



The Voice Still Lives

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Synopsis: A tribute to Bible teacher John Vernon McGee and his passion for a clear gospel.

Ten years ago as my new wife and I cruised the backwoods of a frighteningly different Caribbean island on our honeymoon, we reached for the rental car radio to try to find the comfort of a Christian broadcast. The first voice we heard made us smile with relief for it was the unmistakably familiar Southern drawl of Dr. J. Vernon McGee on his Thru the Bible broadcast.

The voice is no more. On December 1, 1988 Dr. McGee succumbed to heart problems and slipped into the presence of the Lord.

John Vernon McGee was born in Hillsboro, Texas in 1904. He completed his educational and ministerial training with Th.M. and Th.D. degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary. After pastoring churches in Georgia and Texas, he moved to California where he eventually served for 21 years as pastor of the Church of the Open Door in downtown Los Angeles.

It was during this pastorate that he began his daily radio broadcasts which grew to what are now over 1200 broadcasts a day in the United States and Canada. Dr. McGee's down-home common sense Bible teaching is also translated into 35 languages around the world. It remains one of the world's most popular Bible teaching ministries on radio.

Notably, Dr. McGee was a strong advocate of the grace gospel and a defender of its purity. Listen to his words from the June 1988 Thru the Bible Radio newsletter:

Every Christian should commit his life to Christ. However, *no unsaved person* is asked to commit his life to Christ.... God has only one question to ask the unsaved: "What will you do with My Son who died for you?" If you are unsaved, you are not asked to keep the Mosaic law. You are not asked to *do* anything. You are asked to *believe* God and trust Christ who did it all for your salvation. . . . You are saved by faith, faith plus nothing--not even commitment. (Italics his.)

Dr. McGee viewed Lordship Salvation as a dangerous threat to the gospel. He preferred to label it "Commitment Salvation." Upon reflection, I think this is a superior term in many ways: it focuses the issue on the response of the unsaved person to the gospel; it demands a definition of how much commitment is necessary; and it prevents the charge that opponents of Lordship Salvation do not care about the Lordship of Christ. I think all defenders of the free grace gospel would do well to follow Dr. McGee's lead in calling Lordship Salvation what it really is--Commitment Salvation.

Today I received the latest Thru the Bible Radio newsletter which assured listeners that Dr. McGee's broadcasts will continue with pre-recorded messages well into the future. The voice still lives.