



# The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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Page 1

## BAPTISTS AND MISSIONS

*By Daniel Chamberlin*

### Introduction

I am happy to address this subject today because it is one that is dear to my heart. It must be dear to the heart of all who know the grace of God, not just intellectually, but experientially.

My text is Romans 10:13-15. May these words sink deeply into our souls!

First let me define the term. By “missions” I mean the work of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ among those who are ignorant of it, and seeking to establish churches that follow the New Testament order. Though the term “mission” is not found in the Bible, the concept

is found throughout the book of Acts, and all throughout church history. Simply put, it is the carrying out of the Great Commission of Mat. 28:18-20.

I have been asked to address two matters in particular: (1) the issue of the doctrine of sovereign grace and its influence on missions among Baptists, and (2) three great Baptist missionaries: Carey, Judson and McCoy.

### I. General Observations

Baptists have historically been at the forefront of spreading the gospel. In another message we mentioned briefly the zeal of the Waldenses, especially after some of the

## THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH

*By Forest Keener*

### Introduction

There is a great deal of foolishness and error being exercised today in the teaching of the true biblical doctrine of church perpetuity.

First there is the clear denial of it either by statement or implication. This is promoted in two ways. There are those who claim that the Lord's church has ceased to exist, at least from time to time, and has been reestablished by some person with new revelation, or supernatural insight, such as Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, or some other person like him. This denial is also presented by the claim or assumption that His church fell into chaos and

disarray, and was, of necessity, reformed by men. You hear such terms as "The great reformation". The reformation was not great. It was nothing but the sticking of band aids on Catholicism, and all it does or can possibly produce is reformed Catholicism.

Secondly, there is the approach of Neo-Landmarkism, which seeks to prove the perpetuity of the Lord's church by a pedigree, preserved through human history. While history will surely give witness to the perpetuity of the Lord's church, the pedigree route tends to discredit it rather than to corroborate it. While there are good records, which point in the (See PERPETUITY Cont. Page 7, R Column)

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followers of Peter Waldo had joined them around 1170. They sent out men who had been well-instructed, full of Scripture and sermons in their hearts. They went as traveling merchants to avoid detection from hostile authorities. Their influence spread far and wide.

The proliferation of Baptists throughout church history is perhaps the best testimony to their missionary spirit. Unlike some of our Protestant friends, we have been so busy doing the work that we have had little time to write about it and document it. Non-Baptist historians

have neglected to give credit to the labors, influence and sacrifice of Baptists. For example, the great majority of martyrs at the hands of Bloody Mary were Baptists, but you would never know it from John Foxe! (See Peter Masters comments on *Looking for our Spiritual Roots*.)

Baptists have been more interested in quality than quantity, but God has seen fit to give a good measure of both, usually in a gradual and unnoticed way, in many smaller congregations. But there have been occasional large increases, such as during the Great Awakening. Whitefield lamented that in America most of his chickens became ducks (i.e. his converts became Baptists)! On the other hand, during the iron curtain years, Baptists in the Soviet Union continued steadfast, working secretly, doing what they could to spread the gospel, and God honored their labors.

In 1982, David Fountain wrote that of the approximately 50 churches in Great Britain that have continuously preached the gospel for the past 300 years, nearly all are Baptists and all are Calvinists. The staying power of these churches is a testament to their missionary character in their own "Jerusalem."

Asplund's *Register of Baptists in America*, published in 1791, shows there were at that time 867 Baptist churches, 795 (92%) of which were Particular or Calvinistic. The expanding nation gave opportunity to Baptists, and they took advantage of it.

It must be said that Baptist polity lends itself to missionary work, with only local control (no denominational hierarchy), and no formal education required for ministers.

Thus Baptists have led the way in missionary work.

## II. The Influence of Sovereign Grace Theology in Baptist Missions

Does our theology hinder us from being missionary-minded? In most instances, the answer is no. In some instances, the answer is yes. Even today some good men and churches seem hindered, fettered, by their Calvinism. Is their theology over-developed? Have they gone too far? No! I maintain that their Calvinism is immature and under-developed. It is a full-

grown, robust Calvinism that can freely offer Christ to every sinner without exception. Just as the Arminian forgets that while many are called **few are chosen**, the hyper-Calvinist forgets that while few are chosen **many are called!** Spurgeon reminds us that the truth of God's sovereignty and the truth of man's responsibility "are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory, but they are not. The fault is in our weak judgment." (*The Early Years*, p. 174.)

