

Jesus . . . Liberal or Conservative?

By Ronald L. Dart

Was Jesus a Liberal or Conservative? In the interest of full disclosure, I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican. I am independent politically, as a disciple of Jesus, as an evangelist as it were. As a preacher of Christian values, I don't feel it's my job to be in one political party or the other. Now Liberals and Conservatives in this world are defined by political values. If you are Republican you are Conservative and if you're a Democrat you're a Liberal, supposedly.

But that brings me back to my original question. And this is why I'm not a Republican or a Democrat. What about Jesus? Was Jesus a Liberal or a Conservative?

A Conservative is defined as someone who is disposed to preserve existing conditions and institutions, to restore traditional ones and/or to limit change. When you look at the political landscape, I'm surprised anyone wants to accept the label of Conservative, especially Christians. Oh sure, we want to preserve or restore traditional values and institutions. We think traditional morality is a good thing. We think the family is a wonderful thing and we want to preserve and restore those things. But surely we don't want to preserve the status quo. Nor do we wish to limit change.

Conservative is a useless label, frankly, unless we understand what it is we are trying to conserve—how long has abortion been the law of the land? It's been law for decades now. Since this is the status quo, then aren't the people who are fighting to preserve abortion Conservative? If they are trying to conserve what is, they are trying to conserve the institution of abortion which is now the status quo—the law of the land.

In the Sermon on the Mount, which has to be the most fundamental of Jesus' teachings, He had this to say, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot

or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).

Now they haven't passed yet, check out the window and see if they're still there.

"Whosoever therefore shall break

one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

Here Jesus is taking is a strong Conservative position. "No, the law hasn't been done away with; I'm not come for that purpose. I have come to actually strengthen the law. I am come to fulfill it, to make it stronger." And if you read through the rest of the

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The Joy of Giving. . .

How often have you given a child a toy he really wanted and you were thrilled with his response? Didn't you share in his joy? God says, "He loves a cheerful giver," so apparently you make God happy when you give to him. Giving to God shows him something that even prayer does not. You're willing to give something of yourself to the Great God who gives you everything. You should rejoice knowing that God is happy because you've obeyed him and shared part of what he has given you with him. Giving is good! You can't outgive God. Bless you for giving to God through *Born to Win*.

By David Havir III

Can you sum up your life in a few paragraphs? Human lives are complex and full of surreal and powerful moments shaping their entire beings.

How would you begin to sum up your life in a few paragraphs? Surely, it would take multiple literary works to do it justice and encompass all that you are. I had to consider this as I gauged details that would interest your mind.

My name is David A. Havir III. I am the new Vice President of Ministerial Services and Organizational Management for Christian Educational Ministries. I am truly honored and humbled by this opportunity to work with an organization that possesses such a history and clear Bible message.

My job is not to replace Ron Dart, but I am here to walk in his path. His clear Bible messages are timely and timeless and will continue to go out on the air. *Born to Win* will continue to provide Mr. Dart's CDs, sermons, Bible study courses, books, and other effective literature.

I was three years old when my father began pastoring the Worldwide Church of God in Lexington, Kentucky. Two things reign supreme in Lexington: thoroughbreds and University of Kentucky basketball.

My father's career took us to Big Sandy, Texas, in 1991. To be honest, I figured Big Sandy would be a small blip in the story of my life. I had no way of knowing that it would become a central point in my narrative. In 1995, a group in Big Sandy offered my father the position of pastor in a non-denominational, Sabbath-keeping congregation. The objective for the church was to get away from the dependence on a large, centralized church corporation. We were going to be independent and proud of it!

I was working as a tutor for Tyler Junior College (TJC) in Tyler, Texas, in 2001 where I also attended classes. The tutoring area shared a floor with the sign language interpreting program. I decided it would be to my advantage to take one class in American Sign Language, to acquire the skills to communicate with deaf students on a nominal level. This off-the-cuff decision profoundly shaped my life.

The first time I remember seeing Diana Ragland was at an American Sign Language Club meeting in the fall of 2001. I was instantly drawn to her good-natured smile. She knew that I worked in the tutoring area and stopped by to say hello a couple of times. During the

first part of October, however, I was nowhere to be found. Diana thought I had dropped out of school. I sat with her at a tutoring table when I returned the following week and discussed where I had been, answering many questions about the Feast of Tabernacles and other details of my faith.

