

## Introduction

Our topic today is “Knowing Our World by Faith Part Two.” We are going to reflect further on Hebrews 11.3: **By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.** We have reference here to more than the material stuff of the world because the word universe is literally “worlds.” Therefore, the reference is to that stuff in total in its historical unfolding in stages as worlds or ages. Moreover, it is significant that the text does not tell us that God created the world, but that He created the world by His word (**the universe was created by the word of God**). This fact directs us to passages like Psalm 19. Look with me at this Psalm for review to see how the facts of the created universe are His words, the expressions of His thoughts, as the product of His creative breath (Ps. 33.6). Note the following three points.

### 1) First, created things are speech

The heavens and the sky are products of God’s speaking and they make declarations and proclamations: (19.1, **The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork**). Hence, they are divine speech. To put it another way, this means that the natural world is theology from the angle of divine activity because theology is God’s speech. When people do theology, they do theology with a small t; they study the speech of God. So, we have Theology (capital T) and theology (lower case t). Thought question: why is this definition of theology okay but inadequate, “theology is the study of God”? It leaves out the fact of God’s speech. Better: “theology is the study of Theology, the study of God by His self revealing speech. Therefore, when we do theology we study and comment on what God has said, notably, both in creation and in Scripture. Priority belongs to God’s speech in Scripture because it is direct speech in words. His word in creation is indirect through created things under His control because as the Psalm states it, God reveals knowledge through the creation in its day and night unfolding (19.2, **Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge**).

### 2) Second, His speech is universal.

The universe in its framing, orderliness, and interconnectedness (Heb. 11.3: “framed”) is God’s voice that is heard universally: it goes out **through all the earth** and His words **to the end of the world** (19.4).

### 3) Third, His speech invites all who hear to fellowship

Finally, and remarkably, the larger point here is that His speech in the created order is a warm invitation to fellowship with Him by sharing in His thoughts. The Psalm indicates this by its reference to the sun (19.4-6). Like the rising and encircling of the earth by the sun, the speech of God warms everything it shines upon (19.6, **there is nothing hidden from its heat**). His words in creation extend a warm welcome to fellowship with Him and to think His thoughts after Him.

Thus, we know that created reality is theological; it is divine speech; it is the product of God’s speaking. Interestingly, then, we study theology when we study the natural world and we study theology when we study Scripture; in both we are fallible; in both God is infallible.

These thoughts lead us to a discussion of two major things this morning: knowledge of the truth and confidence in the future, or by faith we have knowledge and hope.

## 1A. Knowledge of the truth

Faith yields knowledge (by faith we know our universe). It yields a worldly knowledge, knowledge of this empirical, factual, sense-perceived universe that we encounter by the five senses (taste, touch, smell, hear, and see). To appreciate the radical nature of this knowledge, of having it, we need to spend a little time on our ignorance in the fall in relation to how we come to transcend this ignorance.

### 1B. Man's ignorance in the fall

While recognizing the accomplishments of the fallen human family in the arts and sciences, if we are going to be true to Scripture, we must reckon with the fact that the natural man's ignorance is total. The "knowledge" that we speak of him having is relative, partial, and incomplete in such a way that it fails to be true knowledge at every point. This is pungent.

Consider this example. The non-Christian looks in his yard and sees a frog; that fact registers in his mind. He sees, he reads a word of communication from God and we can say that *in a sense* he correctly identifies the frog in distinction from other living things. This has to be the case because he bears God's image even in the fall. However, Scripture tells us that fallen man is in *impenetrable darkness* to the extent that he understands *nothing*. There are a number of passages that teach this radical teaching and they underscore the fact that without faith, without submission to God, the natural man does not understand this world or any particular thing in it.

#### 1) The natural man lives in the dark

Jesus said, <sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, <sup>23</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Mat. 6.22-23). We know that the eye is bad, so, we know that the light that flows into the mind is actually darkness. In fact it is **great ... darkness!** It must be total because the whole body is full of darkness. In our fallen state, our understanding is "darkened" (Eph. 4.18).