The truth is, the gospel is good news—and it is good news to all who hear it, whether they believe it or not. The promises of Christ can be addressed to all men, and **must be!**

From time to time, some Baptists seem to have become lopsided in this regard. As I interpret our history, I hail Andrew Fuller as a hero, not a villain, for detecting a deficiency in his fellow-Baptists in England in the late 1700's, and making an effort to deliver them to a more biblical position. Even though his *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* may contain some wording that could be improved, he was far from "the greatest enemy the church of God ever had" as William Gadsby called him (Iain Murray, *Spurgeon vs. Hyper-Calvinism*, p. 51).

Like Fuller in the 1700's, Bernard Honeysett in the 1900's spent many years among a group of English Baptists who never fully preached the gospel. He writes,

By claiming that the promise of salvation in Christ cannot be addressed to all men, Hyper-Calvinism has to present another means by which individuals may know that the promise is addressed to them. This it does by encouraging preachers to describe feelings and experiences by which an individual, looking at himself, may discover if God has begun a work in his life. Thus there developed the type of "experimental preaching" favored in these circles, the purpose of which was to help individuals to discover a life-giving work of the Spirit in their hearts *before* they believe they are able to rest on the promises of the Gospel. The effect of this is to reverse the way in which sinners are to be brought to peace. (*The Sound of His Name*, p. 85-86)

Such an approach is obviously death to missionary outreach, both at home and abroad.

When William Carey first asked his fellow

Baptist pastors "whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not binding on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent," he met with accusations of "enthusiasm" (a.k.a. Arminian zeal) and was told scoffingly, "When God pleases to convert the heathen, He'll do it without consulting you or me. Besides, there must first be another pentecostal gift of tongues" (*S. P. Carey*, p. 47). Though some have questioned whether these words were actually spoken, Carey himself said that he was strongly rebuked more than once for his "enthusiasm."

Our Arminian friends would say that those of us who are missionary-hearted are so **in spite of** our theology. But I believe we are missionary-hearted **because of** our theology! We of all people have the privilege to know more of the glory of a great God, who is worthy of being known. We know that God's almighty arm is able to save even the chiefest of sinners. We know that God most certainly will save a great number for His honor and fame. We understand the place that **means** occupies in God's scheme—He has ordained not only the end but also the steps by which that end comes to pass. We know that we are fishing in a pond stocked by God before the foundation of the world!

It is noteworthy that the whole phenomenon known as the "modern missions movement" was commenced exclusively by men holding Calvinistic theology. This includes the three I am about to mention. Far from being a hindrance, sovereign grace truth is the impetus for biblical evangelism and missions. When God told Paul, "I have much people in this city," Paul did not relax—he labored all the more. So must we!

### III. Carey, Judson and McCoy

Let me briefly sketch the portraits of these great Baptist missionaries, who were contemporaries for 46 years.

**WILLIAM CAREY** was born in a small village in England in 1761, and died in India in 1834. He was poor, did not even finish high school before going to work as a cobbler's apprentice, and possessed very ordinary gifts. But God filled him with extraordinary grace! From a

nominal Anglican background, he experienced a radical conversion at the age of 17, through the unrelenting witness of a fellow-worker. His love for the Savior and for the souls of men grew and never stopped growing. In spite of being certain that he had no aptitude for preaching, a small congregation insisted that he preach just once. He preached. They insisted again, and he preached again, and again. He eventually cast his lot with the Baptists. Though uneducated, he taught himself the classic languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin while repairing shoes and pastoring small churches. Thus his gift for languages began to emerge. He read the log-books of Captain James Cook's recent voyages to the South Seas and could only think of the lost souls that Cook described. Cook was the match that lit the torch in Carey's heart. He began to gather information about all the nations and peoples of the earth. His handmade globe became a second Bible to him. He also taught school to supplement his small pastoral stipends. "His pupils saw sometimes a strange sight, when their master would be moved to tears over a geography lesson. As he pointed to continents, islands, and peoples, he would cry, 'And these are pagans, pagans!'" The biographies of Eliot and Brainerd also gripped him. Not all his fellow-Baptists appreciated his concern for the heathen. As he talked, wrote and preached about the need of souls in far away places, some insulted him by calling him Arminian. But with a few, notably Andrew Fuller, he found one heart and soul in the work of missions. Carey's now-legendary "deathless sermon" consisted of two parts: First, **expect** great things from God; second, **attempt** great things for God. Though you may not appreciate it, it was in all honesty his postmillennialism that made him first expect great things, and that expectation, in turn, moved him to attempt great things. With a persistent William Carey, a handful of English pastors agreed with fear and trembling to send out the first Baptist missionary to go to the other side of the globe. They were charting new waters literally and figuratively! It was as if Carey were descending the depths of an unexplored mine, and Fuller and the others promised to hold the rope and never let go.

