



Real Faith & Reason

Absolute Proof of the Bible
and the God of the Bible

Volume One

A chain of thought
is only as strong
as the weakest link.

Scientia

Real Faith & Reason

Absolute Proof of the Bible and the God of the Bible

Volume One

Petros B. Scientia

Real Reality Books
Portage, Wisconsin

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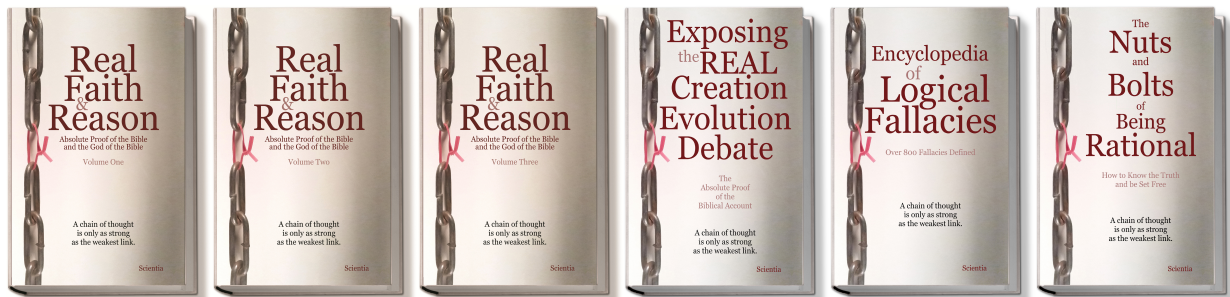
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Trip 1: My Journey

As a young child, I remember asking my father, “How can we know we’re right and everyone else is wrong?” I don’t remember my father’s answer. I’m sure he was amused. And yet, we all think our opinions are right and other opinions are wrong. The question isn’t silly. It’s profound. What makes us think our opinions are right and everyone else is wrong? And that question didn’t go away as I got older. I continued seeking God about my life-long question “How can I know the truth?”

In my late teens, my pastor gave a sermon on the Holy Spirit. He was teaching from the Bible, and God seemed so real to me as I listened. I couldn’t imagine how that would be, but my pastor said all the power of the God Who created the universe is available now. We could somehow know God personally, and He could lead us into righteousness. During the week, I was thinking about that. I was open to God and pondering what my pastor said. That’s when my life changed.

I had always been a serious Christian, doing the best I could. I firmly believed Jesus Christ died for my sins and He forgave my sins. I sensed His forgiveness for my faults. I read a chapter a day in the Bible just like they told me to, but I didn’t understand it, and it was pretty dry reading. I tried to live a moral life. I prayed. All those years of Bible study and prayer may have prepared me for what happened next.

The experience is difficult to describe. I was suddenly free in a way I had never been free. It was like the phrase “Christ in me” suddenly became a real experience. I was alive in Christ. As I write these words, they fail to describe what began in a moment of belief and wonder.

From that day, Scripture opened to me. The Bible became supremely interesting to me and made perfect sense without rationalizations. God started teaching me about love. Then, He taught me about His design for the church. He spoke to me through Scripture, the created world, visions, an inner voice, and various Christian friends. I knew it was Him by intuition and conscience.

However, I wasn't free from the fallen human mind's ability to rationalize false interpretations of Scripture as I was to find out in the years following. I knew God had changed me. I knew God was teaching me. I didn't know how deceptive and tenacious the human mind is. I found out why God says the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked beyond what we can know.

At first, I didn't know how weak I was, but I heard so many ideas I became confused. A dynamic preacher on the radio said he had a word from God that would bless me in every way. He had a revelation, but he couldn't tell me that day. I had to tune in the next day. He kept building the suspense, and he was going to let it out but at the right time. Finally, after about a week, he revealed what God had spoken to him. If I sent him ten dollars, God would give me a hundred. If I sent him a hundred dollars, God would give me a thousand. I instantly knew this was a lie. I knew it intuitively, but I wasn't certain of anything.

I looked at all the denominations. Every one of them could convincingly present their version of truth. They all followed the Bible and could give biblical reasons for what they believed. Some teachings rang false, but others seemed true.

I met a preacher who told me to come to his church because he was both a prophet and an apostle. A neighbor offered to pay for me to go to seminary in their denomination. Some churches had great music. Others had great speakers. Some claimed they had all the truth and those who wouldn't follow their interpretations were twisting Scripture. Others went further to the point of using fear of hell to get me to believe their doctrines. I heard many conflicting and confusing end-times theologies and origins theologies. There were theologies about the Godhead, morality, baptisms, and every other facet of life, and they all promoted conflicting interpretations of Scripture.

However, after all my searching, my question remained. “How can I know the truth?”

God began answering me decades later by speaking to me about my thinking and pointing out how inadequate that thinking was without revelation from the Holy Spirit. He didn’t show me everything at once. The progress was slow. He spoke to me through Scripture and many of the means of revelation God mentions in Scripture. God spoke to me by bringing to mind the teaching I had received from Godly Christian teachers and confirming that teaching through experience and Scripture. God gave me a supernatural certainty the Bible is true and without error. He told me no personal revelation will ever conflict with the Bible. He showed me moral law still applies but God is now activating His spiritual law by making true righteousness possible through grace. At the same time, He taught me He is certain to correct my misinterpretations of the Bible even though I might resist Him for a while. He’s still correcting me, and He will continue to correct me.

God was exposing the biggest lie and the most amazing truth. But the truth seemed too simple. And then, there was the lie. I thought, No one would fall for such a lie. And yet, the entire world believed the conclusions springing from it.

God showed me the natural human mind builds reasoning by making up stuff. It makes up stuff and then pretends the made-up stuff is true. Could it be? Do we base most of our thinking on made-up stuff? If so, our thoughts are pure vapor. And yet, no one was talking about that. I wondered, “Wouldn’t everyone be talking about that?”

God also showed me the simplicity in Christ. Christ isn’t a theory, theology, or concept. Christ is a person. He’s real. Whoever seeks Him finds Him. Moment by moment and step by step, He leads, teaches, corrects, purifies, and transforms every person who follows Him. Faith comes by hearing Him, and whatever He says is the truth. Sound reason requires truth as a starting point for thinking, and every thought that opposes Christ has a foundation of made-up stuff.

Of course, I had many questions in my mind. Could it be we can only find truth in Christ Jesus? If so, what does this do to theology, philosophy, and science? And what about the argument between

presuppositional and evidential apologists? What about logic, critical thinking, and decision-making?

It seemed if God doesn't supply the truth through some form of divine revelation, rational thought would be impossible. Without that truth, humans could only react to their natural senses as animals do. They could learn about how to react to those senses. However, they couldn't reason beyond what they could observe and test. And I noted science that leads to technology is limited to what we can observe and test. If that's true, then all human reason that goes beyond what we observe or what God reveals is irrational. And where do we get the information we need to interpret what we observe? How much of what we take for granted is nonsense that someone planted in our minds because they firmly believed that nonsense?

I fought this idea. I could only imagine the reaction of secularists and naturalists. I soon found out about that. Those who pride themselves in their minds don't like to know their minds are worthless without the truth that comes from Christ. What I thought was God's revelation to me was one of two things. It was either insanity or truth. Though I looked for it, I found no place to compromise. I carefully experimented in conversations with believers and unbelievers and found others who also fought the idea of God being the only source of all truth. And yet, no one could answer it. No one could tell me how the human mind could manufacture truth. No one could tell me what would limit God's ability to reveal truth.

Over the last two decades, I gained confidence in what God had revealed. All knowledge and wisdom is hidden in Christ. Christ is the truth. I knew it by revelation. I confirmed it through hundreds of conversations and experiences. God exposed me to the many intense arguments of Christians struggling with various aspects of this same truth. Atheists and naturalists were cruel and irrational. And yet, God corrected many of my ideas in the process. Human minds brought up many clever arguments against God being the Source. Those arguments often sent me to the presence of God to seek the answer. And God was faithful to answer every skeptical question and statement.