#### 2) The natural man suppresses the truth

He suppresses the truth he confronts every day, the truth of God revealed in the created order: <sup>18</sup> **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.** <sup>19</sup> **For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them** (Rom. 1.18-19). He exchanges the truth for a lie (Rom. 1.25). He claims autonomy from God and becomes an alien in the wilderness of the world outside of Eden. His foolish heart is darkened (Rom. 1.21). His "knowledge" is actually ignorance as the light in him is actually darkness (Mat. 6.23). The darkness pertains to knowing both "physical" and "spiritual" things.

#### 3) The natural man knows nothing

Paul makes this point regarding false teachers and their disciples: <sup>3</sup> **If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,** <sup>4</sup> **he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,** <sup>5</sup> **and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain** (1 Tim. 6.3-5). Thus, outside of submission to Christ, to His word, and to godliness man **understands nothing** and is **deprived of the truth**. We need to ponder the full impact of the word nothing. The natural man has absolutely no understanding of anything.

### 2B. Transcending radical ignorance

Significantly, the only way to transcend our radical ignorance is by faith. Only in submission to God's speech in creation and in Scripture do we have our blind eyes opened and the eyes of our hearts enlightened so that we can know the world. Then we can hear the voice of God that rings in our ears. Then and there we come to understand the point of every fact. It involves personal relationship with God who speaks with authority wherever He speaks.

Consider how this works out when we say that there is no "I-it" relationship. Philosophers talk about person to person relations as "I-you," which is personal subject to personal subject. The "I-it" relation is subject to object. But there can be no such thing as an "I-it" relationship, not in any fundamental and meaningful sense. Why is the notion of "I-it" a superficial way of viewing the world, even though we are talking about the world of objects or the objective world? There is no I-it because of what *it is*. The world *is* God's speech; He is everywhere present and this speech is thus truly personal. In our encounter with every fact and circumstance of life in this world, we come face to face with the Creator and sustainer of the universe. This is not pantheism (God is the stuff or the stuff is God) because of the Creator-creature distinction. Instead, the world is sacred as divine utterance (not divine identity).

Therefore, knowing things, truly knowing any thing involves a personal relationship to God. Knowledge is not a relationship to facts or the possession of information, smartness, or good grades. In turn, this means that the requirements of a good act apply to the act of knowing. True knowledge is when the understanding conforms to God's standard of truth regarding the facts, to what He knows (in part of course for us). But there is much more: because knowing anything is interpersonal between you and God, then you must receive the facts as God's word, submit to the authority of His speaking, and obey Him for His glory. The submissive heart of faith is the key to all knowing.

Therefore, to know the universe as God's word we must submit ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ to receive the truth wherever we turn and to use it for the glory of God.

## 2A. Confidence in the future

Scientists are usually poor philosophers. Often, they do not recognize the philosophical foundations of their empirical (hands on) work. For example, they have a problem of induction (of what will probably occur) as they plot their predictions based on the regularities of the world. However, they have no logical basis on which to have hope for the future, even though everything they do is based on that hope. They trust in the regularities of the natural order of things and by studying the past they predict the future. Thus, they know that H's and O's (hydrogen and oxygen) yield water. But in an ultimately chance factual world, they do not have any basis for believing that that will continue for our good. For all they know, the next H and O combination will be the H + O unit that will cause the world to implode, or that it will produce a poisonous liquid with none of the benefits of water. They cannot prove the future from the past without circularity in the argument: they have to believe that the future will be like the past in order to use the past to "prove" the conduct of matter in the future. By contrast, Christians have what science needs to function: we know that H's and O's will produce water for our good indefinitely as long as the world lasts until the interruption of things by the final Day of Judgment.

Because the world we study in science is God's discourse, it is a coherent and true whole. We know that what God said in the past is consistent and will remain so as the future unfolds. Accordingly, what people call the laws of science are actually the consistent expressions of God's creating and sustaining will. This means that the very creation with all the laws regarding the properties of matter in their unfolding over time *reek with the promises of God for the future*. That is the foundation for all the sciences: for fishing, biochemistry, electronics, and so forth.

