

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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THE WORLD COULD NOT CONTAIN THE BOOKS

by Lee Moses

No man in his lifetime has ever approached comparable accomplishments to what Jesus Christ did in His thirty-three year lifespan, and He accomplished what He did almost entirely within a three and a half year ministry. He miraculously healed sicknesses, cast demons out of those possessed, gave sight to the blind, restored the limbs of the maimed, raised the dead to life again, died for the sins of the world, conquered death (and consequently the devil, Hebrews 2:14), and paved the way for His kingdom and Gospel to permeate the furthest reaches of humanity. As daunting as it was, Jesus accomplished all the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4; 19:30). The effects of what He accomplished still powerfully reverberate almost two thousand years later. The apostle John wrote an account of Christ's life, at the conclusion of which he wrote, “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that **even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.** Amen*” (21:25, emphasis LM). John clearly did not mean this literally. Although Christ performed far more great works than have been specifically recorded in written form, this statement is evidently hyperbolic.

But consider all that He has done outside the time of His earthly

ministry. He had a limited time to do the work accomplished during His earthly ministry (John 9:4), yet He has existed eternally (1:1-2; 8:58). God the Father has never ceased working, and the Son works with equal diligence (5:17). If one will consider just a few areas of Christ's work outside the time of His earthly ministry, he will see that the world indeed could not contain the books that should be written.

The Creation He Has Constructed

Christ, in His pre-incarnate state as the *Word*, carried out the unfathomable work of creation. Inspiration says of Christ, “*And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands*” (Hebrews 1:10). Certainly all three Persons of the Godhead were active in the creation, but Christ was the executor of creation. Paul wrote of Him, “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him*” (Colossians 1:16). Any component of creation, observable or unobservable, is attributable to Christ. As John said, “*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*” (John 1:3).

The world has been filled with

books and journals seeking to describe and explain the creation. Recent findings in DNA coding and mathematical order within nature more and more clearly shows the order in creation. In turn, this order points more and more clearly, not only to a design characterized by incredible foresight and wisdom, but also to flawless execution in the universe's construction. Should the world stand, there will be a countless number of books published examining the workings of the universe—all of which ultimately look at Christ's workings.

“*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge*” (Psalm 19:1-2). We have an entire universe that continually tells all generations of mankind about the glory and creative work of the Godhead, yet we know very little about the process of creation and the intricate workings of its sustenance. If all that was involved in Christ's work of creation were revealed, could the world contain all the books that might be written on the subject?

The Souls He Has Saved

Christ came to earth “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). After He ascended to the Father, He left much of that work in the hands of His church (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:2). He had preached throughout Israel of the coming kingdom and of man's need for salvation. He had given His life in agony upon a cross, a onetime atonement that would never need to be repeated (Hebrews

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10:12-18). When He ascended to His Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to reveal the saving Gospel in its entirety to the apostles (John 15:26; 16:7, 13). Yet despite all He had done for the salvation of mankind, His work was not done. Christ entered heaven not to retire, but to work: *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”* (Hebrews 9:24).

We can read about what Jesus did to save Saul of Tarsus, whom we remember as the apostle Paul. Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and confronted him with his sin (Acts 22:6-11). He sent a faithful Christian in Damascus to teach Saul what he must do to be saved, and that he was to save others (verses 12-16). Many things could be said about the contrasting lives of Saul before and after his conversion (9:21; Galatians 2:23-24), and Paul said and wrote many things about the

two contrasting lives, attributing the contrast to the grace of Christ (Acts 26:9ff; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-16). He doubtlessly did not say all that he could have said on the subject.

While Jesus has not appeared to anyone else since he appeared to Saul (1 Corinthians 15:8), He has been involved in the salvation of every soul who has ever been saved from sin. This writer could compose an epic tome devoted to the grace Jesus Christ has bestowed on him, as could each Christian scattered throughout the globe. And Christ is not only involved in one’s initial salvation, but He is also actively involved in seeking Christians’ final salvation. John wrote, *“. . . And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:1-2). Christ serves as the *“one mediator between God and men”* (1 Timothy 2:5), *“who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Romans 8:34).

How thankful the Christian can be that he has Christ working for him as Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, and High Priest! *“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Hebrews 7:24-25). When one considers the depth of one soul’s salvation, and multiplies that by the numerous souls saved throughout the ages, surely the world could not contain the books that might be written about it.

The Places He Has Prepared

Christ told His apostles, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if*

I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). These “mansions” or “dwelling-places” were not limited to the eleven apostles to whom Jesus spoke. Such would hardly constitute many mansions. A permanent inheritance in God’s house is available to **all** who live according to the Gospel of Christ: *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Revelation 22:14). Peter wrote to numerous Christians scattered throughout various locales, and said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”* (1 Peter 1:3-4); that is, “reserved in heaven for **all** of you.”

