**THOUSANDS OF UNWRITTEN BOOKS**

***The Greatest Biography***

*“This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen*.” – John 21:24-25

I don’t know about you but my greatest pleasure outside of my life of evangelism is the reading of history. And history, when you boil it all down, is simply the lives of people who have created the timeline from Adam to us. People create history, therefore it is biographies of their lives that make history so enjoyable, and educational. I am a strong advocate for children, as well as adults, to immerse themselves in the reading of historical biographies. As George Santayana famously said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

For example, while in high school I set out to read the Pulitzer Prize winning six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln, written by Carl Sandburg. I was motivated to read it because I read Mr. Sandburg’s speech given to Congress in 1959 on the 150th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth, in which he described the 16th president as “*a man who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of a terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect*.” That captured my imagination. I have been a Lincoln reader ever since.

But the greatest biography ever written, and the only one that ultimately matters, is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit inspired four men to write the abbreviated story of the only perfect life ever lived. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were given this special task, and I will let Luke, the only Gentile writer, tell you how he went about it:

​Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” - Luke 1:1-4

If it took Sandburg six large volumes to give us the details of Lincoln’s life, can you imagine how many books could be written about the greatest life ever lived? Why just one day in Christ’s life could easily consume a library. John tells us he merely recorded the bare minimum of just a few miracles, and the claims that came from them (“I am the bread of life … I am the way, the truth and the life … I am the resurrection and the life” etc). And yet if the Holy Spirit had wanted to give every detail of Christ from conception to ascension “*even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written*.”

Many years ago I read the simple description given by James Allan Francis in 1926. It is called “One Solitary Life.” I quote it now for your reading pleasure:

**One Solitary Life**

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

But suppose, just suppose, the Holy Spirit had really inspired all the hundreds of eyewitnesses to write accounts of what they saw when Jesus lived among us. We have but a handful of parables, and only a small sample of His many miracles, and but a few of His sermons, along with only a limited number of one-on-one interactions with “*the common people… who heard Him gladly*.” If the Spirit had wanted to flood the world with overwhelming evidence given from thousands of witnesses, He could have easily done so. Oh how we wish He had done so!

But what we have is enough. What we have is “*written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you may have life in His name*” (John 20:30-31). Thomas, yes “doubting Thomas,” refused to believe in the resurrected Christ until he had empirical evidence (the use of the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, touching and tasting). “*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”* When eight days later he saw, heard and touched the very much alive Jesus, he fell in worship and exclaimed, “My Lord and my God.” But Jesus replied to him, and us: *“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* (Jn. 20:29).

I never saw or heard Abraham Lincoln. Yet the writings of historians and eyewitnesses have left enough proof of his life and deeds that I have become a fan of his.

I never saw or heard Jesus either. And I do not have the thousands of unwritten biographies of Christ. But the gospels of three Jews and one Gentile is enough for me to draw a conclusion about that One Solitary Life. “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*.” Like Theophilus before me, I know the certainty of those things instructed and have declared Him, “*my Lord and my God*.” What is your verdict?

What is your verdict? - Rick