

Tuesday, September 14, 2010 - To Burn or Not To Burn

I love the United States of America. It is the country where I was born, the country where I met my wife, the country where my children were born and raised and the country where I will die. I believe in protecting the citizens of this country against those forces of evil that would try to destroy the representative republic we have spent 234+ years trying to build. It disturbs and disgusts me when those from without and within threaten the very freedoms that hundreds of thousands have died to provide. There are some in this country that want to paint America as evil and racist while painting others who profess violence in the name of their "god" as misunderstood or "put upon."

There is a serious threat being posed to this country. During a recent public terrorist financing trial in Dallas, a chilling collection of previously classified evidence was entered which laid out the Islamist agenda to take over the United States. The evidence contained a memo from the Muslim Brotherhood (parent organization of Hamas – the Palestinian extremist group) laying out steps for how the U.S. Constitution could be destroyed from within and replaced with Sharia Law. The "plan" is aimed at creating a view that Muslims are "victims" and hence criticism of Islam becomes a topic to be avoided. It plays on Americans' distaste for racism. They even have a powerful P.R. and lobbying firm at work. It is called C.A.I.R. Let there be no doubt that the Council on American-Islamic Relations is a [terrorist supporting front organization](#) that is partially funded by terrorists, and that C.A.I.R. wishes nothing more than the implementation of Sharia Law in America.

I also love the Lord God and while I profess my loyalty and allegiance to this country, I am owned by God and I'm to be His representative in this world first and foremost. So it was with mixed emotions that I followed the debate over the last few weeks regarding whether individuals in this country should or should not burn a book revered by millions of people around the world called the qur'an. I give the book no deference because none is deserved. It was written by a man who had grand delusions of greatness and he was nothing more than a perverse sinner. As I understand the argument, those in favor of burning this book wanted to show their disdain for the teachings in the qur'an, specifically in regards to the threats made against those who don't hold to the Islamic beliefs found within, mainly Christians (those who don't agree are called infidels and their death is called for.) For those who don't believe the qur'an promotes such violence, please see the following chapters and verses:

> 2:191; 3:28, 85; 9:28-30, 123 and many others

While I understand the desire to outwardly show outrage toward such ignorance, I

would state to you that there is a much deadlier issue at hand; the denial of the deity and death of Jesus Christ found in the teachings of Islam.

So what do we as Christians do? Do we show outward rage or do we set about, as Jesus states, of teaching the truth in love so that we might help souls to be saved? I believe we are more effective taking the second approach for in teaching The One and Only Truth, you expose the error of all other teachings. Now some will say, "Chuck, do you honestly think 'those' people would be willing to hear what the Bible teaches?" I honestly don't know that answer, but I do know that God has never told me to worry about that. In making a judgment of that kind, I am limiting the Power of the Almighty God! Consider the following verses:

Matthew 5:10-16 - Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Hebrews 4:12 - 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.

I do not want to stand before God in the day of judgment and tell him I took it upon myself to decide who I would share The Truth with. My friends, God's Word can do amazing things to the hearer who truly wants The Truth. So as we shift gears in this lesson I ask you keep one thought in mind: Who do I most trust to change the hearts and minds of the people in this world? God or governments? That question should be very simple to answer.

The New Testament provides guidance that will enable the devout Christian to know how to approach potential converts of any religion. Those who have lived among certain peoples may have some keener insights into the cultural peculiarities of a country, but these matters, however, are not the vital aspects of seeking the lost. In the first century there was simply a compassionate proclamation of the pure gospel, brought to bear upon honest hearts; this produced an explosive growth of the kingdom of Christ.

As one studies the qur'an, you must first ask yourself how anyone can take seriously a document that easily contradicts itself 1/5 of the time. Consider the following words of Ibn Umar al-Khattab, a 7th companion of Mohammed, and the 2nd Muslim Caliph: "Let no one say that he has acquired the entire Koran, for how does he know that it is all? Much of the Koran has been lost; thus let him say, 'I have acquired of it what is available.'" Remember that quote: "Much of the Koran has been lost".

A dear friend of mine provided me the following information based upon his studies of the Islamic faith:

In 1972, workers in Yemen were restoring the ancient 'Great Mosque at Sana'a'. According to early sources, "the Prophet Muhammad" commanded the construction of this mosque, including its location and dimensions, sometime around 630. The mosque remains one of the first architectural projects in Islam.

The workers uncovered a hidden loft. Inside the loft was a mound of parchments of Arabic texts that were melded together by centuries of exposure to the elements.

On-site examination suggested that the parchments were fragments of early codices of the Koran. The Yemeni Antiquities Authority permitted no one to study the entire collection. As scholars were allowed to view and study portions of the collection, it was determined that a significant percentage of the parchments dated back to the 7th and 8th centuries- Islam's first two centuries. They would have been the earliest known pieces of the Koran known to man. They were fragments, in other words, of perhaps the oldest Korans in existence.

