



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

Vol. XV, No. 9

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Page 1

ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church

3084 Woodrow - Memphis, TN 38127

October 1-3, 1999

THEME: FOCUSING ON CHRIST

FRIDAY EVENING

5:30 Evening Meal

7:00 Singing

7:25 THE ETERNAL WORD

Eld. Richard Eckstein

8:05 Singing

8:15 THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND INCARNATION
OF CHRIST

Eld. Laurence Justice

SATURDAY MORNING

9:45 Singing

10:00 THE INFINITE HUMILIATION OF
CHRIST

Eld. Jimmie Davis

10:40 BREAK
OF

10:55 Singing

NOON-LUNCH

11:15 THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST

Eld. Ron Crisp

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 HIGH PRIESTLY OFFICE OF
CHRIST

Eld. John Kohler

8:00 Singing

8:10 THE BURIAL, RESURRECTION, AND
ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Eld. Lee Roy Dutton

SUNDAY MORNING

10:00 Singing

10:15 THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Eld. Earl Smith

11:05 Singing

11:20 THE KINGLY OFFICE AND REIGN

CHRIST

12:00

(Conference ends when lunch is over)
Special music for Conference: The Fayards,
Laurence Justice, and possibly others.

Wayne Camp, Pastor

Phones: (901) 357-0215 (901) 876-5015

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PLANNING TO MOVE? If at all possible, please notify us three weeks in advance of your change of address so that we may keep your paper coming. It costs us 50 cents to get your new address from the Postal Service and that may take long enough that two papers are returned at a cost of \$1.00 before we get the correction. This will mean you miss one or two papers. Your help in saving us this expense will be appreciated.

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!

Brazil: I would like to thank you for your studies. I am a pastor of the Batista church in Brasil. I know pastor Calvino of the church of Catanduva, SP. Brasil. I have been studying English for 2 years and I need to improve my English. I am a pastor since 1987. GOD BLESS YOU.

ARKANSAS: I want to say "Thank You" very much for sending me your paper for such a long time. I have Arthritis in my fingers so hope you can read this. I like the big print in the paper. I can see it better. I have been going to write for a long time. I just have to pick a day when I can see and write.

MINNESOTA: Please send me a subscription to your paper. Also, please send me two of August 1, 1999. The

article on limited atonement was GREAT!

CALIFORNIA: How do you ever expect to be pastor of Antioch in Little Rock or pastor in Mecca (Texarkana)? It's about time someone exposed the Baptist Heresies and traditions. While you are on the subject, why not look at the great commission, observe the rule of interpretation and determine if it was given to 120 or 11 ordained apostles? When does a mission become a church? Also, when a man is ordained to the full work of Gospel ministry, does this include doing mission work? If so, why does he have to get another arm to move from place to place? If a man was ordained in Memphis, to the full work of the Gospel ministry, and went from there to Nashville, preached and ordained elders, and established a church; from thence to Louisville, and did the same, from there to Indianapolis, to St. Louis, to Little Rock and after three years came back to Memphis would these all be churches, irregular churches, or no churches? Would they be scriptural without the proverbial arm? Where did the arm come from? Finally, why can't we give them a leg or a foot or better yet, a helping hand?

I am impressed with your website. It does not resemble the standard ABA format, because there was no fried chicken on the screen.

WWW: It is plain from your articles your opinion of Promise Keepers is to say the least very low... at worst... heretical. My concern is for my Brothers in Christ who persist in using the books and tapes to feed themselves and others and promote Christian Maleness... the Godly Male Image as defined by PK literature... Have you any suggestions when it comes to dealing with use of PK materials in church sponsored Mens Ministries? It appears that a group would like to begin meeting within our fellowship hall for the expressed purpose of teaching men to be men of God... but, using PK materials as a basis. Specifically the Point Man study guide from Steve Farrar published by Multnomah Press... Are you familiar with the text and would you endorse its use in this type of study?

