

# The Baptist Examiner

A nation-wide, independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

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## The Primacy Of Missions

The Annual Sermon on Missions, Preached by Pastor J. C. Lilly, of Marion, Ky., Before the Old Bethel Association, Meeting With Mortons Gap Baptist Church on September 30, 1932.

"And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations" (Mark 13:10, R. V.).

Missions has become the "sideline" in the average Baptist church. Every other interest is cared for first, and, with what is left, the work of world-wide witnessing is feebly attempted. We stand with an impoverished membership today, because we have put last in our church programs that which must have first place if the blessings of Christ are to crown our efforts! Churches which have put the cause of world-wide witnessing first, are the churches least affected by the present scourge of depression. Churches that have sought to provide for local needs to the exclusion, or at least the sad neglect, of world-wide needs are churches which are now struggling to meet even their local obligations! This ought to say something, at least, in the interest of the great cause of world-wide witnessing! A scriptural attitude toward the heathen will make it far easier for any church to finance its local needs. There is no scripture in support of a church caring for its local needs to the exclusion of heathen needs. Acts 1:8, 9 is an oft abused portion of the Word of God. Artists at scripture-twisting inject into this passage words taken from another passage, and away from the real meaning of the passage from which they were taken. Acts 1:8, 9 reads: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me BOTH (the word is not "Beginning") in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The very first command ever given to a New Testament church was given by the Lord Jesus, the head of the church, and was a world-wide missionary command. It is found in Matthew 28:19, 20, and reads: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." The word taken from Luke 24: 47 (and taken out of its setting), and injected into Acts 1:8, has kept the average church at the "beginning!" Did I say "beginning?" No, not even at the beginning, but has rather caused the average church to be balking at the beginning! We have chosen the words of Mark 13:10 as suitable words for our text. Whatever else our text may teach, it most certainly teaches the plain truth that the first business of every New Testament church is that business of getting the gospel to "all the nations."

### I. OUR TEXT FIRST SPEAKS OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

Is the gospel being preached in many quarters today? What a sad situation confronts us as we face conditions existing in the average community today. Is it any wonder that there is such a dearth of spirituality in the average church when we come to view the preaching and teaching that has gone out from its pulpit, and Sunday School class-rooms? There are very few pulpits that have even the pure gospel preached from them today, not to mention the "all things" of Christ's great commission. This is an alarming situation,

and needs to be sounded forth in the form of an alarm. Our text puts "gospelizing" as the first work needed to be done under the marching orders given to the churches of Christ!

### II. WE NOW COME TO NOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS GREAT WORK.

Our method of developing this second thought in this treatise will be primarily, that of answering false theories and misapplications of scriptural texts.

#### 1. We affirm that the heathen are lost without the gospel.

They are not lost because they hear the gospel and reject it, else the gospel becomes a curse rather than a blessing to the benighted heathen! No, a thousand times "No" do we answer to the anti-missionary, and the anti-Bible theory that the heathen are not lost without the gospel! It is not what men do that sends them to hell, BUT IT IS WHAT THEY ARE! Eph. 2:3 tells us what they are, which is, "by nature children of wrath." Jer. 17:9 tells us the natural condition of their hearts, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Rom. 1:20 tells us what the spiritual status is of the heathen without the gospel. It says: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE." Rom. 5:12 says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon ALL MEN." All men are in a state of death spiritually, and thus are in a lost state. The doctrine of salvation by ignorance (which must be the doctrine of the folks who teach that the heathen are not lost without the gospel), gives the lie to the words of Paul as recorded in Romans 1:16, which reads, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Then the only hope for the salvation of the heathen is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The great commission within itself is all the proof we need of that fact!

#### 2. We next affirm that God is no respecter of persons.

Peter was one of these "Jerusalem" fellows until he prayed about the matter, and the result was that he got his eyes open, and when his eyes were opened he got his mouth open, and when he got his mouth open as a result of a scriptural eye-opening, he made a confession, and such a confession as lots of Baptist churches and Baptist preachers need to make today. What was that confession? In Acts 10:34-37, 43 he said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace BY JESUS CHRIST: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached. . . . . To him Give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." God has no more respect for the lost in America than He has for the lost