

“Why Can’t We Talk to Our Loved Ones Who Have Passed?”

Why can’t we talk to our loved one who has passed? I am having a very hard time with death and the feeling that it is cruel that we can’t know our loved one is ok. My years of church taught me to know of God’s love for us which gives us eternal life, but the cruelty of not knowing how our loved one is or their terrible suffering seems so unlike the personality I have had of God.

Dear _____,

I am so sorry for your heartache at missing your loved one. I truly understand; it’s only been a few months since [we lost our son](#) and we miss him very much.

I think God uses the heartache of losing communication with our loved ones to remind us that death and separation was not part of His original good creation, so we gain a fuller understanding of the impact of sin on our world—and why it required something as huge as the death of God’s Son to rectify. I also believe God redeems the pain of grief so we can learn how to turn to Him as “the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). If we were able to communicate with our loved ones, it would be so easy to bypass God altogether and just seek to connect with our friends and family—just as we so often do with those with us on earth.

We are so limited by our earthly existence, we can’t begin to imagine the intense joy and glory of our believing loved ones’ life in heaven. And if you could see your unbelieving loved one in the torment of hell, would that bring you any peace, or would it rip you apart inside? I think that “not knowing” is the grace of God for us still here on earth.

It’s interesting and poignant that you used the world

“cruelty.” And it’s easy to think that it’s God who is being cruel. But the true source of cruelty in our enemy, Satan, whose agenda is to “steal, kill and destroy” (John 10:10). It was his idea to inflict immeasurable pain on us as God’s image-bearers by bringing sin into the Garden of Eden.

We do know in Deuteronomy 18 that God forbids us try to contact the dead. He even calls it an abomination. All of God’s prohibitions are given to us for our protection and blessing, so like with so many other things, there must be something about God’s “no” in this issue that is meant for our good.

The Got Questions website has a couple of articles you may find helpful as well:

[If we talk to loved ones who have died, do they hear us?](#)

[Can I ask God to deliver a message to a loved one who has died?](#)

_____, I send this with a prayer for the God of all comfort to give you His comfort as you trust Him in His goodness. And in Paul’s words in 2 Thessalonians 3:16, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way.”

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

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When Gratitude and Grief Hold

Hands

Sue Bohlin has discovered that the ongoing habit of giving thanks for God's many goodnesses has mitigated her grief in her son's death.

It's been five months since [our son took his life](#) and we were thrown into a sea of grief. I can tell people are still praying for us because God's deep and beautiful grace is holding us up.

The day after Curt died, I was struck with the thought that a gigantic wall of awful grief was going to hit me. Hard. I knew that wall. It slammed into me the first time when our firstborn baby Becky died on her eighth day of life. It slammed into me again almost two years ago when [a third of my tongue was cut out](#) because of cancer. So I know how to recognize the unbidden, overwhelming feelings of loss and deep sadness.

But a second and comforting thought chased down the chilling first thought: *The Lord carried me through those times of great grief in the past, and He will carry me again. I don't need to fear the grief monster because my God is bigger than the grief monster. Thank You, Lord, thank You.*

That immediate prayer of thankfulness arose out of a 50-year-long habit that God impressed on me as a college student as I struggled to reconcile why a good God would let polio cripple me. I learned probably the biggest lesson of my life: that He wants us to give thanks not only **IN** all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18), but **FOR** all things (Ephesians 5:20). For a deeper dive, I invite you to read my blog post "[Giving Thanks for EVERYTHING?](#)"

I couldn't possibly know back in those early days of my walk with Christ how the habit of giving thanks as a way of life would shape how I could handle the unthinkable loss of a

second child decades later.

Giving thanks as a daily habit began as a step of obedience, but then it grew to become an intrinsic part of my everyday life—to the point that I shoot up many more “thank You” prayers than “please” prayers. And that has never been so true as it has been these past five months.

ALL of my “please” prayers for Curt, as he struggled for years with a deep, dark suicidal depression I could not begin to imagine, have been turned into “thank You” prayers. Every day I tell the Lord how grateful I am that my son is experiencing a level of joy he couldn’t have imagined any more than I can imagine the pain of his mental illness. I thank Him for the massive sense of relief that is Curt’s daily life in heaven. I thank Him that his hearing loss has been replaced with perfect hearing. I thank Him that Curt’s love of music, which was devastating because of that hearing loss, has been ratcheted up to enjoy new kinds of beautiful music (so I read in stories of those who have been allowed a glimpse of heaven). I thank Him that my son’s deep suffering is only a memory for him now, and he has all eternity to look forward to whatever God will allow him to do. I thank Him that Curt can look forward with clear eyes and unskewed thinking, to the next stages of his new life on the other side.

