

## Behold the Lamb of God

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

Why does God leave us with so many unanswered questions? And why are some of the truths of Bible so, seemingly, obscure? If God wants us to know something, why doesn't he come right out and say so? The fact is that on the really important things, God did come right out and say so.

But there is much more to be known, and God has placed in the heart of man the desire to know everything. Everything, of course, is a little more than our small brains can hold, but there is rather a lot more that we can know.

As Paul said, now we know in part. We call the Bible the Word of God, and indeed it is. But that Word comes to us in the form of the testimony of a cloud of witnesses. And just as a good investigator can take the testimony of one witness, combine it with the testimony of another witness, just as he can then come to know something that isn't actually in the testimony of either. So we can sometimes find insights into things that are not actually said by any of the witnesses. It is like a great puzzle of life, where we struggle to put together all the pieces and discover things previously unknown. Sometimes, we have to be led to these things by

God himself, opening our minds to see these things.

After one particularly opaque parable of Jesus, his disciples came to him privately, probably feeling a little dumb, and asked him what a particular parable meant. "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark 4:11-12). That is a troubling statement, but it is better to be troubled than to dismiss it. Some people are allowed to understand some things, and some are not.

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What makes the difference? It may have something to do with how we treat the things that are plainly stated. What is there about "Thou shalt not steal" that we don't understand? But why should God reveal the hidden things to a thief? What good is there in opening a mind to see things that he won't do

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### *Christ Gave His Life for You . . .*

As we commemorate the death of Christ at this upcoming Passover, it's important that we remember that Christ gave his all for us. Philip P. Bliss wrote the words to the old hymn, *I Gave My Life for Thee* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It goes on to say, "My precious blood I shed—That thou might'st ransomed be,—and quickened from the dead—I gave, I gave My life for thee; What hast thou giv'n for Me?" As we humbly partake of the bread and wine at the Passover, that's a question each one of us must ask ourselves. Never forget, we can't outgive Christ, our precious Savior.

## Can't We All Just Get Along?

By Richard Glasgow

There are two kinds of people: those who follow politics and those who don't. It might be fair to suggest that those who *don't* follow politics are averse to the partisanship and constant bickering and name-calling. Those who disdain the political infighting may subconsciously subscribe to the Rodney King politics of "can't we all just get along?"

Well, quite frankly, we *can't* all get along. Though that might sound a bit harsh, it really couldn't be any other way. In political parlance, partisanship is usually used as a pejorative and those who use it that way are said to be *non-partisan*—as if to suggest they are above, or morally superior to anyone who is partisan. By definition, a partisan is one who abides by or is emotionally attached to a set of beliefs by which he lives and is not likely to change.

The *non-partisan*, on the other hand, prides himself on his willingness to compromise. The "can't we all get along" idea is much like the "co-exist" bumper sticker spelled out with the symbols of the world's religions. *Co-existing* isn't

a problem; that is, until someone or some other religion or government says our beliefs aren't acceptable unless we change and adapt to the beliefs of others. *That's* when things get problematic and *that's* why we all can't get along.

We're dawning on an era where Christianity is becoming unacceptable to many as our culture spirals downward and becomes more antithetical to God. What was once considered good is now considered bad. Morality has been replaced with depravity. Isaiah warned of a time such as ours in Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

There is good and evil in this world and our problems arise (personally and nationally) when we compromise with evil. When it comes to evil, we can't afford to compromise. The more decadent our society becomes, the more difficult it may become for dedicated Christians—which is very odd when you think about it. Most Christians

are quite tolerant and unobtrusive in how they treat others. Wouldn't most people want to be around those who kept the Golden Rule? Maybe not. The mere presence of a moral person can inflict guilt on someone who is *not* moral, and when that happens, it's the *moral* person who causes offense, even when they're silent on the matter.

It hasn't been that long since the idea of Christian persecution, especially in English-speaking countries, was unthought of. These days it's becoming clear that a persecution is on the way and may have even begun. We really shouldn't be surprised. Jesus plainly told us in Mark 13:12-13 that his followers would be hated and some would even be killed because of what we believe.

It goes back to calling good evil and vice-versa. Regardless of what some may think about Christians, we always have the opportunity and *responsibility* to live the life God and Jesus intended so we'll be a shining light and sterling example to everyone with whom we come in contact . . . whether they like us or not.

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## The Forest of Darkness

By Bill Stough

Over 30 years have passed since I hiked the woods near our house with my then eight-year-old son, Ryan. This is a beautiful area on hills leading down to a creek below. Ryan started calling it "the Forest of Darkness" because of the dense and tall cedar trees where sunlight did not readily shine through. Now here I was again,

years later, hiking through "the Forest of Darkness" with two of Ryan's children, Sophia, age six, and Ethan, age four!