I learned to hold on loosely to what I thought was true. Every time I thought I knew something, the Holy Spirit would show me there was

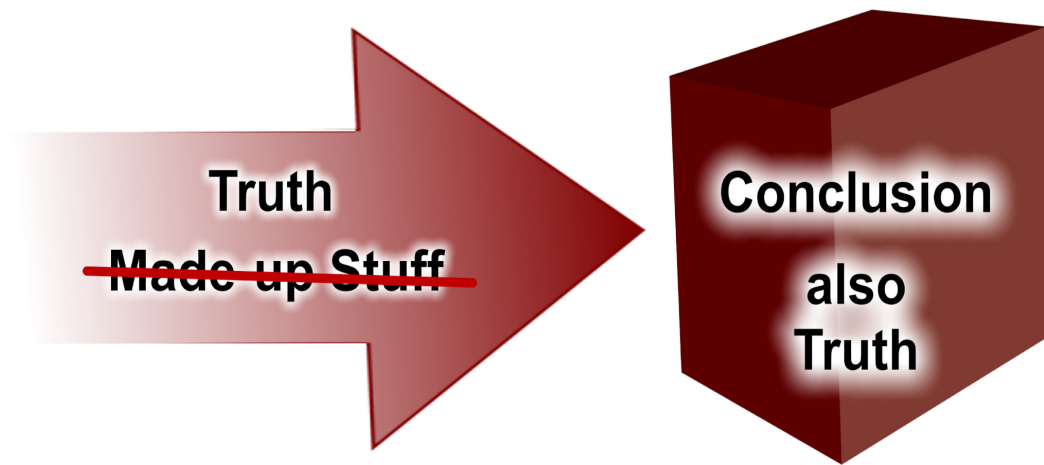
more to it than that. But God also spoke through external evidence to confirm the revelation He had given me. During countless conversations, skeptics, Christians, and curious people brought up many questions.

I had an impression God wanted me to write this book to explore the answers to those questions. However, I'm not a writer. I've written short descriptions of technical systems and business systems, but I never thought of writing a book. I looked for someone else to write the book, but no one would do it. When I started, I had trouble finding anyone who would even tolerate the idea that all knowledge and wisdom come from Christ. Some believed it in theory. They read the Bible. They saw it plainly stated, but they got angry about the idea that it might be true and practical. Only more recently do I see others with the same message. When God begins to restore truth, He doesn't just move on one person. He moves on many as He moves.

My journey is only beginning. God has only begun to answer my questions.

For whoever chooses to come along, this journey isn't about prescribing what anyone should think. The examples we'll look at on this journey aren't the focus of the journey. The journey is about a new and better way of thinking. It's about true wisdom and understanding that continues to grow over time. It's also about how God will transform you into the image and likeness of Christ from glory to glory.

A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in airing his opinions. ~ Proverbs 18:2 Berean Study Bible



Trip 2: Truth versus Made-up Stuff

How can we know the Bible is true and God is real?

We should know why we believe what we believe. And our thinking must be sound. We must build our thinking on a firm foundation of truth. We have to understand how we know the truth is the truth. For instance, how can we know the Bible is true and God is real? We need to answer that question and remove all doubt. Real faith and real reason take us on a journey to explore the wonders of rational thought. Our journey doesn't just prove faith is rational. It proves truly rational thought is impossible without faith. The journey will take us beyond the blind, make-believe faith of ungodly thinkers to the faith that is substance and absolutely certain proof.

We want to do the following:

- learn how to explain our faith in a simple way anyone can understand
- learn how to explain our faith without committing fallacies
- recognize the underlying reality that makes every debate against the Bible a debate of made-up stuff versus divine revelation
- see why ungodly thinkers become irrational the moment they go beyond the material realm and try to reason about non-material subjects like God, morality, and the origin of the universe

- identify how we know every aspect of the Bible is true, including the history, the promises, the commands, and the orders
- understand why biblical faith is reality and absolutely certain proof
- know how we can have absolute knowledge
- know how we can have absolute discernment between God's leading, teaching, and correcting and all the other voices
- think through the dangers of divine revelation and how to avoid the pitfalls

I pray this journey opens the door for all this and more.

Here We Go

Here we go on a journey, a pilgrimage of the mind to find a Path to rational thought. We want to remove the mystery from reason on this exploratory expedition. Since this is a pilgrimage, it's not random. We're intent on a purpose and a quest.

“Please come, and let's reason together,” implores the
LORD ~ Isaiah 1:18a International Standard Version

On this safari, we'll explore reason. We'll learn the difference between sound reasoning and unsound reasoning. Dangerous and terrifying as it may be, we'll focus on how we think our thoughts. We're willing to risk this self-assessment because we want to walk in the light. That's why we walk in the Spirit. As we go, we'll find out about the nature and source of faith and uncover facets of grace seldom considered. As the Holy Spirit enlightens us, we'll understand why seemingly sincere thinkers can have opposing and conflicting positions on topics like:

- Absolute belief in God versus atheism
- Biblical truth versus human philosophy
- Creation versus evolution
- Knowing Christ versus ungodliness

- Pro-life versus pro-choice
- Free enterprise versus socialism or communism
- Biblical family versus extramarital sex, rape, perversion, and other assorted alternatives.

Sometimes, we wonder how each side claims to have “the high moral ground.” Amazed, we see each side claiming to be the rational side. In these cases, someone must be living in a fantasy, but we sometimes can’t tell who’s right and who’s wrong. While fantasy can hold our attention, it can’t produce real satisfaction since we long for the authentic and the genuine. We want to be true to who we are, our true calling. Since we treasure all that’s good, we find ourselves willing to abandon complacency. We’re willing to risk the loss of comfort because of our love for reality, hate for being deceived, and intense desire for truth.

We have a sense in our spirits we CAN be certain God is real, Jesus Christ is real, and the Holy Spirit is here to guide and direct our lives. We need to know the difference between true realities and false or unproven concepts. We need to know that difference with certainty. We can’t have certainty by simply claiming it or using circular reasoning or other fallacies. We’ll answer those needs on our journey.

In 2nd Timothy, chapter 3, God tells us about a time when people will be “always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” If they’re learning but not coming to the knowledge of the truth, what are they learning? God calls it learning, but learners can learn lies and evil. Teachers can teach lies and evil. Thinkers can think irrationally.

Here’s the context of God’s statement about learning without coming to the knowledge of the truth.

In the last days, terrible times will come.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

They’ll have a form of godliness but deny its power.

People will be boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, traitorous, reckless, and conceited.

These people will teach what isn't true. That's happening. God says, "Turn away from such as these!" Teachers are teaching students that each person has his or her own truth. They tell students each one has his or her own reality. They teach a system of reasoning and logic that can't possibly lead to knowledge of the truth. They teach lie upon lie. Behind all those lies is the big lie. They say it makes sense to base all thinking on made-up stuff. They don't say it that way. They don't make it obvious. They use persuasive words, and we'll get into that on this journey.

Here's the problem they have. Without divine revelation, made-up stuff is their only option. They try to cover it up. They say divine revelation is impossible. They imply that the human mind can discern truth all by itself.

This lie is everywhere. You can't avoid it. This false teaching isn't only in schools. Every form of media echoes the message. It's implied in almost every book, article, conversation, debate, or statement you hear. The schools, media, publishers, museums, entertainers, amusement parks, and every other form of communication work as a unit to repeat the same lie in many ways. They act as the great false prophet of the Apocalypse, speaking the same lies from many outlets. Since the lie is implied everywhere, it seems true. It's not true. It's the big lie. I struggled with this.

Jorge Luis Borges wrote a short story titled "The Library of Babel." The story was about a library where people had access to every book ever written. While most of the books were pure made-up stuff with no truth, many other books contained truth. So the trouble wasn't the lack of truth. The trouble was no one could find the truth in the vast quantities of gibberish since they had no way to separate truth from fabrication. With a Babylon of voices each claiming to be right, we live in a world of babble as we try to find the truth in a sea of lies and deceptions.

