

A Few Make History

Some brethren assume the continuity of a faithful, visible, functioning church, from the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection until now. It must be "assumed" — it can not be proven — nor do I believe either is essential. But on that assumption, there is a "necessary inference" that should shake us up a bit.

If there has always been a "faithful few" it is because there has always been a few who acted independently of the majority — who thought for themselves — who refused to go along with the elders or the preacher "for the sake of peace." History is filled with proof of continual change which constituted apostasy from the divinely ordained standard. Such changes (we do not refer to changes of no scriptural consequences) had to be resisted — by people who knew the difference in essentials and non-essentials, and who refused to accept as a matter of faith or standard for fellowship anything for which there was no divine authority.

In every generation there had to be a few who endured the name "Anti" or its equivalent, and went about the

By Robert Turner

business of maintaining a small (minority) scriptural church regardless of how this affected their secular business and social relations.

The key was, of course, independent Bible study, which directed dedication to Christ rather than to the "party" or popular opinion. The faithful few knew both who and what they believed (2 Tim. 1:12-14), and on this basis they both spoke and acted (2 Cor. 4:13). They had convictions — vital, personal, motivating convictions.

But the folk today who rest their hope upon party affiliation, and seem most anxious to assume the historic continuity of such a party; are often the least informed, and less likely to have strong convictions based upon independent Bible study.

Had you lived in the "dark ages," would you have been among the "faithful few"? We all like to think that we would have been; but the truth can be read in our present day record. Do we stand with the "faithful few" today, regardless of consequences?



The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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The Foundation of Spirituality — Honesty

By Larry Rouse



Thought to Ponder

A commentary of the times is that the word honesty is now preceded by old-fashioned.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Why does the preaching of the gospel seem not to be effective in our society today? We know that God's word has not changed, nor has its power (Rom 1:16). We are assured by God that His word will never return to Him void, but it will always accomplish the purpose for which He sent it (Isa 55:11). Today, with this present generation, as it has in past generations, the word of God is able to expose hearts and allow men to choose light or darkness (Jn 3:19-21). This choice depends upon the kind of heart a man possesses.

When Jesus described the kind of heart in which the word of God would be received and would prosper, He described it as "good and honest" (Lk 8:15 KJV). Will a man choose light or darkness, honesty or dishonesty? If a man decides that he "hates the light" then God will let him "believe a lie" and will not do anything further other than the presentation of His word (2 Thess 2:10-11).

We must fight the temptation to be dishonest

The battle for honesty lasts a lifetime. God emphatically warns the Christian to guard his heart and to keep it pure. "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col 3:9). God has plainly told

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us: "He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence" (Psa 101:7).

The nature of man has not changed. Without continual exposure to the word of God, men's hearts will be pulled back to self-justification and blindness (Prov 16:2; Jer 17:10-11). Why do men prefer dishonesty? Psychologists suggest that men tend to make up the reasons for their behaviors after they do them, and that their "reasons" and behavior usually have nothing to do with each other.

King Saul was a prime example of a

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Classes this Week

Kid's Class at the Building at 5:15 All Are Invited	Monday Night Men's Class 7:00 PM at the Davis'	Wed. Morning Ladies Class 10:00 Am at the Miller's	Thursday Night Acts Study at 7:00 PM at Jillian Petty's	Friday Night Grades 1-8 6:00 PM at the Fowler's
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Sick

Jim and Barbara Kicker	Pam Dial (Laura Weldon's Mother)
Albert Boyles (William Herd's Relative)	Rose Tate (Toni Herd's Cousin)
Adriana Mininno (Haley Chittam's Cousin)	Dave and Betty Bradford
Blake Whatley (Hunt's neighbor)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)
Marty Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)
Carol Dickerson	Bunny Richardson
Rachel Bragwell	Cheryl Wilson

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Anna Miller and Laura Humphrey.
- Rachel Bradford newborn, Libby, has gone home!
- Sign up to host or teach the Monthly Home Kid's class (Grades 1-8). College students are encouraged to be study leaders.
- Let us remember the great opportunities we have in local evangelism. Let's be sure to greet and welcome all visitors.
- Meeting at the Pratomont church in Prattville, Sun -Tue. (7:30 Weeknights) - Phillip Owens speaking.
- Audio CDs of Today's Sermon will be immediately available.

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good man who gave in to dishonesty to his own destruction. Do you remember the various explanations that he made to Samuel when he was confronted about his direct disobedience to God's command (**1 Sam 15:3, 15, 20-21**)? "I was going to sacrifice them! No, wait, it was the people that did it!" Finally, after a spiritual wrestling match, Saul admits his sin, but without true repentance! Saul thought that his outward confession without a changed heart would put him right with God. In this he had deceived himself! This pattern would remain throughout Saul's life.

