

# **“Were Jesus’ Miracles a Demonstration of His Humanity or Deity?”**

I am writing a thesis about Jesus’ dual nature and I would like to know what you think about the miracles Jesus performed. Were they a demonstration of His humanity or deity? I’ve already heard that He performed His miracles as a man who was been used by the Holy Spirit as some preachers today that have the gift of healing. Please give me biblical references.

Great question!

His deity. Only God can do miracles; there’s nothing in our humanness that can do them.

When Jesus exorcised demons, He simply said, “Be gone,” not “In the name of the Father.” When He calmed the sea, He simply said, “Be still,” not “In the name of Yahweh.” When he fed the 4,000 and the 5,000, He simply blessed the food and kept handing it out. Period.

We do see examples of people performing miracles in the Bible, like Peter healing the crippled in man in Acts 3:6. Peter had no power on his own, but said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Jesus never had to appeal to a higher power; He WAS the higher power.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“You’re Overreacting About Harry Potter”**

Dear Ms. Bohlin,

It was with great concern that I read [your article regarding the Harry Potter series](#). You said,

“But there’s one substantial difficulty with the Harry Potter series. They make sorcery and witchcraft enticing to the reader. And that is not consistent with a Christian worldview, where we are called to ‘take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.’ God gives us very strong and clear commands about witchcraft: it is a sin, it is an abomination before God, and the Old Testament penalty for sorcery or witchcraft was death. The proscription against the practice of magic is continued in the New Testament.”

Please know that in Great Britain the state religion is the very Christian Church of England. We can freely talk about God and government at the same time. There is no problem with my son’s school putting on a Nativity play, the Headmistress praying at the school assembly and his teacher teaching about the life of Jesus. England has clergymen from the Anglican (Episcopalian Church in the US) Church in Parliament as representatives. This is a very Christian country and J.K. Rowling would never make a statement about Christ without being eaten alive and her book banned from every school in the country if it was thought to be of the occult.

The book is getting lots of questions in the US for dealing with wizards, but not here. I think that is because England has such a history of King Arthur and Knights, dragons and other lore. One more story about a wizard is not considered to entice children into witchcraft anymore than any other

stories. It is not an issue in the UK. There are few occults in England and no religious right or fundamentalist. The English think the Americans' obsession with Harry Potter and the occult is weird, unless there is the issue of American Christians not being as strong in their faith.

Thank you so much for your insightful letter. The difference between the UK mindset and ours in the U.S. in terms of the King Arthur and wizard mythologies provides a wonderful perspective on the whole Harry Potter phenomenon, and I am indebted to you for helping me see things more globally.

Here in the U.S., the subject of witches and magic is definitely linked to the occult and Satanism (or, at the least, the pagan religion of Wicca), whereas I see how it is probably dismissed as nothing more than mythology in the UK.

Nonetheless, God has still condemned occult practices as a form of idolatry. Perhaps Harry Potter doesn't stir the imagination in that direction in England, but it certainly does here.

But I hear what you're saying about how the English could look at us as weird for our reaction to Harry.

Thank you for taking the time to write!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Help Me Understand Rewards**

# in Heaven”

Dear Sue,

I want to ask about different rewards in heaven. In some classes I've been told that everyone is equal in heaven and there are no levels. Other classes seem to indicate that it is the way you live on earth and the deposits you make in heaven on the rewards you receive. I know that believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior guarantees your salvation, but I am a little confused on the levels in heaven and what this means. I've even been told that it is just different people's interpretation. Please help me understand!

The confusion usually comes from people confusing the differences between SALVATION and REWARDS. Salvation is a free gift, but rewards are earned by our works after we are saved. No one's works will ever earn them salvation—the only ones that count are the ones we perform after becoming a Christian. Salvation is a present reality, but our rewards will be given in the future, in heaven.

