

**APPRECIATE
THE GOOD**

We don't have to accept everything about a person in order to recognize and appreciate something they have done or said that is good or beautiful or the truth.

We can choose and appreciate the good, be edified by it, and also recognize at the same time that we probably wouldn't want to embrace absolutely everything about the person.



If we can take on this attitude, it will help us to find points of common ground with people who have very different beliefs than we do, and we'll be able to use that common ground to give them Jesus and the answers that we have.



We accept the good and beautiful and inspiring things that many people do, even though they may also do things that we don't agree with or support, or who may have even committed very great sins in their past. If we judged on the basis of some of these specific sins that we can't accept or agree with, then we wouldn't accept the Psalms, because David had a man killed.

Do you know who King David had killed, and the reason why? Read this account in 2 Samuel, chapter 11.



In Psalms 51 we read the prayer that David prays after Nathan the prophet tells him of God's punishment for his sins, and in verse 10, he says, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit in me." King David's repentance and brokenness of heart and humility before God helped him become a better ruler and leader of Israel.

And we couldn't appreciate Moses or his example of leadership, or the first five books of the Bible that were authored by him, for that matter, because he killed a man in anger.

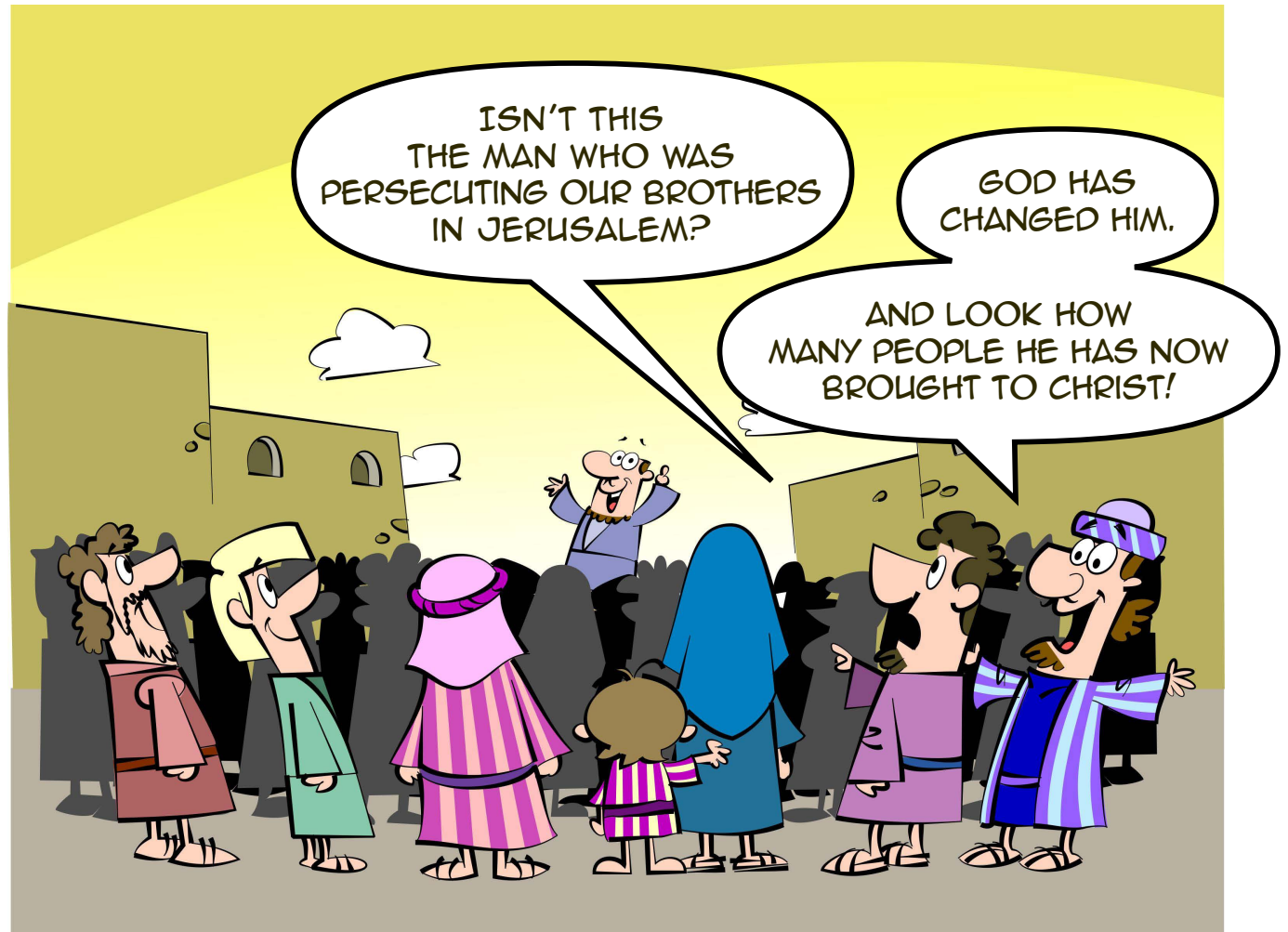


Moses was raised in the house of Pharaoh's daughter, but at some point he learned that he was of Jewish descent. Exodus 2:11–15a recounts the story of how Moses sees an Egyptian strike and kill a Jewish slave, and Moses kills the Egyptian in anger, and then flees into the wilderness for fear of Pharaoh's wrath.

