

## And In Other News...

# *The Chosen* TV Series: Ecumenical, Heretical and Blasphemous

Shaun Willcock

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*The Chosen* is a phenomenally popular TV series which purports to be about the life of Jesus. It has been described as “a global phenomenon” and “the most successfully crowdfunded series of all time”. It has been translated into dozens of languages. And it has earned multiplied millions of dollars.

But is it biblical? This is the all-important question, to which the answer is a straightforward No. It is not. Far from it.

Alarm bells should immediately ring when one learns that the series is praised by both professing Christians and those who make no such profession at all. But in today’s ecumenical, interfaith, warm-and-fuzzy-feelings world, where anything resembling discernment is completely lacking, multitudes of those who call themselves Christians see nothing wrong with it and in fact think it is a wonderful series.

### *Dallas Jenkins, the Creator of the Series*

Dallas Jenkins is the creator, director and co-writer of the series. He is the son of the novelist Jerry B. Jenkins, who wrote the *Left Behind* series of “Christian fiction” – some of the most blatantly unbiblical novels ever. So perhaps the reader should not be surprised at what you are about to learn concerning his son.

He has said: “I’m a conservative Evangelical. I believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. I believe in the supremacy of God’s Word. I believe in the Holy Trinity. I believe in God the Father, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and believe that Jesus is the Son of God and all of the core tenets of Scripture.”<sup>1</sup> But even if all this is true – and in Jenkins’ case it is not, as shall be seen – none of it automatically means that he is a Bible teacher – or even a Christian! Many heretics appear very orthodox. A man may say with his mouth what his heart does not believe; or he may intellectually accept what he says he believes, but deny it by his works. A true Christian is not merely one who has sound doctrine in the *head*, but one who knows Christ in the *heart*. As we shall see, Jenkins is *not* a conservative Evangelical. He is *not* a true Christian.

### *A Man Portraying Jesus*

This immediately makes the series unbiblical: the fact that a man pretends to portray the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God. I go into this in my book, *Trappings of Popery*.<sup>2</sup> No sinful man could ever accurately portray Christ the Lord, nor should he even try. No one knows what Jesus looked like, and therefore any portrayal of Him is inaccurate and puts a false image in the mind of the viewer when he prays to the Lord, which is idolatry; but even more than that, the actor can only portray the human nature of Christ, not His divine nature. Yet to portray only one of His natures is to present an inaccurate and incomplete portrait of Him! This is as sinful as an artist depicting what He claims is a picture of Jesus.

If there was no other error in the series than this, it would be enough to reject it outright. But there is much, much more that is very wrong with *The Chosen*.

## *Adding to and Changing the Biblical Account*

Dallas Jenkins claims to believe that the Bible is God's Word and needs no improvement.<sup>3</sup> But the series adds a whole lot of subject matter to the biblical characters, and adds events which are not found in the Bible at all – showing that Jenkins does not truly believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it is all-sufficient, despite what he claims. There are many examples of this. Here are just a few (and no, there was no need to actually watch the series to discover such things).

Jenkins constantly puts words in Jesus' mouth which He did not say, and would never have said. For example, in Jn. 3 there is the account of the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus. In *The Chosen* "Jesus" is shown asking Nicodemus, "What does your heart say?" These words are not to be found anywhere in the biblical text. Furthermore, Jesus would never have asked such a foolish question, given that His own Word says of the human heart, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). But this kind of question – "What does your heart say?" is so typical of modern western confusion today. "Listen to your heart" is pop psychology. It is what people say to one another all the time, but this is not the teaching of the Bible as the heart is deceitful and wicked, and since men cannot know it truthfully or fully, listening to it is very, very bad advice.

At one point the actor supposedly portraying Jesus says, "If we are going to have a question and answer time every time there is something you are not used to, we will have a very annoying time for all of us."<sup>4</sup> Jesus becoming annoyed over such a trifling matter? This is utterly contrary to what the Scripture reveals about the holy Son of God.

At another point he says, "Get used to different." Would the Lord Jesus Christ have said such a thing? Absolutely not. What about "I'm here to start a revolution"? Again, No. He did not speak this way, nor did He come for such an earthly and sinful purpose.

Jenkins makes the disciple Matthew to have had Aspergers' Syndrome (i.e. to be autistic), James the lesser to have had cerebral palsy, and Peter to have broken the Sabbath by going fishing. There is *nothing* in all the Bible to support these things. They are utterly fictitious inventions of Jenkins' imagination.