WWW: Hi, in your article you reference a James Holly M.D. and I copy: James Holly, M. D., has written an excellent article in which he said, Lacking historical and biblical Christian roots, the leadership of Promise Keepers may have reflected the New Age and Mormon concept of man becoming a God by encouraging men to assume a responsibility which belongs to God. If men can and should be "promise keepers", then they can and should be little gods. This is what Joseph Smith taught, and this is what is taught by some who are embracing Promise Keepers. But you did not give the reference to where this article was printed. Do you have this information. I am addressing an issue at my present church concerning Promise Keepers. It appears I'm loosing the battle. Most information against the P.K.ers are brushed away as "nuts" or you can't trust those wacko's on the internet. I do appreciate your hard work and concern. I personally can't accept the P.K.ers message, but many of my friends and fellow believers in Christ have participated in the movement. I really need documented evidence. I was also needing to know if any Promise Keeper leader is or was affiliated with the Mormon Church? Hope you can help.



Baptist Giants of Past Years Speak on the Nature of the Church

Part III

By Wayne Camp

As I continue my research into this very important subject concerning Baptists and the nature of the church, more information unfolds. Dear brethren kindly send me information that is deeply appreciated. I trust this will be continued.

I am sometimes reminded of the scientist who had made an intensive study of the rock formation in a certain valley. He decided he had discovered some new things for which the world was waiting and prepared a paper based on the rocks that he had found in this particular valley. When finished preparing his paper, he decided to explore the valley one more time before submitting the paper for publication. To his dismay, he stumbled upon a large rock that did not fit in with what he

had written. If his paper were true, this rock should not be here. Instead of withholding his paper, or altering his conclusions, he picked up the heavy rock, carried it to the top of the hill, and threw it over into the other valley. He then submitted the paper, unchanged. He was not about to introduce any evidence that contradicted what he had written.

In this research, I have run into things that I wish I could ignore. But, honesty demands that I not cover it up. I have had that experience in researching J. R. Graves on the nature of the church. From my study of Graves in the past, I never thought he would hold to any doctrine that resembled the doctrine of a universal church. I had him on my list for this study as a definite, unwavering champion of "local-church-only" men. Yet, some brethren have sent me material and pointed me to pages that indicate that Graves did, indeed, have some notions about a universal church.

GRAVES ON THE LOCAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

Many of our readers are familiar with Graves monumental work, **OLD LANDMARKISM—WHAT IS IT?** In that work Graves sets forth the marks of a true church. Mark Four, he declares

to be the doctrine of the local nature of the church. After discussing different ideas of the nature of the church, Graves proceeds to show that it is local in nature. He writes,

The third is the Baptist, or scriptural theory; viz., the church is a local organization. This implies that the primitive model was a single congregation, complete in itself, independent of all other bodies, civil or religious, and the highest and only source of ecclesiastical authority on earth, amenable only to Christ, whose laws alone it receives and executes—not possessing the authority or right to enact or modify the feast law or ordinance, or to discipline a member, save for the violation of what Christ himself has enjoined. This church acknowledges no body of men on earth, council, conference or assembly as its head, but Christ alone, who is invisible, as "head over all things" to it.

Proofs.—1. *The term ecclesia itself.*—The Holy Spirit selected the Greek word, *ecclesia*, which had but one possible literal meaning to the Greek—that of a local organization.

2. *New Testament use.*—It is used in the New Testament 110 times, referring to the

Christian institution, and in 110 of these it undoubtedly refers to a local organization; and in the remaining 10 instances it is used *figuratively*—by synecdoche—where a part is put for the whole, the singular for the plural, one for all. In each of these instances what is true of all the churches is true of any one—*e.g.*, Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 21:5, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Col. 1:18. There is no occasion whatever for any *misapprehension* touching this use, nor is there one passage that affords the shadow of a ground for the idea of an invisible church in heaven, any more than for a huge universal, national or provincial church on earth, but a multitude of passages preclude the idea.

3. *Ecclesia in the plural.*—It is used in the plural thirty-six times, which fact is demonstrative that the universal or provincial idea was not then known. (P. 38-39).

4. The *ecclesia* of the New Testament could, was required to assemble in one place.—This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do. It was often required to assemble. (Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 11:18; 14:23.) Discipline, baptism and the Lord's Supper could only be administered by the assembled church. (*OLD LANDMARKISM, WHAT IS IT?*, Pp. 38-40).