Ethan was scared as we entered that grove. He began to cling to me and at times grabbed hold of my leg. When not holding on to me, he kept looking at me so as to never let me out of his sight. He didn't want to

get lost. On one occasion he said, "Don't leave me." I, of course, would have never even thought of leaving him there. As long as he could see me and follow me, all was okay.

Ethan was showing me something about how a true Christian should be. We can all learn something from his attitude on

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when he sees them? This may not be the whole answer, but it is a start.

For the person who cares to look, there is an incredible wealth of knowledge in the Bible. Whenever you see an anomaly in the Bible, it is a red flag stuck in the ground that says, “dig here.” Take for example an incident recorded only by the Apostle John. John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River by a little place called the Ferry House. John looked up and saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said something quite astonishing to the people standing near. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

In a sense, John was baptizing unto repentance, and the idea of washing away one’s sins in baptism was well enough known. The people knew well enough what a sacrificial lamb was. The ceremonial rites at the Temple made provision for offering a lamb or even a kid of the goats as a sin offering. They were completely aware of the Passover lamb, which served for a family, and memorialized the Passover night in Egypt when all the firstborn not protected by the blood of the lamb died. But there was nothing in the understanding of the Jews standing around John about a man serving as a lamb for a sin offering. Nor was there anything in their purview about saving the world. Salvation, to them was of and for the Jews.

So what did the people think when John said this? John’s testimony is here, but it is incomplete. By the time Paul wrote some of his letters, a lot had

happened to clear up the mystery. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 provides us with background. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

There is a thread that runs from John the Baptist’s remark to Paul’s statement, and now we realize that John the Baptist knew what Jesus was to do and why he was to do it. And there is rather more significance in John’s remark: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This combination shows that the Passover Lamb is for everyone, not just for the Jews.

But notice something else about this thread. It continues on from these statements, and it may be worth following to see where it leads. “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That

which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his

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deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:1-21).

John 3:16 may be the first Scripture you ever memorized: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is the Gospel in a nutshell. But there is still this thread we are following, and it doesn't end here. To follow this thread and gain an enormous understanding of this, please order the *FREE* CD of the *Born to Win* program titled, *Behold the Lamb of God*. It will add to your knowledge of God's Word and deepen your relationship with your Savior.

**For your convenience, a Holy Day offering envelope is enclosed.**

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

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that day. We, too, are walking through a frightening place where it is possible to get lost and spiritually die. Deuteronomy 8 also describes this walk.

It can be easy to forget what a dangerous walk we are involved in. When we were new to Christianity, we feared the possibility of falling and being left out of the Kingdom of God. Complacency can take hold so we no longer think about being bitten by venomous snakes who inject poison into our spiritual bodies. Satan and his demons are compared to snakes. They can send fiery darts at us which enter our thinking and tempt us (Ephesians 6:10-16). How many times have we had ungodly thoughts and dwelled upon them, not grasping that those were injected into us by venomous demons?

My grandchildren would have become lost had they not known their need and were I not there to look after them. I knew the way through that forest and they did not.

If we have only self-reliance we can't make it. We also need someone to look after us (Hebrews 12:1-3).

We do have someone who knows the ropes; who has been there in the woods before us, and who has shepherded an untold number of people through the great and terrible wilderness before us. And Jesus cares! He will no more walk off and leave our Father's needy children than I would have left my grandchildren in the woods. God will never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

God won't quit on us or leave us stranded in the woods, and we need to keep our eyes on him and be humble about knowing our need. There is so much we can learn from children. They illustrate total dependence, full trust, openness, and complete sincerity. Adults are moved to see that kind of trust, humility, and dependence. It also moves God when we cast ourselves upon him and pray with fervency, "Don't go off and leave me! I have a lot to be scared of in this forest."

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## **Festival Association Welcomes Co-Chairman**

Christian Educational Ministries is pleased to announce that Phillip McCollum of Franklin, Tennessee, has volunteered to assist with festival planning this year. Phillip graduated from Ambassador College in 1986 with a B.A. in Theology. Phillip and his wife, Elaine, are the parents of two children, and have attended the Feast with CEM since 1996! Many

dedicated volunteers are contributing their talents and skills as members of the 2013 Festival Association, but there are still vacancies to fill. If you are interested in helping at the Feast this year, please contact Phil at cemfot@gmail.com or Paula Hughes at paulahughes@borntowin.net. You can also call Paula at 1-888-BIBLE-44 during business hours.