

IS IT REASONABLE?

So many people from denominations will tell us that there is a seat for everyone in heaven and that we are all worshiping the same God just in a different fashion. They will lead us to believe that there is no wrong way to worship God. He accepts all kinds of worship. But Paul told us of people like this when he said in Galatians 1:6-10:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any {man} preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (10) For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Paul, here, tells us that these people are perverting the gospel of Christ and how we are supposed to react to this perversion. He says to let them be accursed or to stop all communication with them.

The simple fact is that not everyone will go to heaven. There are those people in the world who will be going to hell. In fact, the Bible tells us that few will be going to heaven contrary to what people in the denominational world will tell you. Jesus when preaching the Sermon on the Mount said in Matthew 7:13-14,

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

So already we see that the denominations are wrong because of what the scriptures say.

Jesus told us that few will enter into the kingdom of heaven. How do we become part of that chosen few? It is the grace of God that saves us as we see in Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves: it is the gift of God:" The grace of God is not something we can earn. We cannot do good works and think that God owes us salvation. Grace is unmerited favor. It is something that God gives us because he loves us. He does not give it to us because we have done a lot of good things. If that were the case then there would be many people in the world who would receive the grace of God. The grace of God cannot be earned.

We must have faith in God. Faith does not earn us grace. We must obey the steps of salvation by hearing the word, believing it, repenting of our sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized as Peter said in Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Also, we see that we must show our faith by our works and know that we must continue living a faithful life of service unto God.

In this faithful life of service, there are many things which God tells us that we must do as a faithful Christian in His service. This is where the people of the world say that God is an unreasonable God. Is He unreasonable? Let us look at a few of the things that God asks of us and then examine this issue of whether or not they are reasonable requests of us.

When we are baptized into Christ, we are raised up in newness of life and become a Christian. Christianity is not a thing. It is a way of life and God tells us many things that we must do in order to live that life. Jesus Christ is an example of how we need to be in order to live that life. We need to live so that Christ is seen in us. After all it is written in John 13:15: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." We need to live a life so that the people of the world can see we are living as a Christian and that they can see Jesus living in us.

Since Jesus was the only perfect man to ever walk on the earth, we already know that we can never be exactly like him. We are not going to achieve the perfectness of God. Still we are commanded to use Christ as our example. So we also know that if we try to be like Jesus and that if we honestly work to achieve His perfectness, then the grace of God will take the imperfections

out of our lives. Again we see that the grace of God takes care of us and gives us a home in heaven with Him.

Let us look at another command that God gives us commonly known as The Great Commission:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

We are commanded here to show others the way of Christ. To go and teach others the gospel and to show them how to achieve a home in heaven. One way we can do this is by supporting the people on the mission field and giving them the necessary funds they need to go to other places around the world and teach people salvation. Something else we need to do is to speak to the people we see every day about God and His saving power. We must talk to the people we see each day and that we work with and we must show them Christ by our actions. Then possibly we can convert them and bring them into the few that will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Another command that God gives us to follow as a faithful Christian is to be able to work with our fellow brothers and sisters in service to Him. The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:16,

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

In this passage Paul is comparing the church to a common human body. He is telling us that we need to work together as each part of our bodies work together. When one certain part of our body gets hurt, the entire body will suffer for the one part. The body as a whole feels the pain of the part of the body that was hurt. Likewise, we must apply this idea to the body of Christ. When just one of our brothers in Christ falls away into the world, then the entire body needs to feel pain for that one person who was once a part of the chosen few. Also, when a person has been added to the body of Christ, then the whole body needs

to recognize and see the joy in knowing that that person will be in heaven.

Something else that we must do as a faithful Christian is not be a part of this world. Paul said in Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Paul is telling us that we as Christians are a part of a heavenly kingdom—not a part of the world. Also the Bible says we are a peculiar people. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." We must not be a part of the world. This world is headed to the wide gate which leads into hell. Paul told us that we must not be a part of this world but that we need to be a part of God's kingdom which has a home up in heaven waiting for us. Paul told us in the Philippian letter that there is one purpose that we are on this earth and that is to show the world of God's saving grace (Philippians 1:21). Paul also explains how our true home is in heaven and that we are only on this earth for a limited time. In 1 Corinthians 15:22 Paul writes, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." During that time, we need to follow God's will and tell others about it.

The world and Christianity are two things that cannot be mixed together. They are like oil and water, you cannot be part of the world and be a Christian. It is impossible to be both. After all Jesus said: Matthew 12:30a "He that is not with me is against me." Consider also what John writes: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

There are so many things that God tells us we need to do as faithful servants to him. There is truly a lifetime full which is exactly what we have. There are so many things that we have to do on the earth and, yet, we are only on the earth for a short time. But these things will please God and by His grace we will receive a home in heaven. An unknown person once said: "A path without obstacles probably doesn't lead anywhere." Yes, the Christian life is full of obstacles and things that

we must do to be pleasing to God, but it is truly a refreshing thought to know that this path which is so full of obstacles will lead us to a home in heaven.

There are some people in the world that will say that the things God gave us to do are unreasonable and that there is too much to do. Those people need to be reminded of Genesis 2 where God breathed life into Adam. They need to understand how God has given us life. Maybe then, they will see how that giving a lifetime of service and devotion to God is not an unreasonable thing.

God did give us a lot to do in this world. He told us that the life of the Christian is not going to be an easy one to live. There are many things that we must do that are hard and are going to try our faith. Yes, he told us to be separate and apart from the world. He told us to go and convert people in all the world. He told us to live as His Son lived and that He is an example to us. He told us to do all this and he told us it might be difficult to do, but, it was not an unreasonable request of the Almighty God!

Last, a portion of what Paul wrote to the Romans seems fitting. Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." ■

For ▶ **A FREE Bible Study**
▶ **Additional copies of this tract**
▶ **A list of available tracts**
contact the
39th Street Church of Christ
15331 East 39th Street
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA
www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org

Is It Reasonable?

by
Jeremy Northrop

© 1994



International Bible Studies
Tract Series