I call your attention to the following in the above statement. Graves says, “. . . nor is there one passage that affords the shadow of a ground for the idea of an invisible church in heaven.” I mention that because of some other things Graves wrote. While he denies the existence of an invisible church in heaven, he does not deny the existence of a visible church composed of all the saved in heaven and on earth. I have no desire to put words in his mouth or writing, but he did believe in more than just the local nature of the church.

Before looking at some other things written by

Graves, I would also call your attention to another thing he says about the local nature of the church. He wrote, “. . . the church is a *local* organization. This implies that the primitive model was a single congregation . . .” Again he said, “*The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*—This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do.” Apparently Graves, a true Landmark Baptist, did not agree with a common practice seen today. He held that “*The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*” We see Landmark churches today that have two, three, or more congregations meeting in different places and yet they allegedly compose one **LOCAL (?)** church. Graves, a true Landmarker, held that a truly local church was “a *local* organization. This implies that the primitive model was a single congregation.” He further held that the church was and is required to assemble in one place. This Landmarker would not have agreed with the practice of churches who start missions in various parts of the world whose members are actually members of a church here in the United States. He would not have agreed that the assembly at Antioch was a mission composed of members of the church at Jerusalem until Barnabas went down and organized them into a church. He would not have agreed with those who, without any Scriptural evidence, argue that Paul and Barnabas set up missions composed of members of Antioch on the first missionary journey and then returned on their way home to each location and organized those missions into churches. No one who holds to a strict, biblical view of the local church, should approve of churches calling themselves local while meeting in two or more locations, often separated by oceans and continents. On this matter, I fully and wholeheartedly agree with Graves. “*The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*”

GRAVES BRIDE-CHURCH DURING THE MILLENNIAL REIGN TO BE COMPOSED OF ALL THE SAVED FROM ABEL TO THE RAPTURE

Consider the following statement from his book, *Seven Dispensations*. Concerning the composition of the bride-church he wrote some interesting things. He believed the bride during the millennial reign would be composed of all the redeemed from Abel to the rapture of the saints. He wrote,

It is well to understand clearly what Christians will constitute the Bride of Christ, whom, long espoused, Christ will now take to himself as his wife before the Father's face and the intelligences of the Universe. They will not be all the saved, as is so generally taught, but only those redeemed from among men from the days of Abel until the day of the Rapture. There will be millions saved during the millennial age, but these will not constitute the Bride of Christ during that age, [Emp. Mine, RWC) but, with the saved nations, will constitute the subjects over whom Christ and his Bride will reign for the thousand years. (*Seven Dispensations*, P. 461).

Please understand that Graves is only speaking of the bride during the millennial reign. The bride, according to Graves, will not be complete and will not be presented before the Father until the last person to be saved is saved. Only then will what he calls the "church-bride" be complete.

Graves wrote a small book which he called *The Middle Life*. In it he argued that the saved do not immediately go into heaven when they die. They are in paradise, a place of rest. While I disagree with Graves on this, I want to call your attention to some things he said about the bride-church in relation to this. He wrote,

All these—the most illustrious saints that ever lived on this earth—had not ascended into heaven, but had for ages been impatiently waiting in a comparatively depressed state,

indicated by their being seen, not at the right hand of God, in the most holy place, but under the altar of sacrifice, which was placed in the court, but never in the holy of holies—the type of 'heaven itself.' They were in an imperfect, unglorified, and, consequently, in an unsatisfied condition. This state could not have been heaven. Now, if not one of the most illustrious saints who ever lived on earth—who laid down his life for Jesus—is permitted to be perfected and glorified, or to enter heaven itself at death, can we believe, unless the Scriptures expressly declare it, that those who have never suffered and who deserve so much less, are there, and go directly there now, from earth daily? There is, also, an oft used figure of speech of great significance, found throughout the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, which, if I understand it, is conclusive in the settlement of this question. The church of Christ, which, in this sense, embraces the whole number of the saved, is spoken of as the (betrothed) bride of Christ, and which he will one day bring into his Father's house and present her before the King complete, perfected and glorified, and after this the marriage will be celebrated and she will become his wife." (*The Middle Life*, Pp. 26, 27).

