

Reasoning from the Scriptures

Joe Slater

Reason: “to discover, formulate, or conclude by the use of reason; to persuade or influence by the use of reason” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary).

My mother used to tell me, “Put your thinking cap on!” That’s because I didn’t always think things through before speaking or acting. Sound reasoning takes serious mental effort, but it pays big dividends in both earthly and spiritual matters.

God has always expected people to think logically. Even under the Old Covenant He pleaded with sinful Israel, “*Come now, and let us **reason** together*” (Isaiah 1:18). God didn’t say, “Let’s get in touch with our feelings.” His people’s behavior made no sense; they needed to think!

In Thessalonica Paul went into the synagogue and “**reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, *‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ’*” (Acts 17:2-3). The New Testament word for reasoned has “logic” at its root. Paul showed logically from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. We ought to do the same today.

Even Jesus’ enemies knew that He expected them to use sound **reasoning**. When they demanded to know the source of His authority, He turned the tables on them, asking them to say where John the Immerser got his authority. “*And they **reasoned** among themselves, saying ‘If we say, ‘from heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us’*” (Luke 20:5-6). Yes, they knew logic well enough to recognize He had put them on the horns of a dilemma, so they tried to weasel out of it by claiming they didn’t know (20:7).

Having been made in God’s image, we are capable of sound reasoning. So put your thinking cap on!

We Are Not Trash!

A woman accidentally fell out of her second-floor window into a garbage truck that just happened to be outside. She tried to get the truck driver's attention but to no avail. She climbed her way near the opening and waited until the truck stopped so she could get out. A foreign man who was walking down the sidewalk saw inside the truck and remarked, "There's another example of just how wasteful Americans are. That woman looks like she's good for at least another 10 years."

While this funny story is fictional, perhaps there is one part that really isn't too far off. No, we aren't going to purposely throw ourselves into the garbage, but sometimes we become so down on ourselves that we feel like trash. We may all have faults to work on, but we are anything but junk.

In fact, God considers each of us to be extremely valuable (Matthew 6:26). He specifically made us for a purpose (Ephesians 2:10). He gave each of us a soul, which is more valuable than the entire universe (Matthew 16:26). He specifically made us in God's image (Genesis 1:27). He even saw so much value in us that He sent His own Son to die for us so we could be with Him (John 3:16).

Despite our flaws, faults, and imperfections, God loves us (Romans 5:8). He considers us more valuable than anything else in this universe. So, the next time we're feeling down, let's remember how much God treasures us. After everything He has done for us, He deserves our praise and loyalty (Luke 9:23).

--Author unknown (via Mt. Carmel, Athens, AL)

The same God who led His people into the Red Sea led them out.

A Mistake with Deadly Consequences

On June 29, 2024, BBC News reported a tragic incident involving four Sri Lankan fishermen who died after consuming liquid from unlabeled bottles they found floating in the ocean (Aleks Phillips, BBC News). Their fishing boat, the Devon, was operating over 300 miles off the coast of Sri Lanka when they discovered the bottles. Mistaking the contents for alcohol, they drank the liquid and shared it with other fishing crews in the area. As of the reporting time, in addition to the four deaths, two other fishermen were critically ill from the unidentified liquid. This tragic mistake had deadly consequences.

This story, while heartbreaking, serves as a powerful metaphor for the false and misleading information about the New Testament’s teachings on salvation that circulates in the religious world. Just as the fishermen were unaware of the danger in the bottles, many people are unaware of the spiritual dangers in the various doctrines presented by different denominations. How can one discern which teachings are safe to follow?

The answer lies in adhering to and teaching the plan of salvation that has Jesus’ “seal of approval.” When scriptures are “properly divided” (2 Tim. 2:15), it becomes clear that New Testament baptism (immersion) is the act through which one’s sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). Salvation today is only found by joining in Jesus’ death (Rom. 6:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:21). To consume any other gospel is to make a mistake of eternal consequences (Gal. 1:8-9).

--David Bragg (via *Bulletin Gold*)

“I would die for my children!”

I believe you. But will you live for them?

Will you get yourself healthy?

Will you eliminate distractions?

Will you lead them more intentionally?

You’d only have to die once. You must live every day.

Do that.

(author unknown)