

When Foresight Fails

By Gary Henry

"In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good" (**Ecclesiastes 11:6**).

Although we cannot see afar, we can judge rightly what is near. One of my favorite quotations from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the reply made by Aragorn when Gimli suggested that Gandalf's advice had been wrong because it had resulted in the loss of Gandalf's own life: "The counsel of Gandalf was not founded on foreknowledge of safety, for himself or for others," said Aragorn. "There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse, even though the end may be dark."

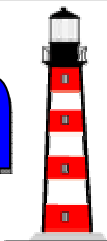
The fact that we have so little ability to foretell the future is not an accident. It was God who chose to limit our field of vision to that which is immediately in front of us. It should be evident that if this was God's choice, then no more foresight than what we have is needed to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. However interesting or helpful we may think it would be to see further ahead, God apparently knew that such an ability would hinder us. We were made to work productively in the present moment, and the equipment that we were given is exactly the right equipment for the business of human liv-

ing. But wouldn't it help us deal more wisely with the present if we could know the future? Probably not. Most of us will have to admit that even on those occasions when we do know what's going to happen, we tend to do very little about it. If we've been poor stewards of our time, it's probably not fair to blame that problem on a shortage of information about the future. But be that as it may, we do not really need to know any more about tomorrow than we do. The various pieces of our lives need to be connected to one another in a pleasing pattern, certainly. But God has chosen that the most pleasing pattern is achieved not when we foresee the whole thing from start to finish but when we deal with each day's piece as if that were the only one.

"If a man lay himself out to do the immediate duty of the moment, wonderfully little forethought, I suspect, will be found needful. That forethought only is right which has to determine duty, and pass into action. To the foundation of yesterday's work well done, the work of the morrow will be sure to fit. Work done is of more consequence for the future than the foresight of an archangel" (George MacDonald).



The Auburn Beacon



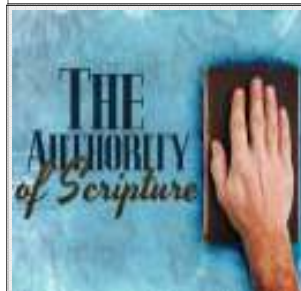
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

Volume 4, Issue 41

August 18, 2013

The Logic of Authority

By Doy Moyer



Thoughts to Ponder

Deliverance can come to us only by the defeat of our old life. Safety and peace come only after we have been forced to our knees.

Someone has to be in charge. It only makes sense. While we may dream of a society where there are few laws, just imagine having no laws. Take away all speed limits, all road rules, all laws dealing with lanes and directions, and where do you think that will get us? Without rules, authority, and the ability to back it up, society cannot long survive in any civilized fashion. Even Utopia had its rules that were punished upon violation. Read the book.

The same is true of other areas of life: school, business, and the home all require authority. Acting like no one is ever in charge is not a situation anyone can long stand. "Isn't anyone in charge here?" bellows the customer who can't seem to find answers to the most basic questions. "Can I talk to someone in authority? Can I see your manager?" There is always an expectation that someone is in charge, and we often recognize that going "to the top" is the only way to get something done. Again, it only makes sense. And we know it does. No further proof is needed.

So why should morality and religion be any different? Suddenly we can become our own authority, acting like we are the ones in charge of how to serve and glorify God. We want to be

Yet beyond that I must then prayerfully ask God to bless my reading so I can see from this text what I need to change, repent of, or even do more of. I must think about how this reading changes me. That is what separates reading the Bible from reading a bestseller.

Christians. We want to give God all the glory. We want to praise God with all our hearts. But we want to do it our way, defining Christianity by our own terms, expecting God to accept our "humble" service. After all, what kind of a God would refuse to accept the praise of those who so lovingly and whole-heartedly gave it? He is the passive audience isn't He? We get to perform however we wish and God will just curtsy to us and tell us how great we've done. That's what any parent will do for a little child just doing his best.