I ask you to especially consider these words from the pen of Mr. Landmarker, himself, "The church of Christ, which, in this sense, embraces the whole number of the saved, is spoken of as the (betrothed) bride of Christ, and which he will one day bring into his Father's house and present her before the King complete, perfected and glorified, and after this the marriage will be celebrated and she will become his wife." Please notice that Graves held that there is a sense in which the church "embraces the whole number of the saved." He refers to her being spoken of as the

“betrothed” bride of Christ. I must assume he has in mind Paul’s statement to the Corinthian assembly. **2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**

Graves did not stop there. On page 29 of the same book, he wrote,

“Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish’ [defect of any description]. ‘Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory,’ etc. But this presentation of the church-bride unto Christ by his friend, and of his bride unto his father, when he shall have brought her, in her perfected and all glorious condition, into the King’s palace, manifestly cannot take place until she is complete in all the members of her body—until the last sinner is saved and glorified. If a portion of the saved were presented before the Father—brought into the King’s palace, the bride could not be said to be prepared—all glorious, without blemish, spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. She would be incomplete, a deformed and disgusting personage. Therefore I feel warranted in the conclusion that no saint has gone, or will ‘go to heaven;’ but, as a component member of the body of that bride, will, with all the members, be presented together with that body, which will be at the close of the millennial age.’ Rev. xix. 7-10. Eph. v. 25. Jude 24.”

It was the position of Graves that there is a sense in which the church is composed of all

the redeemed. While I do not agree with him on this, I still consider him to have been a Landmark Baptist.

It was the position of Graves that the bride-church of the millennial reign would be composed of all the saved from Abel to the day of the rapture. While I have never held such a position, I will not mark him off as neither Landmarker nor Baptist.

It was the position of Graves that the church-bride will not be complete until the last sinner that is ever to be saved is saved. Hear him once more. “But this presentation of the church-bride unto Christ by his friend, and of his bride unto his father, when he shall have brought her, in her perfected and all glorious condition, into the King’s palace, manifestly cannot take place until she is complete in all the members of her body—until the last sinner is saved and glorified.” So, according to Graves, the church-bride will not be complete until the millions, whom he says will be saved during the millennium, are saved and glorified which will be at “the close of the millennial age.”

As much as I wish that Graves had not said these things in **Seven Dispensations** and **Middle Life**, he did say them. These are rocks which I would love to throw into the other valley and deny they were ever in my valley. I suppose I could have written about Graves as I had originally intended and have said that he was absolutely, unequivocally a “local” church advocate only and always. But, a couple of dear brethren sent me these references that show that he was not as strict on this matter as I had always thought. Some great Old Landmark Baptists held that in some sense the church is more extensive than the “*The ecclesia of the New Testament*” which “*could, and was required to assemble in one place.*” While I disagree with that, I still own them as Landmarkers and Baptists and will continue to quote them from time to time as such.

ECCLESIOLOGICAL DUALISM

By Wayne Camp

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF THE NATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Part III

[Originally published, September, 1986]

It was my intention to finish this article in the August 1999 issue of the paper but was unable to include it all. My apologies for spreading it out over three issues.

The issue of the nature of the church set forth in Scripture is very important. Several doctrinal errors grow out of the doctrine of the universal church. As we have seen, and will continue to see, Baptists have not always been agreed on the nature of the church. Some very strong Baptists have held to some form of a universal church. Some only consider it as future. Even B. H. Carroll held to a future "glory church" that will be composed of all the saved though he denied that such an institution existed now. Yet, he is highly esteemed among our brethren for his strict local concept of the church in this church age.

But, that is another subject to be discussed in another article. We will now note some expressions and passages that are used by universalists to advocate a universal church.

