

Is The Chosen a Good Choice?

Saturday, May 27, 2023 0:800 AM CT • 54:01

Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Is The Chosen A Good Choice?

That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. We are able to reach believers and non believers with that mission through the radio station, website or app on which you are listening today because of the support of listeners like you. So thank you for your prayer, encouragement and support. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Just a quick update before we get to the preview for the topic today. We had a wonderful event last week. The speaker series event with Alex Newman. He gave a really compelling presentation on The Great Reset that we will be making available, at least the audio of it, in the coming weeks. We so enjoyed meeting face to face with listeners who came out to the event. Thank you for your participation.

All right, let's get to our preview for today's topic on The Chosen. You have likely heard about and may have seen The Chosen television series. Tens of millions of people all over the world are watching it. It's been translated into dozens of languages. Most Christians say they just love it and call it life-changing. Even many non-Christians say how it's given them a new perspective on Jesus. The series, now in its third season, depicts the life of Jesus generally based on biblical accounts and particularly from the perspectives of those closest to Jesus, like his disciples. "Generally" being the important word because what Dallas Jenkins, lead creator of the series has done is added all kinds of "plausible" fiction to the stories in the gospels. For instance, Jesus is portrayed as doing speech prep before the Sermon on the Mount. The apostle Matthew is portrayed as autistic. These things Dallas Jenkins would say are, "plausible." In other words, the dictionary defines that as seemingly reasonable or probable. Now, is that a problem? I mean, don't all films and books use, "artistic license?" Isn't the greater good here that so many millions of people are being introduced to Jesus in a, "fresh" and "relatable" way?

This weekend on The Christian Worldview, we're going to examine The Chosen and ask the questions - is the series honoring to God and His Word, and therefore something you and your family should watch? So let's start off by asking the question, What is The Chosen? Well, I went to the GotQuestions.org website, and they have a whole page on it and they're very favorable on it. Their

take is very positive for The Chosen. They say The Chosen is a television show about the life of Christ. Season One, released in 2019, garnered attention for several reasons. It is the first television show of its kind presenting the life of Christ over multiple seasons. It plans seven seasons total. It was crowd funded. Bringing in more donations, over \$40 million as of 2023, than any other media project ever. It is the first series to be launched in every country simultaneously via its own app, with over 108 million views so far in 180 countries, and it is being praised for its accurate and engaging storytelling.

Moving on with the article. The Chosen is free to watch with no fee or subscription necessary. The show's creator, Dallas Jenkins, has a degree in Biblical Studies, and is the son of the Left Behind co author, Jerry Jenkins, remember the books and the movies he did with Tim LaHaye. In creating the show, Dallas Jenkins put together a panel of expert consultants, to ensure biblical and historical accuracy in the script he was co writing for the show. We'll get to that later. On the panel we're a Messianic Jewish rabbi, a Roman Catholic priest, and an Evangelical professor of Biblical studies.

You have to remember that every worldview has a source. So The Chosen is projecting a worldview. While it is based on Scripture, the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ and His disciples, the worldview that's going to bleed through is going to be that of Dallas Jenkins primarily, and also those that are contributing to it.

So who is Dallas Jenkins? He did an interview with Sean McDowell who is a well known Christian apologist and also the son of Josh McDowell, who is also a Christian apologist as well. At the beginning of the interview, Sean McDowell asked Dallas Jenkins a very important question.

Audio Sound Bite: Sean McDowell 05:26

I'm really curious, before we get to The Chosen, Why are you a Christian? What's your story?

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 05:33

That's a great question. I was raised in an evangelical home. My dad is Jerry Jenkins, the author of the Left Behind books, which is what he's been writing since before I was alive. I was raised and born into a family that took God seriously and Jesus seriously and I was a churchgoer. I think that's why I got started. Now as to why I'm still a believer 47 years into my life, it's that my experience with God, my experience, as a believer.

This may sound weird, but it's lived up to the promise that a childlike conversion experience as it were, accepting Jesus into your heart and committing your life to Him has not necessarily made life easy, but it's made life joyous. You know, as your dad has written. Your dad has written extraordinary books. But when the promises of faith come alive, even here on Earth, even before you get to the ultimate promise of faith, which is eternity, you go, I've just seen too much. I've seen too much to where I can't not believe. Since probably I was five years old, when I first prayed the prayer, I believe God has been proven faithful.