Not a great deal of the Bible is devoted to describing heaven. Some of the clearest pictures of heaven are given in figurative language; describing it as being a city of “pure gold” (Revelation 21:18), having foundations *“garnished with all manner of precious stones”* (verse 19), and twelve gates into the city each made of a single pearl (verse 21). Heaven is described as being a place without the sorrows and trials of this life (verse 4). Such words still do not fully convey the beauty and perfection of the places which Christ has prepared for the faithful.

Even inspiration is limited to human words. As human words derive from finite human thoughts, such words simply cannot ever fully describe the unparalleled splendor of heaven. As one sectarian preacher accurately observed, “Heaven would

hardly be heaven if we could define it." Were all of mankind collectively to put forth its best efforts to describe the places Christ has prepared, the world itself could not contain the books.

Christ has done, and continues to do, infinitely more for mankind than mankind could ever dream of doing for itself. He has constructed a physical universe in which man may live, He has saved souls from their own undoing, and he has prepared eternal dwellings of unspeakable beauty for all of the faithful. It has been well said that "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." Christ has prepared the place, but we must prepare ourselves if we are to dwell there (Psalm 15:1-5; Matthew 24:42-25:46; Revelation 14:13; compare with Galatians 3:27). We who are Christians work for Him as we stand in awe of all that Christ has done for us.

Friend, the world itself simply could not contain the books.

CANCER

by Leland Reed

This is a word we all dread; the diagnosis of cancer in a loved one or in ourselves is a devastating and fearful thing. Cancer in most cases, if found early, can be eradicated from our bodies and we can live a normal life. However, if not found early, it can permeate our physical being and cause much pain and even death. Not only does it affect those that are diagnosed with cancer but it affects our family and friends. We have all had family or friends that have had to face this terrible disease and saw the hurt that was caused from the loss of a loved one to this terrible disease.

Sin is very much like cancer in the Christian's life—if diagnosed early and eradicated from one's life, he can continue to have the hope of eternal life with God and Christ in heaven. However, if it is not removed and allowed to grow, one will face eternal death. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). The word *canker* is used once in the New Testament, and the way it is used indicates something that unless removed will continue to eat away (2 Timothy 2:17). Sin operates in much the same way—if we do not remove it, it will continue to eat away at our lives and we will end up succumbing to it. We may think we are happy faithful Christians, but if we let this sin remain we have allowed the cancer of sin to permeate our life and it will lead to eternal death. We have to remove this disease of sin from our lives if we expect to receive life eternal in heaven. *"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"* (1 John 1:10). The apostle John gave those who have already become Christians instructions on how to remove this cancer of sin. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). The apostle went on to say, *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"*

(1 John 2:1-4). I think we can plainly see the harm done in the life of one that does not remove this sin by repentance and prayer.

We also need to consider the damage and hurt to one's family. The influence our sin can have on our loved ones can cause them to fall away and be lost as well as ourselves. *"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea"* (Mark 9:42). To "offend" here is to cause them to sin. This was so important that the words of Jesus are recorded three times regarding this subject (Matthew 18:2; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

What is the effect of sin on the church? We have seen how a church can gradually slip away from the old paths and sink into false teachings, the question; how does this happen? We allow just one little scrap of false teaching to get a very small hold and it will grow into other false teachings and soon you are off the path to heaven. I cannot recall a church going off all at once; it usually is a little false teaching at a time. Again just a small false teaching is like a cancer if allowed to go unchecked it will eventually kill the whole body. Jude told us to *"contend earnestly for the faith"* (verse 3). To "contend earnestly" is to stand pat in the teachings of Christ and his apostles, not to vary to the right or the left, and to defend the gospel. The sanctity of the church depends on its members clinging to the word of God and not letting the cancer of false teaching go unchecked.

Sadly today we have seen many congregations fall into this category of sin. Why does this happen? Because we as members have allowed the cancer of sin to

permeate our lives and have not “*Stud[ied] to shew [ourselves] approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15). You might contend for the faith and the congregation will still not heed the warnings—in that case save yourself and move to a faithful congregation.

It is a sad thing to see a family member or friend suffer and die from cancer; however, it is a much sadder thing to see a fellow Christian or even a congregation succumb to the cancer of sin. Physical cancer can kill our body but it cannot condemn us to hell; however, sin, spiritual cancer, will condemn us to hell if allowed to go unchecked. “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matthew 10:28).

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[EDITOR’S NOTE: Brother Reed wrote this article in light of his own battle that he recently had with cancer. Thankfully, doctors were able to remove it through surgery. Brother Reed certainly understands the gravity of cancer; but we are thankful to him for pointing out a cancer of far more lasting effects.]

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GOD’S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

- COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD’S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God’s word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men’s doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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