Diana was very passionate about the interpreting program at TJC. In fact, her power of persuasion convinced me to change my major and pursue interpreting alongside her. Our first official date was on January 18, 2002, and we've been happily together ever since.

A number of landmark events occurred in my life in 2004. Diana and I were married and moved to Nacogdoches, Texas, to begin our lives together. We busied ourselves with learning to balance work with our goals of pursuing higher education at Stephen F. Austin State University. In the fall of 2004, I was baptized at the Feast of Tabernacles in Destin, Florida.



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Shortly after celebrating our first anniversary, we welcomed a strong, healthy, beautiful daughter into our lives in the summer of 2005. Eleven years later, I feel this is the best way to describe Danae—our pride and joy.

Over the next several years, Diana and I graduated from SFA with Bachelor's degrees in Communication Disorders and Business Administration with a minor in Finance, respectively, and we moved back to the Big Sandy area in 2007. In 2009, there was a change in personnel at Church of God Big Sandy (COGBS) and a call for volunteers to run the sound system was made. I

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Introduction

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was the only sucker who showed up for training; thus the sound system shortly became my baby. The learning process definitely had its bumps, but I think we survived it unscathed. I was elected to the Board of Trustees for the church later that year.

In April 2011, I received a job offer to run an ophthalmic clinic and surgery center in Nacogdoches. This was a great opportunity and I looked forward to attacking that challenge and advancing my professional career. There was a complication. Literally, one week prior to the job offer, I agreed to become the Teen Program Coordinator at COGBS. The church and perspective job were 90 miles apart. After much prayer and consideration, my wife and I committed to making both responsibilities work.

I believe we were successful overall in our efforts. In fact, Diana took over the responsibility of organizing the Youth Bridges Program at COGBS during our time in Nacogdoches. After four and a half years of driving an hour and a half back and forth for weekly church services, board meetings, teen activities, youth activities, and a variety of other events, it was time to return to the

part of Texas we regard as home.

As I set out to write this article, I pondered questions regarding what I should include and what you would most want to know in this self-introduction.

Those who know me best know I am a big proponent of balance in all things. As humans, we are inconsistent by nature. My goal is to try to use Christ's teachings as a guideline to limit those inconsistencies in my own life.

There is a time and place for all. Ecclesiastes 3:3 is my life's mantra.

I anticipate this new challenge and deeply appreciate the opportunity to make a positive impact at CEM. I will continuously pray that I can be an instrument for accomplishing the following goals: increasing listenership of the *Born to Win* broadcast, writing positive messages for this newsletter, energizing the YEA program, enhancing the Youth Summer Camp, reestablishing the Feast program to previous heights, growing our mailing list, and helping you in any way I can. Please let me know how I can serve you. And let this journey commence!

Should We Take God Seriously?

By Ronald L. Dart

It is truly difficult to maintain a constant state of "high" alert. It was painfully evident in the weeks after 9/11 that the people of this country wanted the government on alert, but it was just as evident that we couldn't possibly stay on that level of alert for the rest of our lives.

Anyone who travels these days knows that security at airports, tight as it is, is not tight enough to protect us with certainty. Absolute security is an impossible task.

Anyone who has studied the events leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor knows that the military establishment had been on repeated alerts. They stood down from one alert only to have to move back on alert again. In the end, the effect was to dull their responses to the point that they were almost completely unprepared for the attack on Pearl Harbor.

What they needed, and what we need today is a state of readiness that we can maintain indefinitely. It will fall far short of absolute safety. Some of us will get hurt because there is no way it can be avoided. But if we try

too hard for too long and then let down, the results could be even more disastrous.

There is a powerful analogy here with the state of Christianity in the world today. So many false prophets have set dates in the past, so many have cried "wolf," that the entire Christian community is in a state of apathy that is very hard to overcome. And yet, the Bible is shot through with warnings about the dangers we face.

The title I put on this article probably sounds stupid. Should we take God seriously? Of course we should. And yet, it seems from where I sit that the entire community of Christ takes God rather casually. How can we say this? By looking at the way they live their lives.