They will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ (you may hear some people call it by the Greek word, *bema* [bay-ma] ), when our works (NOT our sins, which were paid for at the Cross) will be tested and judged.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.” Similarly, Romans 14:10, 12 says, “We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of God. . . and each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 describes what will happen: God will test our works by the fire of motive. If we did things in His strength and for His glory, they will pass through the refining fire and emerge as gold, silver and costly stones. If

we did things in our own flesh and for our glory or for the earthly payoff, we will have gotten all our strokes on earth, and the works will be burned up, not making it through the testing “fire.” (Those works are referred to as wood, hay and straw, which are easily consumed by flame.)

There are various kinds of rewards, but the Bible doesn’t give a lot of information.

Matthew 10:41 talks about a prophet’s reward, a righteous person’s reward, and a disciple’s reward.

Then there are crowns:

- James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 refer to the “crown of life” for those who endure, remaining faithful under trials and persecution. (Some have called this the martyr’s crown.)
- 2 Timothy 4:7-8 refers to the “crown of righteousness” for those who loved the Lord’s coming and lived holy lives in anticipation of His return.
- 1 Peter 5:4 promises the “crown of glory” to those who shepherd God’s flock with faithfulness.
- Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19 refer to beloved believers that Paul calls his “crown of exultation (or rejoicing).”

All these crowns use the Greek word *stephanos*, which is the crown made of foliage and placed on the head of the victor of a competition.

But it can be made of precious metals as well. Rulers’ crowns symbolize dominion and authority over people, and sure enough, God’s rewards include dominion and authority:

Revelation 2:26—“He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” This goes along with one of the parables in Luke 19:17 where the master

rewards the servant who was a faithful steward of his money; he says, "because you were faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities."

Revelation 2:17—In this book written to people undergoing persecution, Jesus promises, "To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name, written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."

We can also lose our rewards (2 John 8), and it's possible for someone to take our crown (Revelation 3:11). So, no wonder God calls us to be faithful and persevering all the way to the end!

I'm so glad you asked this, because I've heard people say, "If those who become Christians as small children end up in the same place (heaven) as those who trust Christ moments before they die, then why spend your whole life serving God?" That's because they don't understand that what happens at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be very, very different for these two people. Our lives in heaven will be determined by the choices, sacrifices, and actions of earth. Some will be very wealthy, and others will be "barely there." 1 Corinthians 3:15 says that the deeds of some people will be burned up, and they will suffer loss; they will be saved, but only as those escaping through the flames. It will be like watching your house burn to the ground with every single thing you own in it. . . lost. On the other hand, lots of people will see their works shown for the high quality that they are, and they will be rewarded exceedingly well because God is so generous.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

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# “I Am So Afraid—What If There Is No Heaven?”

I am writing to you because I am very concerned and don't know where to turn for help. I am a Christian and have always felt I had a great deal of faith. I lost my father, my mother and an older sister over the years – and my faith sustained me during those traumatic times.

Recently our 38 year old daughter died quite suddenly. I am just overwhelmed with grief – and I believe the medications given her caused her sudden death. She had kidney problems – but her doctor was aware of that, and the med he gave her should not have been given to her because of her kidney problems.

Now I seem to have lost my faith completely. I cry and want so much to know she is OK and that she is not sad and lonely as we are here without her. I have begun to question if there really is a Heaven? I read recently that Heaven is something Christians invented to take away their fear of death. Is this true? I also read a book called *Embraced by the Light* by Betty Eadie, and it really upset me. She claimed to have had an out of body experience where she went to Heaven, and then she wrote a whole book about what heaven is like – and the different levels there, and how one may stay at a lower level, or advance to a higher level.

I am so afraid – what if there is no Heaven? Or if there is, is my daughter sad and lonely because none of her family are there with her? I just don't know anymore what to believe. I try to pray – but find no peace. I am so afraid.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am so very, very sorry to hear of your tremendous loss. You must be in such shock you don't know how to "do life" at this point.

As a mother who has also lost a daughter, I want to encourage you in how the Lord comforted me. Most especially, I am comforted by the truth of Psalm 139:16—"All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be."