Jesus is even shown as dancing at a party in one episode! This kind of sinful portrayal of the Lord and Saviour resonates well with the worldly, but is blasphemous. Journalist Sean O'Neal wrote, "Whether or not you believe he was actually our Lord and Savior, *The Chosen* does a pretty good job of suggesting why so many people wanted to follow this guy around."<sup>5</sup> Except that the Lord Jesus was *not* "one of the boys", a "party animal" who was followed by His disciples for this reason. He called people *out of* the world and its ways.

In one episode, one of the disciples asks Jesus to make the disciple Andrew a better dancer, to which the actor portraying Jesus replies, "Some things even I cannot do."<sup>6</sup> Not only would the Lord Jesus never have taught His disciples to dance, but to make Jesus say there are things He is unable to do is blasphemous!

Lk. 5:18 says, "And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him." But in *The Chosen*, he is shown as being carried by Mary Magdalene and a woman named Tamar! It was obviously of no concern to the creators of the series to ignore what the New Testament says and do things their own way. Doubtless this was done as a nod to the feminist agenda.

Ah, feminism. This is promoted subtly in the series. For example, "Jesus" is seen asking Mary Magdalene to lead in prayer and the reading of Scripture. This was never done by Jews in the first century, nor do we read of the Lord Jesus Christ ever requesting such a thing. It is, in a word, a lie.

And Jesus and His disciples are made out to be very humorous. Sean O’Neal in the *Texas Monthly* wrote: “Yeah, but was [Jesus] funny? Scholars argue that, yes, Jesus actually had a great sense of humor and a droll sense of irony that’s often overlooked. Still, you’ve likely never seen a Jesus as sitcom-witty as the one portrayed in *The Chosen*, the hit streaming series filmed right here in Texas. This Messiah and his disciples have a quippy, lightly teasing banter.... Take this exchange from the show’s second season: Jesus’ followers John and Big James call on him to smite some unruly Samaritans, so Jesus cocks an eyebrow and deadpans, ‘You wanted to use the power of God to bring down fire to burn these people up?’ John takes a beat. ‘Well... it sounds a lot worse when you say it *that way*,’ he says. All that’s missing is a choir of angels to supply the heavenly laugh track.”<sup>7</sup>

O’Neal also stated: “The show... presents Jesus and his disciples as real, vaguely neurotic people, busting free of the stained-glass images that have long enshrined them. They bicker and fall in love. They struggle with insecurities and jealousies. A lot of them are just plain rude to one another.” He describes them as “a bunch of hothead doofuses as they jockey for power around their famous friend.”

And the characters are made to speak as if they are living in the twenty-first century, with Romans and Pharisees etc. saying things like, “freaked out”, “that’s not a good look”, etc. All done, no doubt, to attract young viewers. After all, that’s what it’s all about: attracting viewers. That’s how money is made. Who cares about the truth or accuracy?

### ***It Goes Beyond Entertainment***

It would be bad enough if *The Chosen* was nothing but entertainment. But it is even worse than that. Dallas Jenkins has been involved in writing study guides and devotionals in the light of his fictional characters (they *are* fictional, for they are not accurate portrayals of Christ or the disciples). This means that churches and individuals will actually use these materials of his as they watch the series, thinking it is all enabling them to grow in their spiritual walk. They have been deceived.

### ***Trotting Out the Testimonies***

There are always those who claim to have been positively affected by a show like this, and because of these testimonies we are expected to endorse it, praise it and even be thankful to God for it. But this is a huge error. When someone says, “I came to know Jesus better through this show”, we have to ask: how could a TV series of any sort, and even more so one which is so inaccurate biblically, do that in a person’s life which their reading of the Word of God did not do? One comment was, “I feel like I’ve been reading my Bible in black and white all these years and now it’s in colour”;<sup>8</sup> the implication being that until *The Chosen* came along this viewer was unable to truly benefit from God’s Word. But does such a person truly know the Lord, or the Word of the Lord? Very clearly not. How come Holy Scripture is explicitly declared to be “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16,17) – and has indeed been completely sufficient for all the Lord’s people through the centuries – but now all of a sudden it’s not? The answer is evident: viewers such as this one want thrills, they want excitement, they want motion and action, they want “*colour*” – they find Scripture to be dull, boring, and they derive no profit from it. The Bible was a dead book to them until this TV series came along to liven everything up!