Every day I thank the Lord that I *know know know* where my son is, and that he is more alive today than he ever was on earth. I thank Him for the beloved family and friends who graduated to heaven before Curt, with whom he is enjoying restored fellowship and laughter and hugs. I thank the Lord for how real heaven is to me.

And because He has taught me how to turn hard truths into a “thank You,” I know what to do with the pangs of loss that inevitably strike me every day. When I see Curt’s handwriting on my recipes from the tweaking we did together when cooking, a fresh wave of missing him washes over me . . . and I’m able

to say, “Thank You for all the help he gave me in the kitchen over these past 17 years of his living here.” When Ray and I wince at needing to find caregivers for our dog Lincoln when we go out of town—something we never needed to do because Curt never went anywhere—I’m able to say, “Thank You that he was our built-in dogsitter for all those years.”

When I see his computer components gathering dust in a corner, or when we need computer help, I’m able to chase the pangs of missing him with, “Thank You for the gift of having an IT genius in our home all those years.”

It might be easy to scoff and think, “You’re just sugar-coating this horrible loss of your beloved son. Get a grip and face your grief squarely instead of trying to paint it with rosy colors.”

But I am not a stranger to grief. I’ve endured a number of very big, very painful losses. I seek to be honest and authentic in this hard place we are in, but my reality is that gratitude softens the blow of grief. The Lord demonstrates His goodness to me in so many ways every day, I can’t help but see them because I’ve grown more sensitive to recognize what I call His “hugs and kisses.” Those hugs and kisses are one way He comforts me in this hard time.

Because gratitude and grief CAN hold hands.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/when-gratitude-and-grief-hold-hands/ on December 17, 2024.

Laredo Apologetics Conference Videos

*Laredo Apologetics Conference
November 2024*



Videos from our Apologetics Conference in Laredo, Texas are now online [here](#).

“What Does It Mean to Be Made in the Image of God?”

How would you explain what it means to be made in the image of God to a brand new Christian or someone who hasn't made that decision?

Great question! I think the bottom line is that God made us like Himself so that other parts of creation can see what He is like by looking at us and how we act. Since God is not physical, it's not a resemblance in our bodies, but is the immaterial, inside parts of us. Kind of like how family values and habits can be seen among family members. We are all made in the image of God, but sometimes people lie about what God is like when they act in ways that are NOT the image of God, such as cruelty or not being kind and loving.

Let me give you three different aspects of what I found.

Got Questions has a couple of good answers:

What does it mean that humanity is made in the image of God?

www.gotquestions.org/image-of-God.html

What does it mean when God said, “Let Us make man in Our image” (Genesis 1:26)?

www.gotquestions.org/let-Us-make-man-in-Our-image.html

And to my surprise, I really liked the answer I got from Meta AI with the prompt, “*Explain to a child what it means to be made in the image of God*”:

What a wonderful topic!

So, you know how sometimes you might draw a picture of your family or friends? You try to make the drawing look like them, with their same smile, eyes, and hair. It's like a special copy of them.

Well, when the Bible says we're made in the image of God, it means that God created us to be like Him. Not exactly like Him, because He's God and we're humans, but we have some special qualities that are similar to His.

Here are a few things that make us like God:

We can love: Just like God loves us, we can love our family, friends, and even people we don't know. We can show kindness, care, and compassion to others.

We can think and create: God is super creative and wise. He made the whole universe! We can also think, imagine, and create things like art, music, and stories.

We have a conscience: God knows right from wrong, and He wants us to know the difference too. We have a special voice inside that helps us choose good over bad.

We can talk and communicate: God speaks to us through the Bible and in our hearts. We can talk to Him through prayer, and we can communicate with each other using words.

We are special and valuable: God thinks we're so valuable that He sent His own Son, Jesus, to save us. We're like precious jewels to Him!

Being made in God's image doesn't mean we're perfect, though. We still make mistakes and do things we shouldn't. But it means we have the potential to be like God in many amazing ways.

So, remember: you're a special creation, made to love, think, create, and shine like God!

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue

Posted Oct. 2024

The Pope Got It Wrong. Breathtakingly Wrong.

