

THEATER OF GRACE

Exploring the Cosmic Ramifications of The Atonement

MOMENT BY MOMENT, day by day, year by year, every individual human life is under focused observation by the inhabited universe. Heavenly population groups, composed of unfallen beings, are literally watching us from afar. While our eyes cannot penetrate their realm, their vision can and does penetrate ours. They are not watching human affairs for entertainment, but as observing spiritual scientists, so to speak, who are eager to witness the outworking of the full ramifications of God's grace upon human hearts. They long to see us come to the place where we love like God loves, for only then will they assured that we are safe to grant access to the eternal kingdom of other-centeredness they call home. Astoundingly, the church is God's chosen agency for the accomplishment of this grand purpose.

OUR INHABITED UNIVERSE

Hebrews 1:1-2—¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

Job 38:4, 7—⁴Were you there when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . .
⁷When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Revelation 1:20—The . . .stars are the angels.

Job 1:6—Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Luke 3:38— . . .the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

THEATER OF THE UNIVERSE

1 Corinthians 4:9, NIV—We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

Isaiah 1:2—Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me."

Revelation 12:12—Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!

Daniel 4:17—This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones.

Ephesians 3:10-11, NIV—¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NOTE: The word here translated as "spectacle" is from the Greek word *theatron*, from which we derive the English word *theater*. It means "a show," and suggests that something is on display to be watched or observed.

NOTE: "Manifold" is from the Greek word *Polypoikilos*. Good English equivalents are words like *multifaceted*, *multidimensional* and *complex*.

Special Testimonies To Battle Creek Church, pp. 18-19—The church of Christ, enfeebled, defective as she may appear, is the one object on earth upon which He bestows, in a special sense, His love and His regard. The church is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to effect transformations so wonderful that the angels look upon them with astonishment and joy. Heaven is full of rejoicing when the members of the human family are seen to be full of compassion for one another, loving one another as Christ has loved them.

THE COSMIC IMPACT OF THE ATONEMENT

Ephesians 1:7-10—⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

Colossians 2:15, NIV—Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The Signs of the Times, December 30, 1889—The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy.

Ephesians 2:7-10—⁴God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Amazing Grace, p. 235—The grace of Christ must mold our entire being, and its triumph will not be complete until the heavenly universe shall witness habitual tenderness of feeling, Christ-like love and holy deeds in the deportment of the children of God.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 9—From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God.

NOTE: Verse 10, The Amplified Bible—[He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth.

NOTE: The Greek word here translated, "workmanship" is *poiema*, from which we get the English word poem. In ancient Greek the word can refer to any work of art, such as sculpture, painting, architecture or poetry. A good translation would be *masterpiece*.