

In search of...

Truth & Right

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A Savior Who Cares

When was the last time you took a good look at the night sky and tried to count the stars? Can you still do that? If you live in the city, you most likely are not able to see the night lights as well because of the street lights or reflected light from the various sources coming from within the city limits, but here where I live, on the outskirts of the Phoenix metro area, I can still walk out into my backyard and get a great view of those night lights and identify many constellations. It still cannot match the night skies I remember seeing when I was a lot younger, when I would go out to the back portion of our farm and lie on my back on a small hillside and just gaze into the sky, seeing how much I could see.

I will probably never cease to be amazed at a clear, moonless night sky. When you take the time to observe the night sky for a few hours [not seconds or even minutes], you begin to see how really small we are and you might even begin to wonder why we exist at all. Compared to the whole universe, we seem like an infinitesimal mass and for those who ponder our

existence and ask themselves why they are here, they might have trouble finding a reasonable answer after observing that night sky. We are so small in the whole of the existing universe, for what possible reason could we be here?

For those of you who believe God exists, the question still might pose some interesting problems. Seeing the vastness of the night sky and understanding [at least in part] that we are but a small iota of the Creation, why would God care about such a small part of the Creation [man]? Indeed, we could ask the same question the psalmist posed many years ago: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4).

Indeed, why would God be mindful of man? Why would He care about such a small portion of the vast Creation which He established? It may be that the deist considered this question and could not come to a reasonable conclusion that satisfied

him, so he resigned himself to the concept that God did create all things, but then took a big step back and let it fend for itself. I must point out that this view of God would necessitate a rejection of the gospel message, for any plan of God that would somehow "interfere" with the creation after its origination — or that would even help in any way — would go against the basic premise of deism. Deism, at best, is blend of human philosophies that seeks to explain our existence without demanding a response to the Creator. Deists can claim belief in God and do nothing, and then play the sophist when questioned about his "faith" and his life. I must point out again that this is nothing more than a combination of human philosophies, and not Scripture-based. Like all human philosophies, it falls short of explaining our existence because it denies some — or all — of Scripture.

But to the question of our existence; why would God take notice of man — such a small part of His Creation? Consider more words of the psalmist in regard to the high standing of God and the low place of mankind: "The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high, Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes — with the princes of His people. He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 113:4-9). If I may simplify his words: "Why does God — who is so far above us — care about man?" I believe if we can answer that, we can begin to understand some very important points about our existence — and our eternal destination.

Consider also that God — knowing before man was even created that he would sin — established a plan for man's salvation "before the

foundation of the world" (I Peter 1:20) and "before time began" (II Timothy 1:9). Why would God, who obviously knew before He even created man, go ahead and create man with the foreknowledge he would so often and so blatantly transgress His will? In my vastly inferior mind, I would be seriously questioning the wisdom of even following through with my plan to create man at all! Why bother, if he is only going to turn against me? Again, the answer to that is the center of our existence and our eternal destination!

Furthermore, why would Jesus willingly leave heaven, come to earth, be born as a human being is born [in a stable, no less!], allow Himself to be laid in a feed trough, suffer all the pains of humanity, suffer ridicule, humiliation and persecution, and ultimately suffer the cruel death on the cross? And for whom? Man? Mankind was guilty of sin [all of us, Romans 3:23], unworthy of God or Jesus Christ, and the enemies of God Himself! Why would Jesus endure all that for His enemies? Why would He lift a finger to do anything for a being who had so thoroughly and plainly rebelled against His will and rejected Him so coldly?

If we consider the fact that we who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ are trying to get to heaven, we might rightly ask what possible reason someone would have for leaving heaven! If we consider the fact that we who are followers of Jesus Christ live so that we will one day put off this inferior body and put on the superior and eternal one (cf. II Corinthians 5:1, 2), we might rightly ask why Jesus would come to earth to wear that humble corruptible body and suffer all the pains we experience! If we consider the fact that we who are followers of Jesus Christ seek eternal life (Titus 1:2), we might rightly ask why Jesus would come to earth just to die (cf. John 12:27)! If we consider the fact that Jesus knew all of these things, and particularly the fact that He

would have to die a cruel death (Matthew 26:2), we might rightly ask why Jesus would even bother! Why would Jesus willingly do all of these things for a portion of His Creation that would treat Him so cruelly?