Carey arrived in India in 1793 and never

returned to England. He had set his hand to the plow and he never looked back, though the ground was dry and unyielding. He labored for 40 years in India, enduring one great trial after another. His life reads like the list of perils Paul endured. For two years, there was no communication from home. About that time his wife lost her sanity and lived a deranged and dangerous woman till her death 12 years later. He was harassed by the Englishmen of the East India Company, who wanted no missionaries interfering with their business in India. Carey eventually found refuge under the Danish flag at Serampore, not far from Calcutta. All his years in India he supported himself financially by one means or another. Seven years passed until his first Indian convert was baptized. Progress was painfully slow. In 1812 a great fire destroyed the literary work of many years. As more missionaries came, painful divisions needlessly developed that even spilled over into the churches back in England. He outlived a second wife, and several children. But in the face of all these and many other sore trials, Carey's determination never wavered. He later said, "I can plod and persevere. That is my only genius. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything." One who worked with him said he did not have half an hour a month to relax from hardest labor. He wrote to one of his sons, who had also become a missionary, "The conversion of one soul is worth the labor of a life" (**S. P. Carey**, p. 270).

God truly did **great things** through the **attempts** of Carey. He eventually translated the Bible or parts of it into 40 languages. He is recognized as one of the greatest linguists of all time. He was often asked how he had been able to learn so many languages. He would answer, "No one knows what he can do until he tries." Many churches were established. To this day his name is a household word in India, because of his varied influence on the social order, especially in linguistics, breaking down the caste system and putting a stop to *sati* (widow-burning). This one we know as "the father of modern missions" requested that the following lines and nothing more be inscribed on his monument:

A wretched, poor and helpless worm,

On Thy kind arms I fall. (Watts)

**ADONIRAM JUDSON** experienced a dramatic conversion at the age of 20 in 1808 in Massachusetts. A printed sermon by an Anglican minister stirred his heart for the work of missions. A book by a British army officer describing Burma implanted in his mind the great need of that remote and backward nation. He was gripped in a way that he never got over. He said,

It was during a solitary walk in the woods behind the college [Andover], while meditating and praying on the subject, and feeling half inclined to give it up, that the command of Christ, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," was presented to my mind with such clearness and power, that I came to a full decision, and though great difficulties appeared in my way, resolved to obey the command at all events.

While making preparations to go, he fell in love with a young woman who shared his commitment to the Savior. In a letter asking her father for her hand in marriage, Judson wrote:

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent of all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown of righteousness, brightened with the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?

John Hasseltine let his daughter, Anne, decide. She said yes. Still in their early 20's, Mr. and Mrs. Judson left the shores of America in 1812 as the first American overseas missionaries. They spent the remainder of their lives in Burma (except for a short visit to their

hometown on separate journeys, both for the sake of their health). On the long voyage, Judson, a Congregationalist, studied his Bible and became convinced of believer's baptism. Anne was but a step behind him in her own convictions. Shortly after arriving in India they submitted to baptism at the hands of one of Carey's associates, William Ward. The other missionaries who had accompanied them on the voyage had to separate from them. But one, Luther Rice, also became a Baptist and returned to the USA to seek help and funding from the Baptists. The Baptists in America rose to the challenge. But Judson did not learn about it for two years. (Imagine the anxiety of not knowing who, if any, were holding the rope!)