Sue Bohlin reacts to Pope Francis's recent statement that all religions are roads to God, providing a biblical answer to this false teaching.

Recently (9/13/2024) Pope Francis told a Singapore audience of youth from different faiths that all religions are equal, all different paths to God.

Through an interpreter, he said,

“If we start to fight among yourselves and say my religion is more important than yours, my religion is true and yours is not, where would that lead us. It is okay to discuss, because every religion is a way to arrive at God. Analogously speaking, religion is like different languages to arrive at God. But God is God for all. And if God is God for all, we are all sons and daughters of God. ‘But my God is more important than your God.’ Is that true? There is only one God, and each of us is a language, so to speak, to arrive at God. Muslim, Hindu, they are different paths. Understood?”^[1]

As the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church's 1.3 billion adherents, the pope is responsible for speaking truth to his flock. Not only is this statement heretical, it is a slap in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ—Whom the pope presumably worships and serves. If all religions lead to God, why did

Jesus leave heaven to become a human being? Why did He submit Himself to the excruciating suffering of His passion and crucifixion? Why did the sinless, perfect God-man die? What's the point of His resurrection?

No. Different religious paths do not all lead to God. The pope is wrong wrong wrong. Those who believe what he's saying, trusting in their false religions, will remain enemies of God; their sin will forever separate them from God. This breaks my heart. Even as I type this, I pray for God to open the eyes of those embracing this Satanic lie so that they will turn in faith to the one true God.

Those who believe the "all religions lead to God" deception often invoke the story of the six blind Hindus who encountered an elephant. One felt its side and said, "An elephant is a wall." Another felt its leg and said, "An elephant is a tree trunk." A third felt its tusk and said, "An elephant is a spear." The fourth felt its trunk and said, "An elephant is a hose." The fifth felt its tail and said, "An elephant is a rope." The last one felt its ear and said, "An elephant is a fan."

The point of this allegorical story is that each person's encounter and description of the elephant in radically different ways is like the various world religions. None of them should claim to have the corner on truth because they all have different perspectives.

But this view leaves out the larger picture: an elephant is an elephant—not a wall or tree or spear or hose or rope or fan. And the Creator of the elephant has communicated with us the very nature of the "elephant." He has revealed capital-T Truth about reality, and He has been clear in how mankind is to relate rightly to Himself. This blind Hindu story leaves out the very important aspect of revelation, when Someone outside the limitations of our "blindness" as finite creatures, tells us things we cannot know on our own.

Which leads us to the ultimate reason why the Pope is so very wrong. The "Creator of the elephant," Jesus the Son of God, came to earth as a man and made astonishing truth claims about Himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

If all religions led to God, why would Jesus say He is the ONLY way?

He also claimed to be Yahweh, the covenant God of the Old Testament. "Before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58).

He claimed for Himself attributes that are only true of God Himself:

Eternal "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." (John 17:5)

Omnipresent "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." (Matthew 18:20)

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

Sinless "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46)

Accepted worship "And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'" (Matthew 14:33)

Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27-28)

Able to Forgive Sins And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have

been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" (Luke 7:48-50)

Judge of All Men "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice..." (John 5:24-28)

Jesus claimed to be God; He claimed to be the only way to the Father. He backed up these claims by fulfilling prophecy about the promised Messiah. And most phenomenal of all, He said He would die and rise from the dead three days later—and He did it.

We can believe Him when He says He is the only way. We *should* believe Him.

The Pope is massively, terrifyingly wrong. All religions do not lead to God. Jesus is the ONLY way.

1. <https://ethosinstitute.sg/every-religion-is-a-way-to-god> / Accessed 9/17/2024 ?

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/the-pope-got-it-wrong-breathtakingly-wrong/ on September 17, 2024.

What You CAN Say to Someone Who's Grieving

When we [lost our \(believing\) son to suicide](#) last month, we received hundreds of cards and Facebook notes assuring us of people's care and sympathy. What a blessing!

So often, people just don't know what to say in the face of horrific loss and pain, and it's easy to say the wrong thing. One of my favorite-ever blog posts is "[What Not to Say When Someone is Grieving.](#)"

But I want to share ideas on what has been truly comforting and supportive, because some of the comments we received are how "the God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3) blessed us, and I hope you find them helpful for crafting what YOU can say to someone in pain.

Bottom line key: what really comforts and encourages us (because we're still making our way through grief) is communicating LOVE. Nothing encourages like the power of love. If you're really crunched for time, scroll to the end for the two most powerful notes we received.