Host: David Wheaton 07:08

So that was Dallas Jenkins answer as to why he is a Christian. That he accepted Jesus into his heart when he was younger, and now he's seen too much to not believe, and that his childlike conversion experience has made life joyous. There wasn't a word about sin, repentance, or even about Christ and what His work was on the cross. That's remarkable, because the question wasn't just, Are you a Christian? Lots of people will answer, Oh, of course, yes, I've gone to church and I was baptized as a child or something like that. The question was, why you are a Christian? The answer as to why someone becomes a Christian has everything to do with the fact that we are sinners. We need to be reconciled and forgiven by a holy God, through the person and work of Jesus Christ, and so on. That's not communicated at all. It always leaves me to question whether someone actually understands what the gospel is and what they're actually believing in. God doesn't save us to make our lives just more joyous.

The primary reason why anyone becomes a Christian should be that we are sinners and under threat of God's judgment, unless we receive by faith, God's terms of reconciliation, that we repent of our sin and put our faith in God's provision for our sin, the person and work of His Son on the cross, and His resurrection. Sure, there's other benefits to salvation, like a joyous life, added peace and so forth. But why we are a Christian primarily is because we're sinners against a holy God, and we need to become right with Him.

Getting back to the article from GotQuestions.org on The Chosen, it says Dallas Jenkins goal in creating the show was to help people know Jesus better and love scripture more. To reach that goal, he and the other script writers took the Gospel accounts and added plausible, and that's a very key word that Dallas Jenkins uses over and over, plausible. Again, it means seemingly reasonable or probable details about the lives of the biblical figures found there in the Gospel accounts. The intended result, got questions said, is that viewers see the people in the Bible as real people who dealt with the same types of issues we all have to deal with. In The Chosen the disciples have families and friends. They have reputations to uphold. They have a sense of humor, and they struggle with finances and other concerns. As with all storytelling based on historical events, some artistic license is evident.

I would say more than just some. In retelling the Gospel accounts, the writers have inserted or modified some characters, storylines and details of the inspired original. One example of these artistic choices is that the disciple, Matthew, is depicted as a young man on the Asperger's autism spectrum. There is no direct biblical evidence that Matthew had this disorder, but it's a "plausible detail." So the writers felt comfortable using artistic license to insert this additional trait to Matthew's character. Since no one is claiming that the show is God's Word, or that it is on par with the Bible, such license, GotQuestions says, is acceptable and even expected in a medium such as television, as long as viewers remember that what they are seeing is art and not real life and they compare what they view as scripture, there is no danger of confusion.

That is a major stretch to me. I mean, do we really think that most viewers of The Chosen are going to be like the Bereans watching the program with the Bible in one hand? He uses the word plausible over and over again as they fill in the blanks of what could have happened surrounding the life of Jesus. GotQuestions goes on to say, dramatizations of biblical events, such as are presented in The Chosen, provide an opportunity for sharing the gospel with those who otherwise might not be exposed to the Bible. For believers, such dramatizations can promote spiritual growth, reminding us that the Bible is more than just a story. It relates actual events in the lives of real people who had emotions, relationships and concerns similar to ours. My response to that is, Is the Bible somehow unrelatable as God inspired it to be? I mean, it shows all kinds of imperfections and sin of its main characters. Why is the film series necessary to make it more authentic and relatable to us? Last paragraph. There is some concern that members of the Mormon church are involved in the production of The Chosen and that resources owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are used to film the show. In fact, the distributor of the show, VidAngel, was founded by two Mormons. Also of concern are some statements made by Dallas Jenkins, that seem to embrace Mormons as his brothers and sisters in Christ. I'll just add, it's much more than "seems to embrace", its that he does embrace Mormons as his brothers and sisters in Christ. The soundbite coming up, for instance, on the website, LDS- LatterDaySaintsLiving.com. It says, Derral Eve's one of the two Latter Day Saint executive producers of the hit show, The Chosen, knows the show's creator Dallas Jenkins has received pushback for choosing to work with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons. In fact, Eve's became emotional when talking about that opposition in a recent podcast interview. "But this is what I love about Dallas," Eve's said. "He was able to see my heart and he's been the biggest defender of me and my family and my faith background. He's literally had to endure stuff that no one should endure because of our relationship. Honestly, I will always be eternally indebted to him, because of how he has defended me and my beliefs." His Mormon beliefs. On the flip side, he'll say other things of how we've helped him. It's just been a very synergistic project. Eve's added that the show has historical and biblical consultants as well as representatives from different religions who aid their writers.

