

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 25

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

November, 1991

No. 11

THE "MANY THINGS" OF JOHN 16:12 (THE "RED LETTER" JESUS - Part Two)

by Ted J. Clarke

A previous article sought to emphasize the great importance of the spoken words of Jesus (often printed in red in many editions of the Bible), while warning our readers that we cannot ignore the teachings of the rest of the New Testament. According to Christ, there were "many things" that he did not reveal to the apostles while he was on earth (John 16:12). However, these "many things" were revealed to the apostles through the Holy Spirit and written for our knowledge (John 16:13-15; Ephesians 3:3-5). Paul reminded Christians that what he wrote are "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). In light of these Scriptures, we cannot say that the red letter words are more important or more authoritative than the rest, for they are all the words which Jesus revealed through his inspired spokesmen (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If it were not for the writing of Acts, the Epistles and Revelation, we could not know the "many things" which Christ revealed through the Spirit after his ascension.

Jesus and His Word

There are those who believe that it is of the greatest honor to Jesus to promote the gospel accounts of his life, while playing down or even belittling the rest of the New Testament. The gospel accounts do provide the evidence needed to produce faith in Christ as God's Son (John 20:30-31). They also give us the example of Christ's love for God and man, seen in his obedience to God and service to man, that we must seek to imitate (1 Peter 2:21). First John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked." Truly, we must take up our crosses daily and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).

Therefore, we never outgrow the need for the gospels, even after our faith is established in Christ as God's Son. We

need to constantly return to these accounts of the life of Jesus in seeking to become more like him (2 Corinthians 3:18). We cannot, however, become more like Christ unless we follow **his word**. You cannot successfully separate Jesus from his words. The Lord warned the Jews, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of **me and of my words** in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed..." (Mark 8:38). We cannot accept the **MAN** (Jesus) and ignore his **PLAN** (what he says). Luke 6:46 says it another way, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Jesus' own words point us beyond the gospels to know "many things" he promised to reveal (John 16:12). Since Christ pointed us to these "many things" he would say through the Holy Spirit, how does anyone dare to say that such material is not as important as Christ's red letter words?

Christ's Words: Commission and Compliance

The Lord promised his apostles that the reminding and revealing work of the Holy Spirit would be associated with the work of the Great Commission. John 16:12-15 is connected to the Great Commission by Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:4-8. Jesus had come to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He also promised to establish his church/kingdom (Matthew 16:13-19). The book of Acts of the Apostles is an inspired historical account of how the apostles complied with, or carried out, the Lord's commands. In Acts, chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came to remind the apostles of the Lord's former teachings and began to reveal the "many things" Christ had mentioned in John 16:12.

Men are taught in Peter's sermon what they must do to be saved, and the Lord's church was established as promised (Acts 2:22-47). Peter preached

forgiveness of sins through faith (v. 36), repentance and baptism (v. 38) in Christ's name for the first time. Three thousand believed and were baptized, receiving the salvation Christ promised in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16). "And he said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.'" The Lord added these 3000 obedient believers to his church (Acts 2:47). Indeed, Acts of the Apostles is the **pattern** for the twentieth century church to continue carrying out the work of the Great Commission, just as the apostles did. "Acts" shows that all men are to be saved in the same manner as those Jews on Pentecost, repeating several cases of conversion to Christ among both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 8:5-12, 26-39; 10:43-48; 11:1-18; 15:7-11; 16:12-15, 25-34; 19:1-5 et al.). "Acts" also documents the progressive development of the worship, work and organization of the Lord's church (Acts 2:42-47; 5:42; 6:1-7; 8:4; 11:19-30; 14:21-23; 20:7, 17-32 et al.).

Without the book of Acts, we could not know the "many things" Jesus has revealed about how to carry out the Great Commission and the nature of the Lord's church. We cannot belittle "Acts" and what it teaches about salvation and the church without belittling Jesus (Mark 8:38).

The Epistles and Following Jesus

It is only because the epistles (letters) of the New Testament continue to reveal the "many things" of John 16:12 that the Scriptures can claim to be "complete," presenting "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). If Paul's letters are representative, giving us "the commandments of the Lord," then everything that these epistles teach is profitable in some way. "All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable..." (2 Timothy 3:16). These writings are filled with positive obligations for Christians (Galatians 5:22-25; 2 Peter 1:5-11 et al.), as well as prohibitions of things we

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Ted J. Clarke EDITOR

Publication No. 211780

"MANY THINGS"

(Continued from page 1)

must avoid (1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 1 John 2:15-17 et al.). We cannot please Christ if we do not obey his commandments, nor do we love him if we ignore these revelations of his will, even though they are not in red letters (John 14:15, 21; 15:14).

