

## The Authentic Jesus

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

There are so many mysteries in the Bible. The Bible was written in another language and in another culture. This often makes understanding the Bible difficult. This is not to say that we aren't programmed to understand. You know, we are programmed. Just like a computer has to have an operating system to, well, operate, so do we. As a small example, our system of thought addresses everything in terms of a beginning, a middle and an end. To grasp the idea of a being who is eternal—that is, who has always existed—is just beyond our reach.

It is hard enough to imagine living forever into the future. But when we turn around and look back, we can't help ourselves. We have to ask, where did God come from. That he has simply always been doesn't compute. It's not that we aren't willing to believe it. Only that we can't really understand it. We can only understand God in terms in which he chooses to reveal himself. We get lost when he steps beyond that.

We read in Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory

in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."

We can understand and know God at the human level. But wait. God isn't human, is he? Now there we have something to grapple with. The author of the Book of Hebrews challenges us on this idea. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe (Hebrews 1:1-2, NIV).

Now that is huge. When he says the Son is the heir of all things, that is rather more than we can understand. Then, he says that God

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made the universe through him. That may be even bigger. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his [the Son's] powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father'? Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'?" (Hebrews 1:3-5, NIV).

This makes it very difficult to

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### **Formula For Blessings . . .**

Have you ever wondered why nothing seems to work for you? Here's the formula for turning that around. "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 12:28). God wants to bless you. He has laid out certain things we must do and blessings will follow. Read Malachi 3, and do these things, and blessings will follow.

## What's A Christian To Do?

Part 3, by Richard Glasgow

(Continued from Part 2 of the same title in the September, 2013 issue of Living to Win)

The historical accounts of Joseph, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Mordecai, and others testify to the fact that God doesn't expect his people to divorce themselves from those in power and the politics of the time. God's people were able, with his help, to transform godless cultures for the betterment of the citizenry and for God's glory.

Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." Deuteronomy 4:6 says, "Keep therefore and do them [the commandments and statutes], for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Even the calloused and cruel Roman Empire became a better place due to the positive influence of Christians. "Historian Alvin Schmidt points out how the spread of Christianity and Christian influence on government was primarily responsible for outlawing infanticide, child abandonment, and abortion in the Roman Empire (in AD 374); outlawing the brutal battles-to-the-death in which thousands of gladiators had died (in 404); granting of property rights and other protections to women; banning polygamy [which is still practiced in some Muslim nations today]; prohibiting the burning alive of widows in India (in 1829); outlawing the painful and crippling practice of binding young women's feet in China (in 1912) . . ." (*Why*

*Christians Should Seek to Influence Governments for Good*, p. 8, a booklet by Dr. Wayne A. Grudem, adapted from his book by the same title, published by Zondervan, 2010.)

It was the influence of William Wilburforce, a devoted Christian, who helped bring about the end of slavery in England in 1840. The anti-slavery movement spread to America, thanks largely to Christians. Yes, there were Southern Christians who opposed the abolitionists, and one of America's worst wars resulted. Still, the anti-slavery movement prevailed.

We can see the positive influence Judeo-Christianity has had throughout the ages, even though almost all of the world's governments have been antithetical to God's way. The United States of America, on the other hand, was set up not as a secular monarchy or dictatorship, but rather as a constitutional republic by godly men with godly aspirations for our country. Like no other government ever formed by men, our Founding Fathers, inspired by God, brilliantly put together a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." It was specifically designed for the people to be involved in making laws and governing. It is a blessing that God gave this country a government which actually gives its citizens the privilege of being involved in their own governance as one of their many benefits.

Furthermore, our founders had God in mind, that we should be ever mindful of him and the Natural Law, which is defined as: "a principle or

body of laws considered as derived from nature, right reason, or religion and as ethically binding in human society." The founders collectively knew our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. In order for the Republic to succeed and endure, we would need to govern ourselves by adhering to the Laws of God and Nature. That being the case, it would have been essential for moral and religious people to participate in the law-making and law-upholding processes, which would have necessitated the involvement of Christians—if they wanted the country to flourish with God's blessings.

Looking back, at what point would the modern day apolitical churches have made their decision to no longer participate in the political process? Wouldn't they have wanted a voice in the arena of lawmaking all along, and wanted to assure the best candidates were elected? What kind of world would it be if all of God's people throughout the ages had kept silent and not sought to influence society by being the salt of the earth and the shining city on the hill as instructed by God? Would we just sit back and try to be good examples in our communities by going to church and preaching the Gospel while refusing to incorporate Christian values into our community, state, and federal government? Wouldn't that be like giving our adversaries permission to do whatever they wish when it comes to government on every level?

If you have children in the local

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believe, as some do, that Jesus was an angel in time past. Because Paul, who most likely wrote this book, makes it clear that this was never said to any of the angels. “And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’ In speaking of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.’ But about the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy’” (Hebrews 1:6-9, NIV).

God is speaking: “About the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever. . . therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’” There is only one way to take this. There are two here who are called God, the one speaking and the one spoken to.