\_\_\_\_\_, your daughter didn't live one day less than God intended for her to live from before the foundations of the earth. It FEELS like a premature death to us who are left behind, but no one is more powerful than God, and HE is the one who determines the length of our days. So even though it is hugely painful and grievous, and even though it's tempting to blame the medications, she died on the day God knew she would die and planned for her to die. Not a day sooner, and not a day later.

Secondly, Jesus said He came from heaven (John 6:51). It is a real place. If there is no heaven, then Jesus lied. If Jesus lied, then he was not the holy Son of God, and His death was meaningless. If His death was meaningless, then none of us have any hope. But our hope is REAL and TRUE! He died to make it possible for us to be united with God and reunited with our believing loved ones.

Paul said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6,8). If your daughter trusted Christ, she is immersed in a living sea of light and love and glory, worshiping the Lord Jesus and enjoying the freedom that comes from being released from this fallen, decaying world. When she "graduated" from your womb to your arms, did you ever worry that she was lonely for the comfort of the dark, warm place inside you? I bet not! <smile> She was in a far, far better place when she was born. When people are in heaven, it's like graduating from the womb to our mother's arms only way, WAY



better. Being with the Lord is so much better than this earth that we can't even begin to imagine it, any more than the pre-born infant can imagine what it's like to be nestled in her mother's arms, to look in her eyes, to see a glorious sunset, to listen to a symphony. To eat ice cream! To love and love back. . . all those things cannot be imagined in the womb, but they await the baby, just as the joys of heaven await us if we have trusted Christ as our Savior.

I want to suggest to you that you read Joni Eareckson Tada's wonderful book *Heaven*, because it will make you much more familiar with heaven and it will greatly comfort your heart. Unlike Betty Eadie's book [\*Embraced by the Light\*](#), Joni's book is TRUE and based completely on the Bible.

I pray you will know the warmth of God's comfort in growing measure as you grieve the loss of your daughter. One of the things that makes heaven so real to me is knowing that my daughter and my parents are there. I pray the realness of heaven will grow for you as well.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Who Are You to Say Who the TRUE God Is?”**

Who I am is irrelevant and this letter is meant with no intent on harming anyones feelings, as the matter of religious preferences is a very delicate one. I have to say that I was offended by [the advice given to a couple taking care of a](#)

[young Wiccan](#) . I came across this part, "tell her about what the TRUE God is like." Now in all fairness who are you to say who the true God is??? Are you saying that all other religions are wrong? Maybe I am jumping to conclusions. This next sentence also grabbed my attention: "Those who refuse to acknowledge a personal devil are more vulnerable to spiritual warfare than anybody." Now I realize that there is not one ultimate devil in Wicca, but there is one in Christianity. Because this girl does not share your beliefs or even those of her parents, there is no need to tell this as advice to someone. The people of Wicca believe that evil is created by man-kind, but they still know it is there and try to use their gifts to do good and never harm anyone or thing. If a Wiccan uses their power to give anything bad or take anything good they are forbidden to use the craft and are no longer allowed in their coven to practice The Craft. Also I feel the need to point out that you do not need to practice 'Magik' to be Wiccan.

I have friends of all faiths, Christians, including people from Pentecostal, Mormon and Orthodox churches, Muslims, people from the Jewish faith and to no surprise I do know many Wiccans. I have to say that we all talk and share our different views on religion and I have never heard any one try to convince someone that their God is the true God or that because they do not believe in "Satan" they are "more vulnerable to spiritual warfare" than anybody. I just want you to think more clearly about what you are writing. I do not want to start an argument, I just wanted you to hear my views. I am sure I am not the only one who thinks this. One more thing, you also said, "We believe that there is one God." Well this is obvious as you are Christian as I believe it, but not everyone does think there is one God. Rather than trying to convert this girl shouldn't this couple have been told to tolerate her religious beliefs and help to practice it safely and carefully with the respect that she deserves. This girl does not have Christian beliefs, it should not be put upon her

**to change her mind and her beliefs. By all means use your faith to help people not change people.**

Dear friend,

If you didn't like what we say on our website, you're probably not going to like my reply either. I am not seeking to offend you or anyone else, but it makes sense you would take offense given your worldview.

