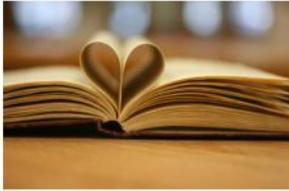


Stories



We all love to tell stories! We have favorite stories that we love to tell the children and sometimes even to the adults. Some of them are part of the Biblical Narrative.

For instance, there's the one about the farmer who built this huge ship, even though he had no knowledge of how to build it, then he loaded it with all kinds of animals that we have no idea where they might have come from and then proceeded to sail this ship around on the planet that now was covered completely with water even though he had no knowledge of captaining the ship now that he built it nor do we know where all that water came from.

Then there is the one about the 80 year old guy who decided to guide his family and a million others across the desert because they were having a hard time with their home owners association, in their travels they came across this large body of water that there was no way to get around, so the guy took the big stick that he was carrying and split the water so that all the people could walk to the other side of the body of water and they didn't even get their feet wet.

The next one is about this kid, probably 12 years old who decided that he needed to engage in battle with this giant who was maybe 3 to 4 times his size and the kids weaponry was going to be a pocket full of rocks. Other armament was offered to him but being 12 it didn't really fit. Off he went with a stick and a sling shot and surprisingly he defeats the giant and everybody is happy and emboldened.

Finally, there is this guy who is supposed to go to "The Big City" and tell the inhabitants that they are "Really Bad People" in hopes that they will take his message to heart. He's not too keen on that concept and decides not to do it but while sailing on this cruise ship a huge storm comes up and will soon sink the ship the guy tells every one about his circumstances and they decide to throw him overboard. Miraculously some large aquatic creature swallows him without hurting him in any way and then regurgitates him on the shore which encourages him to fulfill his assignment. The people take him to heart, much to his chagrin and he has words with his assigner but that doesn't go well either.

Ya still with me? The Bible is filled with "Stories" and many of them include events that are difficult to swallow but as a group, Christians say that the Bible is the "Inerrant Word of God" and that puts us in a quandary. Science says that much of this stuff couldn't possibly happen, human nature says you might be looking for a long time to find someone that naive to follow through on such an assignment. Yet, there are the stories as incredible as they are we hope that they are true but if we were challenged on any of them, how vehemently would we defend them?

We believe things for a number of reasons, sometimes because of "sensory evidence" such as, "The Sun will come up", "The Ground will be solid here", "If you jump up, you will come down" those conclusions come as a result of past experience. Other reasons for belief may be as a result of someone of great intelligence, ability or authority you trust but this does mean surrendering your belief system into the hands of another. Opinion of others through polls and surveys have often influenced the beliefs of those outside of the poll. Much of what we believe even in our day to day world is driven by what is referred to as "Motivated reasoning" and is actually made up of wishes, hopes, fears and an inclination to twist the facts to conform to our prevailing beliefs. The results may resemble rational thinking but in

the end the conclusion will support what we want to believe. That's what makes today's culture so difficult to deal with, because the volume of belief systems is myriad, the pressures to choose the "Right" one is intense and the substantiation for choosing one is limited, troublesome, perplexing and challenging.

I have recounted four of the most familiar Biblical Stories and each one of them contain material which is not easily substantiated in scientific knowledge and whether you do or don't believe it may not have much of an impact on your future, even though all of them testify to the ability and glory of the God that we choose to worship. However, we are entering the season when the "Story of Stories" will be told, why all the other stories were told and describes what your "Eternal Existence" could be like if you choose to believe this one.

This is the story of a Man who spent 3 to 3½ years wandering around a piece of real-estate about the size of New Jersey and in His wanderings He healed an unnumbered throng of individuals, attracted thousands (maybe millions), instructed those thousands along with 12 guys, reanimated three people and as a result of all His efforts they executed Him. However, that's not the end of the story!! Just as the grave couldn't hold those three people, it could not hold this Man and He returned to reassure the men who had promoted His teachings and feared for their lives.

On the surface this story may not be any more believable than any of the four afore mentioned ones but that isn't really true. There is prodigious documentation around the life and existence of this man and eye witnesses that were willing to contribute their lives to testify of who He is and what He is, as luck would have it their lives were lost in this effort. If they were willing to give up their lives to defend this Man's character, that certainly would assert the validity of their claims.

As I have described earlier, there have been challenges to this account and because this event occurred many years ago and much of this man's assertions rely on another deity that much of the population deny the existence of, if you proclaim this man's accomplishments, in many instances you will be dismissed or ejected and if you persist you will be put away as being ludicrous or feebleminded.

So it goes, the "Belief System" that you bank your "Eternal Life" on is the product of thousands (maybe millions) of ludicrous, feebleminded and naive people who have passed their beliefs down throughout history to you. Do you believe that? If you are unwilling to advocate your beliefs to others, then it must be you do, but there are many throughout history and even today who risk their lives daily to encourage others in their beliefs.

HE IS RISEN!! Let everyone know who He is and what He has done for you. Never mind the consequences others weren't worried!!