We want the truth. We want reality. We don't care about opinions. We certainly don't care what everyone else thinks. We recognize knowledge differs from an opinion, and the truth differs from a viewpoint. Opinions are easy. For opinions, we just make up stuff and believe it. Then, we pretend the made-up stuff is reasonable so we can convince ourselves we're right. For opinions, we still have a reason to believe, but we don't need to base our reasoning on anything real. Opinions are mere suppositions in our minds or the minds of others. Opinions just give the *illusion* of sanity.

In contrast, truth is restricted. It's restricted because the standard for truth and knowledge is high, and the standard for sanity is likewise high. We're defining "insanity" as the inability to deal with reality. Reality is absolute by nature because reality is truth, and truth excludes all that isn't real.



Sound Reasoning versus Assumptions

A chain of thought is like a train. We must rationally link each car. If one car leaves the track of truth, the entire train derails, and irrationality can follow unhindered. Regrettably, the results aren't usually good, although God sometimes shows mercy during the train wreck. The human mind can imagine anything, but the train of logic left the track of truth the moment the first assumption began. If the train of logic stays on the track of truth, the reasoning is sound.

Let's look at this problem another way. We can picture a chain with one link replaced by a twist-tie like we use to close a bag of bread. A chain of thought is only as strong as its weakest link. That twist-tie will quickly fail, and the whole chain will fail. However, it's an inaccurate picture since the twist-tie represents a single assumption, but twist-ties are infinitely stronger than assumptions. Assumptions

have all the strength of hot air, but how do you make a picture of hot air holding a chain together?

Assumption - Zero Truth Value



A chain of thought is only as strong as its weakest link.

Assumptions have zero truth value. If we add even a single assumption to our chain of logic, our logic has zero strength. Assumptions aren't a rational basis for interpreting observations and experiences, but schools teach us we can rationally use assumptions as the basis of discussion and reasoning. And yet, our journey will expose the folly of assumption-based reasoning. It's worse than we've ever realized.

Real Faith

The thing above all else I want you to see is that you can not generate it; you can not work it up; you can not manufacture it. It is imparted and infused by God Himself. You can not sit in your homes and struggle to have faith, and affirm that something is; nor can you turn your hope and desire into faith by your own power. The only place you can get it is from the Lord, for the Word clearly and distinctly states that faith is one of two things. It is either a gift of God, or it is a fruit of the Spirit.
~ Charles S. Price, *The Real Faith*

Some Christians and non-Christians have falsely told us faith is a belief based on nothing at all. This implies humans originate or manufacture faith.

Others have falsely told us we base faith on physical evidence. They claim true faith comes when we examine physical evidence and draw a conclusion. It seems as if they think faith is a product of the human intellect.

Some of those who think faith comes by looking at physical evidence take Romans 1:20 out of its context and use it to make their point. This verse does say the invisible things of God are clearly seen through what He made. However, it doesn't say faith cometh by examining the physical evidence and reasoning to a conclusion. And they leave out verse 19. Verse 19 says "what can be known about God is plain to them because God has revealed it to them." God speaks through His creation, but we must learn to discern His voice from all others. Fortunately, Christ's sheep know His voice.

Atheists and Christians both use the same physical evidence. Christians see a creator God. Atheists see naturalism, materialism, and uniformitarianism. For atheists, the evidence confirms God doesn't exist or can't be known. And they interpret the physical evidence as confirming their atheistic belief system. God speaks to both Christians and atheists through the physical evidence. He speaks through what He has created. Atheists refuse to acknowledge Him and glorify Him, but Christians recognize the voice of their Creator God.

The Christians who teach physical-proof-based faith use Acts 1:3, which says "Jesus showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs." However, Acts 1:3 doesn't say these proofs were the source or the basis of anyone's faith. We can be certain the Father drew those who believed, and their faith came by God's utterance. Often, God speaks to us through seeing a miracle or hearing someone speaking by the Spirit of God. In this case, they saw the miracle of the resurrected Lord and heard Him as He spoke by the Holy Spirit. No real faith ever originated in the human intellect. Real faith is a gift from God.

So, we've looked at the two main ways of defining "faith" incorrectly. Some people say faith is belief without evidence. Others say faith is based on physical evidence. Both are wrong. The amazing thing is those who sincerely confess Jesus Christ is Lord have real faith even if they philosophize about faith in these false ways. No one can confess Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Some of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord just don't realize how they have this faith. For God's wonderful gifts, we don't need to understand them fully to apply them. However, by teaching wrong ideas about faith,

some teachers hurt themselves. And they hurt those who listen to their false definitions.

Real faith has power. Real faith builds our understanding of reality on a firm foundation. But fake faith is powerless and worthless. If we substitute this powerless faith for real faith, we walk away from Jesus Christ and lose His leading and blessing.

In a world regulated under a secularist, naturalist mindset, much of the church has slumped toward a fake faith, a make-believe faith. Real faith isn't pretending. Without the living Christ active in our lives, faith becomes a mental exercise in which we make ourselves believe in various ideas.

Real faith isn't a leap into the darkness that lands us in the light. Real faith is not belief without evidence. Real faith isn't a mental exercise. Real faith is supernatural assurance and knowledge of truth. Real faith comes when God speaks to us. Christ leads, teaches, and corrects everyone who will listen to Him and follow Him. Whoever seeks Him finds Him. All may come. He speaks through Scripture and every means of divine revelation He mentions in Scripture.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ~ Romans 10:17 King James Version

If faith comes by hearing the word of God, then we need to know what God means by "word of God." What term was translated as "word?" It's the Greek term "rhema." What does "rhema" mean? Rhema means utterance. It's a statement or a sentence from God. It's God's voice.

Here's how the NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon defines "rhema," which is translated as "word." "That which is or has been uttered by the living voice, thing spoken, word." Strong's tells us rhema is "a thing spoken, a word or saying of any kind, as command, report, promise, a thing, matter, business." It's "any sound produced by the voice and having definite meaning." It's "speech, discourse, what one has said, a series of words joined together into a sentence (a declaration of one's mind made in words), an utterance, a saying of any sort as a message, or a narrative."

How do you hear God's voice? You know. You know about your conscience, intuition, imagination, and inner voice. You know the difference between these. You know demons and your fallen mind can speak to you through any of these. And you know the difference between God's voice and the voice of a demon or your fallen mind. You know that demons and your fallen mind can counterfeit God's voice. And you also know they can't fool you unless you allow it because you prefer to be deceived at a moment of temptation.

Some Christians even start consciously using the inner voice or the imagination. They speak their own words or project their own visions out of their own hearts. Rather than waiting for God to speak, they use self-talk, positive mental attitude, and self-manufactured, make-believe, fake faith. Those who fall into this error know better, but someone influenced them. Someone bewitched them.

Your conscience, intuition, imagination, and inner voice are holy. You must reserve them for God's use only.

God may speak to you through the Bible, but something inside you, your conscience, intuition, imagination, or inner voice, speaks to you. The Bible is God's messenger to you. God may project a vision on your imagination as you read the Bible, and you suddenly understand as never before. God may speak a word in your inner voice as you read the Bible, and you receive a new grasp of what God is saying. The creation is God's messenger to you. In the same way, God may speak to you through His creation, but His actual word will come from deep within your spirit to your mind, your soul. This is how you can understand what you see in nature. God can send an angel as His messenger to speak His word. And God can speak to you through other Christians, but the deep must speak to the deep. If a brother or sister speaks to you by the Spirit of God, you can only receive it by the Spirit of God. God gets all the glory. The flesh profits nothing.

The first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans talks about what happens to those who hear God's voice but fail to thank and glorify Him for what God is saying. They go into darkness. God gives them what they want. They want darkness, so God gives them darkness. If they persist, God will give them enough darkness that they can't tell the difference between God's voice, human reasoning, or demon voices. That explains a lot of what you see going on around you.

Here's the point. Listen to God. Give Him the glory. Acknowledge His voice when He speaks. Yield to His Spirit so God says His words and does His acts through you.

Jesus authors our faith. He originates it. We don't. He also finishes or completes our faith. Notice how different this is from the make-believe faith skeptics call "belief without evidence."

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ~
Hebrews 12:2a King James Version

Faith is substance and evidence.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ~ Hebrews 11:1 King James Version

What Greek term was in the original text the King James translators rendered as "substance?" The Greek term is "hupostasis." What does "hupostasis" mean? It means essence. It means reality as opposed to a concept. Strong's, NAS, and Thayer's give us the following: a support, something with a firm foundation, substance, that which actually exists, steadiness of mind, or assurance.

