

## ***“It Is Not Reasonable”***

Reason is an appeal to the mind, describing the mind's apprehension and evaluation. It is egotism gone to seed that declares everything untrue that man does not comprehend. How foolish in our world filled with incredible things.

Reason does not establish right and wrong. A musical instrument in worship is not wrong because it is unreasonable. It is without scripture and thus unauthorized. And all we do or teach must be authorized (Col. 3:17). A fellow proclaims the demand for baptism to be unreasonable -- "I do not see any sense in water baptism." So what? It is commanded (Mk. 16:16, Acts 2:38). We do not look in our own mind (reason) for the answer to what is right; we look -- by revelation -- into the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-16).

There are also things that are true but entirely unthinkable. Just try grasping the speed of light -- 186,000 miles per second. Stretch your mind to envision the distance of a light year. Such thoughts defy the mind. While fact, they are absolutely too large to fit into our minds.

God is also several sizes larger than man's thinker. The finite mind will never fathom eternal existence -- though even the rankest skeptic must admit something has always been. Now add God's other characteristics -- omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Reasonable? Absolutely not! Small wonder man does not understand God; his thinker is far too small for infinite thoughts.

"It is not reasonable to believe in resurrection, instant healing; calming a raging storm, or opening a path through the sea. So I reject the Bible." Wait a minute! You have not considered all the facts. "Unreasonable" may be no more than "incomplete reasoning." You need one more fact before a conclusion -- God. With God and his power considered, the other things are quite reasonable.

Your neighbor abruptly quits his job of twenty years, forfeits his retirement, virtually gives away his possessions, leaves his friends and moves to the desert. Is that reasonable? Has he lost his mind? Now add this bit of information. The doctor advised him he would die in three months if he did not make that move. Ah, that is different! The unreasonable suddenly is perfectly sensible.

Consider another case: A family devotes most of their time to religious work. They go to church several times a week -- rain or shine. They constantly study and talk about the Bible. They have little time for recreation or hobbies. They spend much of their money on religion -- even sacrificing things they need to have more to give. Are these people unreasonable? Crazy? Consider: Man is appointed a judgment with consequences as grand as heaven and as horrible as hell. The time at stake is eternity. Jesus died to give the forgiveness and happiness. Many are unaware of this. This changes the picture. It transforms a "living sacrifice" into a "reasonable service" by a "renewed mind" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

- by Joe Fitch

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## ***“Just As I Am”***

The song *Just As I Am* is a commonly used invitation song. The idea in the song is that we cannot make ourselves right with God on our own; apart from Jesus' blood we have no hope. That is precisely the New Testament picture (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; etc.).

I fear, however, that some folks have an erroneous idea about Jesus saving us "just as we are." They seem to think that He saves us without any change in our conduct. That is opposite to the New Testament picture.

Jesus' charge to the apostles was "*that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations*" (Luke 24:47). Forgiveness is extended to those willing to abandon sinful conduct, not to those who insist on continuing in it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "*Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you...*" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). He did not say such **are** some of you, but such **were**. They changed their conduct in connection with being washed, sanctified, and justified (v. 11).

"Just as I am," if referring to our own helplessness, is a comforting sentiment. But to suggest it means salvation without repentance is to hold out false hope.

- by Frank Himmel

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## **Valuing Sparrows**

Matthew records Jesus saying:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (10:29).

But Luke's record has it this way:

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" (12:6).

Some have suggested that these two verses amount to a contradiction in the Scriptures. But there is a simpler explanation. In that day sparrows were caught, sold, and eaten - if you can imagine such a thing! But, then as now, sparrows were so common and numerous that they were of very little value. In fact, you could buy two of them for a farthing - about two cents. But, it appears that they were so cheap that if you bought as many as four then a fifth bird would be thrown in for free. Thus, two for a farthing, and five for two farthings!

What's the point in all of this? It was not intended as an economic lesson about the advantage of buying and selling in bulk quantities! It was, rather, an illustration used to emphasize the point that Jesus was making to His disciples, namely that God cares for and providentially protects his children. Or, as Jesus said, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows," and again, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10:30.31).

God cares for us - what a wonderful thought! This should comfort us in life's harder moments. And, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

- by Greg Gwin