Here's a very troubling clip of Dallas Jenkins doing an interview about The Chosen with a Mormon interviewer:

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 13:48

What's funny about the LDS folks is you guys seem to be, even though you're the most controversial, you seem to be the least confrontational. It's like, hey, we all love Jesus. I just want to let you know we love the show. When people start going, Hey, you're a Mormon, you're going to hell, you're like, hey, whatever. It seems to roll off your back. Maybe it's because you're used to being on the outside sometimes. But yes it's been so fascinating because even my family members when we first started this relationship with VidAngel, part of it was, well be careful because of the common misconceptions about our different belief systems, but also just protecting the show. Will the audience be bothered by the fact that there are LDS people involved? Personally, I didn't really care because I've worked with

people of all different traditions. I've worked with atheists. I've partnered with people who have distributed my movies who had zero desire to, or connection to Christ and couldn't have cared less about it. Even if I had significant disagreements with the LDS community, which I've learned I have fewer than I thought I did, but even with that I was okay.

I was comfortable with that because as long as they're treating the show properly, that's all that matters. So, I can honestly say, what's been one of the top three most fascinating and beautiful things about this project has been my growing brother and sisterhood with people of the LDS community that I never would have known otherwise. I'm learning so much about your faith tradition and realizing, gosh, 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 that 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. It's controversial. I don't mind getting criticized at all for the show. 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 swinging, protecting my friends, and my brothers and sisters. So I don't deny we have a lot of theological differences, but we love the same Jesus.

Host: David Wheaton 16:28

That was Dallas Jenkins saying that Mormons and evangelicals love the same Jesus. You mean the same Jesus that Mormonism believes in who was a brother of Satan, that was founded by Joseph Smith, who has a completely different revelation called the Book of Mormon, the book that's claimed to be greater than the Bible? A religion based on, Yes, some things of Christianity, but also works based religion. Go to the mormon.org website and you can read all about it. That's what Paul described as a different gospel in Galatians, chapter one. Dallas Jenkins just equated the biblical gospel with a false gospel. That's exactly what Paul wrote about in Galatians chapter one, where he says, *I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a re, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!*

As we have said before, Dallas Jenkins is affirming that the way of salvation that the Mormon Church teaches, is equivalent to the biblical gospel. So should we trust any professing Christian who would make this statement, that we love the same Jesus with a false religious way? Would you be skeptical of the content that this man produces? You should be. When we come back after these ministry announcements, we'll talk more about The Chosen and get into the concept of plausibility that Dallas Jenkins and the contributor, talk about over and over again. You're listening to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 18:32

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this, fling open your windows, pray openly so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

That was evangelist, Ray Comfort, exhorting believers to stand firm and speak boldly, just like Daniel. Ray's new book, *So Many Lions, So Few Daniels* is 192 pages, softcover and retails for \$16.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Become a Worldview Partner 19:32

What is The Christian Worldview Radio Program really about? Fundamentally, it's about impacting people, families, churches, with the life and eternity changing truth of God's Word. We know the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that saves us from God's wrath by God's grace for God's glory. And we know the Bible is the inspired Word of God, providing the only way to think and live to the glory of God. We are a nonprofit listener supported ministry.

If you'd like to help us impact listeners with the biblical worldview and the Gospel, consider becoming a Christian Worldview Partner who regularly give a specified amount to the ministry. As a thank you, Christian Worldview Partners automatically receive many of the resources featured on the program throughout the year. To become a Christian Worldview Partner, call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233 or visit TheChristianWorldview.org. Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Our topic today is, "Is The Chosen a Good Choice?" *James 3:1 says, Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.* So when you are writing a Christian book, speaking to an audience about the faith or about doctrine or making TV programs, as Dallas Jenkins is doing depicting the life of Christ, you are a teacher, whether you want to admit it or not. You're not necessarily a pastor, that's different. But you're teaching. So there's a greater responsibility. There's a stricter judgment for teachers of those who are presenting things in Scripture. There's a duty to be accurate, to accurately represent God and His Word, to be faithful to it, to honor him. That is the primary calling of a teacher. That's where this issue of plausible comes in. Dallas Jenkins mentions that word often as the operating principle of The Chosen. Yes, they genuinely follow the narratives of the life of Christ from within the Gospels, but they add a lot of fiction. In other words, they make stuff up that they consider to be plausible. Here's more from Sean McDowell's interview with Dallas Jenkins,

