

## Oversimplifying God Romans 11:33-36

American poet John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) based the following poem on a fable which was told in India many years ago. It's an example of how limited sensory perceptions can lead to misinterpretations.

### ***The Blind Men And The Elephant***

**By John Godfrey Saxe**

*It was six men of Indostan, To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant, (Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation, Might satisfy his mind.  
The First approached the Elephant, And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side, At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant, Is very like a wall!"  
The Second, feeling of the tusk, Cried, "Ho! what have we here,  
So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant, Is very like a spear!"  
The Third approached the animal, And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands, Thus boldly up he spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant, Is very like a snake!"  
The Fourth reached out an eager hand, And felt about the knee:  
"What most this wondrous beast is like, Is mighty plain," quoth he;  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant, Is very like a tree!"  
The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most; Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant, Is very like a fan!"  
The Sixth no sooner had begun, About the beast to grope,  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail, That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant, Is very like a rope!"  
And so these men of Indostan, Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion, Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right, And all were in the wrong!*

### **The Bible reveals various areas of the person and power of God.**

Feeble efforts to understand God often lead us to categorize God.

However, infinite, all-powerful God can't be cut into little pieces.

We must vigorously avoid trying to put God in a box! - Psalms 106:2; 145:3; 147:5; Romans 11:33-36

Oversimplification - "to simplify to the point of causing misrepresentation, misconception, or error.

To cause distortion or error by extreme simplification of a subject." American Heritage

Oversimplification leads to misconceptions & misunderstandings.

Ever present danger in our attempts to understand One True God.

### **Oversimplification Of His Love**

We must avoid sin of oversimplification regarding the love of God.

Many say, "Since God is all loving, he will not condemn sinners to eternal punishment."

This oversimplification gives rise to universalism

Assumes God too loving, patient, kind, longsuffering to cast erring men into the flames of hell.

Love of God is beyond measure - John 3:16; Ephesians 2:4-7; 1John 3:1-2

Does not mean he will not condemn sinners to eternal punishment.

God is a God of love

We mustn't forget He is also a God of justice who will avenge all evil - Psalm 11:5-6; Romans 2:5-11;

Hebrews 10:26-31

### **Oversimplification Of His Omniscience**

Must avoid sin of oversimplification regarding omniscience of God.

Many say, "Since God is all-knowing, he is responsible for all human suffering."

This oversimplification gives rise to skepticism and disbelief.

God's knowledge of human suffering render him accountable for it  
God's knowledge above understanding - **Exodus 3:7; Isaiah 37:28; 46:9-11**

Does not mean that God is to blame for all human suffering.

God is all knowing

We must not forget that God is a God of law and consequences:

A violation of God's moral law brought sin and death into the world - **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:16-19; Romans 5:12**

A violation of God's natural laws can also lead to painful, even fatal, consequences.

Therefore, let us not blame God for the consequences of sin.

Satan is to blame. We are to blame. God is innocent.

### **Oversimplification Of His Sovereignty**

Must avoid sin of oversimplification regarding sovereignty of God.

Many say, "Since God is omnipotent, he directly controls the eternal destiny of each individual."

This oversimplification gives rise to Calvinism.

God is all-sovereign, he must, therefore, be ultimately responsible for deciding who will be saved and who will be lost.

Indeed, God is all-powerful - **Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 32:17; Amos 4:13**

Doesn't mean directly controls eternal destiny of each individual

God exercises unlimited power and authority

We must not forget that he created man with a free will - **Joshua 24:15; 1Kings 18:21; Ezekiel 18:20**

We choose to follow steps of Jesus, or walk in pathway of Satan.

God does not force us. The choice, and the consequences, are ours.

### **We Can Know Certain Things About God: He Is**

God of love and justice, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent.

Holy, good, longsuffering, patient and kind.

However, let us never forget this one point:

All of man's efforts to systematize doctrine of God doomed to fail

Deity cannot be reduced into distinct, discrete component parts.

Jehovah God cannot be cataloged, classified or pigeonholed.

Infinite God must of necessity exist, least part, beyond experience & understanding of finite man.

God is, and shall be, transcendent.

We can only know God to the degree that he has revealed himself.

Must exercise caution regarding revelation of God in Scripture

Approach overemphasizes one characteristic of God, to neglect of another, must of necessity yield a false understanding of God.

Just because we get a grip on one end of an elephant doesn't mean we know what the other end looks like!

Let us accept what the Bible says, and leave it at that. - **1Peter 4:11; Deuteronomy 29:29**

Are you observing ALL the words of God's law? If not, Why not?

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