Cards

I am sad and so sorry for all the pain you are experiencing. I'm praying for your peace in the midst of the anguish. With love for you and appreciation for your faithful witness.

May you both feel the hope that anchors our souls—even in dark days and weeks.

I am so sorry for the grave loss you are suffering. I am lifting you up in prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to

intercede for you in this time when words are not enough. I ask God to make His nearness evident to you in the coming days and that His peace would surround and carry you moment by moment. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

There are no words sufficient to convey my deep sympathy for you. Having said that, I know that Curt is now experiencing what those of us who remain can only look forward to—complete fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and all the saints who have gone before. You both remain in my heart and prayers.

Praying for an extra measure of God's presence and peace in the days ahead.

We love you and we feel your pain and wish we could bear some of it for you. We lift you up to our Father's grace!

We know that Curt is fully healed and rejoicing with Jesus over the indescribable gift of glory! Still, we cannot fully fathom the deep emotions you are going through. Just know you are and will be in our prayers.

Facebook notes

I will be in prayer asking the Lord to tenderly hold you both in His hands and ease your pain and your grief.

May the Holy Spirit minister to you and meet your needs in ways beyond we could even ask or imagine.

My heart is breaking for you. I'm so sorry. Love you all.

May the Lord be so near, may you cherish your wonderful memories with you son, and may the hope of heaven bring comfort in the deep pain of loss.

No words can adequately comfort—but I am so deeply sorry and I pray for sustaining comfort until the promised reunion.

I am heartbroken for your loss but so grateful for your hope

that you will see Curt again.

Oh Sue, words fail. May the peace that passes understanding come to you, Ray and the family quickly.

Words are inadequate in the midst of such tragedy. Love and prayers for you and your family.

Oh dear friends, we are crushed by this news but we know God's grace superimposes us in our most difficult moments. We are praying for you in this difficult time and know your future reunion with Curt will erase this present sorrow.

Oh, Sue! I am weeping with you. I am praying for you right now. May the Lord comfort you as only He can. One day, death will be forever defeated and all will be made new. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

I am asking the Lord to help you feel His presence and strength in tangible ways and that the hope of heaven comforts you. Sending you so much love!

My heart grieves with you, Sue and Ray. May God's loving presence comfort and sustain you as He did for me four years ago when I received similar news about my son. I'm thankful we grieve but not without hope. My prayers are with you now and in the days to come and I send you my love.

We lost our son to suicide two years ago, so when I tell you my heart aches with you I know whereof I speak. I pray that the Lord sends you comfort. I pray that the Lord holds you in his loving arms. I pray He gives you whatever strength you need. I love you sweet sister in Christ.

—

Lord, we ask for Your comfort to envelop our beloved Bohlin family in their time of unimaginable sorrow. Please grant them strength to face each day and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Surround them with love and support, and let them feel Your presence even in the darkest moments.

Help them to find solace in the memories of their son and to lean on one another as they navigate this painful journey. May they feel Your everlasting arms holding them close, providing hope and healing in the days to come.

In Your merciful name, we pray. Amen.

I wish I could give you a huge hug right now. My heart aches for you and Ray.

My heart breaks for you both. May you experience God's supernatural peace surpassing all understanding ... in such an un-understandable moment.

I have no words. Only tears.

Our hearts are breaking for you! God is faithful, yes but this is HARD.

Oh Sue & Ray, what words are there for this? May you be swamped with God's tender mercy. I pray that the structure you have built upon the firm foundation of Christ, day after day & year after year, now be a sanctuary for you. May many take note to see & know that Jesus is enough for unspeakable times.

Devastated & heartbroken for you all. He was such a sweet soul and he will forever have a piece of my heart. Grateful he is in the arms of Jesus and no longer in agony. Praying the Lord's peace washes over your pain.

Oh Sue. My heart is shattered on your behalf. May you be comforted by ways that only the Lord can offer. I love you SO MUCH. I am approaching His throne for you and your family.

I know God is so near and grieving along with you and Ray! I

pray that you can submit all your steps and words to him and let him heal you the only way our amazing God can. I am sending so many hugs.

Oh Sue! I cannot imagine the depth of pain coupled with the hope of heaven. Lord, preserve my dear friends through their deep loss, sustain them with your mighty hand, extend peace and rest as they reflect on sweet memories. Hold them close Lord.