A bit overstated? Perhaps, but I don't think by much. Have we not read? "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but

(Continued on page 2)

Sick

Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Faye Guy (Ashton and Bailey's Grandmother)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)

August Birthdays

- 2 - Emma Miller
- 2 - Heath Donahue
- 4 - Will King
- 5 - Andrew Cagle
- 6 - Isaac Burton
- 7 - David Golden
- 7 - Anna Leigh Peek
- 9 - Elliott Weldon
- 9 - Troy Swenson
- 10 - Sarah Tam
- 11 - Walker Davis
- 12 - Jon Coleman
- 13 - Brendon Kirby
- 14 - Elizabeth Wiggs
- 15 - Kalee Reid
- 16 - Cade Smith
- 18 - MaKayla Chittam
- 19 - Brettlyn Currier
- 16 - Me-Shell Looney
- 20 - Caleb Law
- 24 - Sophie Hall
- 25 - Emily Jones
- 27 - Chip Freeman
- 27 - Stephen Ambrose
- 28 - Larry Rouse
- 28 - Cole Johnson

News and Notes

- ☑ - We welcome back our students and are thankful for our new students. Please be a part of the events planned to let us get to know you better!
- ☑ - Those who are interested in being a part of the ladies home Bible studies see Nicole Pender or Yvette Rouse.
- ☑ - Let us be preparing for our meeting next week with Bryan Gibson, August 25-29.
- ☑ - The meal list for the meeting is posted in the foyer.
- ☑ - We welcome our new members, Casey and Taleesha Hergett; 115 Lee Road 68; Smith Station, AL 36877.
- ☑ - Here is Ryan and Jennifer Hasty's new address: 218 Deerfield Dr., 36832
- ☑ - Alexander and Elizabeth Anne's grandfather, Charles Leigeber, Jr. died and was buried Thurs.
- ☑ - Candy Long's mother, Martha Jones, had successful back surgery this week.
- ☑ - Caleb Gandy's grandmother, Sarah Lanier, has been placed in hospice care. Please remember them in your prayers.

Elders

Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

E-Mail:
larryrouse@aubeacon.com

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

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

(Continued from page 1)

he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" (**Matthew 7:21-23, NASU**)

Not that verse! Let's face it. Calling Jesus "Lord" doesn't always work. What does work is the direct link between calling Jesus "Lord" and actually doing what He says. Those who do what He says from the heart are the ones who take His Lordship seriously. They are the ones who have built upon the foundation of Jesus and His Lordship. Read **Matthew 7:24-29**. Jesus taught with authority. Since the Lordship of Jesus is all about His authority (**Matthew 28:18**), then accepting His Lordship necessarily entails submitting to His authority. How can it be any other way? It's not a choice between the heart and obedience. It's obedience with heart. Let's not turn this into some kind of false dichotomy.

Something else about **Matthew 7:21-23** screams authority: what do we want to enter but the "kingdom" of heaven? When we see the word "kingdom," we ought to think of God's rule. It is "of heaven," entirely within God's control and power. Since God is in charge of heaven, He is not obliged to accept just anyone who utters the words that pay lip service to Him. No. We really must take His authority seriously. Calling Jesus, "Lord," then minimizing His authority through our actions is hypocritical. "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?" (**Luke 6:46**) We may feel offended by the idea. We may wish to buck against it. But there it is. Fight it if you wish. Jesus and authority are forever linked. And accepting His Lordship means we accept that all the authority belongs to Him and none to us. That's right: "None of self and all of Thee."

Suppose, though, that people wish to reject the idea of authority altogether. Then where exactly will they turn? Themselves? Others? Are we really to believe that they will reject all authority? It's not even possible. The logic of authority is that there is no escaping it. Authority is basic because no one can avoid it. It is logically self-evident. Even if peo-

ple try to avoid God's authority, they will still rely on another source for the authority by which they do anything--their own or another's. To contradict the point is self-defeating. Try refuting it without thinking yourself or someone else to be the authority somehow who is "in the know" with the power to do anything about it.

But once we reject God as the ultimate authority, then we are left with people. Really? Like atheist Jean-Paul Sartre once said, without God somebody has to invent values and it might as well be "me." But do we really want people to be our ultimate source of authority? Yet this is the very choice Jesus put to the chief priests and elders of His day (**Matthew 7:23-27**). They wanted to know by what authority Jesus did what He did. After all Jesus was pretty brash. He was healing and teaching in the Temple, paying no real regard to the position held by the chief priests. And of all things He had the audacity to turn the tables of the moneychangers over. What an embarrassment for them! Who does Jesus think He is? Where did He get the authority to act that way? It was a good question. But Jesus "turned the tables" again, this time on their question. What was the authority for John's baptism? "From heaven or from men?" What other options are there? If not from God, then who or what? If we reject God's authority, then the only authority left is from men. Fallible, selfish men. They knew they couldn't answer the question without trapping themselves. Once again, Jesus was the Master of the situation.