Audio Sound Bite: Sean McDowell 22:16

You guys are creating this imaginative, creative look at the life of Jesus through the eyes of many of his followers. I imagine with as big as this is, people have asked questions like, How do we know the Bible is actually true? How do we know Jesus rose from the grave? Does your ministry deal in any way with those apologetic questions? Or do you just punt and say, that's not our lane, read these books? Check out these folks.

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 22:40

Yes, that's a really important distinction. I want to clarify too, and I hope this comes out the right way. We're not a ministry. I think the reason that I want to say that is because to your question, you're right. Some of these questions are for people like your dad to have explored. We're making a show under a couple of assumptions. Number one, we're portraying the stories that the Bible tells. We're adding to some of those stories. Obviously cultural context, historical context, and some artistic imagination of course.

Our operating principle is, we believe that our portrayal is plausible. As to whether or not the truth of what we're portraying has changed your life as the viewer or not, if you are someone who's a believer, if you're not a believer, that is actually not for me to try to impact. When you come to watch my show, I'm not saying, Now before you watch my show, you need to have come to a faith in Jesus. Look, that's true of our cast and crew. The majority of our cast and crew aren't traditional evangelical believers. We don't have a religious litmus test for who is going to be involved in our show, or who is actually going to watch our show. Now, to be clear, my hope is that after watching our show, that you know and love Jesus more. My hope is that you consider that these stories might have actually been real. But even if you don't when you're watching it, that doesn't mean you can't still appreciate the show, or glean something from it.

Ultimately, the end game of the show is hopefully to hand the baton off to people like yourself. I am not a pastor. I do believe that the show can be pastoral, and I've heard from pastors and thought leaders and authors who have said the show has been a great tool in their toolbox in order to disciple people. As for the show in and of itself, I don't want to put on the show or on me the job that I believe only God can do, that only the Holy Spirit can do, if that makes sense. Again, I'm not resisting the call to evangelism. In fact, that's a call we all have. But the show itself, I think, if we're trying to in a 50 minute episode not only portray a show and make it something that people actually want to watch, but also trying to give the four steps of salvation and make a gospel tract, I don't think the show is going to be nearly as effective at that as someone like you can be in a personal relationship with a listener or a congregant or a friend.

Host: David Wheaton 25:18

Okay, that was Dallas Jenkins really talking out of two sides of his mouth. It's sort of a plausible deniability. When you insert things into these programs that are plausible, in other words, they think they could happen, maybe they didn't happen, it really gives you a license to add whatever you

want. Maybe it happened. We want people to consider that they're real, he said. Then he mentioned that he's not a pastor. That's true, but he is a teacher. He's trying to absolve himself from responsibility. We're not a ministry, we're just producing a TV show. It's part entertainment. But again, the show is influencing tens of millions of people. It's shaping their perspective on who Christ and His apostles were. It goes from being not only just the operating principle of they put in what they think is plausible, but he also has a deniability to it ,too. It gives him some distance that, well, we thought it was possible, it may not have happened, you don't have to believe that, and then, I'm not really a teacher, I'm just putting this out there. This isn't meant to be part of the Great Commission, that's someone else's job.

But that's not really what's taking place when you create a television show with this kind of impact around the world. Here's a clip from an interview he did with Ed Stetzer, who is a popular Christian influencer. He's been a big advocate of the He Gets Us campaign where he talks more about this plausible deniability.

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 26:50

As you know, I come from a conservative Bible believing background. I'm a strong evangelical who believes that the Bible is God's Word. So we start with that as our primary source of truth and inspiration. We don't change it, but again, we do give some of what we believe is plausible. That's our operating principle, our operating word. Is this plausible? Does this fit within the character of Jesus in the gospels? And if so, we believe that we have the opportunity to fill in some gaps, to give some context that has, for many people, for literally millions of people who have shared this with us, has made the Bible come alive for them. And it's caused them to search the Scriptures and read the Bible even more.

