



The Same Gospel

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<https://peacefulscience.org/articles/confident-faith-science-3/>



We live in a scientific world, one that looks to science as the only reliable path to public truth. In this world, where do people of faith look for confidence? In this moment, many look to scientific arguments for God, and scientific arguments against evolution. We hope these arguments will guard our faith and convince the skeptic. But is this confidence proper? Is it really secure?

In the centuries preceding modern science, and to this day, Christians found confident faith another way, outside of science, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The one “sign” that Jesus offered skeptics, the Resurrection was a miracle that left evidence that persists to this day. Could this same Gospel be our confidence now?

The Gospel's Sameness

The Gospel story is haunted by a mysterious power that reaches people from all times, cultures, statuses, and personalities. I understand this as evidence of a living God, continuing his infallible work in history. The Gospel is an ancient story through which a living God reveals himself. The unflinching sameness of the Gospel through millennia should encourage confidence.

This same Gospel echoes through thousands of years of Jewish and Christian thought and experience. It is found in prophecy, centuries before Jesus' birth. This is the same Gospel of which Isaiah writes around 700 BC (Isa. 52:13-53:12). I would read his songs in junior high, about a suffering servant that bears the sins of the world. Jesus is this servant. This is the same Gospel of which Daniel spoke around 600 BC. In high school, I would read his 70-weeks prophecy that foretold the year an anointed prince would come to bring everlasting righteousness. Jesus is this prince (Dan. 9:24-26).

In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, this same Gospel turns the course of history. Tearing in two, from top to bottom, the dividing

curtain that separates us from God (Heb. 10:20; Mt. 27:51), he reorders our world and becomes our cornerstone.

In the early church, this is the same Gospel of which Paul writes in his letters. He declares that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures; he was buried, but then arose three days later, and was seen by many (1 Cor. 15:3-7). This is the same Gospel that, without political power, spread with unreasonable success in the first few generations across the globe. This is the same Gospel that St. Augustine wrote about in his Confessions in 400 AD. I read his witness of Jesus during my first year of college and recognized my own faith to be one with his.

In our modern world, this is the same Gospel of which the great scientist Pascal wrote in the 1650s. In high school, I read Pascal's Thoughts, his version of *More than a Carpenter*, and saw my future as a confessing scientist. This is the same Gospel of which C. S. Lewis wrote in 1950. In elementary school, I read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, recognizing the great lion Aslan as Jesus incarnate, working out Narnia's redemption. This is the same Gospel of which Lesslie Newbigin wrote in 1995. As a professor, I would read his Proper Confidence and see again that Jesus is our only path to confident faith. This is the same Gospel of which Dr. Francis Collins wrote in 2006. I would read his story, *The Language of God*, in graduate school and recognize his path to Jesus as the same as mine. This is the same Gospel that my mother recounted to toddler me, so many years ago. And yes, this is the same Gospel that continues to be compelling in our scientific world.¹

Seen clearly in history, the mystery of the Gospel's sameness is a prophetic wonder, inviting us to rest and trust. It does not seek approval from this world's shifting authorities. This sameness, too, we doubt. Threatened by a world that trusts in science, will the same Gospel be enough, or should we make it new?

This is a part of a series of excerpts of my story originally published in “Finding Confident Faith in Science.”
Didaskalia 27 (2017): 165-88.

1. The works to which I refer include: Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, ed. W. F. Trotter, Mary L. Booth, and O. W. Wight (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1910); C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994); Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

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