So people want to reject God's authority and only accept the authority of men. Here then is an interesting dilemma for them. Suppose the response is, "The Bible is just a book from men." The ones who argue this are now relying on their own authority. For the sake of argument, let's just say the Bible comes only from men, the same fundamental source that the skeptics have. Then what makes the Bible's authority any less or worse than the authority relied upon by its doubters? If it is only from men, and the doubter's authority is only from men, then who's to say that either is better or worse? Why can't I use the Bible while they use other human authority? Why should they even care? And why should I care what they think?

Authority is logical. It is self-evident. It is necessary. Why not accept that and then make sure that our source for authority is greater and better than we can provide all by ourselves?



Serpents and Doves

By David Smitherman

Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves", **Matt. 10:16**.

Serpents and doves---two creatures that have little in common. And yet, in the development of our character, we are to be "as" they are in some respects. Quite a paradox, isn't it? Well, much of the Christian's character is a paradox. For instance...

We are to control our tongues (**Jas. 3:1-f**) but also speak boldly (**Eph. 6:20**). There is no virtue in a bold tongue that is uncontrolled or one so controlled that it is never bold. Our tongues need a "controlled boldness" in order to rebuke sin both publicly (**Gal. 2:11-f**) and privately (**Matt. 18:15**). Though the consequences may be unpleasant (**Mk. 6:16-18**) we must speak boldly and when occasion demands it our bold tongues must be blunt (**Matt. 23:15**). Fear of saying a wrong thing should not keep us from saying the right thing (**Matt. 10:26-27**). Someone has wisely said, "Silence is not always golden; sometimes it is just plain yellow."

Paul's humility (**1 Cor. 15:9**) and yet his confidence (**2 Tim. 4:7-8**) exemplify yet another paradox. Humility should not breed timidity but neither should confidence give rise to arrogance. Humility will keep us aware of our own weaknesses but should never cause a hesitancy to point out sin in the lives of others (**1 Cor. 5:1-13**). We are humbled by our liability to err in opinions and understanding of Truth, but are confident that there are some things that cannot be compromised (**Gal. 2:5**).

As a consequence we often go to extremes: either a pseudo-sophisticated person who thinks that "cultured" people avoid bold speech, confident affirmations, intolerance of sin, and conduct that may "offend" others; or a crudeness that is abusive in speech, arrogant, intolerant, and unconcerned about what others think.

The virtue of longsuffering (**Gal. 5:22**) must be balanced with intolerance (**Col. 2:4,8, 16,18**). Longsuffering is needed as attempts are made to progress toward maturity, but intolerance is demanded when progress is not made and goals not reached (**1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-f**). It is one thing to suffer long with sinners as they attempt to conquer sin but quite another thing to tolerate wrong-doing (**Rev. 2:15-16, 20-21**).

We must certainly care what others think about us (**Matt. 5:13-16**) but at the same time think little of how others evaluate us (**Gal. 6:10**). The virtue of living to *influence* others (**Phil. 2:12-16; 1 Pet. 2:11-12**) can so easily become the vice of living to *please* others (**Gal. 2:11-f**).

Some are prone by "nature" to be "as serpents" or "as doves" and the Devil uses our "natural inclinations" to cause an imbalanced character. He would have us emphasize what comes easily and de-emphasize what doesn't. As a consequence we often go to extremes: either a pseudo-sophisticated person who thinks that "cultured" people avoid bold speech, confident affirmations, intolerance of sin, and conduct that may "offend" others; or a crudeness that is abusive in speech, arrogant, intolerant, and unconcerned about what others think.

The development of a balanced, yet paradoxical, character does not come quickly (**Heb. 5:12**---"by reason of time") nor is it easy (**1 Cor. 9:25**---"striveth...self control"), but there are no short-cuts to maturity.