### ***Jenkins on the Son of God***

Dallas Jenkins told the *Wall Street Journal* that he “was inspired by secular if similarly impassioned shows such as *Friday Night Lights*, *The West Wing*, and *The Wire*, and wanted to make a show with a similar naturalistic bent that delved into the people and the politics of Jesus’ time. That meant less emphasis on the divine and more focus on the human – Jesus included.”<sup>9</sup> So in order to understand Jesus and His message in the twenty-first century, we need a TV series inspired by – the Word of God?

Er, no – by secular and stupid TV shows! Even if it means presenting a “Jesus” who is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

### ***Jenkins on the Holy Scriptures***

Jenkins claimed in an interview that he “felt like God was saying that ‘this will be the definitive portrayal of My people and this is what people are going to think of around the world when they think of My people. And I’m not going to let you screw it up.’”<sup>10</sup> Yet this man also claimed *The Chosen* is not a replacement for Scripture! He cannot have it both ways. If it really is not a replacement for Scripture, why would God supposedly tell Jenkins (according to Jenkins!) that it will become the *definitive portrayal* of God’s people? *The Bible* gives us the definitive portrayal of the people of God! And if Jenkins was a true Christian he would believe that and uphold it. But he does not. He exalts his own TV series as being more definitive than the Bible he claims to believe!

In fact, considering how close Jenkins is to the Mormon cult (see below), his justification for the series – that it does not replace Scripture while at the same time claiming God is behind the project – sounds chillingly similar to an advertisement used by the Mormon cult to promote their *Book of Mormon*. The advert says, “Like the Bible, the Book of Mormon is a special book that teaches about Jesus Christ. It doesn’t replace the Bible. As you study both books, you can gain a deeper understanding of Jesus’ gospel and draw closer to God.”<sup>11</sup> Substituting *The Chosen* for the Book of Mormon, Dallas Jenkins could have written this advert himself, his own position is so very similar to it!

Jenkins claimed that he was “trying to tell God’s stories in a fresh way”, and “enhancing Scripture”.<sup>12</sup> This is blasphemous. Firstly, God’s “stories” (they are not fictional, of course) do not need the help of any man, and certainly do not need to be “freshened up”. They have served the elect of God perfectly well ever since they were written down by men moved by the Holy Spirit. Secondly – “*enhancing Scripture*”? 2 Tim. 3:16 categorically states that Scripture is perfect as written. It is all-sufficient and needs no enhancing! To attempt to “enhance” it is to sin greatly. The dictionary definition of “enhance” is: to intensify, increase, or further improve the quality, value, or extent of something. Does he want to *increase* Scripture? Does he want to *improve its quality and value*? Does he want to *extend* it? Apparently so. His soul is on most dangerous ground (Rev. 22:18,19; Deut. 4:2; Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:6). Far from supporting this man by lapping up his dreadful work, all true believers should tremble for his soul and pray for his salvation.

### ***Jenkins on Roman Catholicism and Ecumenism***

Jenkins is on record as stating that Roman Catholicism and Mormonism have only minor theological differences with his own version of “Christianity”. In fact, he has called them simply “different perspectives” which are “exciting to explore, not dangerous”. After writing each episode of *The Chosen*, he consults a Roman Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi and a so-called Evangelical to make certain that what he has written is “biblically accurate”!

In an interview he admitted that he incorporated the religious views of Roman Catholics, Jews and Evangelicals into the series. And he admitted that he was particularly concerned to appease Roman Catholics! Now why would that be? In a word – money. No religious institution has more of it than the Roman Catholic institution. He said he was “a little nervous from a Catholic perspective. Would they be comfortable seeing Mary as worried, as even incorrect?” He also was at pains to promote the false Roman Catholic teaching that “Hail Mary” prayers supposedly point the person to Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

In an interview Jenkins said, “[*The Chosen*] is really focused solely on the stories of Jesus. Which means that a lot of people from a lot of different tribes all love it. LDS [Mormons], Catholic, Greek Orthodox, whatever. And they don’t disagree about the show, which makes a lot of people nervous because they’re like, wait a minute, we are supposed to disagree... supposed to be angry at each

other.”<sup>14</sup>

This man is an ecumenical of note! A few points from this brief statement by Jenkins. First, his series is *not* focused on the true stories of Jesus, because those are found in the Gospels and many of Jenkins’ stories are *extra-biblical*. Second, the fact that people from false religions and cults love the series shows that the “Jesus” being presented in the series is not the Jesus of the Bible. There is only one true Jesus Christ and only one true Gospel, but there are many, many false Christs and false gospels which are proclaimed by false preachers and teachers (2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6-9). Third, yes, true Christians certainly disagree with the false gospels presented by such false Christians as Papists, Mormons, Greek Orthodox, etc.; but we are certainly not filled with anger! Rather, we are filled with sorrow that the devil has blinded their minds (2 Cor. 4:4), and we seek to persuade them of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ that they may be saved.