Host: David Wheaton 27:34

He started out by saying that he's a conservative evangelical. Well, there shouldn't be any conservative evangelical that states very plainly and clearly that Mormons and evangelical Christians believe in the same Jesus. I'm going to play what Dallas Jenkins said about Mormons that we aired in the first segment, just a brief portion of it, in case you missed it.

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 27:56

I don't deny we have a lot of theological differences, but we love the same Jesus.

Host: David Wheaton 28:01

If someone thinks that's a statement that could be made by a conservative evangelical, I would say we have a very different definition of what it means to be a conservative, theological evangelical.

To me, that is a complete compromise of the most important issue in life. What is the gospel? How can we be right with God? You're affirming a false religion. But then he went on to talk about how the operating principle is, we insert what is plausible. In other words, that's not in Scripture, but we think it

could have happened. Well, the reality is that God inspired everything in the Bible that he wanted in the Bible. He put just what He wanted us to know, no more and no less. There are things He didn't want us to know or focus on, so he didn't put them in the Bible.

For instance, is it plausible that Jesus had acne, and that he was self conscious about it? Could be, but God didn't include that in the Bible for a reason. Did Peter have a lustful eye for other women that weren't his wife? Well, it's plausible, but God doesn't say that. Should we put that in a book or a program just to make him more relatable to us? God put exactly what He wanted us to know about Peter. That he was impulsive, that he denied Christ, that he repented of it, that he compromised later in the book of Acts with the Judaizers.

The canon is closed now. So when you're putting things in that are plausible, just guessing fiction, you're going beyond what God has decreed in His Word. Here's an example of how Dallas Jenkins inserts what could be plausible into The Chosen. This is a conversation between Jesus and John the Baptist never portrayed in Scripture. Certainly the dialogue you're going to hear is never portrayed in Scripture, but loosely based on when John the Baptist sent some of his own disciples to question whether Jesus was the expected Messiah or Should we expect someone else? The Chosen portrays it as John the Baptist came himself to talk to Jesus.

Audio Sound Bite: John the Baptist and Jesus 30:07

Because I'm beginning to wonder why you're taking this so slow. Why you're always running away after performing miracles? Tell me, why do you always go off to these desolate places?

Jesus: I need solitude. I'm working on something. A sermon. A big one.

John the Baptist: You're the planning type. I would say the first thing that comes to my mind, in preaching and in life.

Jesus: Yes, I remember from the time you started talking and I heard about that brood of vipers comment. That was classy. Do you know how the pod says vipers are born?

John the Baptist: Yes, they hatch inside their mothers and eat their way out killing their mothers in the process. I thought it was a pretty good line.

Jesus: Yes, but no one wants to be accused of killing their Eema.

John the Baptist: Yeah, well I'm not here to make friends with religious leaders. And judging by that stunt you pulled on the Sabbath, neither are you. Are you really going to be nice to these people?

Jesus: I suppose not. Just be careful.

John the Baptist: Now is not the time to be careful. 30 years you've been here.

Jesus: David was a shepherd, and in the wilderness and all around for 30 years before he became king.

John the Baptist: Yes. And then he ruled for 40 years, he killed a bunch of people, made horrible mistakes and then he died in bed with a teenager he was not married to.

Jesus: Maybe not the best analogy, but also she was there to keep him warm.

John the Baptist: I know. I know. I know what you mean. But what I'm saying is taking all this time, telling all these stories, I must confess, I'm eager for you to get to the point.

Jesus: Look, I'm going to tell stories that makes sense to some people, but not to others. And that's just how it's going to be.

Host: David Wheaton 31:59

Alright, that was from The Chosen, an example of how they insert pure fiction and call it plausible. John the Baptist is conversing with Jesus in person. Again, no basis in Scripture that this ever happened and certainly how they were talking to one another. John the Baptist calls Jesus, Oh, so you're the planning type. And Jesus, I heard about your brood of vipers comment, that was classy. And then John the Baptist talks about the stunt. you pulled on the Sabbath,. Apparently a miracle that Christ had done on the Sabbath. Then Jesus said "just be careful." Then John the Baptist, "Well, now's not the time to be careful." Then Jesus gives the example of King David and his patience. Then John the Baptist comes back and says, "Well, David ended up dying in bed with a teenager who wasn't his wife." Then Jesus says, Well, maybe that's not the best analogy.

