



# Born to Win

## The Authentic Jesus #1

by Ronald L. Dart

There are so many *mysteries* in the Bible. Yes, I know it was written in another language, another culture—and there's much that we simply don't know about that culture—but I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about things that we aren't programmed to understand. We *are* programmed, you know, just like a computer has to have an operating system to, well, operate; so do we. And just as a small example, our system of thought addresses *everything* in terms of a beginning and a middle and an end. So grasping the idea of a being that is *eternal*—that is, who has *always* existed...it's just beyond our capacity to imagine or think about. It's hard enough to imagine living forever into the future, with no end. But when we turn around and look *back*, we can't help ourselves. We have to ask: Where did God come from? And, of course, there is no answer to that. He didn't *come* from anywhere. He just is and always has been. That he has simply always been doesn't compute.

Now, I don't say that we're not *willing* to believe it; only that we can't really understand it. And I don't mean to say that we can't understand God. We can, but only in terms in which he chooses to reveal himself. When we step one step beyond that, in reality, we're lost. I picked up on this, though, in Jeremiah—chapter 9, verse 23:

### Jeremiah 9

KJ2000

<sup>23</sup> Thus says 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:

<sup>24</sup> But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD.

Now, we can understand and know God at the *human* level in terms of the things he reveals of himself to human beings.

But, wait a minute; God isn't *human*, is he? Now, right there we have something to grapple with. The author of the Book of Hebrews challenges us on this idea. In the very first chapter he says this:

### Hebrews 1

NIV '84

<sup>1</sup> In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Now, that's *huge*. When he says that the son is “heir of all things”, that's rather more than I can grasp. But then he says that God made the universe *through* him. *The universe*. Do you have any idea of the

scope of what he's talking about here? Because whenever you look through a telescope at the night sky, we don't see *anywhere near* the edge of the universe. We see stars that...some of them are so far away that if we could travel to them at the speed of light we couldn't live long enough to get to them; they are so far out. This universe that God has made *through* the Son may be even bigger than that. The writer of Hebrews continues:

**Hebrews 1**

*NIV '84*

<sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his [*that is, the son's*] powerful word. After he [*the son*] had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Now, we know (anybody who has studied the Bible) that when he talks about "the Son" he's talking about the one that you and I know as Jesus—through whom, he says, he made the worlds; who came down and provided purification for our sins; and has returned and is now sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. This is the reality that the writer of Hebrews presents us with.

**Hebrews 1**

*NIV '84*

<sup>4</sup> So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.  
<sup>5</sup> 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"?

Now, this little passage of Scripture makes it very difficult to believe, as some do, that Jesus was an *angel* in time past; because Paul (who I think wrote this book) makes it clear that this was never said to any of the angels. "To which of the angels did God *ever* say, 'You are my son; this day have I become your father'?" And the implication is: *none*.

**Hebrews 1**

*NIV '84*

<sup>6</sup> And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world [*that's Jesus*], he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."  
<sup>7</sup> In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."

So angels are servants.

**Hebrews 1**

*NIV '84*

<sup>8</sup> But about the Son he says, [...]

Now, you've got to keep your pronoun straight—who's talking to who here.

**Hebrews 1**

*NIV '84*

<sup>8</sup> 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.  
<sup>9</sup> 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."

Now, the logic of *our* language starts to desert us right here. And we are safe...safest if we just take it as he says it right here. God is speaking. About the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever. Therefore God, *your* God, has set you above your companions.” There’s only one way to take this: There are *two* here who are called God—one speaking and the other spoken to. Both called God.

Now, I suppose this is part of the reasoning of Christian theologians who accept that Father and Son are both God. The only reason this is a problem for us is if we use the word “God” *solely* in the sense of the one Supreme Being. (That’s a customary usage in our society.) And sometimes we’d like to make a word mean the same thing in every context. Language doesn’t work that way; you must look at the context to see what you’re talking about. Now, if we can bring ourselves to understand that God is a *kind* of being—sort of like a human being is a *kind* of being—the difficulty disappears. My father and I are both *human*; we are of *humankind*. The divine Father and Son are both God; they are of the God kind. Now, there may be another way to understand this; but I haven’t seen it. I’ve read some very *strained* arguments looking for another way; but they, in my opinion, did violence to the plain meaning of the text.

### Hebrews 1

NIV '84

<sup>10</sup> He [*God is still speaking*] also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

<sup>11</sup> They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.

<sup>12</sup> You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

<sup>13</sup> To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

Well, the implication of that: none of them. And, of course, he *did* say that to the Son.

### Hebrews 1

NIV '84

<sup>14</sup> Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

You know, this first chapter of the Book of Hebrews is *staggering*. It opens a window on eternity that we can kind of peer through to try to understand what’s out there. If this was all we had, we might be willing to leave room for another point of view. But this is not all we have. Listen again to how this chapter begins. Hebrews 1, verse 1:

### Hebrews 1

NIV '84

<sup>1</sup> In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

<sup>2</sup> 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.

He is *flat-out* making the statement that the Son was the agent of creation of the universe. Now, how did Paul understand this?