We must recognize dishonesty

God's love will lead us to look to the good in others. Indeed, we want to believe the best about others and not be quick to judge another's actions without sufficient evidence. Nonetheless, the Bible is filled with warnings concerning those who would deliberately mislead us and the kind of tactics they will use to accomplish this task. "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (**Eph 4:14**). "These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage" (**Jude 16**).

It is a difficult thing for good and honest Christians to see the deceit and manipulation from those who have a hidden agenda to pull others into their circle. Flattery is first used to gain a closer association and trust. Then lies are told in secret to inflame emotions and close minds (**Prov 18:19**). Finally, these men succeed in having their new disciples cut off association with their former brethren without so much as talking about these newly discovered "differences" over an open Bible (**Gal 4:16-17**).

A commitment to honesty will keep us from these "closed door decisions" that result in one "cutting and running." Instead we will openly discuss and test those who have beliefs that they say are of God (**1 Jn 4:1**). Also, we will not accept testimony about the personal actions of another without first giving that person a chance to defend himself (**Prov 18:17; Mt 18:15-17**)!

Pride always leads to dishonesty

Those who do not know God cannot stand to look at themselves honestly. The driving force behind pride is the desire to be recognized and have praise because we wish to appear to be something that we are not. "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (**Gal 6:3**). Those that follow this path must wear a mask. They must fight to "keep up appearances" and work to tear others down so that they can receive this vain and temporary recognition of men. There is a better way to live your life!

God's forgiveness allows us to be honest

God sees me as I am, and, in spite of that, He loves me and seeks my best. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (**Rom 5:8**). God sees the darkness of my sin and has provided a sacrifice that will wash away my sins and restore my relationship with Him (**Rom 3:23; 6:23**). What do I need to do? I need to be honest! I must see my own sin and make no excuses. The love of God must move me to change my heart in repentance that will result in a changed life. I then will take the final step in water baptism, yielding my body to a burial and resurrection like the Lord's (**Rom 6:3-5**). I now am the Lord's, not because I am perfect, but because I am forgiven and have yielded my heart to Him (**Acts 2:38-39**).

The Christian life is characterized by the forgiveness of God. Rather than run from my shortcomings, I can now run to God for a greater sight and to seek His help in growing to be something more in His service. I come to love the truth, to love bold and honest preaching because it allows me to see what God already sees and what I need to know. Most of all, I am thankful that God's word is able to penetrate my heart when it drifts into dishonesty and point me back to Him. "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give account*" (**Heb 4:12-13**).

Be honest. Are you genuinely serving the Lord with all of your heart (**2 Cor 13:5**)?

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy" (**Prov 28:13**).



Sense of Shame

By L. A. Stauffer

In a recent interview an actress who recently did her first nude scene in a movie explained her discomfort the first time she disrobed on the set before the director, cameramen, and other members of the cast. She explained how reluctant she was, how awkward she felt — as though she at first felt a sense of shame. She then noted how much more comfortable she became and how much easier it was with each take and repeat of the scene as the director worked to get it just right.

This illustrates how in time, with continued practice, any person can become shameless and insensitive to shameful actions. It has happened in this country with fornicators, abortionists, homosexuals, lewd dancers, divorces for frivolous reasons, and nudity and filthy speech on TV and in the movies. Our sense of shame as a nation is all but lost and we, as Israel of old, no longer know how to blush (**Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12**).

But let's get back to the subject of nudity. Shame has been associated with nakedness since the sin of Adam and Eve, who hid themselves in embarrassment and tried to cover their bodies with fig-leaf aprons. Jesus, in the book of Revelation, joins shame to nakedness a couple of times (**Revelation 3:18; 16:15**). And in the case of Adam and Eve, God replaced their inadequate aprons with

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coats of skin which, according to Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, were garments that generally had sleeves and came to the knees (p. 81). It is also interesting that God made undergarments for the priests that covered the thighs to hide the nakedness that could be seen under their outer garments when they climbed the high steps up to the altar (**Exodus 28:40-42**).

All of this should be put in the context of marriage — the honorable and pure relationship in which men and women may view one another's bodies and join themselves in a one-flesh relationship (**Hebrews 13:4**). Jesus made it clear that viewing the body of one to whom you are not married and lust-ing after it is impure and adulterous in heart and thought (**Matthew 5:27,28**). Men and women are, as a result, responsible to clothe themselves in a way that such illicit thinking is not provoked.

This begins with a sense of shame and sensitivity about exposing breasts, private parts, and thighs to someone other than your mate. This, we believe, is the meaning of nakedness in the Bible. Women need a sense of shame about wearing low-cut and short clothing which expose areas of their bodies that only their spouse has a right to look upon. And so it should be with the men.