In these epistles we have detailed information on what it means to follow Christ by obeying God and serving mankind (cf. Matthew 22:37-39). The moral and ethical conduct of Christians is set forth in numerous passages such as Ephesians 4:20-32; love is defined in practical terms (1 Corinthians 13:1-13); the purposes for and manner of baptism are elaborated in several passages (Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21); the organization of the local church is given, including the qualifications for leaders in the church (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1); worship is explained in greater detail (1 Corinthians 11-14, 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); as well as a host of other matters.

Not one of these items is of only minor significance! If one believes the New Testament to be inspired through the Holy Spirit, these "many things" all involve God's will for us. What man has the right to say that these revelations regarding baptism are non-essential? Why believe that one can ignore the teachings on worship to God without serious consequences? Where do the denominations get their authority for

instituting different kinds of church government, contrary to what Christ has revealed in these letters? Matters having to do with salvation and worship to God have always been of the utmost significance. Christ died for the church, which illustrates its importance in God's plan (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). When the epistles speak on these things, they speak with the authority of Christ (Luke 10:16; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:3-5). God has never given man the authority to reject his revelation and decide for himself what is right (Jeremiah 10:23). Man has never had the right to add to or take from God's word, given in the Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

When some cry out, "Just preach Jesus" or "Just follow Christ," meaning to play up the gospels and play down the rest of the New Testament, they show their true ignorance of what Christ really said.

As Philip "preached Christ" in Samaria, he preached faith, baptism and the kingdom/church (Acts 8:5, 12). In Acts 8:35-39 he "preached...Jesus" and quite obviously emphasized the role of baptism in God's plan to the eunuch. The apostle Peter's great sermon in Acts 2 was later followed by his epistle in which he said that Christ left "us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). That very letter is filled with the apostle's commands to be obedient (1 Peter 1:2, 14, 22; 3:1, 6; 4:17). Following in the footprints of Jesus means our obedience to God's will. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Jesus expects you to obey his New Testament will for you. His words, which will judge us, include the teachings of Acts through Revelation, in addition to the gospels (John 12:48; 1 Corinthians 14:37). If your Jesus is only the Jesus of the red letter words, your Jesus is too little to be the Jesus of the New Testament. Accept all the Lord has said and live in obedience to his word (Luke 6:46; John 8:31-32).

Life is action and reaction. Today we speak; tomorrow we hear the echo of our voice.

SUM OR SOME?

by B. J. Clarke

The Psalmist declared, "The sum of thy word is truth; and everyone of thy righteous ordinances endureth forever" (Psalm 119:160 - American Standard Version). Another translation says, "The entirety of your word is truth..." (New King James Version). Tragically, the truth of this passage has been assaulted by modernists and is now being attacked by "Bible-believing" people too.

Modernists assert that parts of the Scripture are inspired and tell us that the Bible contains the word of God in certain places. Such assertions ignore the claim of the Psalmist who affirmed that the entirety of God's word is truth. Furthermore, 2 Timothy 3:16 states, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." If only parts of the Bible are inspired, how does one determine which sections are and which are not? The liberal theologians suggest that **some** of the Bible is God's truth. The Psalmist declared that the **sum** of God's word is truth.

On the other hand, we have individuals who claim to believe that the Bible is completely inspired in all of its parts, yet, these same individuals will preach and practice only **some** of what it requires. They adopt a "cafeteria-style" approach to the Bible in which they pick out the parts they like and put them on their theological food trays, while rejecting other portions that fail to tickle their fancy. These are reminiscent of Jehoiakim, who listened to Jehudi read the word of God as recorded by Jeremiah, and, upon hearing the prophecy of Babylonian captivity, took the scroll, cut it with his penknife and cast it into the fire (Jeremiah 36:23). Jehoiakim wanted only **some** of God's word, instead of the **sum** of God's word.

In the denominational world, millions pledge allegiance to the passages on faith while rejecting the ones that require water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). They take **some** and not the **sum**! Still others praise the epistles but ignore what those epistles teach about the organization of the church with Christ as its sole head and legislator (Colossians 1:18). They further ignore the qualifications for elders given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, substituting a board of deacons with a preacher as head in its

place. **Some or sum?** They believe in the necessity of the Lord's Supper, but ignore the pattern of frequency for it as set forth in Acts 20:7. **Some or sum?** These same people believe in preaching, and yet suggest that women are authorized to preach publicly as well as men. If they disregard Paul's instructions concerning this in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, are they taking **some or sum?** More and more denominational groups preach morality, while forming policies at their conventions and synods which allow homosexuals to be "ordained" as ministers in their churches. Is this not contrary to Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11? Does such a view take **some or sum?**

Far too many preachers are content to preach **some** of God's word instead of the **sum** of it. Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had not shunned to declare the **whole** counsel of God unto them (Acts 20:27). Faithful gospel preachers today can do no less! We are to preach the **sum** of the word, not **some** of the word (2 Timothy 4:2-4). Preachers who worry about being popular with the masses and how to bring in large crowds are afraid to preach the **sum** of God's word. May God spare us from the cowardly "preaching" that is being doled out in many churches. Let us be the kind of people who emphasize the **sum** of the word instead of just **some** of the word!