Granted, we live in a world of sin, disease, aging, dying, and death. Still, because of God's promises in the created order of things, I can look ahead with confidence in the use of the principles, for example, that eliminated my back and hip pain. I can look back at the stretches and exercises that have precise design based on careful analysis and there I can see the promises.

By contrast, as I left physical therapy having been restored to good health, the therapist said, "Good luck" crossing her fingers. However, the "good" that the therapist expresses in combination with luck is diminished and ill founded. It contradicts the entire science of physical therapy. It is dark ignorance. Indeed, the therapeutic principles worked for my knee pain six years ago and my tennis elbow two years ago. The laws that govern a healthy anatomy are more than laws of science; they are promises, the promises of God that He utters in the facts and events of the objective world. We can make use of the science of medicine with confidence because the laws that we uncover there are divine utterances by the Almighty Creator who does not lie. For our covenant keeping God, it is impossible to lie.

To be sure, as the nurse said to me Wednesday in reply to my report on PT: "It does not work for everyone, I'm glad it worked for you." But notably, do not discover a vaccine and say, "Well, since it does not work for everybody, then don't bother with it." We do not do that

because we know that despite the exceptions and extenuating circumstances in God's providence, these discoveries do work in most cases.

Thus, Christians have every reason to be pro-science. That is, we can heartily engage in all the sciences. What we oppose is the philosophy of science that operates on unfounded philosophical principles. Scientism is a name for naturalistic, materialistic, and a purposely anti-Christian use of science; that is science in name only. Christians have reason to be scientifically optimistic. We ought to be for science while we oppose scientism.

Confident hope for the future arises from this understanding of the creational speech of God as creational promises. A huge example is the promise of resurrection that we have in the created order of things. Consider how Paul states the promise of the resurrection of changed, glorious, and spiritual bodies by reference to how God gives new bodies to plants that have died.

**<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. <sup>39</sup> For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup> There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. <sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15.35-44).**

Have you ever heard people talk about the promise of spring? The plants withered away last fall in death and were buried in the earth, but they are there in the earth with promise of the renewal, the rejuvenation, and the resurrection of spring. But do not miss the big picture of God's promise in these things. This is His communication and speech. And do not miss the communication here that death and burial promise new bodies. God who cannot lie promises the resurrection of His children in every new blade of grass and every new shoot that springs from death and burial. It all points to the death and burial of the Lord Jesus. He is the supreme fulfillment of these creational promises, which are parables hidden in the creation since the beginning of time (Mat. 13.35). By His death and resurrection, He secured the promises making them certain in their accomplishment. His death and resurrection secured our redemption and thus the resurrection of our bodies because He did not come to save souls. He came to save persons in the wholeness of what makes them human beings, soul and body!

## Conclusion

We have more information about faith. It is information that is part of the package of encouragement to faith. Faith is trust, trusting the Lord, depending on Him, submitting to Him and thus obeying the will of God (10.36, with confident endurance; hence, it involves entrusting yourself to Him and committing yourself to Him and to obedience). Therefore, there is encouragement to faith here from the fact that faith is how we come to understand our world and lay hold of the promises of God that surround us in all the facts of science because they are the faithful utterances of the Lord God Almighty.

**May we fall down before the majesty of our God and Creator of the heavens and the earth and all their host; may the Holy Spirit fill us with a sense of awe mixed with joy and gratitude in knowing that the facts and events of our world are divine utterances that communicate the glory of God's goodness, love, and wisdom; and may the Spirit keep us close to Christ who is the redemptive speech of God for our eternal salvation. To the triune God be all glory, amen.**

## **Addendum: Some illustrations regarding the fullness of true knowledge**

### ***1. The number one tennis player in the world***

If we deny or simply do not acknowledge the Creator when we experience the beauty of a leaf or the radiance of a sunset, then we do not understand the communication. We miss the point. *We do not know what we experience and know.* We cannot help but know the things that we perceive with our eyes like a sunset. However, if we see but do not understand then we know in some sense and we do not know in another sense. This “tension” about human knowledge is complex, and it pertains to the rich biblical notion of knowing.

