

## **Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness. (Psalm 119:40)**

Many's the time I have read Scripture or heard Bible being preached where I believed what I heard, generally understood the words, but was not able to fully comprehend. Doubtless, you have had the same experience.

For example, take the doctrine of the trinity. The Bible overflows with verses on this topic. Some non-traditional ensamples are: **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.** (2 Corinthians 13:14). **For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.** (Colossians 2:9). **I and my Father are one.** (John 10:30). And this more well-known verse: **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** (Matthew 28:19).

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I say, we believe these verses, but our human experience does not allow us to fully understand them. How can there be three parts to one individual or entity? Two, two mints in one is hard enough!

We run into similar angst when we consider the deep mines surrounding the doctrines of grace, justification, works, predestination, total depravity, and so on. A good example of this was in Ben's October 18, 2020 sermon where he said: "I can't fully explain this coexistence between the absolute sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, but there's no question that the Bible teaches it." So we say, **Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.** And again, **Speak, for thy servant heareth.** (1 Samuel 3:9, 10). Our job is to hear and believe, not to analyze to death! As Dr Gill says on this phrase: *[D]esire the Lord to speak to him what he had to say, to which he was ready to attend[.]*

**These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? (John 6:59, 60).** Obviously, any auditor present could physically hear what was being said. The meaning is who can understand it and wrap their human brain around it. Benson says [a] *strange discourse, a doctrine difficult to be believed*. Barnes says [t]he word "hard" here means "offensive, disagreeable" - *that which they could not bear*. That's so when seen through the eyes of flesh. And Dr. Gill weighs in with these thoughts: *it is to be objected to; so "an hard thing", the word here used in the Syriac version, and , "it is to me a hard thing", are phrases used to express an objection in the Talmudic writings, where they are often met with: or it is difficult to be understood and received; so , "an hard saying", or "an hard cause", is a cause difficult to be tried and determined, [Exodus 18:26](#), and is used of that which seems incredible and absurd, and is surprising and unaccountable*. It made their brains hurt.

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So, what are we to do when we encounter such a crossroad? Answer: I say again -- our duty is to believe what we read in, and hear from, Scripture, whether we fully digest it or not. **The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.** (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Matthew Henry does the best job of getting at the heart of this Deuteronomy passage, and well captures what this sermon seeks to convey, when he writes: *We are forbidden curiously to inquire into the secret counsels of God, and to determine concerning them. But we are directed and encouraged, diligently to seek into that which God has made known. He has kept back nothing that is profitable for us, but only that of which it is good for us to be ignorant. The end of all Divine revelation is, not to furnish curious subjects of speculation and discourse, but that we may do all the words of this law, and be blessed in our deed. This, the Bible plainly reveals; further than this, man*

*cannot profitably go. By this light he may live and die comfortably, and be happy for ever.*

**Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?** (Romans 9:20). Right out of the chute, we are nothing more than man; flesh; frail grass, here today and gone tomorrow. God is eternal and changes not. The proud reasonings and analyses of man fail. Get over yourself and your academic cogitations and intellectual abilities. **For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.** (Job 11:12). You as mere man, the creation, dare not presume to scan the deep things of God and find fault with the plan of His government and providence, into which angels desire to look, while you find it incomprehensible. That's right; some things are incomprehensible.

**Born like a wild ass's colt** is one of those supreme phrases that is hard to overlook. It grabs your attention. What does it mean? Here's what Benson says: *Ignorant, and dull, and stupid, as to divine things, and yet heady and untractable. Such is man by his birth; this evil is now natural and hereditary, and therefore common to all men[.]*

True to form, Dr. Gill is a bit more verbose: *[F]oolish and stupid, without understanding of divine and spiritual things; given to lust and wantonness, to serve divers lusts and pleasures; not subject to the yoke of the law of God, stubborn, refractory [unmanageable], and untameable, but by the grace of God; the ass, and especially the wild ass, and the colt of one, being a very stupid creature, and a very lustful and wanton one, chooses to be free, will not bear the yoke, but ranges about in desert places[.]*

In a word, this phrase is a proverb for untamed wildness. Man is, from his birth, unsubdued in spirit. And yet you want to sit around and ponder the accuracy of scripture because it does not nicely fit into some box in your mind? Again I say, get over yourself.

When presented with this dilemma, which I suggest occurs often, our duty is to learn what God says and then receive it as unquestionably true and right. We should not abuse our powers of reason and discernment to question the conduct of Him who gave the word. God's words are **all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.** (Proverbs 8:9-11).

Do you think it proper as the one made or formed to challenge or question that God who formed you? Do you really think you are smarter than your Creator? Can there be anything more presumptuous than the creature to pretend greater wisdom than the Creator. Any wisdom, brain power, intellect and smarts you have came from that Creator. And does it not insult the Creator to pretend to find imperfections in His proceedings? So you question a God who creates man who is capable of sin and misery? You wonder how a perfect God, who predestinates all things, could permit murder and adultery and idolatry and all sorts of grievous wrongs! How could a just God make men only to be condemned?

