



Mandibular Mojo: Why Christians Need Strong Meat

Eric Holmberg

President – The Apologetics Group

Many people are troubled by the amount of controversy and debate that seems to arise from the Bible. Why can't its truths be clearer and less complicated? (That is one of the things that makes Islam such a potent ideology; you can learn everything you need to know – and some of its leaders would say should know – in a few hours or less.) Mystery seems to bleed from all around Christianity's edges.

Well, first we need to keep in mind that many of the most fundamental truths of our faith are, in fact, simple enough that even a child or the mentally handicapped can embrace them. They are things known more by the heart than by the mind. And they are powerful to save. Thankfully we are redeemed by grace through faith, not because every "i" is dotted and "t" crossed properly in our systematic theology.

Second, when an eternal, infallible, infinitely wise God who can create and sustain an unimaginably vast universe by the word of His power while simultaneously knowing each of us down to the thoughts of our hearts, *when that God* decides to intersect with our finite, fallen and fallible world and worldviews by revealing Himself through His Word or through the Incarnation, we should expect that sparks should fly! (Personally, I find the mystery of the Trinity very satisfying and consoling for this very reason. Any God that I can get my puny mind around can't be God!)

And when faced with these sparks, what should be our response?

For those who have a real relationship with God and have grown to the point where they can endure "strong meat" (Heb. 5:12-14), God, in effect, says "Chase the mystery!" (Pro. 25:2) Exercise those powers of understanding and discernment. Grow up. Work those jaw muscles. Don't you know that one day you will judge angels? There is work to be done in preparation for the challenges of the Great Commission (imagine discipling entire nations), not to mention ruling with Christ in the age to come. Are you going to stop and stare at this obstacle, this mystery, and then shrug and turn around? Or you going to be a man or woman after My own heart and press on?

Too many choose the easy way. And it is not unusual to see them try to justify their reluctance by quoting scripture; for example the first part of the Lord's well-known admonition in Isaiah 55: 8 & 9:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares 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.

"Well, the secret things belong to God (Deut. 29:29)." they often say. "Calvinism vs. Arminianism, predestination, those freaky verses in the Old Testament, the problem of evil, the book of Revelation and end-times matters, Paul's 'hard sayings,' all those things are beyond our grasp even as the heavens are above the earth. Let's just love the Lord and avoid disputing about these things."

But in this they ignore the words of God that follow in verses 10 and 11:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

In other words, when we see that we are bumping up against the ceiling of our human reasoning and we know that God's ways are waiting for us somewhere above, we should not look back to the ground in surrender. It is the glory of a king to search out the matter; to seek to know God's ways. We should turn instead to the Word, humbly and in great faith, knowing that it will not return void. For in

the same way that water (O cleansing, life-giving water!) comes down from the natural heavens and causes the land to bring forth fruit, so will the living Word that proceeds from the realms of glory transform us and bring us into greater levels of maturity and understanding.

And don't be surprised if the understanding you end up gaining tends to offend the natural mind. His ways *are* higher than ours, after all. In truth, I have found that the closer you get to what Francis Schaeffer called "true truth," the more the earth-born mind will squirm in discomfort.

Augustine and Anselm were right: *Credo ut intelligam*. We believe – we have faith in God and His Word – in order to understand.