

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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“ONCE FOR ALL”

Part One

by Lee Moses

When the reader hears the phrase, “once for all,” what does he or she immediately think? An action has taken place that has accomplished what it was intended to accomplish. An action has taken place that does not need to be repeated. “I have mastered the Rubik’s Cube once for all.” “I have sworn off drinking alcohol once for all.” No longer will one struggle to solve the Rubik’s Cube; no longer will one drink any alcoholic beverages. The phrase “once for all”¹ is found once in the King James Version, and five times in the American Standard and New King James versions. The appearances of this and similar terms or phrases clarify many doctrinal misunderstandings in the modern religious world. The appearances of these terms also teach us about the sufficiency of God’s work, and about our response and responsibilities in light of that sufficiency. Consider some things that are “once for all,” beginning with several events mentioned in Hebrews 9:26-28.

The Earthly Appearance of Christ

“...[B]ut now **once** in the end of the world [‘at the end of the ages,’ ASV] hath he appeared to put away sin...” (Hebrews 9:26, all emphases LM). The original word for “once” (*hapax*) is the same elsewhere rendered “once for all,” as several

translations render it in this passage.

All previous history culminated in the life and death of Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:4). This was the one time in history when “*God was manifest in the flesh*” (1 Timothy 3:16).² Following Christ’s appearance on the earth, mankind has entered into “*the last days*” (Isaiah 2:2; Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:2). “[*Christ*] verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20). The long expectations of the Jews and the long needs of all mankind were met in the person of Jesus Christ and in the kingdom He established: “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins*” (1 John 3:5, compare with Isaiah 53).

Premillennialists teach that Jesus will return to the earth to set up a worldly kingdom centered in Jerusalem. However, the “once-for-all” description of His appearance on earth tells us this cannot be true (as do other numerous flaws with this doctrine). To sing, “Our Lord will return to this earth some sweet day” is misleading at best. While Jesus will indeed “*appear the second time*” (Hebrews 9:28), His return will be brief (John 5:28; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 2 Peter 3:10), and His return will be in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The Bible never teaches that He will again set foot on earth. He did that once, and accomplished what He intended to accomplish (John 17:4).

Man’s Physical Death

“[I]t is appointed unto men **once to die**” (Hebrews 9:27). Finality permeates death. As David observed upon the death of his infant son, “*But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*” (2 Samuel 12:23). David could not do anything to change the fact that his son had died; neither could his son nor any other man. A transition takes place at death that no man can undo: “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

While the soul and spirit of man continues to live after physical death (Genesis 35:18; James 2:26) and a bodily resurrection is to come (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:22ff), the pursuits that consume the largest part of man’s time and devotion cease upon physical death. Once death has come, one cannot undo the mistakes of his life. Contrary to the various doctrines of reincarnation, one does not get a “second try at life” once death has come.

As Solomon observed, life has a purpose: “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man [‘this is man’s all,’ NKJV]*” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). As Paul proclaimed, “[*God*] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:26-27). Upon Solomon’s late

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understanding that he had wasted years of his life apart from his purpose, he urged others, *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Whether or not one thinks of himself as *“in the days of his youth,”* **now** is the time to remember our Creator. Once death comes, there will be no second chance (compare with Luke 12:20; 16:22-26).

The Sacrifice of Christ

The Saviour’s sacrifice upon the cross was likewise a one-time event:

Nor yet that [Christ] should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of

himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many... (Hebrews 9:25-28).

The very reason the Hebrews writer spoke of each man’s death as being *“once for all”* was to show that, in the same way, Christ’s offering was *“once for all,”* never to happen again. Christ was not to offer Himself *“often”* (verse 25), or *“frequently,”* or *“many times.”*³ As observed earlier, when one hears the phrase *“once for all,”* he thinks of an action that does not need repeating—indeed, it is an action that **cannot** be repeated.⁴

However, some insist that Christ’s sacrifice **must** be repeated. As an advocate of the Roman Catholic Church states, *“The Roman Catholic Church believes that a religion without sacrifice possesses but an imperfect and defective external worship; for sacrifice alone is essentially an external and visible expression of that supreme adoration due to God.”*⁵ Thus, the Roman Catholic Church instituted the doctrine of the *Mass*, in which Christ is sacrificed each time they partake of the Eucharist (the Roman Catholic adaptation of the Lord’s Supper). As another asserts, *“The Mass is the unbloody re-enactment of the sacrifice of Calvary. Through the consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the Mass perpetuates the sacrifice of the Cross by offering to God the same Victim that was immolated on Calvary for the redemption of man.”*⁶ Such a practice denies that Christ’s one-time sacrifice is sufficient. If this does not trod under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of His covenant an unholy thing, I do not know what does (Hebrews 10:29). *“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God”* (Romans 6:10).

The sacrifice of Christ was a

unique event in all of history. Yes, there had been countless sacrifices made before, and there have been countless sacrifices made since. Some were useless sacrifices, either unauthorized by God (1 Samuel 13:9-12; Isaiah 66:3) or offered to false gods altogether (Deuteronomy 32:17; Judges 16:23). But even those prior sacrifices that were authorized and accepted by God were so only on the basis of Christ’s impending sacrifice of Himself (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:15; compare with 10:4).

As such, it is appalling that some professing *“Christianity”* today would allow that people can be saved and go to heaven without ever being washed in the blood of Christ. It is even more sickening that some professing *“Christianity”* are **offended** when someone affirms that the sacrifice of Christ is necessary for everyone. *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:2). Any true Christian will be thankful and appreciative of what Christ’s sacrifice accomplished: *“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once [‘once for all,’ NKJV], when he offered up himself”* (Hebrews 7:26-27).