SAVIOUR OF THE BODY

A play is sometimes made by Universalists on the portion of the verse in Eph. 5:23 which says; **"He is the Saviour of the body."** This is coupled with verse 25 where Paul says that **"Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it."**

This can be said of any local, visible body that belongs to Christ. Paul wrote, **"The Churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16).** These churches belong to Christ and he gave himself for each one of them. **"The church of God which is at Corinth"** belonged to Christ and he was the Saviour of that body (1 Cor.

1:2). The **"churches of Galatia"** belonged to Christ and he was the Saviour of each one of them (Gal. 1:2). The **"saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi"** composed a church which had **"bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).** Christ was the Saviour of that body and gave himself for it. The same is true of **"the church of the Thessalonians"** which was **"in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thes. 1:11; II Thes. 1:1).** This local, visible body of baptized believers is declared to be "in God and the Lord Jesus Christ." This could be said of each local, visible church of Christ. That is why he could say to the local, visible church at Laodicea, **"I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:14-15).**

Let me hasten to point out that there is a difference in an individual child of God being **"in Christ"** and a local, New Testament Church being in Christ. The child of God is in Christ **and "will in no wise" be "cast out" (Jn. 6:37).** Each local New Testament church of Christ is **"in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 1:1)** as was the church of the Thessalonians. If that local church errs too far from basic New Testament doctrine and practices, the Lord may remove the candlestick. The candlestick refers to the assembly's standing as a New Testament Church and as a **"habitation of God through the Spirit." "The seven CANDLESTICKS which thou sawest are the seven CHURCHES" (Rev. 1:20).** Each local New Testament Church is built together "for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). A local, visible church of Christ may so err that Christ may say, **"I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou**

repent” (Rev. 2:5). Christ may spew one of his churches out of his mouth if it goes too far into heresy or uselessness. When these things have happened, a local congregation may continue to exist but its state as a church of Christ ceases. This evidently eventually happened to these churches. This does not violate the promise of Jesus that **“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18)** for before these died others were started from them and the Lord has his local, visible churches today. God said: **“Let us make man . . .”** When Adam died the human race did not die. Man did not die because before Adam died many children, grandchildren, etc. had been born and so “man” lives on, not because God created a universal, invisible man through whom man in the local sense continues to live but because God has preserved “man” while many men have died. “Man” is a generic term in Gen. 1:26 and has no reference to a universal, visible man, nor a universal, invisible man.

The Lord said **“I will build my CHURCH and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** It was not necessary for him to build two or three churches (as Universalists claim) for that promise to be fulfilled. That first local visible church died just as that first local, visible man died. The CHURCH institution lives on because out of that first church were constituted many **“churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16)**, and not because of the existence of another church which is universal and invisible. The word MAN is used in the generic sense in Gen. 1:26 and in no way suggests a universal man through whom the human race is preserved. The word **CHURCH** is used in the generic sense and in no way suggests a universal, invisible church through which the church is preserved.

Jesus loved every one of his local New Testament Churches. He gave himself for every one of his local, visible churches of Christ (Rom 16:16). There is no universal, invisible church in Ephesians 5:23-32.

ACTS 20:28

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy

Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

Our universal church authorities part ways a little farther here. Mr. Thayer maintains that this church is the universal, visible church, “the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth.” Mr. Scofield seems to be able to find only a local, visible church in this entire chapter.

The church in Acts 20:28 is the flock over which these elders had been given the oversight. This church is the church that the elders from Ephesus were to watch over. **“And from Miletus he sent to EPHESUS and called for the elders of the church” (Acts 20:17).** These elders who had the oversight of the church at Ephesus were to feed the **“church of God”** which was at Ephesus. These Ephesian elders whom Paul had called from Ephesus, who had been given the oversight of the flock at Ephesus were instructed to feed the church of God at Ephesus **“which he hath purchased with his own blood.”**

It is easy to see why the great champion of the universal church people, Mr. Scofield, could find nothing but a local visible church in this verse and in this chapter. That is all that is to be found here. The church, which God “hath purchased with his own blood,” is the same church which they were to feed, and over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. This blood-bought church is the church at Ephesus that Christ loved and for which he gave himself, and the body of which he is the Saviour. How utterly foolish it is for the Universalist to try to read a universal church, visible or invisible, into this verse (Acts 20:28). It is too bad that Mr. Thayer forgot his definition of EKKLESIA, *i.e.*, “an assembly of Christians gathered for worship, and “a company of Christians,” and went to reading his universal church doctrine into such verses as Acts 20:28. He would have saved himself this grandiose and preposterous pretension as would all his fellow universalists who claim that there is a universal church of any kind, visible, invisible, or mystical, in this verse. It is a perfidious violation of every rule of interpretation. It is a treacherous perversion and

corrupting debauchery of the meaning of the verse.