What about "evidence?" What word is in the original text? The Greek word is "elegchos." Elegchos is absolute proof. Strong's, NAS, and Thayer's tell us it's a proof or a test. We shouldn't confuse this proof with the proof the courts use. In the courts, they might overturn a conviction when further evidence becomes available. Faith is the proof no one can overturn. This proof is real proof. It's absolute.

Therefore, real faith is absolute by nature. It's absolute proof. It's substance or reality. It's absolute and powerful because Jesus Christ originates it. Faith comes when we hear the voice of God through Scripture. God speaks to us through Scripture. Through Scripture, He tells us about other methods beyond Scripture by which He speaks to us. Faith also comes when He speaks to us through those methods. By faith, we know the Bible is the utterance of God without error. By faith, we know God never contradicts Himself. That means one Scripture never contradicts another Scripture. It also means no other form of revelation will ever conflict with any part of Scripture. For instance, God will never state one truth through Scripture and

contradict that truth by revealing something contradictory in His creation. True scientific observation will never conflict with Scripture.

God has a sequence of five keys in Scripture. God speaks. You hear. God's faith comes. God's faith gives access to God's grace. God's grace does God's works of righteousness through you as you yield the members of your body to his righteousness. When you yield to God to the point of obedience, you die to yourself to some degree as the Holy Spirit transforms you to some degree since you have permitted Him to do so by your submission to Him. I won't go into this any further at this point, but you can go to RealReality.org and download the free book: *"How God Will Transform You"* to get a better understanding of how God transforms you.

Real Reason

Real reason is also absolute. Real reason also goes beyond inductive reasoning, which can only speak of probabilities. It goes beyond the pragmatism of science, which never deals with truth but only with what appears to work in the natural realm. Real reason goes beyond opinion to absolute knowledge of the truth. However, the intellectuals have told us no one can know anything absolutely. "There are no absolutes." They discouraged us from seeking absolute truth.

Sound reason needs true premises because we can't use unproven claims to prove other claims. And yet, the secularists say sound reason doesn't need true premises. They say we can begin reasoning by establishing assumptions on which we agree. What are assumptions? They're unknown beliefs we accept as if they were true. They aren't known, but we pretend we know them. In a sense, we deceive ourselves when we assume. Assumptions are things we make up and then make ourselves believe.

Without true premises, our reasoning isn't sound. With inductive reasoning, we can only speak of probabilities. With true premises and valid deductive reasoning, we can advance to the knowledge of the truth. We can't know everything, but we can know some things with certainty.

The Connection between Real Faith and Real Reason

If we have to start our reasoning with assumptions or presuppositions, we can never go beyond opinions. Our reasoning will never be stronger than our assumptions. Since assumptions are unknowns, where does that leave us?

The real faith takes us beyond assumptions and presuppositions. It takes us to substance, truth, and absolute proof. The real faith can do this because it comes from the utterance of God. God brought the universe into existence by this utterance. The wonder is we can have this assurance and certainty right now. With that knowledge, we can reason rationally. We can have sound reasoning. We can know the truth and the truth will set us free.

A Word of Caution

The resurrected Christ directly taught Paul the apostle. Jesus Christ set Paul as an apostle.

For I certify to you, brothers, that the gospel I preached was not devised by man. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. ~ Galatians 1:11-12 Berean Study Bible

And yet, Paul did meet with those apostles Jesus set before him. God has an order. God's order is not one person on his or her own. It's not one superior person who receives the doctrine. It's not independent ministries. It's certainly not competitive ministries.

I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I spoke privately to those recognized as leaders, for fear that I was running or had already run in vain. ~ Galatians 2:2 Berean Study Bible

Independence

We know we need Jesus Christ. We must tangibly know Him. And yet, we need each other. We need the body of Christ. We need to be open

to correction. God speaks to us through other members of the body of Christ. And we'll explore how that works before we complete our journey. God warns us about the dangers of pride and independence through history.

In the Seventeenth Century, Roger Williams was a tragic case of a man with great zeal for God. He was intelligent and persuasive. To know him was to love him. He wanted to be obedient to God. Much of what he wrote was true. However, he felt no one could correct him. He made himself the center of His walk. He failed to discern the body of Christ. He saw the flesh in every brother and sister but didn't see the Christ within. He eventually found no one who met his standard for holiness. No one understood the Scripture as he did. In his mind, all of them fell short. No church was good enough for him. They were all hypocrites. Finally, God broke him and made him realize he didn't even meet his own standard. However, he still needed to show he was right. He never got over that. He was a man of God, but he hurt himself with his pride and self-righteousness.

During the same period, Anne Hutchinson felt she was the one set to receive true understanding of the Scripture. She failed to see Christ in her brothers and sisters. Rather than taking her place as one member in the body of Christ, she had to be the chief one to receive revelation from God. As is so common with those who wander into error, she gathered a following by her persuasive presentation style. She, like Williams, pointed out the failings of any other ministries. One way to build the biggest building is to tear down everyone else's buildings. If anyone questioned her, she would use her presentation skill to destroy them. She was a woman of God whose pride kept her from allowing God to correct her as God spoke to her through the body of Christ.

Joseph Smith considered his own ideas to be greater than Scripture. He proclaimed them to be revelations. They may even have been demonic. We won't go into the details of his life or his errors here since many have written books about that. Mary Baker Eddy thought God was showing her the errors in the Bible. These are just a few historical examples of this common human problem.

We've seen many cults. Most of them quote Scripture. We've also seen many teachers who teach mostly truth but a deadly or crippling error.

Every group of Christians is special in God's eyes. However, most groups think they're more special than others. Their doctrine or calling or something about them puts them head and shoulders above the others. Consider your own group for a moment. The leaven does work into the whole lump. We'll look into why this is dangerous before we complete our journey.

Partial Revelation

When God reveals anything to us, the revelation is partial. We know in part. And yet, we sense how special and precious that revelation is. Everyone who follows Christ experiences this. We need that personal experience with Christ.

Sometimes a follower of Christ will receive a revelation and be in awe of God and His truth. That Christ-follower wants to tell others. And that's right and good. However, pride can creep in. Those who receive revelations sometimes think the revelations are their personal property. They think the revelations need protection so they protect them. They may even try to build a personal kingdom on them. Also, the human mind fills in the blanks without conscious effort. The mind seeks closure. It seeks completeness, but the revelation is incomplete. Unless God reveals more, we must leave it alone.

God reveals reality line on line and precept on precept through Christ's body. We depend on the Spirit of Christ in our brothers and sisters. God speaks to one member and then another. However, any Christ-follower can stop the body of Christ from functioning properly. Then, no one can balance the revelation. The member may think this partial revelation is the complete revelation, so no one can add the missing parts.

As questions come up, the Christ-follower with the personal revelation may feel he or she must protect and defend the revelation. The Christ-follower may think the revelation is their property and a claim to fame. This member may feel obligated to think up answers to the questions other people are asking. How does this member answer the questions? How does this member fill in the gaps? Without the body of Christ to add balance, the member reaches into his or her imagination to answer the questions.

How Can We Stay Safe?

God has given us many ways to stay safe and yet make progress with Him.

Here are some safety nets:

- The Bible
- The Holy Spirit to teach us
- The Scriptural pattern of the body of Christ
- Submission to the Holy Spirit
- Submission to each other

The Bible is a safety net. It's an anchor that holds us securely. However, that's not enough. We can easily get off course in our understanding of Scripture. We need the Holy Spirit. We need each other.

Here are some common problems:

- Pride
- Independence from the body of Christ
- Dependence on the human mind to understand the Bible
- Following a doctrine rather than Christ
- Following an organization rather than Christ
- Following a person rather than Christ
- Failure to see the body of Christ and to realize what it is
- Concentrating on the flesh rather than seeing Christ in our brothers and sisters
- Inability to receive correction

I sense God showing me it's not about me. He wants people to know they can know Him. He will call them. I'm just one member of the body of Christ. Others have the same Lord Jesus Christ and will complete what's lacking in me.

