thyatira, there is also a complaint, a serious complaint from the Lord Jesus. They suffered a woman called whom the Lord calls Jezebel. ***Revelation 2:20-21 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.***

The Lord goes on to tell them how he will punish her and her children—those who have followed her ways. The thing that stands out again is the fact that Jesus made no mention of this problem at Thyatira to any other church. He addressed this one single church about her problems. What is said here can be said of every church in the group. No instructions were given for any action on the part of any other church relative to this matter. It was a problem between the offenders in Thyatira and the Lord. It was not the problem of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, or any of the other churches. Local church problems are to be handled by the local churches and their Head. No church has any authority to intrude into the purview of another church. The Lord is the "faithful witness" and he has faithfully testified to the independency and autonomy of each local church.

Let me call as our third witness in the defense of church independency,

### ELD. T. P. SIMMONS

I imagine that Eld. T. P. Simmons is familiar to many of our readers. His book, ***A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*** is a standard in the library of most pastors among us. Bro. Simmons was a strong advocate for the independence of each local church. He wrote, "New Testament churches were independent and democratic in government. This fact is seen in the selection of Matthias . . . the selection of the seven deacons . . . the exclusion and restoration of the incestuous man at Corinth . . . the selection of traveling companions for Paul . . . the duty and responsibility of the whole church to maintain unity of action . . . preserve pure doctrine and practice . . . [and] guard the ordinances."

Let us particularly note his discussion of the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul to the work to which God had called them. He wrote, "THE SETTING APART OF BARNABAS AND SAUL. In this we see the independence of New Testament churches. The church at Antioch, although it was much younger than the church at Jerusalem, acted in this matter ***independent of the church at Jerusalem and without so much as consulting the church at Jerusalem*** [Emp. mine, RWC]. Cf. Acts 13:1-3. Neither did the church consult the apostles."

In addition to his testimony to the independency of each and every local church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is also evident that he had no notion that Antioch was a "daughter church" under the "motherly authority" of the church in Jerusalem. Bro. Simmons held that Antioch sent out these missionaries ***without so much as consulting the church at Jerusalem, or the apostles.*** They acted in their total independency and autonomy in this matter of church business. According to this witness, they were, in no way or degree, in submission to the "motherly authority" of the church in Jerusalem as was advocated in the article and tract called ***"Mother Churches and Daughter Churches."*** That concept was apparently foreign to the thinking of this staunch Baptist

and theologian.

I now call as the fourth witness for the defense of the independence and autonomy of each local church,

**CONCLUSION TO PART III**

Once again we have seen the fact that it is the teaching of Scripture and the historic teaching of true Baptists that each and every church of New Testament times and since have been independent and autonomous bodies. They were subject to no other church. They were subject to no synod, convention, association, super-bishop, pope or council. The only institution for the exercise of religion and bringing God glory is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any organization worthy of the appellation of "church" is scripturally an independent body. The New Testament names no other institution through which we are to serve God in this age except the church. Therefore, there is no scriptural commission for the existence of any other institution.

<sup>1</sup>"The Independency of the Church," Eld. Milburn Cockrell, *The Baptist Examiner*, Vol. 50, No. 10, March 15, 1980, Pp. 3, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*, Eld. T. P. Simmons, Pp. 357-359.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 357-358.

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**Theme: *What God Has Taught Me***

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**Pastor Stephen G. Raines at (501) 776-8537**

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