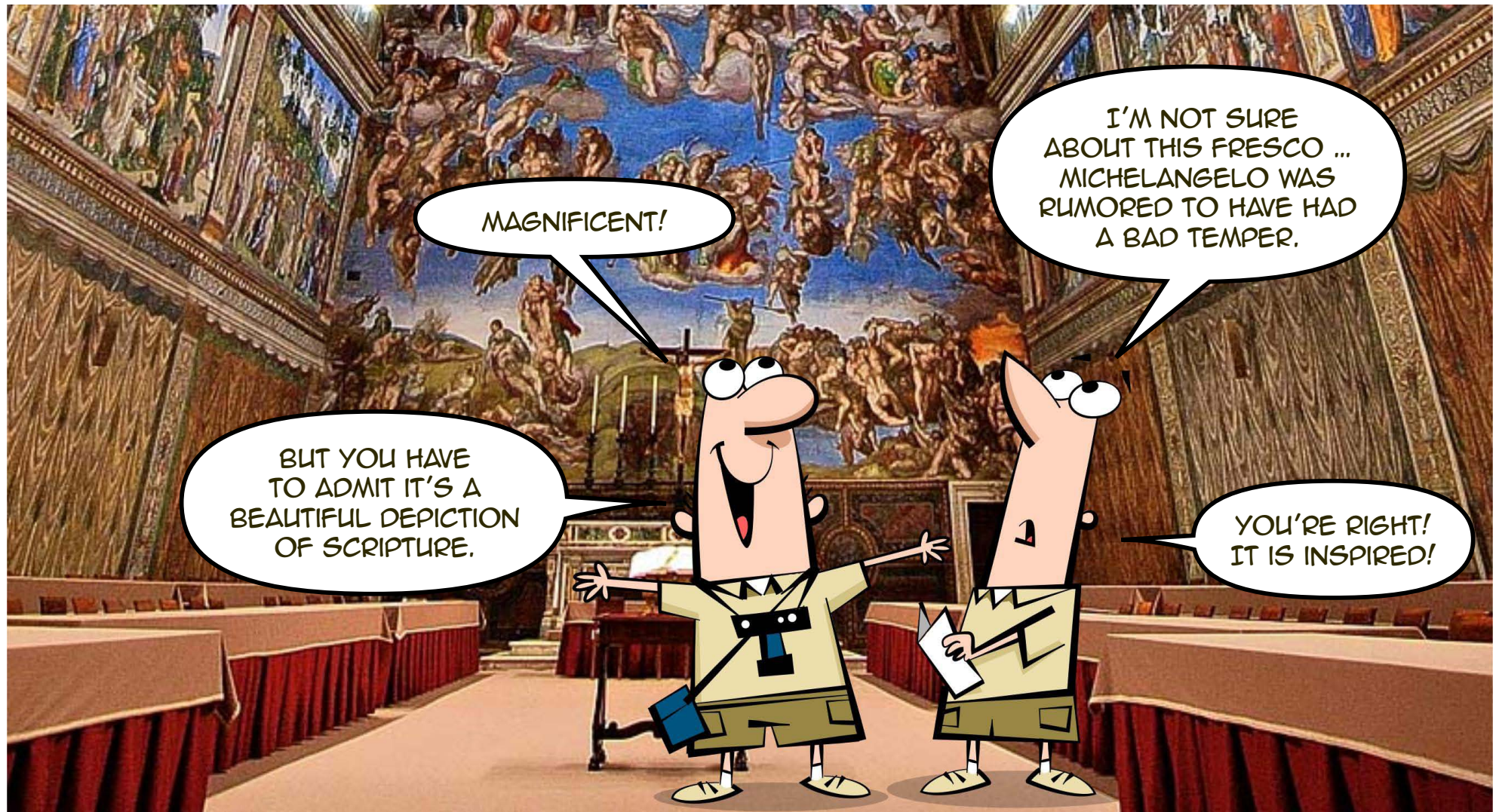
When we think of Moses today, however, we don't only remember his sin, we remember how God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, and deliver to them the Ten Commandments.

We wouldn't appreciate and benefit from a good deal of the New Testament, because Peter denied Jesus, and Paul, who was previously Saul, persecuted and caused terrible trouble for the Early Church.

The Apostle Paul started off his career persecuting Christians (see Acts 9), but after his amazing conversion and repentance he went on to become one of the most influential leaders of the Early Church.



For that matter, we'd have very little in life that we could appreciate or benefit from, because no one is perfect! Where would we draw the line?



The point is, when we see a beautiful piece of art, or hear some beautiful music, we can appreciate the inspiration that we know God gave the artist or composer, even if they weren't living for God or didn't know Him personally. Whenever something is beautiful or heavenly, they obviously got their inspiration from Him, because "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17).

When someone is doing something for the Lord or trying to do something to change the world or to speak up for their faith or to fight injustice or to help the poor, we can appreciate them for that and pray for them and support them in the good they're doing. We don't have to agree with their every belief or choice in life.





Think about Jesus and His interactions with mankind when He was on Earth. He embraced and welcomed people who had made choices that He certainly didn't agree with, but that wasn't what mattered to Him. What mattered was that they wanted His love, and He gave it freely.

If Jesus, who was perfect and without sin, was that accepting and welcoming of everyone, how can we do less?

Let's look for the good more—appreciate the good that people are doing, or the truth they've found and are sharing with others, or the knowledge or skill they have that we and others can benefit from.

That kind of attitude will make it much easier for us to be good ambassadors for Jesus, and we'll automatically carry a lot more of His humble, accepting, unconditional love.

Think about it:

— Can you think of someone from history, past or present, who had significant faults, yet made good contributions to society?

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