[To be continued next month]

¹ From the Greek *hapax* or *ephapax*.

² Perhaps God’s visitation upon Sodom for inspection would qualify as an assumption of flesh (Genesis 18:8; 19:3); however, His purpose at that time was clearly not to **manifest** Himself to mankind (contrast with Matthew 1:23; John 1:18; 3:11-13; 14:9).

³ Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *pollakis*, in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 846.

⁴ *“The basic meaning of hapax in the NT...refers to the uniqueness of Christ’s work as something which cannot be repeated (Hebrews 9:26).”* Gustav Stählin, *Hapax, ephapax*, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999 printing), 1:381.

⁵ W. Wilmers, *Handbook of the Christian Religion*, ed. James Conway (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1891), p. 336; quoted by Randy Mabe, *“The Celebration of Mass and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation,”* in *Roman Catholicism*, ed. David P. Brown (Spring, TX: Contending for the Faith, 2000), p. 345.

⁶ John A. O’Brien, *The Faith of Millions: The Credentials of the Catholic Religion* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1938), p. 355.

SEVEN “MUSTS” MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE

by Jess Whitlock

Many times we find the word *MUST* in God’s Word. Many more times that word is certainly implied. Mr. Vine defines this Greek word, *dei*, as “an impersonal verb, signifying ‘it is necessary’ or ‘one must,’ ‘one ought.’”¹ Let us note the full thrust of this little word in seven powerful passages of the pages of Holy Writ.

1. **John 3:14:** “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST the son of man be lifted up.*” If the serpent had not been lifted up in the wilderness the people would have had no cure for the deadly snakebite. In like manner, if God had not allowed His only begotten Son to be lifted up on the cross, we would be without a cure today for the problem that confronts all mankind; that is, sin! Notice John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Christ Jesus is the Savior of the world (Luke 19:10); He is the only Way to salvation (John 14:6); He is the author and finisher of faith (Hebrews 12:2). Christ was/is the only way we could have redemption.

2. **Acts 4:12:** “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we MUST be saved.*” We are reminded of Peter’s preaching in Acts 2:36-38. Peter affirms that every person who is saved *MUST* be saved by obedience to the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord. “*And having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation*” (Hebrews 5:9). He is our High Priest (3:1).

3. **Hebrews 11:6:** “*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.*” Trust is a Must! We cannot be pleasing to God without that trust, that belief. I recall the words of a hymn that I have sung since childhood: “Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” Do not forget the definition of this word “*MUST*,” i.e., “it is necessary...one must...one ought.” Robinson gives this definition: “It is binding on anyone, it behooves one to do, i.e., one must, one ought.”²

4. **Acts 16:30:** “*And [the Philippian jailor] brought [Paul and Silas] out, and said, Sirs, what MUST I do to be saved?*” There is no greater question that any man can ask today. Remember the imperative force and thrust of that little word, *MUST*. Notice what happens in this context: “*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved*” (verse 31), “*and [he] was baptized, he and all his*” (verse 33) “*and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*” (verse 34). They had to hear the Word of the Lord and obey the Lord’s Word; likewise, man *MUST* do so today! There is no other way!

5. **John 3:7:** “*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye MUST be born again.*” This is the Lord’s direct instruction to Nicodemus. In the context of John chapter 3 we note that one cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless one is born again. Earlier in this narrative Christ had stated, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” (Two more words

are worthy of notice: “except” and “cannot”!) The new birth and being born anew, both refer to the one baptism of the New Testament. This *MUST* is just as imperative today as it was when first commanded by Jesus Christ.

6. **John 4:24:** “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in spirit and in truth.*” We *MUST* worship God with the right attitude and with the right authority (dare we say, pattern?) – yea, verily! Our worship to God *MUST* conform to the powerful, precious truth of God! The late, beloved brother Guy N. Woods has well stated: “the three simple, but vitally important aspects of true worship are set out: (1) We must worship God; (2) we must worship God in spirit, i.e., rationally and sincerely; (3) we must worship God in truth, as His word directs (Colossians 3:17; John 17:17).”³

7. **2 Corinthians 5:10:** “*For we MUST all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to all that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” All mankind will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and all will be judged. Quicker than you can say, “Tiger Woods,” the whole world will be judged by God. The eternal destiny of all mankind will be based upon our obedience or our disobedience to the will of God (Hebrews 9:27; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 14:12; et al.).

¹ W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 775.

² Edward Robinson, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1850), p. 158.

³ Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989), p. 83

TIME TO GIVE UP!

GIVE UP grumbling! Instead, "In everything give thanks." Constructive criticism is OK, but "moaning, groaning, and complaining" are not Christian attitudes.

GIVE UP 10 to 15 minutes in bed! Instead, use that time in prayer.

GIVE UP looking at other people's worst points. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults. It is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.

GIVE UP speaking unkindly. Instead, let your speech be generous and understanding. It costs so little to say something kind and uplifting. Why not check that sharp tongue at the door?

GIVE UP your hatred of anyone or anything! [excepting sin and error (Psalm 119:104, 128; Romans 12:9), LM]. Instead, learn to love. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

GIVE UP your worries and anxieties! Instead, trust God with them. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live today and let God's grace be sufficient.

GIVE UP TV one evening a week! Instead, visit some lonely, sick person, or someone in need of the gospel. Why isolate yourself in front of the "tube?" Give someone a precious gift: your time!

[author unknown]

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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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