Jenkins is particularly fond of Mormonism, as explained below. It is not just Mormons, however. “Mr. Jenkins partners with far more than the LDS church. He partners with NAR-connected (New Apostolic Reformation) worship leaders who sing on set and participate in the show. Individuals like Bethelite Sean Feucht, Elevation Church-connected Cody Carnes and Kari Jobe, Hillsong, Chris Tomlin, and Phil Wickham. Mr. Jenkins also partners with catholic Matt Maher and progressive Christian Dan Haseltine. All of this is seen on The Chosen Facebook page.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, Jenkins is happy to partner with almost any and every false Christian and proclaimer of false gospels, from Romanists to Mormons to Charismatic prosperity doctrine liars to false Charismatic prophets.

### ***Jenkins on Mormonism***

Jenkins gave an interview on a Mormon radio show and this is what he said:

“So I can honestly say, it’s been one of the top three most fascinating and beautiful things about this project – it’s been my growing brother and sisterhood with people of the LDS [Latter-day Saints, the official name of the Mormon cult] community that I never would’ve known otherwise and I learned so much about your faith tradition and realizing... for all the stuff that maybe we don’t see eye to eye on... that all happened, that’s all based on stuff that happened after Jesus was here. The stories of Jesus we do agree on, and we love the same Jesus. That’s not something you often hear... sometimes it’s like, oh they believe in a different Jesus than we do. No, it’s the same, I mean I’ll sink or swim on that statement. I know that’s controversial and I don’t mind getting criticized at all for the show, and I don’t mind being called a blasphemer, I don’t like it when my friends are. I made it very clear that if I go down, I’m going down protecting my friends and my brothers and sisters and so I don’t deny we have a lot of theological differences but we love the same Jesus.”<sup>16</sup> And he has said he has Mormon friends who believe in “Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of the Gospels, the Jesus that I’m portraying in the show, and I do believe and do stand by that statement.”<sup>17</sup>

This false teacher claimed that the members of the Mormon cult are brothers and sisters in Christ! Mormons worship an entirely false “Christ”. Truly the words of Paul are applicable to Mormons as well as to so many others: they preach another Jesus, and receive another spirit and another gospel (2 Cor. 11:4). There is no other *true* Gospel, but plenty of *false* ones, and he is accursed who preaches them (Gal. 1:6-9). Dallas Jenkins, in receiving Mormons as his brethren, demonstrates that he preaches a false “Jesus” and a false “gospel”.

But we should not be surprised that Jenkins is so fond of Mormonism, and speaks so highly of this lying cult. It turns out that he is good friends with two Mormon brothers who launched Angel Studios, the streaming platform behind *The Chosen*; and the second season of the series was filmed in Goshen, Utah, on a set built by the Mormon cult! But his partnership with the Mormons goes even deeper than that: Mormons ran his distribution platform, and they also provided many crew members to him! So then, “Even if the LDS church is not outright telling Mr. Jenkins what to do or what to write, you can be sure that... there is influence taking place. He is not going to write lines or portray something that might interfere with that support network and his ability to reach his goal of reaching 1 billion

viewers.”<sup>18</sup>

He has attempted to justify his very pro-Mormon stance. In a YouTube video he said he had been asked to respond to statements such as, “Dallas Jenkins says Mormons, LDS and Evangelicals love the same Jesus”, and “LDS are Christians.” Here is his reply: “Is it true that I said that? The answer is no, I did not.”<sup>19</sup> This was an outright lie! The following statements, already given above, prove it: “it’s been my growing brother and sisterhood with people of the LDS [Latter-day Saints] community that I never would’ve known otherwise.... we love the same Jesus. That’s not something you often hear... sometimes it’s like, oh they believe in a different Jesus than we do. No, it’s the same, I mean I’ll sink or swim on that statement. I know that’s controversial and I don’t mind getting criticized at all for the show, and I don’t mind being called a blasphemer, I don’t like it when my friends are. I made it very clear that if I go down, I’m going down protecting my friends and my brothers and sisters and so I don’t deny we have a lot of theological differences but we love the same Jesus.”

Trying desperately to excuse such blatant support for Mormons as his brothers and sisters who “love the same Jesus”, he went on: “I think it’s fair to say that this is one where I don’t take back what I said, but I could have given it a little more clarity.”

