

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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A BI-MONTHLY PERIODICAL OF MAMMOTH SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Edition of FCGN Local!

Fulton County Gospel News is a periodical that began as a local mail-out in 1953. Originally, there were about 200 copies sent throughout Fulton County, Arkansas. Since that time, it has grown into a publication that is mailed to 49 of the 50 states. As of now, there are approximately 6,500 copies mailed around the country on a bi-monthly basis.

Until 2020, the church of Christ at Mammoth Spring also mailed about 3,000 copies of FCGN to 12 foreign countries. Covid-19 has brought an end to overseas mailing for the foreseeable future. Because of that, the elders of the church at Mammoth Spring and the editor of FCGN, Barry O'Dell, decided to begin a mailing to every address in the 72554 zip code. These are free of charge and will come out every other month, just like the regular FCGN.

It is our hope that you enjoy this paper and are able to grow closer to God and in your knowledge of His word. If you have any biblical questions, please, feel free to contact us by email, our public Facebook page, or by phone. All of our contact information is on the back page. Jesus tells us that the truth can be known and that it will set us free (Jn. 8:31-32). If there is anything we can do to help you, let us know!

The Value of the Bible

The Bible is a valuable possession that too many of us take for granted. It is more valuable than our homes, our cars, our bank accounts, our friends, our jobs, and even our families. The term "Bible" comes from the Greek work *biblos*, which simply means "book" or "books." The Bible consists of 66 books - 27 in the New Testament and 39 in the Old Testament. We must realize that the Bible was written for us. *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope* (Rom. 15:4). The Bible is God's word and, in it, He has given us *all things that pertain to life and godliness* (2 Pet. 1:3). The books in the Bible hold the keys to heaven, where all spiritual blessings can be found.

by Derek Hufstedler

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Introducing the church of Christ at Mammoth Spring

The church that meets at the corner of 3rd and Bethel streets is made up of many different families and people. There are members who live in Mammoth, Thayer, and West Plains. The church has four elders - Kevin Hedden, Derek Hufstedler, Steve Simers, and Randy Ward. If you're wondering what an elder is, you can read First Timothy 3:1-7 or Titus 1:5-9. There are also eight men who serve as deacons in the church - Jeremy Allen, Robert Cox, Jeff Lancaster, Monty Ragsdale, Reggie Richardson, Keith Rose, Tim Tate, and Jay Towell. If you're curious about what a deacon is, read First Timothy 3:8-13. The church also has one preacher, Barry O'Dell.

The church of Christ at Mammoth Spring

meets every first day of the week for worship at 10:00 and everyone is welcome! We also offer biblical teaching through our YouTube channel (Mammoth Spring church of Christ). We currently have nearly 300 videos on that channel! We also offer a live stream via Facebook Monday through Thursday at 11:00. If you have ever wondered about what you would see or hear when visiting the church, those two mediums will probably answer your questions!

We also offer free Bible correspondence courses through the mail on many different Bible subjects. If you would be interested in something like that, please let us know! We want you to know that we are here to serve our community any way we can.

Whenever we find ourselves lost, we use a map to guide us where we are going -- the Bible is no different. The Bible is an accurate and precise "map" that can help us find our way to our Father in Heaven -- if we let it guide us there. The Bible is referred to as a lamp. In Psalm 119:105 we read, "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*" It is also a sword. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword* (Heb. 4:12). The Bible is all sufficient and contains everything we need to live a good life and find our way to heaven when our life on earth is over.

We all know that this life is short. No matter how long we live on this earth, life is very short! Let's make sure that we are ready when the time comes for us to pass on into eternity. God has given us His word, the Bible, to guide us in this life. Sadly, for many of us, the Bible remains unopened, unread, and unappreciated. We must allow God to speak to us through His word. It will change our lives, give us purpose, and help us in every aspect of life.

We must study our Bible to understand what God's will is for us. When we read the Bible, we learn about all things that pertain to life and godliness. We learn right from wrong, we learn how God views sin, we learn the consequences of sin, we learn how God expects us to live, we learn how to treat our fellow man, we learn what we must do to be saved, and we learn what is waiting for us after this life if we simply treasure and obey God's word.

We must find the time to read and study the word of God so that we can spiritually grow. In order to have victory over sin, we must study God's word and follow His teachings. When we read and study His word, we are more equipped to face the temptations that life throws at us. David wrote in Psalm 119:11, "*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*" If our hearts are filled with goodness, such as we find in the Bible, then we will be strong and able to withstand the difficulties we face in life. Think of those who lived in Bible times, like David, who said in Psalm 119:15, "*I will meditate in thy precepts.*" We must be like David and constantly meditate on God's word. If we have God's word on our minds, there will be no room for worldly thoughts. "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Pro. 23:7). Time spent studying and growing in God's word is time well spent.

God has done so much for us. Not only has He given us life, but He has given it much more abundantly through Jesus. Through Jesus, we can find

salvation. When we read His word and see the love He has shown through everything that He has done for us, we should have a desire to serve Him and do His will. The words He has left for us are to help guide us through this life and show us how to reach the ultimate goal -- Heaven! We must read and study God's word so that we can teach others and share the hope that is within us. As we study and learn how to become a Christian, our life will change. God truly changes people, and when we submit to Him, we can grow and become strong in Him. As we labor to spread His word throughout the world, we will bear fruit that others can see and bring honor and glory to the Lord.

Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith.*" Salvation is defined as "the preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss." The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humbled Himself as a man, a servant, and a deliverer. He gave His life to preserve ours, to deliver us from sin. The Bible teaches all about Jesus and about salvation, and we should all agree that this book is the most valuable possession we

"As we study and learn how to become a Christian, our life will change."

have!

No amount of money or anything on this earth can compare to what Jesus did for us, and nothing can bring us peace and fulfillment like God's word can. We can read about God's promises in the Bible as we seek to find truth and true happiness. "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The Bible will never lose its value. The Bible has existed for many, many years, and it is just as important now as it was those many years ago. We all need God's word in our lives. No matter what troubles and trials we face in this life, our lives can be complete if we read and abide in God's word. We must lean on God's word and strive to learn more about Him and His will. We should let Him speak to us through His word. The Bible tells us that this world will pass away, but His words will never pass away (Matt. 24:35). We must never take God's word for granted. We should read it now so that we can prepare to face eternity when our time on this earth is over.

The Bible is a collection of documents that claims there is a God. It's first words, "In the beginning God..." do not *prove* that He exists. Rather, they assume His existence to be true. How can such an assumption be made? What would cause someone to believe in an invisible being who supposedly created everything in six days? Let's think about it in two ways...

The Internal Evidence. The Bible itself claims that God exists. As already stated, the opening line of the Bible does not *prove* God's existence - it assumes it. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4). Just as we can safely assume that a house has a builder, so can we safely assume that the creation has a Creator. Another passage reads, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). In the Old Testament we read, "There is a God in heaven" (Dan. 2:28). Many other verses could be provided, but these are sufficient for now. However, just because the Bible says there is a God does not convince everyone. The atheist says there is no God - why would he believe what the Bible says? The skeptic is not sure about God - why would he be convinced by a few verses? In other words, is there another way that the existence of a Creator - God - can be proven?

The External Evidence. Let's leave the Bible out of it for a minute. Again, if someone does not believe in the existence of God, then quoting the Bible as the word of God will probably not convince them. Is there some external evidence, that is, evidence apart from the Bible, that would prove the existence of God? If you were to drive by a newly constructed subdivision, what are some logical conclusions that you could reach based on what you could see? You could conclude that someone had to design the layout. Streets, driveways, houses, electrical supply, etc., etc. Those components did not and could not *just happen*

by time and chance. If we have that knowledge, why would we think that something as massive and complex as the universe is just the result of chemical reactions throughout time and by chance? Not only is evolution unreasonable, it is antiscientific! Yet, many believe that it is a fact.

Leaving the concept of design and Designer, think about the existence of morality. Morality is defined as, "principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong of good and bad behavior." If evolution is the answer for the existence of humanity, at what point in the evolutionary chain did something or someone determine a standard of right and wrong? At what point in the supposed human/ape ancestry did morality evolve? Which primate finally decided that he should not steal food from his neighbor? Morality cannot and did not evolve from nonliving material. In fact, no living thing can come from non-living matter. This is one of the fundamental truths of science. Francesco Redi (1626-1697) and Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) proved through their experiments that life is produced from other forms of life. If you have non-life, you will always have non-life!

Is there really a God? Is there really a Creator/Designer? The evidence from Scripture points to yes! The evidence from both nature and morality points to yes! One of the false claims that is made about Christianity is that it contradicts true science. Ask yourself: Which system of belief contradicts true science? One says that all living material - with its diversity and complexity - came from non-living material. The other belief holds that there is an intelligent Designer. One system holds that morality simply evolved over time and by chance. The other holds that morality is revealed by a moral Law Giver. The reality is that true science bolsters the case of intelligent design and creationism. Don't confuse *true* science with an atheistic approach to the origins of both life and morality.

Would you like study more about this subject?

"The evidence from both nature and morality points to yes!"

"He who built all things is God"

~Hebrews 3:4

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

Unique features of the Church of Christ

- We use the Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3). We have no creed book, convention, or central headquarters.
- Our name is after the One who died to establish His church (Rom. 16:16).
- The church of Christ began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4).
- Jesus promised to establish His church (Matt. 16:18).
- That church was purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28).
- The church is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4).
- It was established in the first century (Acts 2:47).
- Jesus the one and only Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23).
- You can only be added to the church by God Himself (Acts 2:41, 47).

What about being saved?

- All people are saved by grace, though faith (Eph. 2:8-9).
- No one is saved by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26).
- No one is saved by grace alone (Matt. 7:21).
- Jesus said that belief plus baptism will produce salvation (Mk. 16:16). That is a promise, not a command.
- The Bible teaches that repentance plus baptism produces remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38).
- Belief, confession, and baptism is seen in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:37-38).
- The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8).
- Christ is "put on" in baptism (Gal. 3:26-27).
- The apostle Peter said that "baptism does save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

Find us on the internet...

www.mammothspringchurchofchrist.com

Facebook - Church of Christ at Mammoth Spring

YouTube Channel - Mammoth Spring church of Christ

Instagram - mammothspringchurchofchrist

Send us an email with your Bible questions - mscoc251@gmail.com

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