This may be the reasoning of Christian theologians who accept that Father and Son are both God. The only reason this need be a problem for us is if we use the word “God” solely in the sense of the One Supreme Being. But if we can bring ourselves to understand that “God” is a kind of being, similar to the way a human is a kind of being, the difficulty disappears. My father and I are both human, of human kind. The Divine Father and Son are both God, of the God kind. If there is another way to understand this, it has not yet been made clear. There are some strained arguments looking for

another way. These arguments do violence to the plain meaning of the text.

If you order the *FREE* CD of this *Born to Win* broadcast, you will find the first chapter of the Book of Hebrews to be absolutely staggering. It opens a window on eternity that we can peer through to try to understand what is out there. If this were all we had, we might be willing to leave room for another point of view. But this is not all we have. Look again at how this chapter begins.

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe” (Hebrews 1:1-2, NIV). He is making an unequivocal statement that the Son was the agent of creation of the universe. How did Paul understand this? He makes this unambiguous statement: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:8-9).

As I said, we might find a way to explain away the first chapter of Hebrews, but we are still left with this. And that is not all. “Who [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things

were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:15-19).

So now we have a faint picture forming in our minds of an eternal relationship. Father and Son. It even suggests that the one who said, “Let there be light,” was none other than the Son. If that is at all confusing to us, we should resist thinking that it is wrong. There is a temptation in all human beings to just toss out what doesn’t fit our preconceptions—or, borrowing the jigsaw puzzle as an illustration, to trim the piece to make it fit.

It is better that we “hide these things in our heart” to see what presents itself later. Now to add to all of this, there was one disciple who seems to have had a special relationship with Jesus. He wrote one of the official Gospel accounts and three letters that are preserved in the New Testament. Here is what he had to say about this—it probably formed the foundation of what Paul wrote.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3). It is at points like this that our system of logic wants to rebel. How is it possible to be God and be with God? The traditional doctrine of the Trinity offers a way of explaining this, but if you have ever read much, you realize that it

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still leaves something of a mystery.

I urge you to order this *FREE* CD of the *Born to Win* broadcast, *The Authentic Jesus*. You need to take a step away from this and look at it again. There are those who could mislead you. If you're not well grounded in this most basic truth that

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was with the Father from the very beginning—and is your Creator. It's a very dangerous path some would lead you down. This slippery slope can lead you to doubt that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This important message, *The Authentic Jesus*, can fortify you from being misled. It will give you an even deeper respect for who Jesus is and

for all that Jesus did for you. To understand the fulfillment of any prophecy, you need to grasp the historical concept behind it. This message will help you with that and enlighten you with a truism that many prophecies are dual and often repeat themselves throughout history.

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public school, don't you have an interest in what the school is teaching? Wouldn't you get involved with the teachers or school board if you didn't like the curriculum being used for your children? Or if you wanted to home school and you lived in an area that was unfriendly toward it, wouldn't you take that up with your lawmakers? If there were known illicit activities in the vicinity of your neighborhood, wouldn't you do what you could to legally bring an end to it?

Any number of scenarios can be imagined that would cause us to try to change or improve our schools and communities. We would be irresponsible parents and citizens if we didn't try to do what's best for our neighborhoods and communities. After all, we're supposed to be good neighbors. Is that only on a local scale? What about nationally? Doesn't the same principle apply on a state and national level?

And wouldn't we want to have good judges appointed in local, state, and federal courts? It's our elected officials who appoint judges for the most part, although some are elected. Either way, we can make a difference in the judiciary by who we vote for.

Years ago I remember Ronald

Dart saying that if every Christian in every county in every state voted for pro-life candidates, the decision in *Roe vs. Wade* may never have happened. Had that been the case, at this writing 55,000,000 abortions would not have taken place since 1973! And 55,000,000 more people would have had their opportunity to contribute to society.

That being said, one has to wonder: how much culpability do Christians have when we examine how every aspect of our culture has deteriorated so rapidly since the 1960s? Was the silent majority silent for too long? Did we think we were powerless to change society, or did we think the breakdown of society was God's will? Did we think prophecy was written in stone and we shouldn't try to thwart God's plan to wreak judgment on our country?

Shouldn't Christians be standing in the gap? Or does God want us to remain silent in the war against good and evil? "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" (Psalms 94:16).

It's easy to reason that there just isn't anybody worth voting for and, in reality, that may be the case. But often there's a clear cut difference of who would be better in an elected office. Find out where they stand on

issues of morality and careless spending, for example. Do they stand for things you believe in? Better yet, do they stand more in line with God's way of life than their opponent? Do a little homework and vote for the best possible candidate.

Christians who are aware of the dangerous times in which we live know the importance of self-examination. It's horrifying to consider that we Christians may actually bear some responsibility for what's happening in this country by virtue of not getting involved! We seriously need to consider whether we've done what God expects of us when it comes to our civic responsibilities and duty to our fellow citizens. May God help us to see what we can do to be a brighter, more helpful, and influential light to society.

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