The Most Powerful Notes:

How my heart hurts for you as you bear this great loss. You have been so faithful to love and care for your beloved son all these years. Now you can rest in knowing he is in the arms of Jesus now. May the God of all comfort carry you and sustain you in the difficult days to come, and may He fill you with joyous memories you can cherish in the midst of the grief. You are incredible parents and I'm sure that very few will understand the burden and sacrifice you have carried for so long. Rest now in peace knowing he is with Jesus and your loving work is complete

—

My eyes have been glued to this page for 30 minutes, unsure of how to start such a note,

I know words can fail at such a time, but loving prayer does its most urgent work. You both are loved by so many and I know that heaven's gates are flooded with the prayers of the body of Christ. My prayer tonight is that the God of all comfort would comfort your hurting hearts.

Please know that your tears are mingled with family and friends who love you so. I am thankful to be in that number.

With my note comes my love,

Loving and compassionate words can't *fix* grief, but they most certainly can bring comfort in the hard coldness of the pain of loss. I hope you find this helpful the next time you want to say something that communicates your heart.

This blog post originally appeared at

blogs.bible.org/what-you-can-say-to-someone-whos-grieving/ on
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Suicide Has Hit Our Family

Sue Bohlin shares her heart in the wake of her and her husband Ray's son taking his life.

Last week our beloved 44-year-old son Curt took his life.

He had struggled with severe suicidal depression for 26 years, hating almost every day of his adult life and wanting God to take him home to join his sister Rebecca. His depression and anxiety crippled him to the point of moving back in with my husband and me in 2008. He often shared with us his anguish at life in a fallen world, living in a broken body.

Curt eventually lost most of his hearing as the result of serving on the flight line in the Air Force, but when he was honorably discharged he was told it wasn't bad enough to warrant disability benefits. The loss of his hearing meant losing his touch with music, which he loved. It also meant losing touch with his community in online role-playing games, so he lost his sense of belonging and purpose.

His life was very painful. After staying his hand multiple times over two decades, God allowed him to take his life and

instantly enter the heaven he had longed for, for so very long.

Some themes have been rolling around in my head since the news of his passing.

First, our grief is mitigated by the relief on Curt's behalf that his suffering is over. When I told my husband the news delivered by a police detective, his first words were, "We've known this day might come for 26 years." We have lived with the darkness of his depression and anxiety for a long time, which included the ever-present threat of suicide because he always thought of it as his ticket out.

Second, God's grace is stronger than I have ever experienced in my entire life. It feels like He has tucked me in the shadow of His wing (Psalm 57:1). I have buried a child before; I know the brutality of grief, but God is holding it back. I winced to realize that a hard, heart-wrenching grief awaits me, but then I reminded myself that He will carry me through those days just as He's carrying me now. And I appreciated my friend who gave me "permission to not be okay" when those days come.

Third, the one attribute of God that comforts me more than any other is His sovereignty. A good and loving God is in control. He chose the day of Curt's birth, and He chose the day of his death. We've been clinging to Psalm 139:16, "All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." Our son did not die a single day earlier than God had planned for him. And He prevented Curt from following through on all the times he planned to take his life since the first time when he was 17. God ordained for our daughter Rebecca to live for eight days, and He ordained for Curt to live for 44 years.

Fourth, God keeps pouring out His goodness on us every time we turn around. We have been inundated with people wanting to

help us with everything we need from money for funeral expenses, to food and paper goods, to willing hands to prepare our home for family coming in for his memorial service. And that includes being willing to clean out his room and haul away all the furniture that reeked of body odor. In case you don't know, severely depressed people usually don't care about personal hygiene, and both our son and his room stank from weeks, sometimes months, of going unwashed. It was a source of sorrow and frustration to us, but we loved him in his mental illness and just lived with it.

Fifth, there is the blessing of *not knowing* so many things. I don't know what he was thinking when something flipped and he went from offering to cook lunch for the family visiting us, to leaving our home intent on stepping off an overpass. I don't know what he was thinking or feeling on that walk. I don't know what his last seconds were like, and I am most grateful that we didn't have to identify him at the medical examiner's office. I don't know so many things, and I am so glad. I can leave all those questions in the Lord's hands, and I can ask him when I see him again-if it matters at all by then.