Burma was a very dangerous and unpredictable place, especially for an uninvited foreigner. But the determined Judson got a foothold and never let go. He learned the language and began translating the Bible. After six fruitless years the first convert finally came. Buddhism enjoyed special privilege with the people and the king, who ruled by capricious whims. After much local opposition in Rangoon, Judson sought royal approval from the ruthless tyrant. He was refused. From then on, he was an open target, living on a precarious edge. The Burmese Christians were in even greater danger. Only the mercy of God protected and preserved Judson. When the British went to war with Burma, all foreigners were assumed to be spies. Judson was imprisoned for 18 months, surviving unspeakable tortures. He was even tempted by suicidal thoughts. Only his wife's diligent efforts with uncaring authorities saved his life. But her own health was irrevocably injured thereby, and she died at the age of 36. A few years later, Judson buried his second wife. Furthermore the climate of the Orient claimed in death most all of his children in the first year or two of life. His third wife outlived him.

When Judson returned to America for a few months in 1845, he was a sensation. The many fruits of his labors were well-known. But he disappointed audiences who hoped to hear thrilling tales of exotic places. Instead, he preached the gospel, insisting that he "had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of Jesus' dying love." In 1850, he took a voyage

seeking good healthy sea air in hopes of prolonging the life of his weakened frame, but it was not to be. He was buried at sea not far from Burma.

**ISAAC McCOY** is an unsung hero who deserves to be sung! He was an American who lived 1784 to 1846. Converted at 16 after a godly upbringing, McCoy was inspired by the labors of William Carey, and later named one of his stations in Michigan "Carey Mission." He was ordained to the gospel ministry at 26. During the War of 1812, in which Indians fought for both sides, he was in his own words "stirred in heart" for the Indians. Public sentiment was very strong against the Indians, from Washington D.C. on down. They were viewed as incorrigible cases not worth the effort to teach. After a useful ministry among whites, McCoy began in 1817 to serve the cause of evangelizing these unwanted tribes on the frontier of Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, and Indian Territory. He was, for the remaining 30 years of his life, "the apostle to the Indians." He was a man obsessed with his calling. He continually grieved at the reticence of his own denomination to evangelize the Indians. "In regard to the propagation of the Gospel in Asia, Africa, and Europe, the denomination is liberal and enterprising; but for the conversion of the aborigines of our own country it is but little inclined to labor." He determined to labor alone if necessary in this needy field.

He introduced the idea of Indian Territory and lobbied much for its creation. He saw this as an "Indian Canaan" necessary for the survival of the tribes, lest they become extinct by the exploitation of the growing nation and the adopting of the sins of the white man, especially drunkenness. Over the course of his life he made no less than 13 trips on horseback to Washington to bring this dream to reality. He was for a time employed by the United States Government in surveying this territory.

His gospel labors were manifold. Among other achievements, he was instrumental in the founding of the first Baptist church in present-day Oklahoma, on September 9, 1832, in the Creek nation territory. They began with only 6 members, but enjoyed rapid growth. Nine months later there were 60 members composed

of whites, blacks, and Indians. A year later the congregation numbered 300. These were not fair-weather converts. The Creeks severely whipped all who became Christians.

Though McCoy and his family were sometimes greatly mistreated and nearly murdered by the Indians, he did not take legal action against them for fear of losing his open door of witness to them. One of the tribes he evangelized, the Ottowas, had in earlier years captured some of his wife's family. His sacrificial spirit is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that 11 of his 14 children died on the mission field. The only child to outlive him was John Calvin McCoy (who became a founder of Kansas City and is buried in Union Cemetery). With such a name, there should be no doubt about the theological convictions of his parents!

And what shall I more say? This unsung hero deserves much more of a song than I have sung. But God has kept all the records. More importantly, it is for us to sing our Savior's praise! One of the hymns McCoy sang at baptisms was:

Hail, exalted mighty Savior!  
 Push thy glorious conquests on,  
 Help us, who enjoy thy favor,  
 Sing the victories thou hast won.  
 We would praise thee,  
 For what sovereign grace hath done.

#### **IV. A Few Concluding Observations on These Missionaries**

One disclaimer: All three whom we have mentioned were influential in starting missionary societies. Though we cannot condone these extra-biblical organizations, we should not deny all that God accomplished in spite of them.

On a more positive note, I have found some common elements in the life and ministry of these three heroes. They were all evangelists at home before they ever set off for their far-off fields of labor. They were all men who sensed a distinct call to their work and were compelled to it. They took the great commission seriously and personally, and not as a suggestion or an option. In a message on Matt. 28:20, Carey insisted, "To neglect His commission is to forfeit His benediction" [i.e. *lo, I am with you*].