Jesus said, "Judge not that you be not judged, for with what measure you judge you shall be judged." Should we take him seriously? As far as I can tell in observing people, we take this statement of Jesus very casually. The Bible tells us that we will reap what we sow.

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Should we take that seriously? Should it affect the way we live our lives and make decisions?

When Jesus told us to watch and pray that we not enter into temptation, did he give us something we can take seriously? Or is it just not possible for us to maintain a high state of alert? The truth is that if we don't take him seriously, we are in a lot of trouble.

What could that trouble be? Where could we find out more? God has warned us—God provided prophetic messages for us in his Word. He tells us what this “trouble” will be and how to avoid it. Do you understand these prophecies and what they mean for you? Take God seriously—gain insight into these warnings. Order this new CD series, *Prophecy: The Basics*, by Ronald L. Dart and find out.

Abortion

By David Havir III

Who doesn't love choice? Choice implies freedom! And freedom (free will) just might be the third most cherished gift that God gave this world. The first being salvation through his Son and the second being creation itself. If one of God's gifts to us is choice, why wouldn't we be pro-choice?

What does the word choice mean here? What is the choice that is being advocated? We are told that the choice is whether or not a woman can dispose of a fetus. Abortion became legal in this country because it was determined that a fetus is not a viable human being. Once a fetus is born, then killing the human being is considered murder. All civilized minds pretty much agree on that.

What about a fetus that is killed in a violent act by someone other than the mother? Since the fetus is not alive, then the perpetrator can only be charged with assault/battery, correct? I mean, if the fetus isn't a human being yet, how can there be a murder charge?

A federal law was passed stating that a person can be charged with murder if a mother is injured and a fetus is killed in the process. It is the Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-212). I'm getting a mixed message here from the Legislature in this country.

But I think that mixed message is the point. Society has a way of co-opting and corrupting language. People with different agendas subtly change the meaning of words so as to manipulate individuals, distract from the message, and/or lull people to sleep. In addition, if you can turn the focus to arguing about the minutiae of words and details, it takes the focus off of the atrocities being committed.

But I think that mixed message is the point. Society has a way of co-opting and corrupting language. People with different agendas subtly change the meaning of words so as to manipulate individuals, distract from the message, and/or lull people to sleep.

So what should we do? Should we get caught up in the argument? Should we take action? Should we just ignore it and hope it goes away? As with everything else, let's turn to the Bible. According to Ephesians 6, we are to be strong and put on the whole armor of God. We are supposed to stand against the evils of the devil. Please don't forget. We are talking about an unborn, defenseless baby. The “choice” is to dispose of it. I'm not sure it gets much more evil than that.

This is no way saying that we should commit criminal acts against those who support that cause or take pleasure when others do. If we rejoice when the enemy falls, God will turn his wrath from the enemy (Proverbs 24:17-18). The Scripture is quite clear on this point.

Is the Bible contradicting itself? Of course not. As is the case with most things in life, I believe the key is balance. None of this is groundbreaking. Most of it, you have probably heard before. But I personally find it far too easy in life to get distracted. And in a way, that is understandable. It is a coping mechanism so that we don't go insane. But it is imperative that we stay strong in our convictions! Never allow yourselves to be “okay” with the evils all around us. However, don't let these issues completely consume you either. Remember that God will ultimately be the Judge of this world. He will right the wrongs.

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Sermon on the Mount you come to the very strong conclusion he did exactly that. He said not only did he not come to do away with parts of it, he came to do away with none of it. Not one jot, not one tittle.

In the same speech, Jesus went on to say, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28). The way some people talk about these things nowadays you would think the more Liberal position would be to relax the rules on adultery—adultery is wrong, but if you’re in love maybe it’s not that big of a deal.

Jesus didn’t take that approach. If anything he tightened the screws down a little bit further. This is reaffirmation of traditional, moral values. Not only that, but the argument is for the internalization of these values. Would you agree with me that this is a pretty strong Conservative position?

This is especially true when you look at the definition of Liberal—“not strict or rigorous, free. . . freely given and abundantly generous. . . free of or not bound by traditional or conventional ideas and values. . . open-minded.” And if you would apply this to what Jesus said about adultery and what he said about the Law, you would never conclude that Jesus is really a Liberal, would you? Well there’s more to know about this man. This is where the problem begins to arise.