Here's the good news. Jesus knows your heart. Even if you slip, He knows whether you sincerely want Him and His righteousness. He hasn't given us the spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.
(2 Timothy 1:7)

Remaining Open-Minded and Humble is Rational

On our journey, we'll allow the Holy Spirit to examine our beliefs, even if reluctantly, as He shows us ways to make sure we're on solid ground. He'll explain how deception works and expose how people trick us. But what's harder to accept is when He uncovers the way we're deceiving ourselves.

It's easier to fool people than to convince them they have been fooled. ~ Mark Twain

When God exposes our self-deceptions, it makes us uncomfortable. However, unpleasant as it is, He helps us better understand why we confuse our thinking when we're trying hard to be reasonable. As we travel along, we'll learn how we can know what we believe is true, how to have real proof, and how to avoid the illusion of proof when no proof exists. We'll also better understand how to remain humble and teachable. We'll learn how to avoid pride and the attitude of dogmatism that won't let even the Holy Spirit correct us. We'll evaluate everything.

The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone.^{2T} ~ 1
Corinthians 2:15 Holman Christian Standard Bible

Truth is simple, but lies are complex. In other words, we would find it easy to understand the truth if lies didn't hide the truth as a thick curtain blocks out light. How did we build our beliefs? If we built them on untruth, on made-up stuff, they self-destruct when God exposes them to light. In a moment, they implode unless we block the light. So we sometimes fight the light since we don't like our world shaken this way. In these moments of unveiling revelation, we weren't aware of any problem with our made-up stuff, and we didn't particularly want it fixed. We didn't think our made-up stuff was made-up stuff. However, when we opened our minds to God's leading, He began to demolish the strongholds in our minds. He began shaking everything built on made-up stuff. If we walk in the Spirit, we experience this shaking. If we walk in the Spirit, God shakes us sometimes since God is shaking made-up stuff that can be shaken

so realities that can't be shaken remain. There's a whole lotta shakin' goin' on.

On our journey, we'll uncover the secret of knowing whether claims are true or false. And even though we know little, we can be sure of what we know.

Wisdom and Reality

With age comes wisdom, but sometimes age comes alone.
~ Oscar Wilde

Why should age bring wisdom? Postmodernism claims experience is of no value based on its other claim that no such things as truth, error, right, or wrong exist. We'll travel down this road and find different types of wisdom exist. For example, we learn what works by experience. The pain from our mistakes will often keep us from repeating the same mistakes. We gain skills. We form good habits. We kick bad habits. However, God has wisdom that exceeds other types of wisdom. There's no comparison.

A mocker searches for wisdom without finding it, but knowledge comes easily to a person who has understanding. ~ Proverbs 14:6 God's Word Translation

Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding—God reveals these three through this Scripture as He tells us an arrogant person tries to get wisdom but can't find it. However, knowledge comes easily for those who understand. What then does it mean to understand?

Understanding and Discerning

And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. ~ Job 28:28 Authorized Version

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. ~ Proverbs 9:10 Authorized Version

The Hebrew word “biynah” means both “understanding” and “discernment.” To depart from evil is understanding or discernment. The knowledge of the holy is understanding or discernment. If we understand, we know the difference between the holy and the evil. We discern the difference between truth and lies. We understand lies are evil and we depart from them and their fruit.

Sound reasoning discerns between truth and lies, but unsound reasoning makes truth appear untrue, and it makes untruth appear true. Since unsound reasoning is often complicated and confused, it makes truth seem difficult. From Job 28:28, we see understanding is turning away from evil, so as we continue on this journey, we’ll need to explore why turning from evil makes knowledge easy.

The hardest part is discerning good from evil, truth from error, or reality from concepts. And though we may feel unsure of this difference sometimes, God makes us confident that He’ll oversee our entire journey to the end. And even if we have only a vague understanding of this certainty, as we walk with Him, we see the vision becoming a bit more stable and defined. And He’s faithful to finish the work He started in us.

Understanding makes knowledge easy. If we can judge the difference between reality and made-up stuff and turn from evil, we have the key to understanding since sound reasoning judges between reality and made-up stuff. However, unsound reasoning can’t tell the difference between the two.

The mind of a discerning person gains knowledge, while
the ears of wise people seek out knowledge. ~ Proverbs
18:15 International Standard Version

Truth exists, but we must discern between truth and untruth. If we can discern, we gain precise, accurate, and certain knowledge of truth. Truth is reality. It’s what’s real. Still, we make mistakes. We think God said such and so, and then we find out we’re wrong. Satan says, “See, you can’t know anything for certain. You can’t even know Jesus leads you. You can’t know He exists.” However, the Holy Spirit speaks from within saying, “That’s a lie. I’m right here with you, and I’ll never leave you nor forsake you.”

We'll explore all about discernment. Here's what we'll find. All discernment comes from the Lord. The fallen human mind has no capacity for discernment of whether revelation comes from God or some other source. No trick of the human intellect is helpful. We must ask God for discernment. God has promised He'll provide discernment. Our discernment grows as we continue to yield to the Holy Spirit since the fleshly nature dies to some extent and Christ within us is built up each time we yield. In other words, spiritual maturity produces discernment. However, spiritual maturity isn't instant. We become mature as we submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptural pattern of the church is designed for safety. And we're growing to the fullness of Christ, so we need to pray God restores that pattern of Scripture.

He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. ~ Psalm 23:3 New Heart English Bible

He restores our souls. "Soul" means "mind" or "life." He restores our minds. He lives within and continues to build us up in Him. He continues to put the flesh to death. So if we focus on Him, He'll be faithful to complete the work in us despite our flaws. We must listen to His voice and not to the voice of Satan since we can't deal with reality unless we know the truth. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us have righteous, godly thoughts. We ask Him to restore our minds and lead us into the paths of righteousness. Righteousness comes from Him, and He'll give us righteousness if we ask Him for it. Then, He'll speak to us. And we'll listen to His voice because He gives us a will to listen to His voice and to yield to Him. He softens our hearts before Him.

If it depended on us, we would be lost. It depends on God. God knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for Him. God knows how to give us discernment. God knows how to communicate clearly. Only when we follow our own desires do we become confused.

We need never shout across the spaces to an absent God. He is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts ~ A.W. Tozer

We'll also explore how to tell the difference between truth and lies. If we can't know the difference between reality and lies, we're subject to the manipulators of the world.

Without truth, there is only manipulation. ~ Dr. Os Guinness

Why does Dr. Guinness say manipulation is the only alternative to truth? Perhaps he might be thinking if no objective truth exists, no right or wrong could exist. If we couldn't know reality, we couldn't tell right from wrong. Then everything would be relative. For those who follow post-modernism and relativism, winning is the only goal, and they use power to win. This power comes from politicking, deception, intimidation, or force. These tactics are manipulations, so without truth, there's only manipulation.

As followers of Christ, we don't want to be manipulators, and we surely don't want to be manipulated. Manipulative, self-serving wisdom comes from evil. However, we can have another form of wisdom. We can have wisdom that flows with love and goodness. So we want to understand the difference between the two types of wisdom Apostle James mentioned.

Who is wise and understanding among you; let him show his works out of the good conduct, in the humility of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and self-interest in your heart, do not boast of it and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and self-interest exist, there will be disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is indeed first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and of good fruits, impartial, sincere. ~ James 3:13-17 Berean Literal Bible

Looking at this Scripture, we want to avoid demonic wisdom, and we want to have more Godly wisdom. Godly wisdom is the true wisdom. It's the wisdom from above. We'll learn that this wisdom is a person. This wisdom is the person of Jesus Christ. This wisdom isn't something you carry around or store in a cistern. This wisdom flows. It's a flowing fountain we renew moment by moment by seeking Christ and yielding to His Spirit.

Dr. Lisle's Challenge

Dr. Jason Lisle spoke about the ultimate proof of Creation. He said something that shocked me when I heard it:

If the Bible were not true, it would be impossible to prove anything because the Bible alone makes sense of those things that are necessary for knowledge. There are certain things that have to be already true in order for you to have knowledge. Consider the reliability of your senses. You really couldn't learn much about the universe if your senses were not reliable. ~ Jason Lisle, *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*

Dr. Lisle also made another absolute claim:

Only the fear of the Lord leads to knowledge.

