

# Can You Take it All In?

Standing on a cliff overlooking the sea, I was struck by just how much there was to see. The immense blue water stretched as far as I could see; the rocky coastline ran for miles in each direction; and yet every centimetre was filled with detail and colour. I felt almost overwhelmed, I couldn't take it all in at once, but spent a happy time enjoying the magnificent view.

You may have had similar experiences in different parts of the world. Across the valley from a large mountain, it may be impossible to see both its top and base at the same time. Only with more distance can we begin to take it all in.

The same applies when we think about the universe. The vast expanse of space is measured by astronomers in terms that we just cannot picture, numbers and distances so large that we struggle to comprehend them. Yet each part of each planet – especially our own – has so many features that they offer many lifetimes' worth of study.

## **As the Creation, So the Creator**

Let's stand back for a moment and think about God, the Creator of these marvellous, awe-inspiring things. The Apostle Paul explained in his letter to believers in Rome that by looking at the creation, we can get a sense of what God is like:

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:20).*

The Lord God is infinite, both in time and in power. He has always been there, and He will always exist, although our finite minds struggle to grasp this. His ability to create, to act and to direct His works is limitless.

This great power is discussed at length in Isaiah chapter 40 (well worth reading in full), describing the world's nations as mere dust compared to God's magnificence. The prophet shows that this applies to God's mind, when he asks the rhetorical question:

*Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counsellor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? (Isaiah 40:13-14).*

## **Great Goodness**

It would be easy to be frightened by all this, were it not for the fact that God is good and kind, and extends His power in love towards men and women. He made us, so He knows our limitations and failings. In the Psalms, God's forgiveness is described like this:

*For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:11-12).*

God is willing to forgive, if we are sorry for the things we do wrong, but He doesn't forgive in a 'little' way. The psalmist uses two different measures



of distance which are actually immeasurable – infinite – to show how far away He is willing to put those sins. This is the magnitude of His mercy, and it can be hard to take in.

Thankfully, in His mercy, God does NOT give us what we deserve – which would be punishment for our sins. Instead he GIVES us what we do not deserve, and what we could never earn. That's His grace.

## **A Powerful Prospect**

The Bible tells about the wonderful future which God has planned for those who love Him, who respond by showing faith, being baptised and trying to copy the character of Jesus.

*As it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).*

The writer is showing how no one has ever seen or imagined the great things God has planned for His people, but that He has shown them to us – in His Word. The Bible tells about the Kingdom of God to come, where men and women will live for ever in a

perfect world. It can be a lot to take in, but it is there for us to read and to begin to picture.

All of this is made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which also can be difficult to comprehend. A sinless man was prepared to give his life for people who would fail so often. And his Father was prepared to give His Son as that sacrifice. Paul puts it like this:

*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6–8).*

So rather than being intimidated by God's limitless power, we should be comforted by it. He has prepared a wonderful future for those who love Him, and He has made it possible through the sacrifice of Jesus.

*[God] is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).*

Through the Bible we can begin to take in all of this, so let's seize the opportunity to do so.

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