And that brings me to the most important idea that has marked these days: HOPE. Hope is future-facing faith. Not wishful thinking, like "I hope it doesn't rain on my picnic." Biblical hope is certainty. Hebrews 6:19 calls biblical hope "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." God has used this horrible time to reveal that He has been working in the background to strengthen my future-facing faith. When I say I have hope to be reunited with my son, it's not a wish. I am 1000% certain that he is in heaven and that my husband and I, our other son Kevin, and his wife Lauren will join him there.

I had the privilege of leading Curt to put his trust in Jesus Christ when he was three years old, watching him grow in his faith over the years, watching him bear the spiritual fruit that proved his faith was real. I know he's in heaven, because

to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). Our dear friend Dave commented on my Facebook post, "I am heartbroken for your loss but so grateful for your hope that you will see Curt again." That's when I had the lightbulb moment and I replied, "Thanks for using the word HOPE. Future-facing faith. My hope about seeing Curt is as strong as my view of Ray this very minute. Who is sitting three feet from me."

Curt's first week in heaven: it felt like he was just on the other side of the invisible wall separating earth from heaven. Maybe it's the special bond between a mother and the child she bore, maybe it's something spiritual, I don't know. But the reality of my son's new home makes heaven closer to me than it has ever been. My husband Ray has said for years that heaven is more real to me than anyone he knows. Part of it is knowing our baby Rebecca is there, part of it is longing for my new body untouched by polio and cancer.

Curt's suicide is not okay. Murder is sin, even the murder of oneself. But Jesus' statement on the cross, "It is finished," meaning "It is paid in full," covered every one of his sins, including taking the life God gave him. With God's begrudging permission, apparently. I trust the Lord with it all.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/suicide-has-hit-our-family on July 16, 2024.

The Eclipse Declares the Glory of God, v. 2024

Sue Bohlin is very excited to be the path of the upcoming total solar eclipse, where God shows off once again.

“The heavens declare the glory of God,” Psalm 19 tells us. On April 8, 2024, millions of Americans will have an incredible opportunity to see His heavenly glory in a way most of us never have: through a total solar eclipse. On a path running from Texas to South Maine, observers on the ground will see the moon slip in front of the sun, blocking out all its light and dropping the temperature drastically (about 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit) and suddenly.

I am thrilled beyond words that by the grace of God, our home in Dallas, Texas is in the path of totality. All I have to do is go out in our back yard to experience this once-in-a-lifetime event! :::doing the happy dance:::

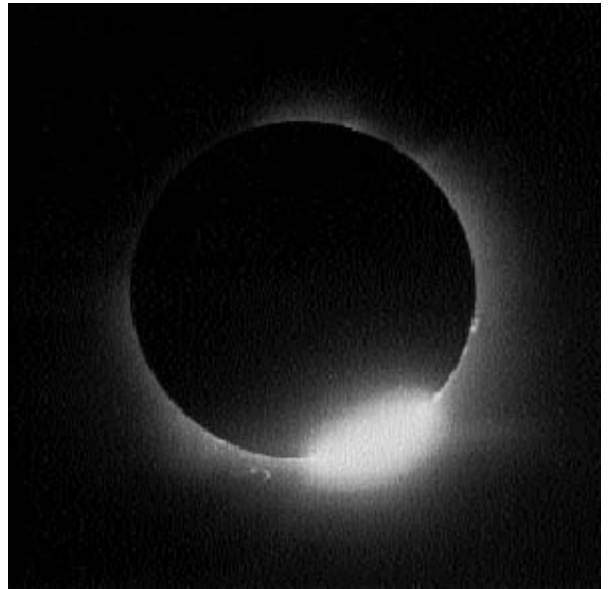
The glory of God isn't just seen, it's *felt* as well. Eclipse-chasers, and even those who have only experienced one total eclipse, report that at the moment of totality (when the moon completely covers the sun, plunging the land into an eerie darkness), people break out with yells and shouts and applause. Many report the hair on the back of their necks standing up. And both locals and visiting astronomers are equally in awe—and often in tears. Like one's first in-person look at the Grand Canyon, it is deeply emotional to be thrilled by something much, much bigger than oneself.

Illustra Media's wonderful DVD *The Privileged Planet*, based on the book by the same name by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards [{1}](#), exposed me to the magnificence of a total solar eclipse. I will never forget the goosebumps at learning that the sun is 400 times farther away than our moon, but it's also 400 times larger. This means that both of these heavenly bodies appear to be the same size to us on Earth. This phenomenal “coincidence” also makes a total eclipse possible.

