

A Case Of Mistaken Identity

By – LaBreeska Hemphill



Joel tells about when he was a little boy of four. He was with his parents in Winnsboro, Louisiana, (about forty miles from Monroe) where his dad was preaching a revival. Dubb, Joel's older brother, was in Monroe working at the time and bought Joel a pop-gun but had no way to get it to him. When Buck McKeithen, another relative, said he was going to Winnsboro, Dubb sent the pop-gun by him. It was a wonderful gift for a little boy but because it was Buck who presented him with it, Joel did not understand who it really came from. To him it was "the pop-gun that Buck got me." It bothered Joel's parents that he didn't understand where his gift came from. They wanted him to give credit where it belonged. His brother had gone to trouble and expense because of his love for Joel.

It is easy to see how a four-year-old could get it mixed up. But what is Christianity's excuse for making a very similar mistake? We as Christians give the credit for our hope and salvation to Jesus Christ. However, in the process, many Christians fail to honor God himself. Our salvation actually originated from God's heart because of his great love for us. The word of God is plain that our salvation is God's greatest gift to mankind. The golden text of the Bible is John 3:16. Even a child can quote it: "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."

Is our spiritual understanding no better than that of a four-year-old? If we think that Jesus is God, then we have a case of mistaken identity just as did Joel at four years of age. I was talking to a pastor's wife just this week and she was telling me how she had to rewrite a play that her church was doing about the birth of Jesus. The script kept saying "God" was in the manger. If we listen closely we will also hear from many pulpits today, that "God" was tempted in the wilderness for forty days, and that "God" died on the cross. My answer to that is, if God can be tempted and God can die, we are in more trouble than I thought!

Often Christians confuse Jesus with the Father himself. However, Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Jesus is not the Father. The goal of Jesus Christ was to get us to his Father. If Jesus is the truth, his words are ultimate truth. He said, "call no man father upon the earth; for one is your father who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). Satan's chief aim is to prevent people from worshiping the One True God of the Bible. He will go to any extent to do that. If we have gratitude to Jesus for our salvation (and indeed we must), and yet fail to give the ultimate credit to God, we are missing the point and failing to honor God as we should.

The majority of Christianity can only see the marvelous gift. But where did it come from? Whose plan was it for all of mankind? Jesus summed up his life and miracles on earth with these words; “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

There is no doubt about it, Jesus is the precious Son of God. Today he is seated at God's right hand. But we must remember that when he was born, while he was in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, there was a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest...” We need to understand that while the precious babe was in the manger, God was still in the highest!!!

God is not the “author of confusion.” Let’s be clear in our minds and believe the Bible, and the words of Jesus just as he has spoken them. If we only see the gift and not the ultimate giver of the gift our understanding is no more than that of a child. The scriptures tells us that in "understanding" we should not be as children but as mature adults (1 Corinthians 14:20).

Jesus’ part in God’s plan for mankind is crucial. His willingness to obey the Father at any cost is an awesome example to all. He purchased our salvation; healing, and abundant life while he was here on this earth. He did that with his stripes, his suffering and his blood. Our gratitude to him is, and should be, without measure, but not to the exclusion of God the Father! Jesus himself said:

“HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD: AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH...” (Mark 12:29).

How can we obey this greatest commandment of all if we are confused about who God is? Jesus is our savior – the son of God. To think that Jesus himself is God, however, is a serious case of mistaken identity.