At first, Dr. Lisle's statement seemed extreme to me. I considered it an exaggeration for a while because I had trouble understanding how it could be true. Now I understand. No one can know anything except by knowing Someone Who knows all things and Who can't lie. And that Person must also reveal the knowledge. Only God meets this requirement. Therefore, only God can reveal knowledge. True knowledge is alive with God's Spirit, so even revealed knowledge goes dead if we don't allow God's Spirit to flow. Only the fear of the Lord leads to knowledge.

not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ~ 2 Corinthians 3:6b Berean Study Bible

We know the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Even though the Holy Spirit infuses the Bible with Himself, a mind closed to the Holy Spirit won't receive anything from the Bible. A Bible will do no good to a thinker who doesn't in any way want God or His righteousness.

Still, many have read the Bible intending to ridicule the Bible, but the Holy Spirit touched them. And they responded by opening their minds to God and coming to know Jesus Christ. In these cases, God miraculously touched them and softened their hard hearts, so they

began to have precise and correct knowledge of truth for the first time in their lives.

and filled with the full riches of complete understanding, so that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. ~ Colossians 2:2b-3 Berean Study Bible

This passage speaks of knowledge, but is clearer in the original language:

all precise and correct knowledge is hidden in Christ.

We can see that *God the Father has hidden* this knowledge, and this knowledge is *precise and correct*. Mystery is whatever God the Father has hidden. And the Father has hidden all knowledge and understanding in Christ. He delights in those who humble themselves to seek Him and receive this knowledge from Him. But He's disgusted with those who follow a vision out of their evil hearts and who lean on their fallen natural minds.

The fall into sin twisted and distorted human imagination and everything else. We often use our imaginations to create visions out of our own hearts. However, God has a heavenly vision He creates by faith. Faith comes when we listen to His voice guiding, leading, teaching, and correcting us moment by moment. When faith comes, it brings a vision. That vision shows us several parts of reality.

- who we are in Christ
- what is and isn't part of the body of Christ
- how we fit into the body of Christ
- what we are to do right now as a member of the body of Christ

And yet, we don't hear God as we ought to hear Him since the roughness of life has hardened us against God. People have hurt us in many ways, wounding us so deeply we haven't been able to forgive. Unforgiveness has hardened our hearts with bitterness. The manipulators have persuaded us to enter into various sins, and those sins have built a wall of separation between our God and us. They've convinced us of doctrines that added to God's words or diminished God's words and deceived us so we can only hear those twisted

doctrines when He speaks. The culture blinds us with the philosophy of naturalism, which convinces us God can't speak or move. Our spiritual ears have trouble hearing God's voice. The manipulators have told us we don't need God to reason. They told us our minds have a magic power to get knowledge that goes beyond what we can observe. They try to convince us we can rationalize beyond our observations without the benefit of divine revelation. Of course, we can rationalize beyond our observations, but we aren't thinking sanely when we do.

Most Christians don't hear God's voice because we've already decided we aren't going to do what He says. ~ A. W. Tozer

And yet, if a Christian is a follower of Christ, following implies He's leading us. And we know all people hear God's voice as He reveals Himself to them in various ways. However, it may be more accurate to say we often disregard His voice because we don't like the righteousness and death of the fleshly nature into which He is leading us. It may also be we don't want to admit our dependence on Him. We may have pride in our own abilities.

We can't be rational when we separate ourselves from God. We depend on God for thinking. We depend on God for reason. That's one of the truths I had trouble accepting. I don't know if it was my pride, or perhaps I had a fleshly desire for independence from God. It may have just been the culture brainwashing my mind. God had to show me I'll never really know Him as long as my carnal mind determines my destiny and my future since the rebellious human nature fights the Holy Spirit. In the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three* we'll look into many of the endless arguments people use to escape from acknowledging Him in all their ways. However, we have several trips to take between now and then.

All knowledge is hidden in Christ. That's the point of this journey. His personal leading and teaching is the only source of truth. Without Him, assumption is all we have. Without Him, all we have left is making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff true.

Dr. Lisle is correct. "Only the fear of the Lord leads to knowledge." Everything else leads only to opinion. Since Dr. Lisle's conclusion is

obvious and every person should know it, why doesn't every school teach this vital fact?

Dr. Lisle said, "If the Bible were not true, it would be impossible to prove anything." He's correct again since God reveals what's necessary for knowledge through the Bible. God is continually revealing reality to us through Scripture and every means He mentions in Scripture. He also reveals He never conflicts with Himself, so no revelation in Scripture will conflict with any other revelation in Scripture. And no revelation through His creation, prophecy, personal leading, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, or any other form of revelation will ever conflict with Scripture.

Simplicity in Christ

If we're following Christ, He's leading us. Sometimes we aren't aware of this leading. We sense a certain action is wrong. We sense another action is right. We know right from wrong without reciting the Ten Commandments, but we might not associate this sense with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been leading us, and we've been obeying, but we haven't been aware. When someone claims we can't trust the Bible, that doesn't ring true to us. It's as if we're hearing another voice telling us the Bible is God's word without error. And we are hearing another voice. It's the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us through our intuition. When we read the Bible, it seems God is speaking to us directly. And He is. We don't always recognize these experiences as interactions with God. But even though we're sometimes a bit thick-headed, God loves us and keeps leading us. He wants us to become more aware of Him and more thankful.

Only God can reveal knowledge and bypass the deceitful fallen human mind, but we must cooperate willingly and choose to yield our minds to the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. And yet we need no extraordinary talent or effort—we just need to stop resisting Him. We need to desire to do His will, but He even supplies the power both to will and to do His good pleasure.

Therefore, we can't be rational or live a victorious life separate from Jesus Christ. Without Christ, even vast amounts of money wouldn't make us successful. Not even the head of a large Christian organization could move forward spiritually without acknowledging

Christ. If we fail to honor Christ, we slowly lose the ability to know the difference between our own deceitful and wicked minds and the mind of Christ. For when we follow Him, the things of earth become strangely dim to us in the light of His glory and grace. But if we don't follow Christ, the voice of Christ becomes strangely dim to us, and the things of earth fill our vision. By the way, many things of earth are religious.

having a form of godliness but denying its power. And turn away from these. ~ 2 Timothy 3:5 Berean Literal Bible

Without divine presence, revelation, wisdom, and knowledge, sound decision-making and sound reasoning aren't possible. That's a radical thought, but is it true?

[Christ,] in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. ~ Colossians 2:3 Berean Literal Bible

In reading this verse, we ask whether the word "all" means all in the way it's written. For instance, we might interpret Scripture by saying the word "all" excludes natural science or excludes some other part of reality. And we might ask the Holy Spirit, "Could it be God didn't really mean the human mind is deceitful and desperately wicked?"

These questions bring up issues like technology. If we can't know anything without Christ, what about the ungodly scientists who develop technology we use? They had to know something to develop that technology. We'll explore whether we're capable of knowledge without Christ as we continue on this journey. The answer may be a surprise.

Caving to Intimidation is Irrational

We want to think for ourselves. We want to keep an open mind to sound reasoning. We don't want to yield to society's groupthink. We don't want to allow the world to squeeze us into its mold. Professor Robert George of Princeton, who's a politically conservative Catholic, wrote a letter opposing the groupthink often prevalent in universities. When Tucker Carlson interviewed him on Fox News, the professor made some excellent points:

You should be pursuing the truth. That's what being in college is all about. It's about learning to pursue the truth, and it's about learning to be a life-long truth-seeker.

He went on to say,

You cannot seek the truth if you're a conformist, if you're an ideologue, if you're a dogmatist. You need an open mind and a willingness to consider the very best arguments to be made on competing sides of questions, and then make up your mind for yourself based on the weight of evidence and reason.

Thinking for yourself means questioning dominant ideas even when others insist on their being treated as unquestionable. It means deciding what one believes, not by conforming to fashionable opinions, but by taking the trouble to learn and honestly consider the strongest arguments to be advanced on both or all sides of questions—including arguments for positions that others revile and want to stigmatize and against positions others seek to immunize from critical scrutiny.

