

not always rational

God's ways are not always rational!

A recent *Parasha* reading was from the opening chapters of Leviticus. (The *Parasha* is the portion of scripture read weekly in synagogues) These chapters give exact instructions for various offerings to be brought to the Lord, including the burnt offering. The burnt offering is to be a "male without defect." In other words, the offering is to come from the best of the herd, and yet it is never to be eaten. It is to be completely burned up as a sacrifice to the Lord, "an aroma pleasing to the LORD" (Leviticus 1:9).

What a waste! Good meat burned up! Charred! Think how many poor people could have been fed!

That's the way we think, but that is not the thinking of the Lord.

From our perspective, God's ways are sometimes irrational. Other biblical stories bear out the same truth.

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There was a time when King David was in the cave of Adullam while the Philistines were at Bethlehem. "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem," David yearned, perhaps almost without thinking. But to three of his men who heard the statement, it was a yearning that was not to be denied. They broke through Philistine lines to draw water from the well and carry it back to David.

Then an amazing thing happened. David "refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD" (2 Samuel 23:16).

To us this seems ungrateful. This may have been how I would have felt had I been one of those three men who risked their lives to get the water from David's hometown.

But to the biblical scribe, David's deed is recorded as act of worship presented to the Lord. "Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?"

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During the week of Jesus' betrayal, there was a dinner in His honor at the home of Mary, Martha and the resurrected Lazarus in Bethany. During the meal, to the

astonishment of all and the dismay of some of the dinner guests, Mary took a pint of very expensive perfume, poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair (See John 12:1-8).

“What a waste!” some of the bystanders, and even some of his disciples thought. “Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.”

Pretty sound logic, I'd say. But God's logic is not ours.

“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended, that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.”

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No, following the Lord is not always rational.

It is not rational for us to love and pray for enemies!

It is not rational to forgive those who have taken advantage of us, abused or persecuted us!

It is not rational for God to forgive murderers, thieves, sexual perverts, and the like when they/we have done nothing to deserve that forgiveness.

It is not rational for Jesus to take my sins and give me His righteousness.

It is not rational to “delight in... insults” (2 Corinthians 12:10) or to “rejoice in our sufferings” (Romans 5:3).

The ways of God are past our understanding. Not rational. But if, as Bill Johnson says, we want the peace that is beyond our understanding (See Philippians 4:7), we must give up our right to understand.