

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages

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**Reasonable Faith  
John 12:36, 44-50**

October 30, 2016

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<sup>A</sup> 1 Timothy 6:28

<sup>B</sup> Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2; John 14:6

<sup>C</sup> John 3:18

<sup>D</sup> John 6:68

A. Introduction

1. Revelation & Science

- a. Paul warned pastor Timothy about “science (or knowledge) **falsely so called**” (1 Timothy 6:28), which implies that there is a true science
- b. I would like to read a few quotations from David N. Livingstone’s article, “**The Gift of Science**” —{2}.
- c. **Science, as we think of it today, came about because Reformers believed that God revealed himself in nature.**
- d. **I have the impression that most people, if asked about the relationship between science and Christianity, would be inclined to speak of a conflict. The idea has become widespread that these are two separate realms and they are more or less constantly at war. Television has probably done much to sustain this image. Dramatized versions of the trial of Galileo or the Inherit the Wind version of the Scopes Trial make for good viewing. ...**
- e. **There undoubtedly have been, and continue to be, disagreements between scientists and Christian believers over many things. But the idea that Christianity and science have constantly been at loggerheads is a gross distortion of the historical record. ...**
- f. **Science, as we think of it today, emerged about three hundred years ago. ... But here I want to say something about the significance of the Reformation for the cultivation of the new scientific outlook. ...**
- g. **The Reformers believed that God had revealed himself to humanity in two ways -- in Scripture and in nature. This enabled them to engage in the scientific investigation of the natural world. By doing so they believed they were displaying the activity of the Creator. Indeed, Robert Boyle, the great English student of chemistry, believed that scientists more than anyone else glorified God in the pursuit of their tasks because it was given to them to interrogate God’s creation.**
- h. Science believes that the universe operates according to set laws; the Scriptures revealed that it is Creator God who established those laws

2. Faith & Reason

- a. not understanding what has just been said, many people think that faith and reason are likewise in conflict – but it just is not so: the facts of science, rightly understood, and the inspired Scriptures, rightly understood, cannot be in conflict for both set out truth
- b. **Betsy Childs gives an illustration showing how faith & reason can coexist without conflict: “I have only a rudimentary grasp of aerodynamics. I can understand why balloons float, and, in theory, I can understand why planes fly. But, in reality, the sight of a metal aircraft that weighs several hundred tons gliding through the air**

always seems slightly absurd to me. How can something that heavy fly? This lack of understanding on my part means that I get onto an airplane by faith. Yet, the faith that allows me to step onto an airplane is not opposed to my reason but completely dependent upon it! I trust that, in spite of the fact that I can't understand the reasons the airplane flies, there are nevertheless good, sound reasons." <sup>{3}</sup>.

c. In fact, Charles Colson argues that faith underlies science, even when that science is perverted to an atheistic mocker of Christianity as do Richard Dawkins & Lawrence Krauss in an anti-religious article in the Scientific American magazine; Colson writes <sup>{4}</sup>.

(A) All of this begs the question: "Is faith, in particular, Christianity, irrational?"

(B) Neither Dawkins nor Krauss comes close to proving this. Instead, Dawkins and Krauss simply assume that materialism – the idea that there is nothing besides matter – is true. Thus, what makes a faith "rational" is whether it can be proven empirically.

(C) Dawkins and Krauss do not offer any arguments to justify their assumptions. They do not tell us why materialism is true: Instead, they ask you to take its truth as a given — in other words, ON FAITH.

### 3. Our Faith's Foundations are Reasonable

- a. the scientist has faith that this universe follows laws – laws that can be stated and often formulated mathematically
- b. we have faith that those laws were established by an all-wise Creator
- c. that same Creator gave us a self-revelation which is expressed in His word – the Scriptures which are capable in reasonable interpretation – not some irrational fantasy in which one things morphs into another
- d. our faith is based on events recorded by sane and sober observers, and those observations have been sustained by observed facts
- e. one result is that it is therefore reasonable to have faith in Jesus Christ

## B. Jesus Truly Reveals God

John 12:44-45

1. 44 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me."
2. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable for He Reveals God
  - a. the Scriptures begin with one clear axiom – an unprovable reality
    - (A) "In the beginning, God ..." (Genesis 1:1)
    - (B) either this universe makes sense or it does not: makes sense in that it has meaning; that for every effect

- we observe there is a cause
- (C) and the ultimate Cause underlying all things is God; the Creator God who stands outside of His creation
  - (D) but we, as created beings are limited in that by our own faculties we can only examine what lies within that creation
  - (E) if we are to learn about God, then, it can only take place if God should stoop down, enter into His creation, revealing Himself to us
- b. and that is exactly what God has done in the Lord Jesus Christ
- (A) "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2)
  - (B) so faith – a trust relationship – in Jesus Christ, is really faith – a trust relationship – in the Creator God, who is otherwise cannot be approached by man Selah!
  - (C) "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me" – when we trust in Jesus of Nazareth, a historical figure of whose existence, words and deeds there is indisputable evidence, that trust is not simply in Him, but in the God who sent Him
  - (D) Jesus is the sole link that a person can have with God – "Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.""(John 14:6
- c. but even more than that: Jesus truly reveals God
- (A) "And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me"
  - (B) Jesus was God living among men in human form
  - (C) so His life and His words and His deeds reveal God to man
  - (D) Jesus reveals God's nature
  - (E) Jesus reveals God's character
  - (F) Jesus reveals that God is holy; is just; is loving; is kind; is full of grace and majesty – go through all the attributes of God and we find them revealed, explained and made understandable in Christ

### 3. How eminently reasonable then for us to trust in Jesus Christ

#### C. Jesus Gives Light

John 12:36, 46

1. 36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them. ... 46 "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness."