They were men of deep personal piety. They

were steeped in the grace of humility. Carey, at the beginning of his work said, "If God uses me, none need despair." In the midst of his work he wrote to Fuller, "None stands more in need than I of the prayers of God's people." At the end of his work he said to a friend, "When I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey—speak about Dr. Carey's Savior."

They were full of unstoppable determination and desire. They understood the importance of their work, and were fully committed to it. They understood God uses means to accomplish His eternally-laid plans. They were patient under trial and persevered, knowing their labors would not be in vain. They kept a long-term perspective. They expected God to work, and were willing to sacrifice everything and suffer anything to get to be involved in it. McCoy said,

Missions to the Indians are unpopular things, and he who does not possess resources within himself to work alone, or with few associates, to sow much and reap little, to work hard without the reward of worldly honor or money, to remain poor all his life for the sake of making the almost friendless Indians rich, and to wait for his pay until he shall get to heaven, had better not enter upon any mission to the Indian.

**Now it is for us to examine our hearts.** Are we really missionary Baptists? We must be more than missionary in our creeds, songs, prayers. We must be missionary in labors, otherwise we are practical hyper-Calvinists. Are we not guilty of much criminal neglect in the work God has given us to do? Let us be missionaries in our "Jerusalem" as well as in the uttermost part of the earth. Our options are simple: go, send, or disobey. We must be at one end or another of the missionary rope!

Young men, consider your gifts and your desires. Consider the need of a lost world. Consider the worthiness of God's Name to be known. At least pray that God would show you what He would have you do in your short life on earth.

Carey said, "Not to have the heart to improve the prize of a God-given opportunity is to deserve the epithet of fool." Friends, will future generations rise up and call us fools for neglecting our opportunities? Listen to McCoy's last words to his wife: "Tell the brethren never to

let the Indian mission decline." Near the end of his life, Judson lamented, "It is my growing conviction that the Baptist churches in America are behind the age in missionary spirit. ...The Baptist missions will probably pass into the hands of other denominations...and those who have occupied the van will fall back into the rear." O may God speak to us, convict us, and re-energize our sluggish hearts!

Our text says that those who preach the gospel have beautiful feet in the estimation of their hearers. Carey's feet were beautiful to some in India. Judson's feet were beautiful to some in Burma. McCoy's feet were beautiful to

**(PERPETUITY Continued from page 1)** direction of church lineage, it is likely if not certain that no one today has a, **church by church**, step by step, pedigree. I have never seen one, even set fourth, at this point in my ministry, though some mistakenly assume that is what they have. Even if such a record could be offered, and if it were accurate, it could not be proved. Thus, this approach to the teaching of perpetuity harms the cause rather than to help it.

For this reason, and several others, I offer this simple two part message, addressing the subject of church perpetuity. I have tried to present it in a fashion that even the youthful Bible student can digest the subject matter and receive edification. May God use it as it pleases Him.

## THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH

### THE BIBLE FACT OF CHURCH PERPETUITY

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 15 and to Acts Chapter 1. Let us begin to read in Matthew Chapter 16 and verse 13.

***When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of***

**man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

Then Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, a passage that all of us are quite familiar with: **"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:"** (He is talking here to His church). **"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses"** (this is not just a command, this is also a prophetic statement) **"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."**

Then notice Acts chapter 8, verse 1: **"And Saul was consenting unto his death. 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. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."**

Then, for my text, read that classic verse again: Matthew 16:18: **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** The rock He is speaking of here is not Peter, by any means, nor his confession, but the object of his confession, Jesus Christ Himself. Peter (petros) is a little **stone**, such as can be picked up and thrown, or washed about by the currents of time and turmoil. But the word **rock** (petra) is never

to be confused with that. In the English Bible men never throw rocks. You will never find an occasion of anybody throwing a rock, because this word **rock** or at least the word that is normally translated **rock** means something like a cliff of rock, something that is not throwable, nor moveable. It is immovable. And Christ refers to Peter as that little stone, that piece of rock that could be rolled, and moved, and thrown, and cast about. But it is upon this **rock**, (Petra) this great cliff of stone, this mountain of stone that fills the whole earth, that He shall build His church, Himself, of course. **"and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**

I want you, with those verses in mind, to listen to the title, or the subject for the next couple of Sunday nights. I am going to be speaking to you twice on the subject of "The Perpetuity of the Church." My purpose tonight, is to speak upon what the perpetuity of the church is, and next week to deal with how it is determined. In other words, How do we identify the Lord's church? How do we go about seeing if this perpetuity has anything to do with us or not? Where are we in this perpetuity, and where does church authority lie? How is the church authority conveyed? We will be dealing with that as we go on.