That was good, but we might question what Professor George said next about shutting down conversations and using Scripture as an authority:

Epithets like "bigotry" are used all too often to shut down debate. It's the equivalent of saying, "This conversation is over because the Bible says." Well, you can't continue to have a conversation if someone is going to use a conversation-stopper. And just as we would accuse someone who tries to shut down conversation by saying, "The Bible says," of being a fundamentalist, all too often, we have secular fundamentalists today, people who, because of their beliefs about same-sex marriage, or abortion, or immigration—it doesn't matter—they want to shut down debate and discussion by calling the other guys names. . . . Don't fall for it. Don't put up with it. Certainly, don't practice it. Don't allow yourselves to be intimidated

and bullied by those who do practice it. They are the real bigots.

Professor George is a Christian, but part of what he said shows how easily an irrational thought can creep into our thinking even when we're trying to be rational, fair, and balanced. It seems he feels citing the Bible shuts down conversation. Should we only avoid the authority of the Bible? Why not other authorities? Why not avoid the authority of scientists? How about the opinions of experts or intellectuals? How about books other than the Bible?

If quoting Scripture stops conversations, does citing scientific research stop conversations? Does quoting experts or intellectuals stop conversations? Do we stop the conversation if we mention something written in a textbook? If these aren't conversation-stoppers, why does Professor George create a special case for the Bible?

And then, he spoke of epithets. He spoke of bullying. He spoke of intimidation. And yet, he used an epithet. He did a little bullying to intimidate certain people. Unfortunately, he used the word "fundamentalist" as an epithet, which is exactly the form of conversation-stopper he's condemning.

Christians made the mistake of cowering to this kind of bullying. Christ tells us to tell others about Him. He tells us to have a strong relationship with Him and to tell others about that relationship. The world tells us to keep our mouths shut. We can only talk about what they tell us we can talk about. We have allowed ourselves to be intimidated and bullied.

"Fundamentalist" is a word coined initially by Christians who, by listing the fundamental doctrines all Christians believe, were trying to unify Christianity. However, ungodly thinkers hijacked this word and gave it a negative meaning. They changed it to mean "a violent or opinionated person who's irrational," but Christians didn't originally define it like that. Professor George's statements about the Bible and Fundamentalists seem to conflict with his other statements. He talked about not shutting down discussions or calling the other guys names. Then, he shut down discussion about the Bible and called the name "fundamentalist." He probably was unaware of what he had done.

If we recognize a legitimate authority, is that wrong? If we know something with enough certainty to end debate, is that wrong? It's unlikely Professor George is promoting a dogmatic belief in relativism, but we can't tell that from what he said.

In Professor George's example, he objected to using the Bible as a conversation-stopper, and Christians do that sometimes. He may be thinking of some of those specific instances. Professor George gave two examples and implied they are equal. They aren't equal.

The first statement:

This conversation is over because the Bible says.

The second statement:

The Bible says.

Those are the two statements Professor George mentioned. The first one ends a conversation. The second one begins a conversation. However, some people hate the Bible so much they would end a conversation if anyone even mentioned the Bible. Here's the context of what Professor George said.

we would accuse someone who tries to shut down conversation by saying, "The Bible says," of being a fundamentalist

We would accuse? Think about that. A crime has been committed. We have to accuse that person. Let's call them a name. Let's call them "fundamentalist." Why does saying, "The Bible says," shut down a conversation? Can we discuss our reasons for using the Bible as an authority? Can we discuss our understanding of what God is saying through the Bible? Or did those who fear the Bible stop that conversation?

We should be able to say why the Bible has authority. That's true. We can indeed quote Scripture and shut down debate by refusing to give a sound reason Scripture is authoritative. Christians sometimes do that. However, Scripture-deniers often shut down the discussion by insisting, without proof, that Scripture lacks authority. They might say, "This conversation is over if you insist the Bible is authoritative." They may argue against the Bible irrationally. Irrational arguments

lack true premises and valid form. Alternatively, they may say, “You can’t quote Scripture since I don’t believe the Bible.” Or they may say, “I don’t need to have a reason for rejecting Scripture since you have the burden of proof.” Such conversation-stoppers use many fallacious excuses against Scripture while accepting other sources as authoritative without sound reasons for the double standard. Christians need to know why the Bible is authoritative. Everyone is responsible to reason from true premises without using any fallacies.

Some people have selected Scripture for special treatment in this way, so we’ll deal with this double standard on our journey. And we’ll also show why we don’t commit a fallacy when we use Scripture as our authority. Of course, we have to know how it gets its authority, and we can’t use irrational arguments to prove the authority of Scripture. We have to know how we know.

Also, we’ll discover why no ungodly argument against Jesus Christ or the Bible can be rational, so we never need to shut down a sincere conversation. For instance, if we use materialism and naturalism to defend the Bible, we’re just expressing our opinions. All materialistic and naturalistic reasoning is mere opinion. We’ll explain the problem of materialistic and naturalistic rationale on this journey. This journey will also discover the only rational explanation for using the Bible as an authority. In the meantime, we won’t let ungodly thinkers intimidate us.

Apologetics

Our journey isn’t about apologetics. And yet it does touch on apologetics. We’ll look into a few quotes from across the Christian spectrum of opinions on the subject.

Apologetics may be simply defined as the defense of the Christian faith. The simplicity of this definition, however, masks the complexity of the problem of defining apologetics. It turns out that a diversity of approaches has been taken to defining the meaning, scope, and purpose of apologetics. ~ Bible.org, *What is Apologetics*

Although our journey isn’t a journey to apologetics, we should be thankful for the work apologists do. And all who follow Christ should

be ready to give a rational response when someone asks us about Christ Who lives in us. This journey connects to apologetics in many ways. Our journey is about knowing with certainty God is real, Christ is real, and the Bible is the word of God without error. It's about knowing what God has revealed is true. It's about discerning truth from error. Those are what apologetics defends and explains.

The Value of Every Form of Apologetics

Classical apologetics attempts to use reason and logic to defend the Christian faith. Here are some examples:

- the cosmological argument
- the teleological argument
- the moral argument
- the ontological argument

Experiential apologetics gives testimonies of the ways Christ has acted and worked through the experiences of those who follow Christ. Presuppositional apologetics points out all worldviews base their positions on presuppositions. It then seeks to show Christianity is more consistent than other worldviews. Cumulative apologetics combines all forms of apologetics.

Apologists point out that we do not have to put our minds out to pasture in order to be Christians. Indeed, some of the greatest thinkers and scientists throughout history have been Bible believers, and many have been biblical creationists. Wisdom begins with God (Prov. 1:7); all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ (Col. 2:3), not with man's philosophies (1 Cor. 1:20). Proponents of evidential or classical apologetics (the differences are negligible for our purpose here) wish to present a wagon train-load of evidence with the hope that the unbeliever will come to repentance. ~ Cowboy Bob Sorenson, *Honoring God in your apologetics*

Sometimes, apologetics gets lost in theories. Skeptics can drag apologists down into the weeds until no one can understand the issues. Some apologists struggle with even the concept of a real Jesus Who communicates with His people in real time. Of course, living in a

naturalistic, godless society, we all struggle with that. We struggle even when we experience His daily leading.

Keeping God in Your Apologetics

While every form of apologetics has value, not every apologist does the work of God. Not every apologist pleases God. Not every apologist effectively brings the unsaved to Christ. It's easy for an apologist to lose touch with Christ while trying to make a defense. We can never go wrong by focusing on the living Christ.

Thus, it is appropriate to argue against evolutionary theories by pointing out that they are based on presuppositions. However, we should not allow ourselves to be cornered into accepting that the case for the truth of the Bible is also based upon presuppositions. ~ Tim Newton, *Must We Presuppose the Truth of the Bible*

We don't use presuppositions to prove the Bible is true. We don't use presuppositions as proof Jesus Christ is real or as proof God is real. We have a firm Foundation. "No other Foundation can be laid than the one that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." We dare not lay a different foundation.