## 2. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable for He Gives True Understanding

- a. the spiritual world — that is, if you will, the environment in which God exists eternally in all His majesty & glory – we have already noted is outside and beyond our ability to examine by our so called five senses: sight, touch, hearing, taste, smell
- b. since this world is transient – in scientific terms, every event in this material world results in an increase in entropy, which in layman’s terms can be expressed as, the world is running down – and since the Scriptures reveal that man is a spiritual being
- c. what makes more sense than we should seek to understand that spiritual world
- d. the occult, the plethora of religions, and such seeking of mankind, are evidences of the existence of that spiritual world
- e. but Jesus’ words were confirmed by the disciples as they went out, and of the church preaching of Him who died but is now alive and exalted

3. How can we then, without suffering, with impunity fail to put our trust in this Jesus who gives light? ... it just does not make sense

## D. Jesus Delivers from Judgement

John 12:47-48

1. 47 “And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.”

## 2. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable for the Alternative is Unthinkable

- a. judgement is not a pretty topic, but a necessary one
  - (A) “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)
  - (B) Jesus came into this world to reveal God: a holy, pure, righteous God, who cannot tolerate sin
  - (C) how can God possible tolerate sin, for sin is rebellion against God, a denial that He is God and Sovereign; to allow it would be to remove from God some part of His nature, to make Him less than God – and this is impossible for the changeless eternal God
  - (D) so sin must be dealt with
- b. and to refuse to trust in Jesus

- (A) to hear Jesus' words and to treat them with contempt
- (B) to ignore His invitation to a full and free salvation through faith
- (C) is to bring judgement upon oneself by those very same words

3. Since Jesus came to save from such judgement,
  - a. how sensible it is to trust in Him for that deliverance
  - b. for this was the purpose of His first coming
  - c. and one day He will come again, then for judgement.

#### E. Jesus Words Are Eternal Life

John 12:49-50

1. 49 "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. 50 And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."
2. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable – His Spiritual Origin
  - a. Mere human ability can only deal with the finite
    - (A) the sum of human ignorance increases annually
    - (B) for every fact that emerges, many questions surface
    - (C) these are simply expressions of physical reality
  - b. The teaching of Jesus
    - (A) "For I did not speak on My own initiative"
    - (B) did not come from that carpenter shop in Nazareth
    - (C) it was not founded upon His illustrious human ancestry
    - (D) it definitely was not the result of Pharisaic schooling
    - (E) but it arose from the incarnation – "but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak"
      - (1) in the Babe of Bethlehem, the infinite God crowded into a man
      - (2) He can therefore knowledgeably speak about the spiritual
3. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable – His Source Is Impeccable
  - a. "the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me"
  - b. Jesus Christ, the man who is God, did not speak with human wisdom

- c. if human wisdom were all that the world needed, then the incarnation would have been unnecessary
- d. but God the Son – the Living Word – spoke directly from God the Father, and being the Son of Man could express them in a fashion man can understand
- e. a perfect message from a perfect source, perfectly expressed
  - (A) **what to say** – in its content
  - (B) **what to speak** – in its presentation
  - (C) “The officers answered, “**Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.**” (John 7:46)

#### 4. Faith in Jesus Christ Is Reasonable – Its Result is Eternal Life

- a. Jesus Christ came into the world at the commandment of the Father
- b. that commandment was
  - (A) not to satisfy the patriotism of the Jews
  - (B) not to provide mere physical blessing – although in His ministry he revealed the mercy of God to those suffering physically
  - (C) rather the word of the gospel
  - (D) “His commandment is eternal life”
  - (E) this has been the theme that is re-echoed throughout this gospel of John, that men & women should
    - (1) believe in His name and be saved from their sin
    - (2) by faith be given everlasting, eternal life
- c. “**Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.”** (John 6:68)

#### F. Conclusion – “Only Trust Him”

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:  
*John*, by Merrill C. Tenney
- EGT – *The Expositor's Greek Testament* – Hodder & Stoughton, 1903  
*The Gospel of St. John*, by Marcus Dods, D.D.
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Gospel according to John*, by Leon Morris
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. '*The Gift of Science*,' by David N. Livingstone, Online Christianity Today, Vol. 43, No. 14, Dec. 6, 1999 – Kerux illustration #5213
3. '*Faith & Flight*,' by Betsy Childs, A Slice of Infinity: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries – Kerux illustration #25701
4. '*The Atheist Leap Of Faith: Atheists, God, And Reason*,' by Charles Colson, Breakpoint Commentary – Kerux illustration #31297