Then he said: “I think we can agree that words matter, nuance matters, and I probably could have given more context and clarity.” Oh, so now it’s all a matter of words and nuances, is it? How like a lying politician he sounds, for they always say, “I was quoted out of context.”

He then said: “I think it’s also true that it would be a problem if I actually said those words definitively.” Not only is it true that he *did* say those words definitively, but in addition the true Christian reader will be utterly perplexed by his reasoning: “That would be a problem, and here’s why: Not because there aren’t LDS folks who aren’t Christians [so he actually *re-affirms* his belief that Mormons are Christians – at least some of them] and not because there aren’t LDS and Evangelicals who love the same Jesus [so he *re-affirms* his belief that they “love the same Jesus”], but because it would be wrong of me to ever say that any one group believes any one thing altogether. That is just a level of arrogance I don’t have.”<sup>20</sup> To which we would not be at all surprised if the true Christian reader responds with: “Huh?” If that’s the best he can do to justify lying, and to justify his heretical statements about Mormons being Christians and “loving the same Jesus”, then he is a master at saying a whole lot about nothing, or at using words to confuse rather than to make his meaning clearer!

Note how he continues, and how he squirms out of the hole he dug for himself: “It would be just as dumb for me to say that all LDS are Christians as it would be to say that all Evangelicals are Christians or that all Catholics are Christians or any other faith tradition. It would also be dumb of me to say that none are! That’s also a level of arrogance that I don’t possess.” Note how he denies saying, “*All* Mormons love the same Jesus”. By denying he said this, he is able to claim he was only saying *some* do. However, even if he only *meant* to say that *some* do, this would still be an utterly un-Christian statement. For *no* Mormons, and *no* Roman Catholics, *while they remain such*, are true Christians! It’s not “dumb”, nor is it arrogance, to say that none are – it’s soundly biblical!

And just to add evidence to evidence of Jenkins’ love affair with Mormonism: he signed on as the executive producer of *The Shift*, written and directed by Mormon Brock Heasley, which promotes the heresies of Mormonism! And justifying himself for doing so, this spiritually blind man said: “The message of *The Shift* is so important... There is an umbrella over it of spiritual importance. Something is being said about our universe and who created it. That is what *The Shift* is about. That is what *The Chosen* is about.”<sup>21</sup> Equating his *Chosen* series with this openly Mormon *Shift* film tells us exactly what we need to know about Dallas Jenkins and Mormonism.

## **Conclusion**

What is Jenkins’ general response when facing criticism for his series? He says, “Get used to different.”<sup>22</sup> But why should we? Should we not be content with what the Bible reveals about the

Lord Jesus Christ? Why must we now “get used to different” just because this man bursts onto the scene, claims to be a Bible teacher, and tells us to? This is not a biblical response at all. It is a cop-out, and it is heretical in itself.

True Christians will *never* “get used to different”. When it comes to biblical matters, “different” is always heretical. We will cleave to the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16); the “ancient landmarks” (Deut. 19:14; Prov. 22:28). We reject with abhorrence that which is “different” in doctrine, practice, or worship. This is the devil’s trick, and Dallas Jenkins is serving him, not Christ.

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### **ENDNOTES:**

(Please note: with the exception of the author’s own book, the works listed below are for documentation only, and are not recommended otherwise)

1. *The Christian Post*, May 22, 2022. “‘The Chosen’ creator Dallas Jenkins clarifies his ‘Mormons are Christians’ comments.” [www.christianpost.com](http://www.christianpost.com).
2. *Trappings of Popery*, by Shaun Willcock. Bible Based Ministries, 2007. Available on our website.
3. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021. “The Chosen and The Shift.” <https://churchwatchcentral.com>.
4. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
5. *Texas Monthly*, December 8, 2021. “‘The Chosen’ is Christian TV That Even Heretics Can Get Behind.” [www.texasmonthly.com](http://www.texasmonthly.com).
6. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
7. *Texas Monthly*, December 8, 2021.
8. *Growing4 Life*, January 26, 2021. “The Chosen: Is It Biblical?” <https://Growing4Life.net>.
9. *Texas Monthly*, December 8, 2021.
10. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
11. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
12. *Growing4 Life*, January 26, 2021.

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13. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
  14. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
  15. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
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  17. *The Christian Post*, May 22, 2022.
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  20. *The Christian Post*, May 22, 2022.
  21. *Church Watch Central*, May 19, 2021.
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