Now, these verses that I have read tonight, are most often used to show the church's commission. That is, going into all the world, and preaching the gospel to every creature. But they show with equal clarity of statement, not just by implication, but with equal clarity of statement, the church's certain perpetuity. In other words that which is going to soon die, could never do what the Lord is saying the church must do, and shall do. It is not possible. I also want to say that an entity which does not fulfill one of these scriptures, does not fulfill the other. In other words, He said in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8: **"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."** No entity, no group that is not fulfilling what He says the church shall do in Acts 8:1, is what He is talking about in Matthew 16:18, when He says,



upon this rock I will build my church. We need to keep that in mind. My subject is not Church History. I am not dealing with church history, though, necessarily, some church history will come into these messages. My subject is that simple, and relatively narrow subject of Church Perpetuity. Now when I say narrow subject, I do not imply that it is a small subject, or that it occupies a small part of the Bible, because actually, it reaches out and touches almost every New Testament doctrine in some way, directly or indirectly. But the subject of Perpetuity within itself is what I am dealing with, and I am going to try to do it in the narrowest possible sense, so as to make it quite understandable, and useable, and thus, I will not incorporate so many things into it, that I will be over burdening you with other issues, and other doctrines.

May I further say that I plan to use these messages in some teaching in the Philippines, because there are a lot of men over there that would like to understand this issue better. It will be an underscoring of some things that are already covered in the Bible Institute of Correspondence, in the Ecclesiology section of it. However, I hope this will be a little more pointed and will deal with these things, perhaps a little more instructively and constructively.

#### **WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM: "PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH"**

First of all then, what is the definition of this term: Perpetuity of the Church? Some may say, I never use that word **perpetuity**. Well, you have used the teaching of it in some of its senses. At least you used the meaning of it. You understand it, but you may not understand it when we just simply say: "My subject is the Perpetuity of the Church." What do I mean by the perpetuity of the church? Well, the term simply means that the church will be perpetual, that it will be continually ongoing, and that the gates of hell, that all of the forces of evil, will never prevail against it, and bring it down, or nullify its commission, or bring it to surrender. That is just never going to happen. That perpetuity, according to the scripture, is clearly

to last until Jesus comes.

Someone might say, well, He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it, but for how long? And it was to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but for how long? How long is this perpetuity to extend itself? There are several things that we could touch upon, but I want to just make it brief and say this: that as we look at the ordinances of the church, we understand that as long as the church continues, that those ordinances are to continue. This is made very clear in the scripture. So if we could find a place that told us how long those ordinances were to continue, and would continue, that would be a shortcut to finding out how long His church and its commission was to continue, and we have precisely that in the scriptures. 1 Corinthians 11:26: ***"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."*** And I could spend a lot of time underscoring and piling scripture up that would show you that this perpetuity was to continue until the Lord comes back again. But I trust that this will be sufficient, and that you will see clearly that this perpetuity is to continue until the Lord comes again. I want to say something else, and please do not under estimate the importance of it. Some years ago, I heard a man say this: "Yes, the Lord's church has always continued. There have been times when it went underground, like an underground river resurfacing somewhere else out in the future." **Garbage!** Do not believe that junk. That is just not so. I understand there have been times when the Lord's churches have met in caves, and things of that sort, but that is not what he was talking about. He was indicating that the Lord's church might cease to be what it is in its open sense of preaching the gospel, and carrying the message into all parts of the earth, and that there might not be a really sound church upon the face of the earth, at some given time, but somewhere underground it was flowing along, and it would resurface. No, it would not. I want to say this to you: Humanly speaking, if the Lord's church could ever cease to exist, in a biblical fashion, it could never be revived, or rejuvenated. Humanity can pollute something which is clean, but humanity can

never bring a clean thing out of an unclean. So wherever that church ceases to exist as a church, it will never be rejuvenated as a church. It will always go down, it will never come back. It will always deteriorate; it will never revive in the sense of being something that it was not. Once a group abandons basic truth and knowingly decides upon a way, that is the way of error, that group cannot again become, nor can they possibly ever produce, a sound church. Just take a little shortcut here. When you find a sound church, you can be absolutely sure it somehow came from a sound church.