I TIMOTHY 3:15

“But if I tarry long, that, thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

One never ceases to be amazed at the extremes people will go to find something in the Scriptures that they can **MAKE** say what they believe. Mr. Scofield finds two churches in this verse. His references indicate that the local church is mentioned in verses 5, 15 and 16 of this chapter. They also indicate that the universal, visible church is in verse 15. Thayer holds that this church is universal and visible.

Timothy was pastor of the church of God at Ephesus that we have just finished discussing. That was the ***“house of God”*** in which he must know how to behave himself. That was the church of the living God at Ephesus just as the congregation at Corinth was the church of the living God in that city (I Cor. 1:2). The house of God at Ephesus, the church of the living God at Ephesus was ***“the pillar and ground of truth”*** at Ephesus.

A house is a unified structure of nails, lumber, windows, etc. that have been put together in an organized manner that makes it a suitable place for habitation. It is not a random agglomeration of house parts scattered all over the earth.

The local, visible New Testament church is a congregation, an assembly of scripturally, baptized believers who compose a house and temple of God, a ***“building FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER”*** and ***“BUILDED TOGETHER for an HABITATION of God through the Spirit”*** (Eph. 2:1-22). Such was the church of God at Ephesus in whose midst Christ walked. What is said of this church of God at Ephesus could be said of ***“the Church of God . . . at, Corinth.”*** It could be said of the church of the Thessalonians which is ***“in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ”*** (I Thes. 1:1) and may be said of each local, visible scriptural, New Testament church in the world today.

There is no universal church in I Tim. 3:15. That is the local, visible church of God at Ephesus of which Timothy was pastor and in which he must know how to behave. How could anyone misbehave in the universal, invisible church?

PHILIPPIANS 3:6

“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.”

Mr. Thayer and Mr. Scofield both held that this is the universal, visible church of which Paul speaks. Here Paul is referring to one single, local church ***“and at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . as for Saul, he made havoc of the church”*** (Acts 8:1-3).

It is rather interesting to see the consistency of the universal church scholars. The statement, ***“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church,”*** both Mr. Scofield and Mr. Thayer say that this is the local church. When they go to Philippians 3:6 they say that it is the universal, visible church that he has persecuted. Now, dear reader, look at these two statements:

1. ***“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church”*** (Acts 8:3)
2. ***“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church”*** (Phil. 3:6).

How, in the name of common sense, could two learned men come up with such nonsensical hogwash as to claim that there is a different church in Phil. 3:6 from the one in Acts 8:1-23.

Their preposterous assumption is even worse when one remembers that the first time Saul left Jerusalem to extend his persecution to Damascus the Lord apprehended him (Phil 3:12) by invincible, Sovereign grace. He marvelously saved him so that he never persecuted any church but the one local, visible church at Jerusalem. The church of which Paul made havoc was the church that Jesus started, which had settled at Jerusalem. The church that Saul zealously persecuted was the church at Jerusalem. Men simply forget Acts 8:1-3 in their

interpretation of Phil 3:6. It was just one more effort to bolster their mythical, universal, visible and invisible church concepts.

COLOSSIANS 1:18, 24

“And he is the head of the body, the church . . . for his body's sake which is the church.”

Mr. Scofield reveals in his notes that he feels the church in these two verses is the “true” church that he says is “composed of the whole number of regenerate persons from Pentecost to the first resurrection.” Mr. Thayer would have us believe that this is the universal, visible church that is “the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth.”

Christ is the head of every local church that belongs to him. Here he speaks generically, with a specific application to the church at Colosse.

GALATIANS 1:13

“Beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it.”