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You chafe at Scriptural principles such as those found in Romans 9:17-18: **For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.**

Let the Lord's people be satisfied to know that God has willed both the salvation of the elect, and the destruction of the wicked, although they are not able to fathom the depths of the ways of God. The Bible tells us these facts; God does not have to justify his conduct. He owes us no detailed explanation of his mind and

thinking. No one has the right to bring God to trial. What he tells us let us receive as unquestionably right and proper.

Here, reportedly, is what Luther said to Erasmus on a certain time long ago: *Mere human reason can never comprehend how God is good and merciful; and therefore you make to yourself a god of your own fancy, who hardens nobody, condemns nobody, pities everybody. You cannot comprehend how a just God can condemn those who are born in sin, and cannot help themselves, but must, by a necessity of their natural constitution, continue in sin, and remain children of wrath. The answer is, God is incomprehensible throughout, and therefore His justice, as well as His other attributes, must be incomprehensible. It is on this very ground that St. Paul exclaims, "O the depth of the riches of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"*

Now, can we not agree that God's judgments would not be past finding out if we could always perceive them to be just? **I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.** (Job 33:12-13).

Whether you fully grasp it or not, what Scripture says on any subject is to be considered decisive on the point. The words of Scripture are the words of God. Simply reciting scripture is all the proof you need. **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The word "scripture" as used here is confined to the book of God. All that is written in it is divinely inspired. And what does writing consist of but words? Every word, then, in the Bible is the word of God, dictated by Him of whom the writers were the instruments He employed, who spoke or wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This is how God communicates to his creation. It

is not for us to question its effectiveness. Surely, if God could communicate through the ass of Balaam, he can communicate through his book of scriptures. (As a reminder, Balaam's ass had had enough and **said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?** Even more remarkable, Balaam answered him. Numbers 22:30).

So, we find Paul at the passage noted above telling us that **the scripture saith unto Pharaoh** (Romans 9:17). Again, at Romans 4:3: **For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** End of story; scripture says it; it's true and factual. And from Acts 17:11: **These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

The design of this sermon is to help those who struggle trying to fit some of God's principles, doctrines and precepts into their human think. Please consider this discourse when you hit that spot. And remember this glorious truth: **For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.** (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

Similarly we learn from Romans 11:33-35: **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?**

The same question substantially was put to Job, when the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and all the proud imaginations which he had conceived, in the agitation of his spirit, were in a moment humbled in the dust. **Then Job answered the Lord, and**

said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. (Job 42:1-3).

To the same effect, the Psalmist David, in the 131<sup>st</sup> Psalm, appeals to the Lord that he received the kingdom of God as a little child, and was not proudly attempting to scan the secret counsels of Jehovah. Lord, David cried out, **my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever.** (Psalm 131:1-3).

Against this backdrop, perhaps you will perceive additional meaning to this famous scripture: **And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** (Matthew 18:2-4).

Little children don't question and analyze to death information they receive from grown-ups. They go with it, fully trusting its validity. In Benson's words, *lowly in heart, knowing ourselves utterly ignorant and helpless, and hanging wholly on our Father who is in heaven, for a supply of all our wants.* Matthew Henry observes that little children are *teachable, and willingly dependent on their parents.*

Further commenting on the **little children** of Matthew 18, Barnes writes that the Lord's people must *lay aside their ambitious views and their pride, and be willing to occupy their proper station - a very lowly one.* A companion passage in Mark highlights this point: **And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of**

**all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. (Mark 9:35-37).**

Away with envy and contentions about primacy and preeminence and all ambitious views about one being better than another.

Such it shall be in the **new heaven** where there is **no more sea** (Revelation 21:1). The sea there referenced includes, at least, the mighty roiling waters of humanity that keep this present world in constant turmoil, tumult and perpetual unrest. Consider these helpful thoughts from Ellicott:

*The sea has played an important part in the symbolism of the book: out of the sea rose the wild beast ([Revelation 13:1](#)); the purple-clad Babylon sat enthroned upon many waters ([Revelation 17:1](#)); the restless, tumultuous ocean, now discordant with its clamorous waves, now flooding the earth in confederate force; the troubled sea of evil, which cannot rest, and casts up but mire and dirt ([Isaiah 57:21](#)), is no more to be found on the face of that earth, or near that city whose peace is as a river, and whose righteousness as the waves of the sea ([Isaiah 48:18](#)), and whose inhabitants are delivered from “the waves of this troublesome world.”*

**To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 25).**

Brief observations in light of current happenings in the world --

**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. (Psalm 46:1-3).**

**For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. (Isaiah 54:10).**

**He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. (Habakkuk 3:6).**

The mountains here are emblems of that which is generally seen to be the most solid, firm, durable, settled and established on earth, i.e. the kingdoms, nations, empires and cities of the world. Sample scripture includes Revelation 6:14 (every mountain and island were moved out of their places), Revelation 8:8 ([a]nd the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea).

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Mountains and hills can also signify great men, including political figures, kings, presidents, prime ministers, and the like.

This glorious language is well-suited to any time of trouble, when commotions, tumults and revolutions are occurring in the earth and when everything sacred, normal, true and valuable seems to be in danger.