In Mark, the seventh chapter, “Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders” (Mark 7:1-3).

So we would say the Pharisees were Conservative, wouldn’t we? They were holding fast to the tradition of the elders and they were very critical of some of Jesus’ disciples because, well, they were Liberals. They weren’t washing their hands before they ate according to the tradition of the elders.

For Jesus, what was important was the heart, not the hands. He said, “Do not ye yet understand, that whatever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and

is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man” (Matthew 15:17-20).

Remember the definition of a Liberal? “Free of or not bound by traditional or conventional ideas and values, open-minded.” On this occasion, Jesus was Liberal. At least he was Liberal in relation to the scribes, the Pharisees and their definitions of tradition, Liberality, and so forth.

Now here’s a question: can anything be more Christian than abundant giving and generosity? Of course not. The problem in our society is that political Liberalism has the government as the giver of all good and perfect gifts, whereas the Bible tells us the Father of lights, God the Father, is the giver of every good and every perfect gift. But the government gives us welfare, Social Security, Medicaid, and Aid for Dependent Children. This is the government giving us all these good things and this is Liberal. Of course I call this O.P.M. Liberalism; O.P.M. standing for “Other People’s Money.” It’s very easy to be Liberal, to be generous, to be free with other people’s money.

The Christian is at once Liberal and Conservative when it comes to the poor and the downtrodden. The Christian is led to give out of his own pocket—to go out there, find people who are sick and hurting, and help them find ways of straightening out their lives. A Liberal value on one hand and a Conservative value on the other—and yet they can exist in the same person.

A Christian can be compassionate, which is a Liberal value, but compassion is a human emotion. Therefore government, which is a system and not human, cannot be compassionate. As Christians, we have a deep and abiding interest in helping the poor and downtrodden of the earth, but when we trust the government to do for us what we should do for ourselves, we have made a big mistake. I really believe that it is right here where Christians become confused about their political Liberalism or Conservatism. They are thinking in terms of the government showing compassion, or the government exercising Christian virtues, and the government can’t. That’s something that can only be done by people.

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Listen to Jesus. In Matthew 25, vv. 31-34, he said this, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him he will sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:” The definite connection here is a causal relationship between “inheriting the Kingdom” and what follows.

He said, “For I was ahungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35-36). Every one of the acts described here is a Liberal act; they are giving acts, they are the kinds of things that people tend to associate with Liberal causes, aren’t they?

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:37-40).

Now all these things are the kinds of things that Liberals say they stand for, but you have to keep in mind that at the political level Liberals want to do this with your money, with my money—our money—as opposed to doing it themselves.

For the Christian, these values are face-to-face, belly-to-belly, hand-to-hand. We go out there, we see people and we help people in person, up close and personal. Conservatives sometimes give the impression they don’t want to do these things at all.

The truth is, though, that Jesus was Conservative and Liberal. The truth is that Jesus was not ‘A Conservative’ or ‘A Liberal’ because these labels we hang on people are descriptive of political positions. But Jesus was able to balance Conservative and

Liberal values right inside his own person. He was a man who was able to balance these things, to choose right behavior instead of politically correct behavior. He would support intensely basic, moral values while looking forward and thinking progressively at the same time. But then Jesus was not a politician because his concern, at all times, was, “What is the right thing to do?” even to the death.

It became obvious in studying the New Testament that whether Jesus was a Liberal or a Conservative depended on who was calling him names. To the Pharisees he may have been considered a Liberal. To another Jew, he might have been considered Conservative. There’s a real danger in mixing religion and politics, but it’s still important to know where Jesus Christ stood on the Liberal-Conservative spectrum.

Space does not permit us to include the entire transcript here. Order your personal copy of this message, *Jesus—Liberal or Conservative?*, and get the rest of the story. Order by calling our office at 1-888-BIBLE-44, returning the enclosed card, or emailing us at adm@borntowin.net.

November Memory Scriptures

Topic: Thanksgiving and Worship

Psalms 100:4
Psalms 100:5
Revelation 4:11
Colossians 3:15
Colossians 3:16
Colossians 3:17
Hebrews 13:15
1 Thessalonians 5:18
Ephesians 1:3
Ephesians 5:20

Born to Win

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.