

Baptist Perpetuity before J. R. Graves

Written by Josh Winslett

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Many modern church historians claim that Baptist perpetuity, the belief that the Baptist Church is the only true Church that Jesus Christ established and has existed since the first century under various names, was fabricated by Baptist minister, J. R. Graves. Graves lived from 1820-1893. Most then would place Landmarkism, falsely so called, only appearing around the 1850s and no time before. With this claim in mind, let's examine the following quote from The Autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson:

A considerable congregation had gathered, and I delivered as plain and pointed a discourse, and as definite as I could. I then explained the circumstances which had led to that appointment, and that I was authorized by the Bethel Church, of which I was a member, and which was located in the district of Cape Girardeau, to give an invitation to any persons wishing to be baptized and become members of the Bethel Regular Baptist Church. I added that if they could give full and satisfactory evidence of the hope that was in them, I was ready and willing to baptize. **But I would wish all to understand, that the Baptists alone were by us considered a gospel church, and therefore they received none into their fellowship or communion** , except on public profession of their faith in Christ, according to the doctrine of His grace.

No probationers of six months, no infants who were sprinkled on the profession of their parents, nor any others but believers in Jesus Christ were received. Therefore, **all who joined this church must renounce alliance with all other denominations**

. They should treat all men friendly as men, but

have no communion or fellowship with any but the Baptist Church of Christ; for they should look upon all others as the daughters of mystic Babylon

. 'I have been thus particular, as I wish to deceive no one,' said I. 'We wish to be understood to say, as did the Lord in reference to this 'Mystery, Babylon' (if any of God's people be ensnared by her), 'Come out of her my people, and be ye separated from her.' If any believe the doctrine I have been preaching this day, and feel evidence of repentance, faith, hope, and a love for God and his people, who wish to walk in the truth, and

desire to partake of the ordinances

of His church, come forward

. You now have, perhaps, the first opportunity in your lives of declaring for Christ; come forward, and we will hear you relate what hope the Lord has done for your souls." (The Autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson 153-154)

Wilson Thompson (1788-1866) obviously believed that Baptist churches were the only true, apostolic churches. He likewise believed in close communion and that all other non-Baptist modern denominations came out of Rome. Please pay close

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attention to the parts of the quotes that I placed in bold. They cannot be understood any other way than that.

The above quote was a written account of events that occurred between 1811 and 1814. Notice that this account not only takes place before the 1850s, but also happens before Graves was even born. A person must either be ignorant, willing ignorant, intellectually dishonest, or a liar to claim that Baptist Church perpetuity began with Graves. I have patience with those that are ignorant, even those that disagree with Baptist perpetuity, but my patience ends with those that knowingly make false claims that it started with Graves. This may just be one quote, but it speaks volumes. Furthermore, many more quotes from both Baptist and non-Baptists could be sourced. It has been said that "history is what you know and heritage is what you have." May Baptist readily study their history, because they have a goodly heritage.