

## Why Would Anyone Leave Heaven

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The earth has many attractions that are costly, many that are pleasurable, and many that are truly beautiful. People have risked their very lives in the pursuit of one of Earth's treasures, and some many have attained that prize they've set their hearts on, leaving behind them castles, universities, symphonies, and priceless masterpieces of architecture art and sculpture. The cruel irony is that too often the person who achieves the prize dies before he can enjoy his success.

Many poets saw this. The Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, was one: "The worldly things men set their hopes upon/  
Turn ashes, or they prosper, and anon,/Like snow upon the desert's dusty face/  
Lighting a little hour of two, is gone."

Robert Frost said it even more succinctly: "Nothing gold can stay." And that is true not only for earth's treasures, but even the best of us. The Swan of Avon usually says it best: "Golden lads and girls all must,/ Like chimney sweepers, come to dust." He said it well, but Shakespeare didn't live to be 60.

Perhaps the most searching of the authors exploring this subject was Solomon. His eloquent tract, *Ecclesiastes* explores this enigma and ends with the well known sad note: "Vanity of vanities; All is vanity and vexation of spirit." He's referring to our earthly human life "under the sun."

And for many of us ordinary working class people, life is an obstacle course dealing us one trial after another, with perhaps a little weekend happiness, "if the fates allow." So why would anyone leave Heaven's bliss to take on our "vale of tears?" But Jesus did just that.

According to the Bible, Jesus agreed to leave the bliss of an eternity with God, and be born in a vulnerable human body so he could take upon himself and pay the penalty for all of mankind's sins. Literally, he became sin, enduring all our evil, agony, fear, to give us his righteousness, for the asking." The question is "Why?"

Paul has it in one of his letters, “Consider this Jesus, who *for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame,” (Heb 12:2.) opening the way for the wondrous promise in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, (us,) that He gave His only begotten son; that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

I think Jesus looked down at the strife, confusion and wreckage of human life on earth. Or perhaps he read *Ecclesiastes* on the hopeless condition of human life, and out of pure compassion and, with amazing grace, said “Yes,” to his father’s unbelievable solution to the humanly unsolvable human equation. That is truly “amazing grace.”

Considering the chaos now raging between Israel and Iran, forces one to become a believer, not in the death-dealing tactics of the Ayatollahs, who preach mainly hate and revenge and are Hell-bent on A-bombing Israel at the first opportunity, but instead to believe in John 3:16.

Thomas Hardy describes humanity’s plight well in his poem “Channel Firing,” where the ghost of a fallen soldier, awakened by the roar of “gunnery practice out at sea.” sums it up to another ghost in the next coffin:

“Just as before we went below/  
The world is like it used to be/  
Mad as hatters,  
they do no more for Christie’s sake/  
Than we who are helpless in such matters.”  
That this is not the judgment day/  
For some of them is a blessed thing,  
Or else they’d have to scour Hell’s floor/  
For so much threatening.”

Truly Jesus offers us a cross road in our journey we’d be wise to take. Things still look pretty grim down here.

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