



Thrift-Store Theology

Jesus Was Not An American

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Jesus Was Not An American

Just another alien?

That may sound silly since we all know Jesus was a Jew and lived way before America was even thought of but it is exactly what we base our current theology on. Let me explain.

The recent space shuttle disaster pointed out a very interesting bit of theology. The rabbi asked to speak at the memorial ceremonies brought up an interesting point when talking about the Israeli astronaut. In a Larry King interview he said that he did not believe that life is only a rehearsal nor that going to Heaven is our goal or main purpose for our lives. He said that making this world a better place and living a good life here and now was the belief of the Israeli astronaut. Of course there were a lot of references to the Christians who died and believed being in Heaven was their resting place and that is good because we Christians do believe that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But what is our main purpose here on Earth? Is it to merely prepare for our life in Heaven as if this were a dress rehearsal? And of course since this life really doesn't matter that much anyway that we can sort of slough it off and say as the ancient Romans did: eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we may die. Do we treat this life as if we are in school, or better yet college, and we are free to experiment with whatever we want to? After all, being in college is a time to try new things and lead a life that prepares you for the real thing later on so enjoy it while you can. We aren't really held responsible for what we do yet anyway. Right?

Jesus had a different view. He understood and taught that we are here on earth to work by serving God and obeying him as he makes his will known in the scriptures. And these scriptures are what we Christians would today understand as the Old Testament. These teachings are about obedience, about doing what is right in God's eyes and not in our own

eyes. What we do now has eternal consequences. It affects not only ourselves but also everyone around us: those we know and those we don't know. That is why we need to know what is the right way to live our lives and that is why God provided the scriptures. By the way, have you read them lately? How do you know how to live unless you read them? Oh, I see. You just do what you want and God will forgive you, right? Well that is why you will hate heaven. In heaven there is only one-way to do things: God's way. And if you don't know what it is then maybe you won't be there after all.

You realize that the Protestant Reformation was fought mainly over the phrase *Sola Scriptura* or scripture Only. In other words, the main authority for our lives, our salvation lies in the scriptures and not in the authority of the church or in our own beliefs. So don't you think it wise to read them and even better to do what they say?

Just a side thought. There is so much written about having the ten commandments put up in our public schools as if having them there will ever make anyone any better. If I remember right the messages of John and Baptist and Jesus was for us "believers" to repent or change OUR ways. They never said to worry about what others believed or didn't believe. In fact I believe that those who think displaying the Ten Commandments also display their Bibles thinking that will make them Christians. Jesus said it is in reading and doing what is written in the Bible that is important. Even Saint Paul knew that the law or the scriptures only showed us our sin or separation from what God wanted us to do. So if you only want to make people guilty then displaying the "Law" might do that. However, I would also like to know how many of us actually know all Ten Commandments and keep them ourselves. After all, the Bible says judge not or you will be judged. Ouch!