Mr. Thayer and Mr. Scofield, agree for a third time. Both hold that this is the universal, visible church that is scattered throughout the earth.

Again we must find these men guilty of glaring absurdity? Paul made havoc of the church of God at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-3). He persecuted no other church as far as is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Only desperate men in search of a few scriptures to bolster their assumptions about the nature of the church would resort to using Galatians 1:13 and Philippians 3:6 as evidence.

HEBREWS 2:1-2

“In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”

Again, our universal scholars are in disagreement. Scofield advocates that this is his “true” church composed of the whole body of

Christians from Pentecost to the first resurrection. The reference leads to I Thes. 4:16-17 and apparently he believed that Christ would sing in the midst of the saints at his return for them in the air. Scofield's slip is showing again. He feels that the “true” church is limited to the saints “from Pentecost to the first resurrection.” Yet he says in a footnote on I Thes. 4:16-11, “Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved, from whatever dispensations, are included in the first resurrection.” (p. 1269). Consistency, thou art a jewel!

Mr. Thayer says that Heb. 2:12 speaks of the “assembly of the Israelites, esp. when gathered for sacred purposes.” Along with some Old Testament references he gives two New Testament references: Acts 7:38 and Heb. 2:12. Mr. Thayer does not believe this church in Heb. 2:12 to be any one of his three churches that we have previously discussed.

Did Jesus ever sing in the midst of his church? Was it a local, visible church? A universal, invisible church? a universal, visible, church? Or none of the above? On the night that Jesus instituted the Lord's supper we read after this was complete: ***“And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30)***. This was a local, visible, and assembled congregation and is the only recorded fulfillment of Heb. 2:12.

There is no universal, invisible church here! **Jesus sang in the midst of a local, visible assembly!**

HEBREWS 12:23-25

“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, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God. The Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Scofield holds that the church in this verse is his “true” church.

Thayer holds that it is “the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received in heaven.” If that were the case, that assembly is local and visible in heaven, so, Thayer does not help the universal, invisible churchman here.

In the book of Hebrews, Paul has been urging these folk—converted Jews—to realize the better things that were theirs as members of a local New Testament Church and as partakers of new covenant blessings as opposed to the Law of Moses. In this chapter, he is contrasting their Judaism with their new relationships as members of one of the Lord's churches. The **“church of the firstborn ones which are written in heaven”** is an abstract, generic reference to the church. Notice that the **NAMES** are written in heaven—he does not say that these first-born ones are in heaven. This is similar to the time when Jesus sent out the seventy. When they returned and were gathered together with him rejoicing, he said to them: **“In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20)**. These folk were members of a local, visible church and their **NAMES** were written in heaven. This could be said of any local, visible assembly of baptized believers.

Scholars generally agree, “the general assembly,” belongs with the “innumerable company of angels.” I could quote a minimum of 12 commentators and Greek scholars but will not take the time and space at this time. Their agreement on this would not make it so. Perhaps in a future article I will deal with this passage more fully, but use it here with the limited purpose of showing the inconsistency of the universal-church men.

ACTS 2:47

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

It is very obvious that the church in this verse is the church at Jerusalem, a local, visible church. A reading of verses 41 through 47 should make it crystal clear. Note that verse 47 tells us that this congregation was **“praising God and having favor with all the people and**

the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

But believe it or not, Dr. C. I. Scofield held, according to his notes “that this is the true church,” which included “the whole number of regenerate persons from Pentecost to the first resurrection.”

If the “true church” is really composed of all those people then who are these who are ADDED daily? If this church in Acts 2:47 is the universal, invisible church composed of all the elect of all the ages how could any **BE ADDED?** Can you add to the number of the elect?

CONCLUSION

Brothers and Sisters, there are many more fundamental and basic doctrines in the word of God than the five points. We must earnestly contend for all the system of faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 4). We must not hesitate to declare all the counsel of God, not just the five points. Our Baptist forefathers shed more blood over baptism than anything else in history but today many consider such subjects as baptism, the Lord's supper and the local New Testament Church relatively unimportant.

May God be pleased to open the hearts of those who despise the local church of the living God!

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