

The Truth Is Rational

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:14–16; Ephesians 1:18; Ephesians 4:23; 2 Timothy 1:7

Code: A312

As Christians we oppose *rationalism* (the idea that human reason alone—apart from any supernatural revelation—can discover truth). But Christianity is by no means hostile to *rationality*. We believe the truth is logical; it is coherent; it is intelligible. Not only can truth be known rationally; it cannot be known at all if we abandon rationality.

Irrationality is an assault on the Scripture and the intent of God. When God gave the Bible, He meant for it to be understood. But it can be understood only by those who apply their minds to it rationally. Contrary to what many assume, the meaning of Scripture is not something that comes to us through mystical means. It is not a spiritual secret that must be uncovered by some arcane or arbitrary method. Its true meaning may be understood only by those who approach it rationally and sensibly.

It's not as if we can make the words mean anything we want them to mean, so that whatever connotation we impose on the words becomes the Word of God. Only the true interpretation of the text is the authentic Word of God, and any other interpretation is simply not what God is saying. Remember, God's Word is objective truth revealed, and therefore it has a rational meaning. That meaning, and that meaning alone, is the truth. Getting it right is of supreme importance.

That is why it is so critical that we interpret Scripture carefully in order to understand it correctly. It is a rational process, not a mystical or whimsical one.

Is it a *spiritual* process? Absolutely. It starts with the understanding that Scripture is internally self-consistent. Therefore as we compare Scripture with Scripture, the clear parts explain the more difficult parts. The more we study, the more light is shed on our understanding. It is hard mental work, but it is *spiritual* work nonetheless.

In fact, we are utterly dependent on the Holy Spirit to teach us truth, because “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). But the way the Holy Spirit gives us understanding is through our minds—employing our rational faculties (1 Corinthians 2:16; Ephesians 1:18; 4:23; 2 Timothy 1:7) so that we can comprehend the truth.

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