The root of the problem in the difference between our position and what you believe is our extremely different perception of religion and truth. I would guess that you see these issues like a restaurant menu where everyone can choose whatever they prefer, and it's inappropriate to tell the other diners that their choice of an entrée is wrong. Our perception of religion and of truth is more like a team of doctors looking at a patient's symptoms; when it's a matter of life and death, they'd better get the diagnosis right instead of merely settling for personal preference! ("Oh, it looks like acne to me." "Well, I think it's eczema, but you can call it acne if you want." "I know a melanoma when I see one, and this is skin cancer!" "Naw, cancer's too harsh a diagnosis, nobody likes to hear that, so I'm gonna stick with acne.")

Just as cancer will kill a person and thus a doctor does him no favors to tell him anything except the painful truth, our worldview is that man-made religions lead to spiritual death and only one—a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ—leads to life. We don't base this simply on our preference, but on historical evidence that God has spoken to us through His word and through Jesus Christ.

I know you were concerned at my advice to the couple who were caring for a girl who was dabbling in Wicca. If all religions were equally valid, then my advice would certainly be off-base. But we are staking our lives on the belief that they are not. For this couple to tolerate her religious beliefs when

they are completely committed to the ultimate truth of Christianity would be like seeing a cancerous lesion on her skin and “tolerating” her skin condition by ignoring it. What appears to be kindness would end up being the cruelest thing in the world when they knew what would save her.

I know our worldview is unpopular in today’s world, but we are convinced it is far more in alignment with reality than the one that says “everybody do what they want, it’s all okay.” We believe it’s not okay.

It leads to a kind of spiritual death far worse than cancer.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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## **“It’s OK to Act Out Because Christ Has Already Forgiven Us?”**

I have a question that I believe you can help me answer. I am a Christian who struggles with homosexual desires. Since I have accepted Christ as my Lord and savior, I no longer regard myself as gay or homosexual, but instead I claim the new identity I have in Christ. I have a friend who is also a Christian as far as I know, and I do believe he is, who also has these same desires. He doesn’t believe that homosexuality is a sin, and has bought into the pro-gay theology. I don’t know if he really believes that homosexuality is not a sin, or if he just wants to believe it is not, I can’t judge his heart, but he presented me with an argument that I have a hard time with. He said that even if homosexuality were a sin, as a

Christian, covered by the righteous sacrifice of Christ, he could continue to practice that lifestyle in harmony with his faith, and because of the work of Christ on the cross, it really wouldn't matter. In conjunction with what Paul said "all things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial", I am having a hard time refuting that argument. Yet I don't believe that he is correct. Am I wrong, do I not understand the power of grace? If so, then why shouldn't I act on my desires and be perfectly comforted in the knowledge that God has already paid the necessary price for my actions? Thank you for your time.

I salute you and honor you for taking the position you have, choosing to take the identity of a child of the King rather than someone who is at the mercy of his desires. That is a HUGE step toward freedom from those desires, and towards healing!

I do share your concern for your friend's rationalization, for that is what it is. Let me share an image that has really touched me from the heart of my friend Randy Thomas, the former director of Living Hope, a ministry to those leaving homosexuality ([www.livehope.org](http://www.livehope.org)). He says that when he is tempted to indulge in a sin, especially of a sexual nature, he imagines himself at the foot of the cross looking up at the Lord Jesus, Who is suffering a horrible death for him. If he allows himself to think, "This sin doesn't matter, You're going to die for it anyway," it's like picking up the nail and the sledgehammer and pounding it into His body.

Another friend suggested an amazing concept to me. Even though Christ's death was 2000 years in the past, He died for all sins, past present and future. All of my sins were future at that point. That means that every time I choose to sin, I am making Him pay for yet another sin that He didn't have to, and every time I choose NOT to sin, that means that's a sin He didn't have to experience and take onto Himself for me. So, by my choices today, I can affect the number and burden of the

sins He suffered and paid for 2000 years ago. Isn't that astounding?