Now move on. As nations have risen and fallen, the church has, of necessity, been there to go to them with the gospel, thus it is that witness unto all nations. Was this command and prophesy just concerning the nations that were upon the earth at that time? I should say not! The fact of the matter is that the basic statement of this implies that this church has to go on, and has to keep doing exactly what He said it would do, until He comes back again, or He has failed, (now, listen to me) both in its design and in His prophecy of it. His church would have failed to do what He said it would do prophetically, and His church would have failed to do what He ordained it to do, as far as commission is concerned. And so, the perpetuity of the church is exactly that, and it is extremely important, both as a doctrine and as to its effect.

### THE PROMISE OF PERPETUITY

Now with that in mind, let us turn for a moment and consider the promise of this perpetuity. Matthew 16:18, once again: **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;"** (Now, Peter is not the rock. As I said a moment ago, Jesus Christ is the rock. He is the foundation of the church. He is the cornerstone of the church. All of those things are said about it in the Bible, time will not permit enlargement upon them.) He said, **"and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** The thing I want you to see from that passage is this: This statement of the perpetuity of the church is not something that

originated with Forrest Keener, or some other preacher who was his mentor, or some preacher that was his mentor's mentor, or on down the line. This is a statement that is clearly made by our Lord Jesus Christ. It was promised by Him. Therefore, anyone who would dare deny this is definitely flying into the face of a statement, and promise, made by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He promised that this very institution would be perpetual. He was not speaking of a particular congregation, and certainly not a universal entity, because there is no such thing as a universal church. There never was, the Bible knows nothing whatsoever about it. Scripture does not say one thing in the world about any such monstrosity. There is no such thing. He is talking about this church, this organism, this organization, all of these things are true about it, that is a congregation of people--now listen—His church is a congregation of people, teaching what the Lord taught, doing what He taught them to do, perpetuating the doctrines that He gave them.

Almost a hundred years ago, there was a great movement in this country, that is often now-days identified as neo-evangelicalism, new evangelicalism. Out of this came a great deal of interdenominationalism, and a lot of other erroneous teachings. Among theses came the idea, that somehow the carrying of the gospel, and the teaching of biblical doctrine, are two different things. This error is so prominent, and because of the great and proper importance of evangelism, it is difficult to fight. You know, Satan can really dream up some great things, as priorities of the flesh, and none is more effective than this idea that the carrying of the gospel, and the teaching of biblical doctrine, are two different things. And that there is great superiority of the carrying of the gospel of Christ as compared to the teaching of biblical doctrine. "We are not going to get all hung up on doctrine, we are just going to tell men how to be saved." That was the philosophy, and that philosophy has spread, and in some instances, has been whole-heartedly embraced, and in other instances has crept into the thinking of men and has deceived some good men. But the fact of the matter is, that Paul went everywhere preaching Christ, and if you could ever say that

anybody, short of the Lord Jesus Christ, was an evangelist, it was the Apostle Paul. Still, he was accused of having filled the world with these doctrines. Anybody who thinks Paul was not a doctrinal preacher does not know split beans from coffee. He was a deep doctrinal preacher. And yet taking all of that doctrine that he taught, he bound it up in this way: We were determined not to know nothing among you, save Christ and Him crucified. The absence of doctrine? Not by the furthest stretch of your imagination. The very essence of doctrine is Christ and Him crucified.

The church at Jerusalem does not exist any longer. It is gone. The church at Antioch does not exist. Some years ago, I heard a man who was a missionary to Syria say, "As far as I am able to tell, as far as I have been able to discover, there not only is not a church in Antioch of any kind, there is not even a Christian in Antioch of Syria." He had been there a lot, and he said, "I have never met a Christian in Antioch of Syria." There are not many Christians living around Jerusalem. Christianity is not very popular in Jerusalem nowadays, if you folks did not know that. It is not very popular at all. But the point is this: The church at Jerusalem produced the church at Antioch. The church at Antioch produced the church at Ephesus and the church at Corinth. Do you follow what I am talking about? It produced churches, and those churches produced churches. So down through the years, even though those churches have lived and died, they have produced other churches that have produced other churches of like faith and order.