So it's like John the Baptist is reproving Jesus. Lots of people pass this off as, Well, it's artistic license, it's entertainment value, it could have happened. I disagree. I think when you're dealing with depicting the life of Christ, accounts from scripture, you have a duty to be faithful and accurate to Scripture.

Here's another example from the same episode about how they insert in what they consider to be plausible of Jesus working on or preparing, doing sermon prep for His Sermon on the Mount:

Jesus: Salt preserves from corruption. If it loses its saltiness, it doesn't do what it. No. If salt has lost its flavor, its salty taste, its. . .

A Disciple: Rabbi, I'm sorry to interrupt. Mary's gone missing. Rhema checked the forest, but she thinks Mary was affected by the demonic. She said Mary wasn't feeling right all day.

Host: David Wheaton 33:59

So there you have Jesus struggling with what to say in the Sermon on the Mount before he gets interrupted by one of his disciples saying that Mary, I'm assuming that's Mary Magdalene, has gone missing. Again, none of this is in the Bible. So what does portraying Jesus as having to rehearse the Sermon on the Mount do to one's view of Jesus? Does that give you a higher view of His divinity?

Or does it make you focus on more of His humanity, that He's just like us? He has to prepare. He has to struggle with what to say when He's going to make a speech. Is it possible that Jesus did some sermon prep before the Sermon on the Mount? I suppose. But the Bible is silent on that. So we should be too. Back to the interview that Sean McDowell did with Dallas Jenkins. Sean asked him, What are the safeguards you put in place for all these things you're putting in The Chosen? Because it's going to affect the way people think about Jesus and the disciples.

Audio Sound Bite: Sean McDowell 34:57

The reality is a lot of people will watch this and filter the Bible through the show, rather than the show through the Bible. That's just the reality and communicate in any fashion.

Host: David Wheaton 35:10

Let me jump in for a second and say that is exactly right. People are going to watch The Chosen, and that's going to be their Bible. It shouldn't be, but the reality is, it is going to be. That is why the responsibility is greater when you are a teacher.

Audio Sound Bite: Sean McDowell 35:27

Now, you said you're TV Show creator, not a pastor. One of the passages that always gives me pause in the scriptures is James 3 when it says, Woe to anybody who wants to be a teacher. Now, you're not a teacher in that sense, but you're portraying the life of Jesus in a fashion many people interpret through that lens. What safeguards do you put in place to just make sure you're dealing with the weight of telling a TV show about Jesus, that many biblically illiterate people might take as gospel so to speak?

Audio Sound Bite: Dallas Jenkins 35:58

Oh yes, that's such a great and a very important question. So here's the bad news. I can't control our entire audience. There will be people, it's just true, who watch the show, perhaps in the wrong way. I think Christians and non Christians. There are some people who will, in a positive way, idolize the show and see it as something more than it is. I think it's entirely possible also that the opposite is true. That they might reject the show and miss out on some of the truths and the, I don't want to say enlightenment, because that sounds a little too New Agey, but miss out on what's happened to a lot of our viewers, which is, that reading the stories on the page has been, in fact, impactful, but seeing it played out, has caused them to go, oh, wow, these weren't just people in stained glass windows, or in black and white words on a page, they were human beings. Now I see those Bible stories with even more clarity. And they are going back to their Bibles more than ever.

Host: David Wheaton 37:11

Again, he's really trying to have it both ways. He's saying I'm not a teacher, but our series, The Chosen is making people go back to their Bibles more than ever. Well, first of all, that's just anecdotal. We really don't even know that. One of the important things he said there is that seeing the stories played out in film, is changing people's lives more than just black and white on paper.

Do you see how that's a subtle undermining of the Word of God? If God had intended for His Word to be presented to us in video, He would have, but He didn't. His word was intended by Him to be communicated to us, in words. Both written words, and then also through the spoken Word of having it accurately preached. This gets into an issue that's also incredibly important about this.

What about that? The written and spoken Word versus moving pictures. Because the Bible is compelling to portray on film because it has everything. Miracles and drama, narratives and dialogue, action and emotion, and the uniqueness of the person and work of Christ. There have been many movies over the years that have portrayed parts of Scripture like the 10 Commandments, or Ben Hur, The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson's movie or the Nativity Story, the Jesus Film Project, by Campus Crusade.

