

Are You Growing Up?

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

By Mike Pittman

solid food belongs to those who are of full age... (Hebrews 5:12-14). It's ok to be "a babe." It's not ok to stay one. Progressing to meatier teachings of the word is a sign of growth.

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

"...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head - Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

What do all of the above verses have in common? It is clear, isn't it, that they encourage Christians to grow. Are you growing? Let's think about some things which might be an indicator that you are growing up.

You are controlling your speech. "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect ("mature" - M.P.) man, able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). What does it say about us when we go around gossiping, backbiting, tying, and speaking unkind words? Isn't it saying that we have some growing up to do?

You are eating solid food. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But

You are becoming less gullible. "Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect ("mature" -M.P.) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to a fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ" (Ephesians 4:13-15). We all need to get to the point where we can identify truth and error. We need to be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11) and be searchers of the scriptures. We should be serious students of the Bible and not have to be spoon-fed the word of God.

You are acting more mature. You are not petty and selfish - you are thinking of the needs of others and of their feelings. You are not easily offended and vengeful. You do not lose control and throw temper tantrums.

Are you growing up?



Classes:

Sun. PM College Devo. and Singing at Tam's House	Mon. 7 PM Men's Class at Davis' on Elders	Tues. 7 PM College Girl's Class at Allison Chandler's	Wed. 10 AM Ladies Class at Manna Jones	Thurs. 7 PM Class at Jillian Petty's on I John
---	---	--	--	--

Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon
Ross Folmar	Bob Simpson	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	"Grandmama" Odessa Wyatt (Dyle's grandmother)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Please Contact Yvette to add a name to this list.	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)

September Birthdays

- 1 - Ryan Seymore
- 2 - Denise Davis
- 3 - Trenton Anderson
- 4 - Kevin Anderson
- 10 - Matthew Sullivanne
- 10 - BJ Winslett
- 11 - Sheryl Fowler
- 12 - Jared Johnson
- 13 - Jared Rice
- 14 - Patsy Ogle
- 17 - Laura Weldon
- 21 - Sarah Chandler
- 24 - Blake Armstrong
- 24 - Wade Winslett

News and Notes

- Holly Law's sister died last week and was buried yesterday..
- The Kid's Class will be this afternoon at 5:15. All are invited.
- Bob Simpson remains in much pain with back issues.
- Jimmy Weldon, Rusty Weldon's dad, continues in ICU.
- Debbi Coleman's uncle, Frank Johnson, is in ICU in B'ham and is improving.
- Those students who have indicated a willingness to place membership with us needs to meet with our membership committee.
- After every services Audio CDs will be available in the foyer of the sermon.

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)

Volume I, Issue 44

August 29, 2010

Answering a Muslim Critic (Part I)

By Larry Rouse



Thought to Ponder

Thou art the way,
the truth and the life.
Without the way,
there is no going.
Without the truth,
there is no knowing.
Without the life,
there is no living.

This week I received an e-mail from a Muslim, Mr. Husain, that was severely critical of those who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. He reasoned that because the Bible was so discredited that our only alternative was to believe in the "only 100% purely existing religion in this world" which "is Islam!" He also advertises his website that he calls the "Niche of Truth." I wish to examine in this article the assertions Mr. Husain presents that led him to conclude that the Bible was so unreliable that "the truth as Jesus taught is unknown now!"

The Reality of Truth

I commend to everyone the honest pursuit of truth. Truth never fears investigation and a lover of truth will never run from an honest discussion. Those who follow Jesus Christ understand the real battle between truth and error. Jesus wants you to find the truth that will "make you free" (John 8:32). Jesus' followers are instructed to "give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Any such defense must be based upon facts, not tradition, feelings or the threats of terror.

Do We Have an Accurate Bible?

Our Muslim critic brings these attacks upon the Bible:
1. We do not have the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible.

Yes, truth is attainable, but many are offended by it. Rather than using existing cultural prejudices to judge God's word or acting out of fear of those who would physically harm others that choose to find and speak the truth, I call upon this critic and all others to enter into an examination of the claims made concerning the identity of Jesus Christ.

2. The original manuscripts were copied by fallible men and as a result every copy that we possess today contains errors. In fact, no two manuscripts are alike.
3. Because these errors exist, then whatever was originally in the Bible is "unknowable" today.
4. The copyists intentionally put their own "mischievous" beliefs into the text since the Bible records examples of sexual sins. One example he cites is that the Bible "displays lady's nude bath! (II-Samuel 11: 2-5)."

Admissions by Our Critic

Our Muslim critic acknowledges that Jesus, Abraham and Moses were prophets of God. He also acknowledges that when the original documents that comprise the Bible were written, that they were, in fact,

(Continued on page 2)

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

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

(Continued from page 1)

the word of God. He asserts that copyists' errors made these writings so unreliable that they are now "dangerous" and should be kept "under lock and key." Let us compare the assertions and charges of this fallible man to the promises of Jesus. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (**Matthew 24:35**).

The Testimony of the Manuscripts

The original ancient texts had to be copied by hand in order to be preserved. There are no original manuscripts in existence. However, honest scholars can easily determine if the present Bible was transmitted accurately or if there was some conspiracy to later change the text. We have at least 5,366 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament in existence today, in whole or in part, that testify to the accuracy of the New Testament. There are nearly complete manuscripts that date from 280 to 350 AD and there is a fragment that is dated around 125 AD. For the Old Testament we have the Dead Sea Scrolls that were written around 100 BC, which include a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah, along with other ancient manuscripts.¹ What do we find when these scrolls are examined and compared to what we have today?

