

## Dealing With The Impossible

Dan Nelson

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Some things in life seem impossible. Even things that we take for granted everyday were for many years considered in the realm of the impossible. On almost any day I can look up and see an airplane traveling across the pail blue and white backdrop. Most of us have been inside these huge compilations of metal, plastic, and textile and have used them to travel for business and pleasure. It is one of my favorite things to do. But how can a million pounds of heavy materials be portioned and fit together to fly hundreds of people across the vast openness that we call sky? It truly is a marvel and yet it happens everyday. The engineers tell us that when the principles are applied, the aerodynamic curvature of the wing coupled with the high velocity of the airplane impacts the air pressures above and below the wing, and something is created called "lift" which forces the whole thing upward. This isn't a miracle, it is science and it happens everyday.

While we take this for granted as a reality because it is part of the scope of our daily lives, this wasn't always so. It was in 1903 when a well-known astronomer named Simon Newcomb went on record with his position of whether we might ever be able to fly long distances in airplanes. He said "The demonstration that no possible combination of known substances, known forms of machinery, and known forms of force can be united in a practical machine by which man shall fly long distances through the air, seems to the writer as complete as it is possible for the demonstration of any physical fact to be." Translation: the idea is impossible. You know, good and intelligent people just get it wrong sometimes.

Daniel Webster is famous in history for a lot more than his dictionary. He was extremely intelligent and was known for having memorized large portions of scripture. But in a senate speech in 1848 he affronted the whole idea of acquiring New Mexico and California as ridiculous, absurd and foolish. He asserted, "that they are not worth a dollar". Now anyone trying to make a rent or mortgage payment today would say that Webster, although otherwise quite bright and of good reputation, was way "out to lunch" on that one.

You may be familiar with the strongly opinionated advice of Admiral William D Leahy to President Truman regarding the viability of the atomic bomb in 1945. He stated "That is the biggest fool thing we have ever done. The bomb will never go off, and I speak as an expert on explosives." Do you thing "experts" are ever wrong today?

In 1743, Montesquieu, who had many people listening to his opinions on matters made his predictions regarding the earth's population. He stated, "The population of the earth decreases every day, and, if this continues, in another ten centuries the earth will be nothing but a desert." Well, what do you think? I recently heard we hit 7 billion and that number is quickly rising. Do you think people are just plain in error sometimes even when they seem so confident in their position?

Henry L Ellsworth, the U.S. Commissioner of Patents in 1844 was convinced that new ideas and innovation was at an end. He said "The advancement of the arts from year to year taxes our credulity and seems to presage the arrival of that period when further improvement must end." Well, was he right? Think about your day. As you read this,

you may be sipping coffee made in you're automatic coffee maker and chewing your bagel prepared in your electronic quick pop toaster. The cream was kept fresh in your side-by-side refrigerator and, if your java gets too chilled, you will reheat in your energy efficient microwave oven. We may get interrupted from time to time before we are finished by the ring of your cell phone or a chime from your computer informing you "you've got mail". But isn't that the world we live in? This is not mysterious to us and it is definitely not miraculous. This is the age in which we live.

There are some things however, that are very miraculous and this is the realm where God is working everyday. Jesus said what is impossible for man is possible with God. He proved it too. It is interesting to me how some people will just "get it" and others won't regarding the reality of God, His interaction with people, and His power to do the miraculous. In Jesus' earthly life, people who came to Him needing help got it. People who came to Him wanting a show went away disappointed. Yet the Bible says that God wants all people to come to Him, all people to have a relationship with Him, and all people to enjoy His awesome blessings. God doesn't want anyone left out.

You may not know how technology works but that doesn't discount the reality of it. In a similar but different way, you may not understand how God operates, but that doesn't take away from that reality either. If we refuse to acknowledge God and be thankful for Him, it will of course, reduce our ability to experience Him. Romans 1 tells us that this is the path of those who think they are wise but actually become fools. Think of the intelligent and well-intentioned people that I mentioned who held strong opinions and yet were wrong. Is there anything that God has said is true that you need to readdress in your own life? God does want us to take Him at face value because He is. He says, "I AM that IAM" and "the just shall live by faith".

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2006. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

### Sunday Worship:

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

### Mid-Week Study:

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View