One position on this is that depicting or teaching scripture in video is questionable just from the start. Some would say it's a violation of the second of the 10 Commandments, that you shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven, above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. The Jews were extremely strict about drawings or depictions of God. They didn't allow them, or even saying His name, because when you produce a video of something, it provides much greater room for error because film communicates so much more. The expressions, the mannerisms, the reactions, the emotions, far more than you would get with words on a page. Video is communicating something far beyond what words and a page can do. That's why we have the expression, a picture is worth 1000 words. Well, if a picture's worth 1000 words, what's a video worth? A million words?

Setting aside that prohibition that some may have about depicting things of the Bible on video, if you do, your one purpose needs to be accuracy and faithfulness to what God has revealed in his Word. I heard a podcast by the men at G3, Josh Buice, Virgil Walker and Scott Aniol talk about The Chosen in this element of it.

We're going to take a quick break and come back after these ministry announcements to hear that soundbite and talk more about The Chosen and whether it's a good choice for you to watch. I'm David Wheaton and you're listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Here's Christian journalist, Alex Newman, on why some of our fellow citizens are destroying our historic values to enact a great reset to globalism.

Featured Resource: The Great Reset DVD 40:29

They have no loyalty to the United States. In fact, I think many of these people at the highest levels absolutely despise the United States, partly because it has been a historically Christian nation. It has taken the gospel to every corner of this planet like no other nation in all of human history. As I mentioned earlier, it's founded on these biblical principles. It's really a lot of the principles that are at the core of our republic. These came directly out of Scripture and our founding fathers made that crystal clear in their writings.

You can order Alex Newman's 80 minute DVD presentation on how globalist are attempting a great reset for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 41:18

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this, fling open your windows, pray openly so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

That was evangelist, Ray Comfort, exhorting believers to stand firm and speak boldly, just like Daniel. Ray's new book, *So Many Lions, So Few Daniels* is 192 pages, softcover and retails for \$16.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 42:25

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Our topic today is, Is *The Chosen* television series a good choice to watch? I mentioned at the end of the last segment that I heard a podcast by the G3 Ministry with Josh Buice, Virgil Walker and Scott Aniol talking about, *The Chosen*. We have that podcast linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. They had some very interesting things to say that I think are helpful when considering *The Chosen*.

Audio Sound Bite: G3 Ministry Podcast 43:10

The pastor who wishes to see affections properly shaped in his people must think carefully about such matters as the poetry and the lyrics of our songs, the music used in worship, the religious artwork we use, he says in our Sunday School material, for example, the themes and motives adopted in our children's discipleship, the motives we give people, young and old to serve Christ,

down to how we design our place for corporate worship. This is not merely decorative, stylistic matters. They provide precisely the kind of analogies of who God is.

He's talking about exactly what you mentioned a moment ago, Josh. These images form and shape our conception of who God is. This is really, I think, the third issue of concern that I have about The Chosen, and that is a lack of understanding about what media is doing, what art is doing. Guys like Jenkins, and even people who watch the show will say, Well, I'm not getting my theology from that. I'm getting my theology from Scripture. I'm not worshiping that Jesus. Well, they might say Mormon theology is not shaping, failing to recognize that art embodies meaning and values and theology.

So you've got this actor portraying Jesus. Even if he were just reciting the words of the Bible, acting is art, and it's embodying and interpretation of what he's saying, right? So even if he's just saying, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son", the way that the actor is portraying that text has meaning and its meaning that goes beyond the words of Scripture. Your theology is being shaped by more than you recognize. Especially as it pertains to images and people who are portraying biblical characters and figures.

Those are things we have to think about. So we've got all that. Then Scripture gives us even more revelation of who God is. Someone is going to pull from that and then add to that, and then put images on a screen with characters that your heart over time begins to be tied to. That is incredibly dangerous. Let me dig into this a little more, because one of the things you see out there by both Jenkins and other defenders is they'll say, Well, this is similar to preaching. Right? Preaching is not just the Bible, it's further explanation of the Bible. This is just a teaching tool. There again, people fail to recognize the difference between words, whether printed and spoken, that medium of communication, and the visual media. Visual does something different than words. Paul could have advocated for drama in the New Testament as a wonderful, powerful means of communicating biblical truth, but he didn't. In fact, we find him avoiding that sort of means of communication, because God wants His truth communicated through words, words on the printed page and yes, absolutely, words from the spoken mouth through preaching and teaching.