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**DOES MECHANICAL MUSIC
IN WORSHIP REALLY MAKE
ANY DIFFERENCE?**

by Allen Webster

Good question. Who gets to answer it?

That makes all the difference. If a man is allowed to answer it, we will get an opinion. Opinions are useless (Jer. 10:23). If God's book is consulted, we will get the truth (John 17:17). Since the Bible will judge us in the last great day (John 12:48), it is a good decision to let it answer all our religious questions (1 Peter 3:15).

God's book teaches that mechanical music in worship is a sin. If this can be proven, it should be held fast (1 Thess. 5:21). Let us examine the evidence. Why is instrumental music a sin?

**I. BECAUSE IT DISHONORS
GOD'S WILL.**

God has revealed His will to men and bound it in a book (II Timothy 3:16-17). If we desire to know what He thinks on a subject, we consult His book (Psa. 119:105). It will lead us in the right way (Psa. 119:101, 172).

So what does it say about worship? "...true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23-24). Thus, He desires worship ("seeketh"). He sets demands of worship ("must"). He directs worship ("in spirit," that is, with the right attitude; "in truth," according to what is revealed). When we look for these directions for worship, we find five acts to be performed. God's truth says that Christians are to study the apostle's teaching (Acts 2:42), partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-28), give as they have been prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2), pray (Acts 2:42), and sing (Col. 3:16).

What makes mechanical music wrong is that there is no command for it or example of Christians using it in the New Testament. Since we are to keep Christ's law and not the Law of Moses today (Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:8-9), we must not violate the will of God recorded therein (III Jn. 9).

**II. BECAUSE IT DISRESPECTS
CHRIST'S WISHES.**

While Jesus was on earth, He explained that He did not want men adding their own ideas to His plan.

He said, "'Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.' And he said unto them, 'Full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition... Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition'" (Mk. 7:7-9, 13).

When men add mechanical music into the worship where Christ has not placed it, they void the value of their worship and disrespect the wishes of the one they are seeking to please (cf. Gal. 1:10).

**III. BECAUSE IT DISREGARDS
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORDS.**

The Holy Spirit moved holy men to write the books of the Bible (II Pet. 2:21). Every word in the New Testament came directly from Him. (Jn. 14:26; I Cor. 2:13). In His last chapter, He specifically specified that no man add to what He had written or take therefrom (Rev. 22:18-19). He explained that if one did, his name would be taken from the book of life. One whose name is not in the book of life cannot enter the gates of heaven (Rev. 20:12).

In light of this, one who adds mechanical music to worship will have his name removed from the book of life and will not be allowed to enter heaven. Therefore, we see how important it is that souls be taught, innovators warned, and worship changed to fit the New Testament pattern. This needs to be done now, before the end comes when there will be no more opportunity for change (Luke 16:19f; II Cor. 5:10).

Does it make any difference? YES! If one dishonors God, disrespects Christ, and disregards the Holy Spirit, can he expect to go to heaven? Examine these verses, meditate on them, and make sure that you are obeying them exactly. May God bless you in these efforts.

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A minute of today may be worth a week of tomorrow.

Blessed is the man who knows when to laugh.

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OUT OF THE HEART

by Steve Williams

Seventeen lilies were planted in a garden, and at the right time sixteen of them matured into beautiful blooms. One which was planted near a hedgerow never seemed to be very healthy or make much progress. It was carefully tended and watered every day, but it would not grow. Finally the gardener dug it up and discovered the cause of the lily's failure to mature. In the hedgerow a vine had sent its roots through the soil and twined around the lily bulb and strangled it. What grew above ground was never very healthy because of a problem hidden under the surface.

When people are not advancing in the Christian graces and virtues as they ought, what is the cause? Is it opposition and difficulty in their external environment? Very often the problem is hidden to the eye, because it is a problem of sin wrapping its roots around the heart and choking out the life God would grant that person. Each of us ought to examine ourself and ask if secret sin is strangling our soul. Instead of being quick to place the blame on others (e.g., "I have not been visited," or "She was not friendly to me!" or "I think he is a phony and a hypocrite!"), let us ask whether or not the fault is our lack of love for God.

Jesus placed great emphasis upon the truth that outward behavior is an indicator of the inward state of affairs of our soul: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil" (Mt. 12:34-35). "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart... Out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander" (Mt. 15:18-19). This is why one must be circumcised in heart (Rom. 2:29), pure in heart (Mt. 5:8), obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17), believe in the heart (Rom. 10:9), have reverence for Christ in the heart (1 Pet. 3:15), and love the Lord with all of the heart (Mt. 22:37). In the judgment day God will judge even the secrets of our hearts (Rev. 2:23). How is your heart, that spiritual part of your nature that others cannot see?

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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