

## ***You Expect Me to Believe That?***

- In the beginning there was nothing. And suddenly for no reason nothing exploded and created everything. You expect me to believe that?
- At some point, by chance the right chemicals happened to float together at just the right moment to be struck by an electrical charge and become life. You expect me to believe that?
- Somewhere two non-human mothers each gave birth to a human child. They were born at the same time and in the same place, one was male and one was female. These two new “humans” gave birth to the human race. You expect me to believe that?
- One of the descendants of these first humans was born with a knowledge of right and wrong. No longer driven by instinct, this person suddenly was making decisions based on a morality for which there is no real explanation. You expect me to believe that?

I'm sorry. I don't have that much blind faith. It's all just too farfetched to be anything more than a fairy tale. I can't believe intelligent people claim it is “science” (cf. I Timothy 6:20).

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1: 1). I can believe that without stretching my imagination. The universe was created by an all-powerful, all-knowing God. That I can believe

- ***by Phil Grear***

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## ***Why Care About Anything 2000 Years Old?***

The Bible teaches that the message of Jesus is for all people and all time. Since the very first day it was preached, some 2000 years ago, it was “the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth --- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). It is tempting to dismiss something this old, but there are good reasons to be interested in it. Let us look at some reasons why the gospel of Jesus Christ is never out of date, and why we should consider it carefully.

**1. The nature of truth does not change.** Rather than being non-existent or relative it is absolute. Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31,32).

**2. The nature of evidence does not change.** When witnesses are credible, and these gave their lives for their testimony, regardless of its age, we have “many unmistakable proofs” (Acts 1:3) of the accounts. “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you” (1 John 1:3).

**3. Man's real problem does not change.** “Your sins have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2). When we feel loneliness or anger or despair it is because we are incomplete without the reconciliation to God that comes through the gospel of His Son.

**4. God's unchanging plan is our only real hope.** “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...for the promise is to, you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:37-39).

If we live for our family, our work, our stuff, for learning, for travel, for fun...it's too little. It's not enough. When Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10), He pointed us beyond all these things to God Himself,

- ***by Robert Hines***

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## ***Qualified and Disqualified***

I am familiar with a man who worshipped in a congregation where several believed having “children that believe” (Titus 1:6) meant ‘two or more’ - not ‘one or more’. Several wanted him appointed as an elder. But because of that qualification which some believed he lacked, others objected. Because there were already elders in place, as well as some valid arguments on both sides of the issue, and seeing that a division would ensue if he allowed his appointment, he removed his name from consideration.

I am also familiar with one whose name was considered for the eldership, and reasonable people objected due to some family considerations. He blew up, called those people some uncomplimentary names, and left the church. Both were seemingly good men in many ways.

However, their true motives were not known until tested. In my estimate, one behaved as Jesus commanded; the other did not.

While we should be eager to develop whatever abilities we have to use in the Lord's service (anything else the Lord calls "slothful" — Matthew 25:26), and be eager to help whether in spiritually public or private work, let us also have the mind of humility. How true the statement is, "True humility is the usual companion of true greatness."

- by *Phillip A. Owens*

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## ***Who Is A "Saint?"***

**Question:** Is it proper to use the term "saints" to refer to all Christians, or is this title reserved for and assigned posthumously to those of extraordinary character and ability?

**Answer:** Our understanding of this term has been altered significantly by the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. The modern dictionary definition reflects this influence: "one of...exceptional holiness of life formally recognized by the...church as having attained an exalted position in heaven...entitled to veneration on earth". This is clearly not true to the Bible usage of the word.

"Saint" comes from the Greek word 'hagios' which is taken from the same root as the terms holy and sanctified. Each of these suggests being set apart or dedicated to a specific purpose or cause, and thus describes every Christian.

In his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine says "this is not an attainment, it is a state...it designates all believers and is not applied merely to persons of exceptional holiness, or to those who, having died, were characterized by exceptional acts of saintliness".

To confirm that this view is correct, note that 1st Corinthians is addressed to "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (1 Cor. 1:2 - NASV). Yet these same "saints" were guilty of contentions (1:11), carnal mindedness (3:1-3), toleration of sin (5:1-2), desecration of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), etc. Yes, all of the Christians at Corinth were saints, but not all were living as God desired. In fact Paul said: "Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not" (11:22). They were all saints, but they were not all praiseworthy.

So, the term "saint" has been perverted through the centuries. But, according to the Bible, it is proper to use the term "saint" to refer to all true Christians. The challenge is for us all to live up to the true definition of the word.

- by *Greg Gwin*