Because of what it takes to have true knowledge, we can affirm that a non-Christian Roger Federer, though number one in the world of tennis, does not understand tennis. He does not know what he is doing (he does not know it, he does not know himself in his experience of it, and he does not understand his doing of it). If we grant this perspective as an ultimate perspective that is biblical, then we ask this question, “What difference does it make in the real world?” Because of God’s common love (Mat.5.44-45) and the fact of a remnant image of God in fallen man (Gen. 9.6; James 3.9), Christian and non-Christian tennis playing may overlap in nature or quality and there may be some actual overlap in the knowledge that each player has of the game. Obviously, the non-Christian may come to an understanding of the game “narrowly conceived” that excels Christian understanding. That said, we must think broadly about the game of tennis. Whether acknowledged or not, the one who takes up the game takes up a sacred task. Playing tennis is not secular in contrast to something sacred like reading Scripture. All the facts that a tennis player learns are indirect words of a message from God to His image bearer. These words share God’s thoughts with man so that man can think God’s thoughts after Him. This sharing is for communication, for co-union, and therefore it is an invitation to fellowship with God (Ps. 19.1-6; of course, redemption requires God’s restorative word that the Psalm goes on to explain). The world where man plays is the kingdom of God (the field is the kingdom, Mat.13) whether we are thinking of a country, city, or stadium. The principles of gravity, inertia, friction, and geometry that govern the activity of all participants are nuances of God’s wisdom. We grapple with God’s wisdom when we study the relationship of string tension to weather conditions, court surface, and ball speed. How can someone have wise-wisdom or true knowledge of tennis if they do not acknowledge God’s kingdom and speech? How can they know the game if they do not know (acknowledge what they know but suppress) that tennis *is* an expression of divine speech that calls to fellowship with God and obedience to Him? All of the principles, details, and nuances of factuality that make up the game of tennis (narrowly and broadly conceived) are words in a message from the Creator to His creature. They are components of communication that are there for our understanding. If the

communication is not received for what it is and used in obedience to the Speaker, then it is not understood. The game of tennis is not known. The number one tennis player does remarkable things *in the dark* because, though fallen, he is still the image of God, but he does many remarkable things in the dark.

What are the implications of this view of knowledge? Could I still speak like this if I were to play against Federer at Wimbledon? Could I look across the court and say, “Roger, you do not know the game of tennis”? Could I say, “you serve and volley in ‘tennis-ological’ darkness (in epistemological darkness)”? If there is true knowledge of the game, then the player will enjoy it, and every bit of enjoyment will lead to thanksgiving to the triune God. Every marvel and every challenge will lead to a sense of awe at the wisdom of God, and it will encourage praise to the God of such wisdom. Experiencing tennis (or biology, or mechanical engineering) will mean experiencing an invitation from the Lord to fellowship with Him. Accordingly, the tennis player will acknowledge God’s voice and submit to His will in the way he plays the game. He will seek to please the Lord in the attitude with which he plays and in the use to which he puts all his earnings. He will not do his tennis work on Sunday unless he has assurance from His risen Sabbath king that such work is fitting on the Lord’s Day.

## ***2. Blue Jays and the knowledge of God***

Epistemic circularity can be “fleshed out” by consideration of our personal experiences with animals. While typing these words, blue jays came within inches of my laptop to take peanuts I put there. I enjoyed watching them, in effect, sneak up on me, grab the peanuts and scurry off. Then one came, took a peanut, hopped on the chair, dropped it to the ground and left. I picked it up and placed it on table again. Eventually, he (or one of his friends), came back, picked up the nut, then dropped it, and stayed a while looking at me as if to say, “What is going on?”