It’s surprising how many really important things Paul puts in his letters almost like a throwaway line. It’s not exactly what he’s talking about, but nevertheless it’s there. He was writing to the Ephesians, for example—really kind of talking about himself in his ministry. He said in chapter 3, verse 8:

**Ephesians 3**

AKJV

<sup>8</sup> To 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;

<sup>9</sup> And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ[.]

Now, that's really a *fascinating* statement. As I said, it's not really the subject that he's writing about it all; but it's clear as crystal. He says plainly: God created all things "by Jesus Christ." In Hebrews, we saw it was "through" Jesus Christ. We might be able to find a way to explain away the first chapter of Hebrews, but then we're still left with this that talks about it. And that *still* isn't all. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he did something similar on a different subject. He says in chapter 1, verse 15 of Colossians:

**Colossians 1**

AKJV

<sup>15</sup> Who [*Jesus*] is the image of the invisible God, [...]

The *image* of him. We've got something very similar to this in the first chapter of Hebrews. He is...

**Colossians 1**

AKJV

<sup>15</sup> [...] the firstborn of every creature:

<sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, [...]

Jesus *is* the Creator. You know, you go back to the Declaration of Independence, where they spoke of all men being "created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights"...the claim made here by Paul is that Creator who gave us our rights is none other than the one we know as Jesus Christ.

**Colossians 1**

AKJV

<sup>16</sup> 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:

Think about *that*. Not only that...

**Colossians 1**

AKJV

<sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Before all things? Well, yeah. What he's trying to tell us here is that Jesus was there before anything you and I can see was here.

**Colossians 1**

AKJV

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell[.]

So by now we should have a faint picture begin to form in our minds of an *eternal* relationship—one that transcends and started long before Man ever existed, or even an environment for Man or a ground for Man to stand on. And that relationship? It was Father and Son. It even suggests that the one who said, “Let there be light”, was none other than the Son.

If all that’s confusing to us, we should resist thinking that it’s wrong. There’s a temptation in all human beings just to toss out anything that doesn’t fit our preconceptions; or, if we borrow from the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle, if we find a piece that looks like it ought to go but just won’t fit where we want to put it, we pull out our little penknife and we whittle it down to make it fit. That’s the way we tend to work with stuff. And I suppose if we found a piece that wasn’t even the right color we might just throw in the trash. No, no self-respecting jigsaw-puzzle-worker would ever do that; because he *knows* long since that, as sure as he tosses that piece, later on there’ll be a place where it belongs. You know, it’s a whole lot better (borrowing an expression from Mary, the mother of Jesus [**Luke 2:19**]) 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’s what he had to say about all this. (It probably formed the foundation of what Paul wrote.) His name is John, and he said this right at the beginning of his gospel:

### John 1

AKJV

- <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- <sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.
- <sup>3</sup> All things were made by him [*that is, by the Word*]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Well, you don’t have very many places to go with that. If you’ve come through Hebrews and Ephesians and Colossians, you have to realize the Word is none other than Jesus.

### John 1

AKJV

- <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Now, it’s at points like this our system of logic kind of wants to rebel a little bit. How is it possible to be *with* God and to *be* God? The traditional doctrine of the Trinity offers a way of explaining this; but if you’ve ever read much of that, you realize it still declares the whole thing to be a mystery. Let’s take a step back from it and look at it again. Is it possible to be Steven and with Steven at the same time? Well, no, that’s not a problem. All you’ve got there is two guys have the same name. I’m always amused to get a letter addressed to “Dear Ron” and signed “Ron”. In fact, one friend writes to me and signs the letter “The Other Ron”. So that really is no mystery to us when we reduce it to the human level; why should it be a big problem when we talk about it at the God level—that here you’ve got two individuals who have the same characteristics; made up the same way; formed of the same substance, the same character; and bearing the same name? Doesn’t pose a major problem in *my* way of thinking.

Now, returning to John again. Let’s start it from the beginning.

### John 1

AKJV

- <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- <sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.
- <sup>3</sup> All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

<sup>4</sup> In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

<sup>5</sup> And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. *[It just didn't get it.]*

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

Now, this is written by John about the other John. The other John is John the Baptist.

**John 1**

*AKJV*

<sup>7</sup> The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

<sup>8</sup> He *[John]* was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness *[testify]* of that Light.

<sup>9</sup> That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

That light? Oh my, that's Jesus—the light of the world.

**John 1**

*AKJV*

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

John sees an irony in that, and there's one certainly there. Here was Jesus walking up and down the dusty roads of Galilee, in the world, the world that was *made* by him—a world that didn't have a clue about who he really was. Once again we have confirmation: He was in the world. (This can be speaking of none other than the Word.) And the one who was *in* the world *made* the world. How many times do they have to say this in the Bible before we get it? John said:

**John 1**

*AKJV*

<sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own received him not.

“His own” obviously meaning Israel. He was indeed despised by the religious establishment at the time. He came to them and they wouldn't have it.