Let's try to answer these important questions, shall we?

First of all, God did all of this for us simply because He loved us. You probably know well the words of Jesus: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). And maybe you remember this: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God is not willing that any should perish (II Pet. 3:9) and He wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). In spite of whom we all are and in spite of all we have done against Him, He still loves us!

And Jesus? Jesus did what He did also because He loved us. Maybe you remember Paul's words that told us, "Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us" (Ephesians 5:2). Someone has said, "He became poor that we might be rich, and died that we might live." That is certainly a Scriptural thought and it is clearly the reason Jesus did all of these things. He did it for us, and He did it that we might be freed from sin and have the hope of eternal life.

I am not opposed to anyone investigating other religions; in fact, I encourage it. See if the leaders and founders of other religions have done for you what God and Christ have done for you. I think you will find that the 'gods' of other religions and the leaders and founders of those religions are selfish and capricious. With Christ, we have a Savior who cares.

Steven Harper

Happy Moments,
Praise God.

Difficult Moments,
Seek God.

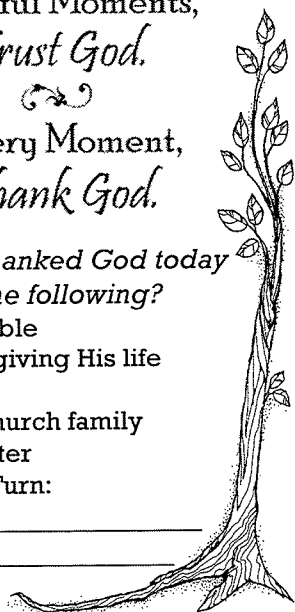
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.

Painful Moments,
Trust God.


Every Moment,
Thank God.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life
for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. What nation was the victim of a seven-year famine during Elisha's ministry?
 - a) Babylon
 - b) Egypt
 - c) Edom
 - d) Israel
2. What did Mary & Joseph sacrifice in the temple when they took the young Jesus there?
 - a) A spotless bull
 - b) A goat
 - c) A pair of doves
 - d) A young calf
3. What is Satan the father of?
 - a) All painful things
 - b) Lies
 - c) Snakes
 - d) People who have evil thoughts
4. What judge of Israel was a prostitute's son?
 - a) Shamgar
 - b) Othniel
 - c) Jephthah
 - d) Barak
5. Who said, "What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?"
 - a) Pilate
 - b) Herod
 - c) Caesar
 - d) Saul
6. According to the Law, what hopping insects were edible?
 - a) The grasshopper, the cricket, and the mantis
 - b) The locust and the grasshopper
 - c) None of them
 - d) Only the katydid
7. What leader was buried "in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah"?
 - a) Samuel
 - b) Zerubbabel
 - c) Joshua
 - d) Moses
8. In what city did Paul escape a plot by going through a window in the city wall?
 - a) Jerusalem
 - b) Antioch
 - c) Ephesus
 - d) Damascus
9. For how long did the thick darkness hang over the Egyptians?
 - a) Twelve days
 - b) Three weeks
 - c) A week
 - d) Three days
10. Who was the mother of John Mark?
 - a) Mary
 - b) Tabitha
 - c) Eunice
 - d) Lydia

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) C, Reference: Genesis 9:13
- 2) B, Reference: Matthew 18:12-14
- 3) A, Reference: Acts 18:27
- 4) B, Reference: Genesis 4:13
- 5) D, Reference: Leviticus 14:7-9

- 6) C, Reference: Acts 20:9
- 7) D, Reference: Exodus 35:22
- 8) C, Reference: John 11:17
- 9) A, Reference: Mark 12:42
- 10) D, Reference: II Kings 2:11