When he flew away, I asked myself the same question, “What is going on?” I picked up the nut and shook it; it did not rattle; the shell had not been broken, but there was nothing inside. That is why the jay left it in wonderment. I can only marvel at this ability to perceive the value of a peanut on the part of a blue jay. I can only wonder, and take delight in seeing this evaluation, and devaluation of the peanut. I can only marvel in the Lord as I experience this gift to the human family, to me. This awesome creature displays the wisdom of God in an interesting and delightful way. Surely, I must conclude that this created thing is God’s voice that among other things expresses a warm invitation to fellowship with Him. He invites me to have even more delight in Him as He shares His thoughts with me in this way. Thus, I know Him, it, and myself in the same act. I know the thoughts of the Lord and see the delightful wisdom of my Creator. I know it (the jay, a sunset) as His word to me inviting me to fellowship,

calling me to learn more of His creation, and through the creation to learn more of Him. Marvelously, I know myself as a person in personal contact and relationship with the Lord. I know myself as someone loved by the Lord, and because I can think His thoughts after Him, I know myself as His image bearer able to image His thoughts in my thoughts, to reflect them in a creaturely way, as His creation myself, but still able to reflect them. Since He speaks to me in this way (showing love, warmly inviting to fellowship, indicating my image bearing ability) and since He speaks with authority as my Creator, I must also conclude that I have obligations before Him. I have the obligation to learn more and more of the world aiming to reflect His wisdom in my understanding of it. Here I have the deepest foundation for learning the three R's; this teaching grounds a philosophy of education that knows no limits in either scope or enthusiasm. Learning about blue jays, flowers, color, and shape is a duty that I have to God and a delightful, fulfilling, and satisfying duty it is as well. Moreover, I have the obligation in my knowledge to acknowledge Him, to acknowledge His speaking to me, to welcome it, to praise Him for it and for what it reveals about Him. As His image bearer, I have the obligation to receive His communication to me as clearly and correctly as I am able, and to use it for Him, to reflect Him (to be what I am before Him), and thus to use it for His glory.

However, the delight of my experience of the Lord turns to dismay when I try to glorify Him but find myself failing to do so. I forget to acknowledge Him in all my ways; I forget that the blue jay is His gift to me that He gives me to enjoy and to know in knowing Him for His glory. In other words, I see myself as a sinner, an ingrate surrounded by the marvelous gifts of God. My sins block my vision of the world around me, turning the brightness of the sun into the darkness of night. In this condition, I am a blind man walking around stumbling over the facts of life. I am so in the dark that I cannot hear or even speak. I am blind, deaf, and mute regarding the facts of life that I sense but cannot understand.

At this point in my experience, I need the rest of Psalm 19 about God's speech. I need to hear about the "creation-speech" of the Lord to understand better, how it is that I confront the face of God in every fact surrounding me (19.1-6), but I also need to hear the good news that the rest of the Psalm conveys to sinners like me:

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; <sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. <sup>12</sup>Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. <sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. <sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Here is the relief to my heart that I need, as I own up to my sins in the acknowledgment that goes with my acknowledgment of the Lord in every fact and circumstance of life. I find the answer to my sinfulness in "my rock

and my redeemer.” The same Lord that speaks to me with such astounding love in His creation-speech also speaks to me in the Scriptures, in the perfect law of the Lord (v. 7). This word is a restorative word that revives the soul (v. 7) and rejoices the heart (v. 8). His commandments enlighten the eyes (v. 8); they are delightful beyond the delight of “much fine gold” and beyond the sweetness of honey dripping from the honeycomb (v. 10).

### **3. *Seeing stars***

Another way to illustrate epistemic circularity (as defined in this paper) is to make some comments about seeing a distant star through a telescope on a clear night. To know what it is that I am seeing as I gaze heavenward, I must acknowledge God’s word written large across the heavens. Denying or simply failing to acknowledge God’s speech is comparable to opposing or forgetting the fact that I see the star in another galaxy because of the telescope. Accordingly, I misperceive the object in view. In the case of the telescope, I will think that the star is something “near” within reach of the powers of human vision. I will think that the star is in one galaxy when in truth it exists in another galaxy. I may see the star at the same time that I am light years away from understanding it. On one hand, I see it, but on the other hand, I do not see it. With regard to the matter of distance, though I see the star, I am “worlds” from seeing it correctly. Likewise, if I do not see the star as a communication from God (if I blatantly deny this truth or simply neglect to affirm it), then I am light years away from understanding and knowing it. I do not know what it is as to its metaphysical makeup; I totally miss the point regarding what it is. I am so far away from seeing it in truth that my view of the stars amounts to darkness, and great is that darkness.