That's different from the visual media. Visual media, I know I'm not a Luddite, I watch movies, I watch TV shows, I'm not saying it's sin, but it does do something different to us. It's far more visceral. It affects us in an immediate sense, often bypassing our intellect and our mind. Again, I think there's a place for that. You want to watch something for entertainment sake, that's one thing. But here are people saying this is supposed to be increasing our knowledge and love for Christ. Visual media does that in a very different way. Again, that God has forbidden for a specific reason, because communicating truth about Christ through spoken and written words, is communicating to our minds, which then shapes our heart and our inner conception of who God is in an appropriate way that God has ordained through His Word.

Host: David Wheaton 47:13

Again, that was the G3 podcast with Josh Buice, Virgil Walker and Scott Aniol. We have the full podcast linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. They bring up several really important points there. When you are doing something in film, it may be a prohibition of a second commandment, but if not, at minimum, is a very risky endeavor, because God intended His Word to be read on the page and preached through the spoken word. Film goes way beyond that, communicating things that God didn't put in Scripture. The Chosen is a perfect example of everything that is wrong with evangelicalism in the West. First of all, there's not a confidence that scripture alone is sufficient to do God's work, so we need to make it more compelling, we need to make it more relatable, it has to be made into a film.

Number two, then you have expectations of what this film can do. It can do things beyond what the local church and the Great Commission of missionaries can do, it can set the world on fire beyond what God has prescribed in His Word.

Number three, speaking of the local church, this isn't local church based. This is para church based. We've talked about that many times in the program, how God promises to bless the local church, but the para church is always fraught with going into error and heresy.

Number four, this series is ecumenical. It brings in people who have different doctrinal beliefs and false doctrinal beliefs. You have evangelicals involved, Roman Catholics, Mormons, charismatics. In fact, they have a round table after some of the programs were Dallas Jenkins and a Roman Catholic and a Jew and an evangelical give different perspectives on the topics.

Number five, why this is a perfect example of what's wrong with evangelicalism is that the metric for success is the viewership. If hundreds of millions of people are watching it, it's being translated into many different languages, therefore, it's successful because it's making an impact. Really, the only metric for success in anything to do with our faith is whether we are being faithful, accurate according to what God has said in his Word. So you have to ask the question, Why would a true believer watch a fictionalizing of the life of Christ when God has already given us the absolute truth and all we needed to know about Him and also prescribed the method, the written Word and the preached Word for how we should understand Him? Second Peter one says, *We have the prophetic word [the Bible] made more sure to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

This is where Dallas Jenkins errors. He goes beyond scripture, putting what he calls plausible or fictional things in it and this teaches, this communicates something and it undermines the Word of God. Instead, we're called in Scripture in Second Timothy 2, *to be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

So as we answer the question of the day, Is The Chosen a good choice to watch? The answer to that is, is the program faithful in the way it represents God and His Word? We shouldn't watch or take in what is not faithful or doesn't honor God and His Word. If you want to watch just enough of it to be able to warn someone else, the problems with it, then I think that's fine. But in my view, The Chosen is akin to The Shack, that heretical book of many years ago, which led so many people away. People loved it, because it gave different perspectives on God and the rest of the Trinity. But I want to close today with what Josh Buice of G3 said, to close that podcast they did on The Chosen.

Audio Sound Bite: Josh Buice 51:38

When we actually give into the need for this sort of graphical portrayal of Jesus, we are actually telling our family, the Word of God is really not enough. It's sort of boring. We need something to spice it up a bit. That's a tragic mistake. That is a move away from the prescriptions of God's Word. It is a move away from Orthodox Christianity. I'll just say it like this, The Chosen is not biblical, Orthodox Christianity. It's something that's dangerous. It's a threat to the true pure theology of God's Word. It should be avoided.

Host: David Wheaton 52:25

We at The Christian Worldview completely concur with that.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. In just a moment, there'll be all kinds of information on this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's anchor our faith in what God has revealed in his Word, not in what's plausible or fictional. The Bible says, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He ought not be depicted differently, or anything added to what's been revealed about Him in the Word. So we exhort you to think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646- 2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.