

The Extent of the Gospel

I have been asked to give my view as to whether all the elect family of God will hear the gospel preached by a preacher. I do not believe that all the elect will hear the gospel. I have **never** believed this; I have **never** taught this; I have **never** written this. Anyone who says that I have ever taught or believed this is either misinformed or is dishonestly spreading misinformation.

I believe, and have written extensively on this subject, that all the elect will be born-again, sometime between their conception and death, by a **direct** and **immediate** act of the Holy Spirit. This is done totally without means. God **never** uses the preached or written or spoken word in regeneration. In regeneration God deals directly with the child of God as He writes His laws in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit have the capacity to hear the gospel and be converted by it. As explained here there is a difference in regeneration and conversion. Regeneration is the impartation of spiritual life. Conversion is the manifestation of this spiritual life.

While I do not believe that all the elect will hear and believe the gospel, I believe that the emphasis of some people is wrong. We should emphasize what the Bible emphasizes. For example, it is certainly true that no one is eternally saved by water baptism. However, in the Scriptures baptism is greatly emphasized. Nowhere in Scripture do we find anyone saying something like this: "Brethren, don't worry about being baptised. We all know that water baptism doesn't save you eternally. So take it or leave it. It really does not make much difference whether one is baptized or not." To preach in such a way would be to dishonor God and to twist the emphasis of Scripture. The comment that water baptism does not save eternally would be technically correct, but to preach it with this improper emphasis would be very wrong.

The same is true of the gospel. In the New Testament there is tremendous emphasis on preaching the gospel to all possible. We should be eager to go through any door the Lord opens for the spread of the gospel. If we have this attitude we will have the attitude of the apostle Paul and of the believers in the Acts of the Apostles. While I do not believe that each and every one of the elect family of God will hear and believe the gospel, I want to preach that glorious message to as many as the dear Lord directs me to. It is sinful to waste a lot of time in arguing about how many of the elect will hear the gospel, while we are not doing everything in our power to spread the gospel.

This is the attitude that our forefathers have had toward the spread of the gospel. As is well known, a great body of able Primitive Baptist preachers met at Fulton, Kentucky in 1900. They issued a *General Address*. In this they said the following:

If the claim of Primitive Baptists be true, no one has access to baptism, the elements in the Lord's Supper, or any other gospel privilege where there is no Primitive Baptist church or ministry. In view of the vast territory in our own country that is absolutely ignorant of Primitive Baptist doctrine, and therefore totally destitute of church privileges, and as the redeemed of the Lord are

among every nation, kindred, tongue, and people under heaven (Rev. 5:9) we behold the great necessity of stirring our people up on this subject.
This clearly demonstrates that we claim too much or do too little.

Our forefathers were right then and they are right now. There are many states in our blessed United States where there are no Primitive Baptist churches. In many of the others there are only a very few. There are many nations where the Primitive Baptist cause does not exist. Only since 1994 have we had a significant presence outside our country. Our forefathers have done better than we have in this generation. My great-grandfather, Elder E. A. Meaders, came from South Carolina to North Mississippi in the early 1800s. He hit the ground running, and helped to establish several Primitive Baptist churches. He used to ride through the woods to church and see Indians staring at him behind the trees. Elder Lee Hanks from Georgia established many churches during his lifetime.

Elder S. F. Moore was still establishing churches when he was an old man. Near the end of his life, when the work of evangelism and the establishment of new churches had almost come to a halt, a young man, Billy Lawrence, asked him what had happened to the work of evangelism among Primitive Baptists. Brother Moore sadly told him that factionalism among the Primitive Baptists had effectively killed the work of evangelism among them. This is a shame.

While I do not believe that all the elect will hear and believe the preached gospel, I want to spend the rest of my unprofitable life in preaching it to as many as possible. I want to preach the gospel of grace that exalts my dear Savior and brings hope and joy to the hearts of His people.

I will leave the fighting and arguing about how many of the elect will hear the gospel to others.

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