Concerning the power of grace: Paul already answered that very question in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Seeing grace as the license to sin is a slap in the face of our Savior. And not seeing homosexual practice as sin is an act of self-deception. Here's a question to pose to your friend: what is glorifying to God about homosexual practice? Consider the biology of sex, for starters. Consider the spiritual meaning of sex between a husband and wife (Ephesians 5), as well. There are very good reasons God limits sex to heterosexual marriage.

Concerning the argument "all things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial," people have to do some serious theological gymnastics to get around God's condemnation of homosexual sin. There is no way it is permissible because every act of homosexual sin, just like every act of heterosexual sin, is immoral, and God stands against all immorality. Scripture is very, very clear that God's intent for sex is restricted to within the marriage of one man and one woman, and everything else outside of those confines is sin. Joe Dallas' fine work *A Strong Delusion* is an excellent answer to the pro-gay theology that he understands well because he was an apologist for it before repenting of it. I heartily suggest it to you and to your friend. In fact, that book was the reason one of MY friends finally made the decision to leave lesbianism behind—it was such a powerful statement of truth.

I do hope this helps clear things up. I pray that God will overwhelm you with the peace that comes with His truth, and you will enjoy the confidence of trusting Him no matter what others say.

In His grip,

# **“Why Don’t You Respect Others’ Beliefs?”**

How come you can’t accept other religions and beliefs instead of always trying to convert them to Christianity? I was brought up in a Christian family and was always taught that you should accept others for who they are instead of forcing them to be how YOU want them to be.

I personally am an atheist and have told my family that since I was old enough to fully understand my own feelings on religion, and my own family have not tried to convert me as they respect what I think and feel. But when I read your replies to people’s e-mails you try to convert people you don’t even know. I fully respect your beliefs and thought that since you were Christians you could respect others. I am not trying to be disrespectful but I have friends from almost every religion in the world and yet even when we come together we never try to (for lack of a better word) force, our views on each other instead we respect each other. I am sorry if I am sounding rude when I say this but would you please email me back with your views on this and I will gladly read them and attempt to understand them.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I very much appreciate the respectful tone of your letter.  
Bless you!

There is a difference between accepting others for who they

are and forcing them to be someone you want them to be. I am not aware of anything on our website that attempts to force anyone to do anything; we do OFFER the way to know God through a personal relationship with His son Jesus, and we do OFFER a Christian perspective on many topics, but I would be grateful if you would help me see any place where we're forcing anything on anyone. Especially since everyone who reads our website freely chooses to come here and freely chooses to continue reading once they discover our position.

We don't have the power to convert anyone. We will do our best to explain why Christianity makes the most sense because it's true, and you have no doubt discovered that we have a lot of confidence in our position. But everything we say comes from a deep understanding that God created us with the ability to choose. We understand the power of influence, and we try to use whatever influence we have by way of what we have learned about the evidence for Christianity being true to help others understand what is right and true.

Many people think that respecting others' views and beliefs is the same thing as affirming that they are all equally valid, and we can't do that. For instance, what if you met someone who believed that red lights mean go and green lights mean stop. Would you respect that view? Really? Or would you do your best to convince the person believing it that it is a wrong and dangerous view to hold?

That's what we do. We believe that God has spoken to our world through the Bible and through the person of Jesus Christ, and thus we can know truth because God has communicated it to us. And those who believe differently from what God has specifically said, hold wrong and dangerous views because it can keep them separated from God forever.

I hope you understand us better now, even if you don't agree. And if you get to the point where your life seems pointless and meaningless—because if there is no God there is no



meaning-giver—then we'll be here to help you.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“I’m a Feminist and a Christian, and I Didn’t Like Your Article.”**

Concerning your article “[The Ten Lies of Feminism](#).”

I believe John Gray has been divorced 3 times. Surely not an expert on women and men’s relationships that you would like the reader to believe.