Now, the Lord put this organism together, in my opinion and I believe the Bible will bear me out, much as He did the human body. That is, as it grows old and decrepit, and churches do that, some growing decrepit faster than they grow old, He lets them die. In the process of their living they have reproduced themselves, and those new churches go on. And so, even though that particular congregation sooner or later dies out, the organization, the church, the institution that the Lord founded has continued to be perpetuated down through the years. Like

the human body, it dies off, and yet humanity is perpetuated through its offspring and, as with man, those original characteristics prevail. Now men do produce monstrosities. Did you know that? I am not trying to be mean about deformed babies and things of that sort. And sometimes those monstrosities live to be a great burden upon society. But we can be thankful that those monstrosities, though they may live in some sense, do not perpetuate themselves in exactly the same way. Men have departed from truth, and created some ecclesiastical monstrosities, but the Lord took away their candlestick, and though He suffered them to exist in error, He never let them be the vessels of church perpetuity. The Lord's church has held those original doctrines and characteristics down through the years. Now there is a principle here. When churches or groups go into heresy, they will reproduce heretics and heretical groups not churches, and those groups will never come back to reform into true churches. Have you ever heard the story of a Catholic church returning to being a Baptist Church? Of course you have not and you are not going to. Somebody said, "Yes, but I knew about a Lutheran church that reunited with a Catholic." There is no reason why they should not, they never truly came out. They, essentially, always were Catholic. And so are Protestant churches in general, but not true Baptist Churches. There is a distinct difference. I do not have time to get into all of that. There is so much here, that I have to move on, and I know that I am leaving some important things just touched upon. I have just been able to make a mark over them and have had to go on, but I must do that. Christ's institution called the church is local and it is visible. It is just like this body of people right here tonight. It speaks and it hears, according to the Bible. Let me show you what I am talking about. In Matthew 18:16: ***"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. 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."*** Now the unavoidable

conclusion here is that this church is not a "universal, invisible church." How could you take grievance to an "invisible church?" I do not even know how you would take one to a "universal church," because that is everywhere. But He said take it to the church. Tell it to the church. And if they will not hear the church, now the indication in this statement is this: You tell it to the church, and the church hears what you have to say, and the church replies, the church speaks to the matter. And if they will not hear the church... So this church has to be a church that both hears and speaks. May I say that the Roman Catholics are far more accurate in their definition of a church, that is a **universal, visible** church, than all of the Protestants are in their definition of a church, that is a **universal, invisible** church. I do not care if some of those Protestants are calling themselves Baptists, I have no respect for their position. It makes no sense at all: Universal, invisible church, indeed! Folly of the silliest sort possible. But anyhow, this is a church that hears and it speaks.

The Lord gives us descriptions of the church, and He often does so in metaphorical terms. By that I mean, He uses common words to define the meanings of terms and doctrines. We use metaphorical words all of the time. That does not mean that they are not accurate. It does not mean that they are some kind of mystical symbolism at all. That is the furthest thing in the world from what that means. It means that He takes a word that we are very familiar with, He takes a word that these little children sitting before me tonight can understand. If I say to Janenna, or David, or Kari: show me your body, point to your body, those children will know how to take their finger and say, this is my body. They know what a body is. They will not be very old before they know what a vine is. By the time they are teenagers they will know what a bride is. They know what a building is, even now. Little children understand those things. The Lord used a body, He used a bride, He used a vine, He used a building to describe His church. But I ask you, how universal are those things? Have you ever seen a universal vine? Have you ever seen a universal building? Have you ever seen a universal bride? How about an invisible bride?

Would you gentlemen like to marry an invisible woman? I would rather be able to see her, wouldn't you? Would you like to have an invisible house to live in? Hey, that would be like being blind, would it not? To have an invisible bride, or an invisible house, I mean really, that would be like being blind. I am simply saying that the Lord did not leave us dangling, with reason or right to define the church in those abstract terms, but he told us what it was like.

He promised us that this entity would go on, or be perpetual. I am not going to quote the scripture for lack of time, but He said to David that there would not fail him a man to sit upon his throne until Shilo come. And in the same sense, the Lord has promised that there would not fail to be this, His church, to keep carrying the gospel and spreading the word of God, until Jesus comes again. He promised it, and it is going to be there.

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