When the text of Isaiah found in the Dead Sea Scrolls was compared to what had previously been the oldest known text of Isaiah (written 900 years later), the two texts matched word for word with only minor variations.² Jesus read from one of these texts of Isaiah in His ministry and called it scripture (**Luke 4:16-21**)! By doing so He gave His approval for the accuracy and authority of these scrolls produced by copyists.

Critics, like our Muslim friend, prey upon the ignorance of others when they talk about the "errors" in the manuscripts. The bulk of these differences are in spelling and word order that have absolutely no affect upon the meaning! For example:

"**The king Herod**" verses "**Herod the king**" and "**Jerusalem with Him**" verses "**all Jerusalem with Him**"

are the common kinds of differences that exist in these manuscripts.³

If some men had developed a conspiracy to deliberately change the text, then there should be numerous examples of major differences in these manuscripts. These kinds of differences simply do not exist. In fact, it would have been impossible for any later conspirators to find all the manuscripts that were spread over several countries and then change them (in some

cases parts of scripture were copied and buried with the bodies of Christians!). Because we have in our possession these vast numbers of accurate documents, we can be assured that there was no such conspiracy.

The only conspiracy that exists today is found in those that misrepresent the truth about the Bible so as to accommodate some latter-day prophet.

The Bible Tells the Truth

Our critic reveals his own bias against the prophets of the Old Testament when he attacks them for simply telling the truth about the failings of men that followed God. One of the examples he cites is of David and Bathsheba, which is simply a fact of history. David saw her bathing on her roof and, as a result, gave into temptation and sinned. He later was confronted, repented and was forgiven. What is dangerous about that? These and other examples cited by our critic as being added by "mischievous" men are, in truth, God's words that warn us by example against such sin. In this our God also shows us the way back to Him.

Does our Critic Really Want the Truth?

Yes, truth is attainable, but many are offended by it. Rather than using existing cultural prejudices to judge God's word or acting out of fear of those who would physically harm others that choose to find and speak the truth, I call upon this critic and all others to enter into an examination of the claims made concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. I will affirm that there is credible evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If our critic wishes to affirm the existence of a latter-day prophet, I also will gladly participate in such a discussion.

I challenge everyone to answer this question asked by Jesus Himself: "But who do you say that I am" (**Matthew 16:15**)? This is a truth that we can know, if we are willing to pursue it and test it. Will you take up this challenge of Jesus? "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (**John 7:17**).

Do you really want the truth?

1 - Bruce, F.F. (1953), *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), fourth edition.

2. - The Reality of Copyists' Errors URL: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/608>

3. J. W. McGarvey (1886), *Evidences of Christianity*, Pages 13-15



Where Are You Going?

By Dee Bowman

Everybody's going somewhere. The kids are going to school. Mom's going to the grocery store, Dad's going to work. Uncle Zeke's going to the dentist, Grandma's going to the doctor.

The fullback's going toward the goal, the baseball player's headed for home. The point guard's shooting toward the basket, the tennis star's hitting toward the line.

Everybody's going somewhere. No matter who you are, you're going somewhere.

Where are you going?

Are you going to get better? Christianity is a life of spiritual growth. If you don't grow you stagnate. If you don't grow your body deteriorates. But unlike physical growth, spiritual growth is a matter of choice—you decide to do it, it doesn't come naturally. "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, says Peter (**2 Pet. 2:2**). And, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," he said (**2 Pet. 3:18**). If you decide to grow, you have to have regular feedings of spiritual sustenance. And please understand, it may not always taste good. Are you going to get better?

Are you going up or down? It's one way or the other. You're either making progress in your spiritual life, or you're defaulting. You can't go to heaven by standing still. You have to make up your mind that whatever is necessary, you are going up. Heaven is always seen as "up." And you can't go up by just sitting around doing nothing or just by standing and watching others go by. Hope is one of the vital considerations in the Christian system and it always looks up toward a desired expectation. "...continue in the faith grounded and

Are you going to heaven? Now that may not sound like much of a question—not until you consider that every person who doesn't go to heaven goes to hell. There's no in-between room. It's one or the other.

settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (**Col. 1:23**). It's your choice. You going up or down?

Are you going to try harder? Trying is what Christianity is all about. It's hard to try harder sometimes. It takes courage, determination, endurance to make the grade, to climb the hill, to make it home. But when the going gets tough—uh, you just have to try harder. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: show me thy

faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (**Jas. 2:18**). If you have faith you have to show it by works; you can't just sit and affirm it, you have to get up and get with it.

Are you going to heaven? Now that may not sound like much of a question—not until you consider that every person who doesn't go to heaven goes to hell. There's no in-between room. It's one or the other. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (**Rev. 22:14**) is a great assurance for those who are going there. But listen to the only other side of the story: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (**Rev. 20:14-15**) and that's the same as describing the ungodly such as will "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (**Rev. 21:8**).

Well, I think you get my point. There's just not any in-between. You're either a Christian or you're now, a disciple or not, a worker or a shirker. How's it going with you?