Moreover, if I miss the fact that the star is a medium of communication from God through His creation, then I miss the point of the information regarding every detail that I think I understand about the star. This is the case because the content of every fact is theology as God’s indirect act of speaking. In turn, I fail to know and understand the call to fellowship that God extends to all people (and thus to me) in the act of sharing His thoughts with human beings through created things. Because He shares His thoughts with His image bearers, then the communication is a warm and loving invitation to human beings everywhere to draw near to Him. If I do not know and acknowledge the Speaker who reveals Himself in the facts of stars and all other things, then I do not have an intimate knowledge of the star I see. Because it is a revelation of God (His self-revealing speech), then I must know Him in knowing it. Knowledge involves personal relationship with God. The person lives in radical tension that grows in his grasp of things that invite him to fellowship with God, if he does so without fellowship with God.

The personal dimension of true knowledge means that to know a star includes grasping it in the mind with thanksgiving to God for the warm display of wisdom that He shares with human beings. How could I *know* that the

star is God's word to me, and thus know it truly, if I do not receive the experience of knowing it with joy and thankfulness to Him?

Finally, as His image, I have the design of reflecting and glorifying God. This fact governs the use to which I must put what I learn, if it is to yield true knowledge. Do I know what poison is if I drink it to quench my thirst? Do I know what a razor blade is if I run my fingertips over its sharp edges for fun? To know the facts in truth, I must know how to use that which I know. If I am to know any particular thing, then, in how I discover it and make use of what I discover about it, I must obey God's commandments, love my neighbor, and seek to glorify God in thought, word, and deed.

#### ***4. Coming to know and growth in knowing as a Christian***

If submission is both necessary and sufficient for true knowledge, then how can it be that Christians disagree with one another in their interpretations of the Bible? The answer to this question is that in the cases of disagreement there are deficiencies regarding many things that are necessary for knowledge. For example, critical thinking is a requirement in Christian discipleship. Disciples have the duty to test all things and to hold fast to the good (1 Thess. 4.25). This is just to say that Christian love is to abound in knowledge seasoned by discernment (Phil. 1-9-11). Accordingly, different levels of growth in critical thinking skill that come by practicing open dialogue will lead to different conclusions. Where conclusions contradict one another, someone lacks a necessary requirement for growth in true knowledge.

How does submission function as both necessary and sufficient for knowledge in a definitive sense and in a progressive sense? The example of a professed belief in Christ may help make this point. Consider the person who "knows" and states the truth that Jesus is Lord. However, if he does not commit himself to Christ from the depths of his heart (if he does not choose Christ above all earthly things), then he does not know the truth that Jesus is Lord. Thus, a person can only say (from the heart) that Jesus is Lord by the Spirit's enlightenment (1 Cor. 12.3). Now, to focus on Christian development, growth in knowledge requires both a submissive heart and a meditative process of testing all things. Christians come up short in both of these requirements; they must grow in both and as they do they will arrive at different stages of true knowledge. Recognition of this fundamental fact is critical for growing love between believers with differences that are contradictory sometimes, and not contradictory, but merely cases of semantics, at other times.

Therefore, by submission to the voice of God (in Scripture and in creation), the believer has true knowledge of God, but this does not mean that he knows God exhaustively or that he automatically knows all the teachings of

the Bible. Submission is necessary and sufficient to know God truly and to begin the journey of coming to know Him better and better. Of course, presupposed in the necessity of submission to God at every step on the Christian journey is the hearing of God's voice in creation and Scripture. Many things are necessary for righteous hearing, such as critical thinking and careful gathering of information (good rational extrapolation and good empirical judgment). Both are necessary in a Christian understanding of the glory of God by hearing His declarations through creation and in Scripture. However, excellent logical skill and acute powers of observation are not sufficient for knowing God or His world. Knowing God and His world are inseparable. To know God, we must know Him through His creation because it is through the creation that God reveals Himself to us. To know the creation, we must know God because the creation is His personal and self-revealing speech. Therefore, unless we submit ourselves (our data gathering and reasoning selves) to God and to the authority of His speech, then we know neither God nor His world (*JBA*, Fall, 2007, 65-72).