**John 1**

*AKJV*

<sup>12</sup> But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

<sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To those who received him (and there were some who did in that day and some who still do) he gave the power to become *the sons of God*. It's fascinating that it is the Son of God who grants power to others to *become* sons of God. Now we come to the crunch of what John is driving at. Verse 14:

**John 1**

*AKJV*

<sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

So the Word became flesh. The Word became known to us as Jesus the Christ. Now, how did all this come to pass?

**Matthew 1**

AKJV

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: [...]

This is the first chapter of the Book of Matthew telling us about the birth of Jesus.

**Matthew 1**

KJ2000

<sup>18</sup> [...] When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.

Now, Luke has a lot more detail about that; we'll talk about him another time. But Joseph, I have no doubt, was distressed by this. And being, we're told...

**Matthew 1**

KJ2000

<sup>19</sup> [...] a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, decided to put her away privately.

<sup>20</sup> But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, [...]

And you've got to understand one thing, too: this is important—that he was the son of David—because the *lineage* of Jesus Christ traces back to David, king of Israel; and David was a type of Christ.

**Matthew 1**

KJ2000

<sup>20</sup> [...] fear not to take unto you Mary your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>21</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now, this is really important. It was important that all this be testified by somebody other than Mary. You can see why that would be so. If Mary was the *only* one who could testify to it...well, everybody would say, "Well, you made the story up because you slept with some kid and got pregnant." In fact, later Jesus' adversaries would hint that he was an illegitimate child [**John 8:41**]. But it didn't depend solely on Mary's story: Joseph *also* could testify as to the fact that an angel had appeared and told him what was going on. And the concept of witnesses and testimony was bigger than we might think.

**Matthew 1**

KJ2000

<sup>22</sup> Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

<sup>25</sup> And knew her not [*That is, he's speaking of carnal knowledge.*] till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Now, right here we walk into another arena entirely from everything we've been in in the New Testament. We're going to an *Old Testament prophet*. And if we are going to be thorough, we have to take a *serious* look at this prophet. Now, let me set the stage for you. I've made this point again and again, but forgive me for going through it one more time: To understand the latter fulfillment of any prophecy, you need to grasp the historical concept behind it. It is sometimes said that prophecy is dual—that is, it has two fulfillments: one in history and another in the distant future—perhaps in the last days. In the broadest sense, that is true; but *in fact* there may be even more than two fulfillments.

You can take the Temple as an example. Solomon built the first temple. The prophets came along and said, "This temple is going to be destroyed!" Okay, it was—destroyed by the Babylonians. When the exiles came back from Babylonia they built another temple. That temple was destroyed by the Romans. There are those who expect a *third* temple which might be destroyed yet again by some future power. There seems to be a repeated *pattern* in here. The reasons behind that are many, and I've talked about them elsewhere.

The terms that are used for all of this stuff is "type" and "anti-type". If you read much work about prophecy, you're going to come into them. The word "type" comes from the Greek [τύπος, *typos*, Strong's G5179]; it simply means a model. You know, like you would make a little model airplane. Aircraft manufacturers will build what they call a "prototype". Actually, they do a mock-up even before that. (I remember sitting in the mock-up of a... I think it was a Falcon 10 that was being built, and it was all made of wood. And the whole purpose was you could sit in it and get a feeling for the size of the thing and know what it was going to be like when the real airplane was finished.) Okay, after that they built a prototype and actually get out and fly the prototype. They bring it back and they make modifications upon it and you get, then, the real model. In biblical terms, type and anti-type. David is called a type of Christ. Christ, in that situation, would be the anti-type.

Now, you get into this quite a bit in the writings of the prophets, and you have to be careful with it. It's a good idea to approach the writings of a prophet like you would view an impressionistic painting: you don't want to get too close to the picture; you see it better if you stand back and get the *impression* that the artist wanted you to get from the painting you're looking at. Sometimes it can be a great deal more powerful than a photograph would be. But if you get too close, even closer, get out your magnifying glass, all you see are the brush marks and you lose the picture completely. This is a mistake *commonly* made by people who try to study the Bible. Take a step back and look at *the whole thing*.

Now, with all that said, we can consider what Isaiah had to say about this child that was to be born. In Isaiah, chapter 7:

### Isaiah 7

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

<sup>2</sup> And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

A big stirring. This was a frightening development. It would have been one thing to be at war with *either* of these powers, and another thing altogether to be at war with *both of them* at the same time,

**Isaiah 7**

AKJV

<sup>3</sup> Then said the LORD to Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, you, and Shearjashub your son[....]

<sup>4</sup> And say to him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands [*Not a particularly complementary expression.*], for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

<sup>5</sup> Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against you, saying,

<sup>6</sup> Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the middle of it, even the son of Tabeal:

<sup>7</sup> Thus said the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

<sup>8</sup> For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within three score and five [65] years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

<sup>9</sup> And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.

It's at *this point* that God said to Ahaz...

**Isaiah 7**

AKJV

<sup>11</sup> Ask you a sign of the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

<sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, I will not ask[....]

And God said, "Okay, I'm going to give you one."

More on this next time.

*Christian Educational Ministries*  
P.O. Box 560 ❖ Whitehouse, Texas 75791  
Phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44 ❖ Fax: (903) 839-9311  
❖ [www.borntowin.net](http://www.borntowin.net) ❖

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