Remember that before it says women submit to your husbands—it says husbands and wives submit to EACH other.

You said “It’s important for men to experience personal significance by making a mark on the world. But God calls women to trust Him in a different area: in our relationships. A woman’s value is usually not in providing history-changing leadership and making great, bold moves, but in loving and supporting those around us, changing the world by touching hearts. Once in a while, a woman does make her mark on a national or global scale: consider the biblical judge Deborah, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Indira Ghandi. But women like these are the exception, not the rule.”

Please be aware that besides women, there are few people of color—men AND women—who have gone on to be exceptional in a

publicly recognized way. It is not because they are in the "roles" God ordained them to be, but because of the man made white patriarchal society that has oppressed and dominated them.

In the spirit of the Lord who spent so much time with the downtrodden, and rebuffed the Pharisees for only giving lip service to the word, I am careful to not just "accept" what has been instilled as doctrine, but question and question again as God encourages us to do. God is not about oppression.

I could take on everything you have written, but the great thing about this country is our freedom of speech.

I'm a feminist—and a christian.

Just a couple of thoughts in response to your letter. . .

First, citing something John Gray said doesn't mean we endorse everything about the man. Even a broken clock is right twice a day!

Secondly, concerning mutual submission: if you check Ephesians, it does not say that husbands and wives are to submit to each other. The context is that Paul is writing to the entire Ephesian church, and he is telling the Ephesian believers to have an attitude of submission toward each other. The phrase "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" can mean "Everyone submit to everyone" or "some submit to others." It is not addressing husbands and wives. Some relationships are a one-way sort of submission, and this would include wives submitting to husbands, children submitting to parents, employees submitting to employers, and church members submitting to church elders. If you try to turn Eph. 5:21 into a doctrine of mutual submission within marriage, then you have to extend it to the other relationships as well, and common sense tells you that won't (and doesn't!) work. I don't know if you have children yet, but I assure you, Paul isn't telling me as a mom to submit to my kids! ::::smile:::: And I don't know

if you are married yet, but I can assure you that submission to a man who loves, cherishes, respects and supports me, and who leads me as he is led by Christ, is not in the least burdensome but a true joy.

Third, I certainly won't argue that women have been disrespected and oppressed women throughout time. I see this as a horrible consequence of the Fall. But as a Christian, I believe that God defines power and influence and what it means to be exceptional very differently from the way the world does, and I believe that women have been very powerful in ways that the feminist mindset refuses to acknowledge. I respect your identification as both a Christian and a feminist, but please be aware that it is easy to let the world (read: feminist thought) squeeze you into its mold so that you see things from a worldly perspective instead of a biblical perspective. To use a phrase like "man made white patriarchal society that has oppressed and dominated them" tells me that you have bought into the feminist perspective. May I suggest that the evil is not patriarchy, but the sinful abuse of power within patriarchy?

You are right, "God is not about oppression." He is about freeing the captives through Jesus Christ, not through man-made political systems and philosophy. Jesus was absolutely radical in [His respect for, treatment of and elevation of women](#), and when people follow the Bible's actual mandates they move from oppressing others to true freedom and celebration of others' dignity, abilities, gifts and calling.

Sincerely,

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“Saying Someone Else’s Path is Wrong Misses the Mark”**

Firstly let me say, I read your site with interest. Secondly I come from a VERY religious background and spent my formative years attending Sunday School, church, youth fellowship etc.

(I have a very strong set of moral beliefs but they revolve around personal responsibility, honesty, integrity and REVENGE – not upon blindly following the words of others.)

In all that time I was treated with nothing but contempt (I never did fit in – yes, I do love thrash metal). This is a source of much anger to me.

I have never gained ANYTHING from worship or religion, if god existed he never would have let half the things happen in my life/family that have happened, therefore, I have rejected him.

I feel fine, better for it in fact and I think that for me at least, I have chosen the correct path. Maybe your choice is right for you but to say that someone else’s is wrong (just because you believe it to be so) is nonsense. Basically, I feel you miss the mark.