But the "new-found" parchments contained aberrations that differ from Islamic dogma! Such aberrations are troublingly at odds with the orthodox Muslim belief that the Koran as it has reached us today is the perfect, timeless, and unchanging "Word of God."

The first person to spend a significant amount of time examining the Yemeni fragments was Gerd-R. Puin, a specialist in Arabic calligraphy and Koranic paleography based at

Saarland University, in Saarbrücken, Germany. Puin recognized the antiquity of some of the parchment fragments. Enticing, too, were the sheets of the scripture written in the rare and early Hijazi Arabic script: pieces of the earliest Korans known to exist, they were also palimpsests -- versions very clearly written over even earlier, washed-off versions. What the Yemeni Korans seemed to suggest, Puin began to feel, was an *evolving* text rather than complete text revealed in its entirety to Muhammad in the seventh century A.D.

More than 15,000 sheets of the Yemeni Korans have painstakingly been flattened, cleaned, treated, sorted, and assembled; they now sit in Yemen's House of Manuscripts, awaiting detailed examination. That is something the Yemeni authorities have seemed reluctant to allow, however. "They want to keep this thing low-profile", Puin explains. "They don't want attention drawn to the fact that there are Germans and others working on the Korans. They don't want it made public that there is work being done *at all*, since the Muslim position is that everything that needs to be said about the Koran's history was said a thousand years ago."

To date just two scholars have been granted extensive access to the Yemeni fragments: Puin and his colleague H.-C. Graf von Bothmer, an Islamic-art historian also based at Saarland University. Puin and Von Bothmer have published only a few tantalizingly brief articles in scholarly publications on what they have discovered in the Yemeni fragments. They have been reluctant to publish partly because until recently they were more concerned with sorting and classifying the fragments than with systematically examining them, and partly because they felt that the Yemeni authorities, if they realized the possible implications of the discovery, might refuse them further access. Von Bothmer, however, has taken more than 35,000 microfilm pictures of the fragments, and has recently brought the pictures back to Germany. This means that soon Von Bothmer, Puin, and other scholars will finally have a chance to scrutinize the texts and to publish their findings freely -- a prospect that thrills Puin. "So many Muslims have this belief that everything between the two covers of the Koran is just God's unaltered word," he says. "They like to quote the textual work that shows that the Bible has a history and did not fall straight out of the sky, but until now the Koran has been out of this discussion. The only way to break through this wall is to prove that the Koran has a history too. The Sana'a fragments will help us to do this."

Puin is not alone in his enthusiasm. "The impact of the Yemeni manuscripts is still to be felt," says Andrew Rippin, a professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary, who is at the forefront of Koranic studies today. "Their variant readings and verse orders are all very significant. Everybody agrees on that. These manuscripts say that the early history of the Koranic text is much more of an open question than many have

suspected: the text was less stable, and therefore had less authority, than has always been claimed."

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a divine book. It is styled "The Holy Qur'an." This volume consists of 114 sections called Suras, each of which is divided into verses. Each Sura (except 9) begins with: "In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." It is alleged that the Qur'an was revealed to Mohammed verbatim by the angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years (but compiled after his death). One passage asserts: "Praise be to God, Who hath sent to His Servant [Mohammed] The Book [the Qur'an], and hath allowed Therein no Crookedness" (18:1). The Yemen papers show that claim to be completely false.

Muslims believe the inspiration of the Qur'an but there is no profound literary style. It is characterized by numerous grammatical aberrations. It is exceedingly incoherent and is without any logical order of thought either as a whole or in its parts.

The so-called "prophecies" are merely vague political speculations that do not even begin to rival biblical prophecy — either in precision or in chronological proximity to the events they supposedly depict (cf. 30:2-4). Scientific accuracy can hardly be claimed when the Qur'an suggests that the human fetus results from "sperm" that changes into "a clot of congealed blood," which then becomes bones, later to be covered with flesh (23:14).

The Qur'an is morally flawed in numerous respects. For example, those who oppose Mohammed should be subjected to "execution [i.e., decapitation], or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hand and feet from opposite sides . . ." (5:36). Women are treated shamefully in the Muslim religion. If a woman is guilty of "ill-conduct," she may be admonished, deprived of sex, or beaten — in moderation (4:34).

My friends, I could go on and on but I hope you are able to see the point I'm trying to make. To deal with the subject of Islam and the Muslim belief, you need only to expose the consistent and multiple errors found in their own teachings. When that is done, their teachings go "up in flames."

Next week, we will dig deeper into the Islamic errors regarding the deity and death of Christ.