During an eclipse, **the heavens declare the glory of God** by

allowing us to see things about the sun we wouldn't be able to observe any other way, beautiful and gloriously resplendent. Just before totality we can see "Baily's Beads." Only seen during an eclipse, bright "beads" appear at the edge of the moon where the sun is shining through lunar valleys, a feature of the moon's

rugged landscape. This is followed by the "diamond ring" effect, where the brightness of the sun radiates as a thin band around the circumference of the moon, and the last moments of the sun's visibility explode like a diamond made of pure light. After the minutes of totality, the diamond ring effect appears again on the opposite side of the moon as the first rays of the sun flare brilliantly. These sky-jewelry phenomena are so outside of mankind's control that witnessing them stirs our spirits (even on YouTube!) with the truth of Romans 1:20—"God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."



A total solar eclipse offers so much more, though, than Baily's Beads and the Diamond Ring. At the moment of totality, the pinkish arc of the sun's chromosphere (the part of the sun's atmosphere just above the surface) suddenly "turns on" as if an unseen hand flips a switch. I knew God is very fond of pink because of how He paints glorious sunrises and sunsets in Earth's skies, but those fortunate enough to see a total eclipse can see how He radiates pinkness from the sun itself! **The heavens declare the**

glory of God!

But wait! That's not all! Along with the flare of the sun's pink chromosphere, a rainbow-like band called the "flash spectrum" appears when the sun is viewed through a prism! (You can google this to see pictures. The best ones are copyrighted so I can't show them to you here.) ***The heavens declare the colorful glory of God!***

For the few minutes of totality, the naked eye can see the sun's lovely corona (Latin for crown) streaming out from the sun. We can't see the corona except during an eclipse because looking straight at the sun for even a few seconds causes eye damage, and because the sun's ball



of fire overwhelms the (visually) fragile corona. This is another way that an eclipse allows us to see how ***the heavens declare the glory of God.***

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez noticed details about eclipses that got him excited:

- During a total solar eclipse, the moon is just large enough to block the large photosphere (the big ball of fiery gas), but not so large that it obscures the colorful chromosphere.
- The moon and the sun are two of the roundest measured bodies in the solar system. (Some moons are potato-shaped!) So when the round disk of the moon passes in front of the equally round disk of the sun, the shapes match perfectly.
- He studied all 65 of the moons in our solar system and

discovered that ours are the best planet and best moon for studying the sun during an eclipse. Because the moon fits so perfectly over the sun, its blinding light is shielded, providing astronomers with a view of the sun's atmosphere. We can discern finer details in its chromosphere and corona than from any other planet.

- Being able to study the flash spectrum during a total eclipse enables astro-scientists to determine the chemical makeup of other, distant stars without leaving Earth.

These facts of ***the heavens declare the glory of God!***

Michael Bakich wrote of the 2017 eclipse in *Astronomy Magazine* blog,

This eclipse will be the most-viewed ever. I base this proclamation on four factors: 1) the attention it will get from the media; 2) the superb coverage of the highway system in our country; 3) the typical weather on that date; and 4) the vast number of people who will have access to it from nearby large cities. [\[2\]](#)

I think this is true of the 2024 eclipse as well. Whether you are fortunate enough to be in the path of the total eclipse like me, or will only get to see 75% of the sun's surface covered by the moon (with eclipse glasses, of course!), this extremely important sky event will be proclaiming to everyone that ***the heavens declare the glory of God***. May it make a lasting impression on us all that teaches us more about God's glory!

1. Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, *The Privileged Planet* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2004)

[2.](#)

<http://cs.astronomy.com/asy/b/astronomy/archive/2014/08/05/25-facts-you-should-know-about-the-august-21-2017-total-solar-eclipse.aspx>

This post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/the-eclipse-declares-the-glory-of-god-v-2024/ on Feb. 20, 2024.

Probe's 50th Anniversary Celebration Banquet

☒ On Nov. 4, 2023, we commemorated Probe's 50th Anniversary with a celebration banquet at Dallas' Renaissance Hotel. We are so very grateful for God's goodness and supernatural enabling to serve Him this half-century by sharing biblical worldview and apologetics worldwide!



200 friends gathered in the Malachite Showroom to help us celebrate God's goodness over 50 years of ministry.



Probe President Kerby Anderson read an official proclamation honoring Probe from Texas Governor Greg Abbott.



We were blessed to share video and written endorsements, like this one from former Moody Bible Institute President Erwin Lutzer, who also wrote a book for us.