Still, that’s your personal choice and as such that’s your right.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

When bad things happen to people, I have to admit that is a very powerful argument against the existence of God, or at least against the goodness of God.

However, all of us at Probe have been convinced that the evidence that God truly exists and that there is a purpose beyond the horrible things that happen, is greater than the

weight of the argument of pain and suffering. Personally, I believe that the shame and contempt that "church people" heap on those who don't fit their mold, like yourself, makes God both angry and extremely grieved. Since the Bible says God made us in His image, then we're supposed to reflect what He is like to the world and most especially, to others who are also made in His image. When people treat others with contempt, they are telling a lie about what God is like, and I think none of us understands the depth of His anguish about that.

I think I understand where you're coming from in terms of wanting to castigate us for saying that someone else's path is wrong since it is different from ours. That would, indeed, be an arrogant and revolting position to take if it didn't matter because there is no God and thus no purpose in life, no afterlife, and no ultimate meaning. On the same plane, I guess, as saying that someone is wrong for choosing Neapolitan ice cream because chocolate is right.

However, if God has truly spoken and revealed true truth to us, and if He determines what is the right path and the wrong path because He is God and He has the right to do that, then simply agreeing with what He says is neither arrogant nor revolting.

I wish you peace, and I pray for you the ability to sift through what you learned when you were young and sort out what was true from what was merely man's teaching and from the pain you received and understandably rejected. I pray that somehow, God will communicate to you the tears HE cried because of the way you were treated. He made you, He loves you, and He died for you. You were never supposed to experience contempt.

Cordially,

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“Is the Eucharist the Literal Body and Blood of Christ?”**

**I have frequent discussions with my friend, who is Catholic, about our beliefs and one of the things that comes up a lot is the Eucharist. She believes that when the priest blesses the bread and wine the spirit of Jesus goes into them. She also gives me John 6:27-58. Is it literal or not?**

This is such a huge issue with grave theological disagreements that we cannot and will not be able to solve. But here are some thoughts that may help.

First, concerning your question about the literalness of the Lord's statements in John 6: When He says, “Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53), does He really mean, “Tear off a chunk of My arm or leg with your teeth and chew Me up”? Furthermore, if partakers literally eat the body and blood of the Lord, it is broken down during digestion, but God has promised that His Holy One would never see decay (Acts 2:27).

In the same chapter, when He says He is the bread of life, does He mean He is made of grain and water and yeast? We also need to look at all the other “I am” statements in the book of John and ask, Does He mean those literally as well? When He says He is the light of the world (ch. 8), is He claiming to be the sun? When He says He is the door (ch. 10), is He saying He's made of wood and has a doorknob? When He says He is the good shepherd (ch. 10), does it mean He gave up carpentry to keep sheep on Israel's mountainsides? When He says He is the vine (ch. 15), is He saying He's green and leafy?

There is a lot of very important and deep symbolism in the

book of John that gives us insight into the spiritual truths the Lord Jesus was trying to communicate about the nature of spiritual reality. We need to be careful when we say we take the Bible literally. Yes, we do—in the places where it's intended to be taken literally. But when a metaphor is used, we need to read it that way.

Secondly, in terms of the nature of communion:

There tend to be three positions on the nature of communion, or “the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20). One is that the bread and wine are mystically changed into the actual body and blood of Jesus in a process called “transubstantiation.” A second position is that the bread and wine (or, in many churches, grape juice) are merely symbols of His body and blood. A third position is that the bread and wine are not chemically or supernaturally transformed, but they are still more than mere symbols: that the real presence of the Lord Jesus is *in* and *around* and *through* these tangible elements of His table.

We don’t have an official position on communion at Probe, but I will tell you that personally, I have held all three positions at various times and have landed on the third. I believe that part of the Lord’s grace to us corporately and individually is this gift of something physical and tangible that is a touch point between the physical realm and the spiritual realm, much as His body was that touch point between heaven and earth while He walked among us.

I hope this helps.

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