Dr. Ray Bohlin, a 48-year veteran of Probe and former president of the ministry, presented an overview of what we've been able to do in our 50 years. See a short list below.



The three children of Probe's co-founder, Jimmy Williams-Trey, Todd and Leslie—shared powerful memories of their amazing parents and growing up along with Probe.



Dr. Jim Thames, representing Dallas Theological Seminary, surprised Kerby with a Lifetime Achievement Award from DTS as our chairman of the board, Parker Eng, documented the award.



We were especially honored to be joined by our beloved June Hunt and her friend Kathy. When June founded the Hope Center, the beautiful retreat lodge-like office building housing scores of Christian ministries, she invited Probe to be one of the first to office there.

Some of what Dr. Ray Bohlin shared of the past 50 years:

- Through our Christian Update Forums, we brought biblical worldview to college classrooms as guest lecturers on more than 50 campuses. At least through 1980, we spoke in over 1,600 classrooms, to 70,000 students, with 70% positive to only 7% negative comments. Then we got canceled by administrations who didn't want their students exposed to truth.
- So we launched a radio outreach. Our weekly radio program, still airing after 40 years, has had tens of millions of listeners. They are available as [12-minute podcasts](#) on Probe.org. We launched a second conversational podcast, [Head & Heart](#), in 2020.
- Our website continues to have a literal worldwide impact, being visited by 193 (out of 195) countries in the past year. We offer over 2000 [articles](#) and [answers to email](#). (You might say we were the original "Got Questions.org"?)
- Our staff has taught on every continent except Antarctica (the penguins aren't interested).
- We've taught 180 [Mind Games](#) conferences, both weekend and week-long camps.
- As the world gets darker and the church becomes more like the world than the Word, the need for what Probe offers is greater than ever.

“Do Babies Go to Heaven?”

Do babies and small children go to heaven?

We have lengthy answers to this question [here](#) and [here](#), but [Shane Pruitt](#) provided an especially insightful, excellent answer to this question on [X \(Twitter\)](#):

At 12:50 AM on a Tuesday morning, our ten-year-old son with unique needs went to be Jesus.

So, a statement like this begs the question, "Am I just wishing this to be true, or do I Biblically know this to be true?"

Meaning, is there support in Scripture that God welcomes babies (born and unborn), young children, and those with unique mental needs (meaning they may be older, but have the mind of a child) immediately into Heaven?

I absolutely believe the Bible answers this. Here are Biblical reasons why I know this to be true:

God's Knowledge: The Lord knows every child at conception and values them. They are considered a person, known and loved by God, from the very beginning. (Psalm 139:13 – 16).

God's Declaration: God refers to young children as "innocents". Not that they were perfect or without a sin nature, but they were innocent of the ability to understand the need of repentance and forgiveness. (Jeremiah 19:4).

God's Promise: In Deuteronomy, we find an unbelieving generation of Israelites being prevented from entering the Promised Land, but their children were exempt from that penalty and were able to enter (Deuteronomy 1:39).

God's Possession: He considers all babies to be His. God condemns Israel in Ezekiel 16:21, of the wretched act of child sacrifice. "You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire."

God's Compassion: He has compassion on all little ones and infants, and is not willing that even one of them should perish (Matthew 18:14). His grace covers them, until they realize their need of a Savior.

God's Illustration: He used a child to illustrate what one

must become like to enter His Kingdom (Matthew 18:1 -5). If infants and children would end up in Hell if they died young, He most likely wouldn't use them as an illustration of how to enter the Kingdom.

God's Compliment: He said children were the greatest in His Kingdom (Matthew 18:4).

God's Blessing: Jesus blessed the little children and said the Kingdom of God belongs to them (Mark 9:13 – 16). Jesus typically didn't bless those destined to Hell or promise them the Kingdom, unless He meant it.

David's Assurance: David knew that he would be in heaven forever after death (Ps 23:6). He also had the assurance that his baby (that had died) would be there as well, where they would be reunited. "... I will go to him, but he will not return to me (2 Samuel 12:22 – 23)."

God's Presence: I do not believe in a "soul sleep". When babies, young children, and those with unique needs die; they are with the Lord immediately (2 Corinthians 5:8, Luke 23:43).

God is not silent on this topic. Scripture speaks.

Therefore, you can know with absolute confidence that you did not "lose" your baby, child, or loved one with unique needs. You didn't lose them, because you know exactly where they are. They are perfectly and fully alive with Jesus.

Posted 8/3/2023