The problem with the debate between presuppositionalists and evidentialists is that both sides tacitly admit there is no evidence for God. Presuppositionalists make the subjective argument that they can see the reasons for presupposing the existence of God, but unbelievers cannot. Evidentialists argue objectively from the evidence they think secularists will accept. However, neither side acknowledges the Bible as evidence. ~ Tim Newton, *Must We Presuppose the Truth of the Bible*

The Way of the Master follows a different form of apologetics. It mostly ignores the pseudo-scientific arguments and pseudo-philosophic arguments. It concentrates on revelation from Scripture and the burden of sin. God says everyone knows He exists because He reveals Himself to them. God says everyone is aware of sin. The Way of the master uses that knowledge to reason with disbelievers.

Forgetting the Goal

Apologetics isn't about winning. It's about bringing people to Christ and helping Christians to know why arguments against Christ or the Bible are irrational. However, some think apologetics is about winning and building their egos. As we look at postings on apologetics sites, we see some people boasting of their debate skill or their knowledge of science. Often, these great debaters are great at attacking others. They attack brothers and sisters in Christ with the same zeal as when they attack atheists. Regardless of who they attack, they refuse to follow the Holy Spirit. They are as spiritual as the braggart with his drinking buddies at the local bar. Many of them spend as much time criticizing people like Ken Ham, Jason Lisle, or Ray Comfort as they do bragging about one or another of their great debates.

In all this wrangling about “the best way,” I don't see any metrics. How many people are these great debaters bringing to Christ? I ask, but I never get an answer. Here's the way that conversation goes.

Self-Promoting Apologist: I'm so great. Everyone should be like me.

Me: When you talk to people, about what percentage come to Christ.

Self-Promoting Apologist: That's tricky to tell. Let me blviate about my greatness for a while. . . .

Me: That's interesting. Do you have any idea of how many come to Christ after you talk to them?

Self-Promoting Apologist: I don't think we should concentrate on that. What's important is that we sow the seed. Let me blviate about my greatness for a while. . . .

Sometimes, I wonder what kind of seed these apologists are sowing. I hope they're sowing Jesus Christ. I hope they're speaking as the oracles of God. Maybe they only speak those words that come from the mouth of God. I pray they do.

Starting from the Right Foundation

True apologetics starts as we purify the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts. We need to learn to listen intently to the voice of God and to move at His leading. He wants us to say only His words and do only His acts. He wants to be the wisdom and power within us doing the work. We can't add to His work from our poor abilities without polluting His work.

While we don't want to debate which of the many methods of apologetics is best, we do know God wants every follower of Christ to testify of Jesus Christ. Our journey will go into considerable depth on that topic. And those who love apologetics will find great value on this journey as well.

Let's pray.

Lord, please make my heart tender toward You so I can hear Your voice and have confidence in Your leading when You call me to testify of You. Whether I'm testifying to the lost or building up those who are born again, keep me in Your will. Give me the words to say and let Your Holy Spirit abide in my words. Thank you, Lord, for Your goodness in these matters. I trust You. I believe You'll open doors of opportunity and guide me and give me the power to be Your ambassador. Amen.



Trip 3: Why Risk a Journey?

Since God has assured us of salvation through Christ, why risk a journey rather than doing everything to protect what we already have and keep it safe? The value of this journey may seem obvious, but we should consider whether it's worth it.

Jesus gives us the answer, and then Satan also has an opinion. Working to deceive us, Satan may tell us we ought to succumb to fear and stop responding to the Holy Spirit's leading. Satan tells us to just hang on to what we've got because where we are is just fine, and we don't need to press toward God's goal. He even says if we progress away from God, we won't suffer consequences. Satan works through our fallen minds and the fallen minds of others, and Satan's deception results in many confusing voices promising peace, fulfillment, a better world, relevance, and many false promises. However, those voices lie.

Stress comes when we allow the many voices in life to drown out the only voice that really matters, the voice of God. ~ Mary Southerland

We'll now consider two types of Christianity: conservative Christianity and progressive Christianity. Of course, if we define "conservative" and "progressive" falsely, we find neither choice is a good choice since both take us away from where we want to be. However, we aren't interested in distorted definitions of "progressing" and "conserving," since God both progresses and conserves for good and not for evil.

To better understand the issue, we ask whether God is conservative or progressive, but definitions matter. We could define "conservatism" as conserving what's good, and we could define "progressivism" as

making spiritual progress. On the other hand, we could define “conservatism” as lacking spiritual progress and “progressivism” as progressing away from God. So depending on how we define these words, we get different answers to our questions.

What Scripture Says About Conserving

This is what the LORD says: “Stand beside the roads and watch. *Ask for the ancient paths*, where the good way is. Walk in it and find rest for yourselves. But they said, ‘We won’t walk in it!’ ~ Jeremiah 6:16 International Standard Version

Do not add or subtract a thing to what I’m commanding you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God. ~ Deuteronomy 4:2 International Standard Version

Anyone who runs ahead without remaining in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever remains in His teaching has both the Father and the Son. ~ 2 John 9 Berean Study Bible

I am amazed that so quickly you are deserting from the One having called you in the grace of Christ *to another gospel*, which is not another, except there are some who are troubling you and are *desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ*. But *even if we or an angel out of heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let him be accursed!* As we have said before, even now I say again: If anyone is preaching a gospel to you contrary to what you received, let him be accursed! ~ Galatians 1:6-9 Berean Literal Bible

who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly, as Moses was divinely instructed, being about to complete the tabernacle. For He says, “*See that you shall make all things according to the pattern* having been shown you in the mountain.” ~ Hebrews 8:5 Berean Literal Bible

“Because *I the LORD don’t change*; therefore you children of Jacob aren’t destroyed.” ~ Malachi 3:6 International Standard Version

God is not a human male— he doesn't lie, nor is he a human being— he never vacillates. Once he speaks up, he's going to act, isn't he? Once he makes a promise, he'll fulfill it, won't he? ~ Numbers 23:19 International Standard Version

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and to the ages. ~ Hebrews 13:8 Berean Literal Bible

Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, *with whom there is no variation or shadow of shifting.* ~ James 1:17 Berean Literal Bible

However, conservatism can be a problem if we define “conservative” wrongly.

Distortions:

- “Conservative” can mean reliance on traditions of the past.
- “Conservative” can mean conserving the current worldview, theology, or opinion.
- “Conservative” can mean claiming to believe Scripture but actually believing a certain *interpretation* of Scripture.
- “Conservatism” can mean having a form of religion but denying God's power and authority in our lives. (2 Timothy 3:5)
- “Conservatism” can mean traditional, anti-bible orders for the home, marriage, or the Church.
- “Conservatism” can mean denying all parts of Scripture we haven't been able to apply to our own lives.
- “Conservatism” can mean denying all parts of Scripture we haven't yet understood.
- “Conservatism” can mean lukewarm Christianity or being at ease in Zion. (Revelation 3:16, Amos 6:1a)

If we define “conservative” these ways, then it’s not good to be conservative.

God wants us to follow His ways. God doesn’t change. However, if we become mired in the clay of traditions and bankrupt religiosity not seen in the pattern of Scripture, then we reject Christ’s lordship over our lives.

And He said to them, “Because of this, every scribe having been discipled into the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a master of a house, *who puts forth out of his treasure new and old.*” ~ Matthew 13:52 Berean Literal Bible

Not surprisingly, both old and new are necessary. Since our hearts are soft toward God, we’re willing to follow God where He leads, but, at the same time, we’re careful to follow God rather than following a false prophet or false teacher.

I commit to you this charge, Timothy, my child, according to the prophecies going before as to you, that by them you might wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having cast away, *have caused a shipwreck concerning the faith,* ~ 1 Timothy 1:19 Berean Literal Bible

Do not be negligent of the gift in you which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood. ~ 1 Timothy 4:14 Berean Literal Bible

For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ~ 2 Timothy 1:6 Berean Literal Bible

When the body of elders laid hands on him and prophesied over him, Timothy received spiritual gifts to wage a good warfare in the battles he would face. And Paul told him to hold faith and a good conscience. Then he said those who cast away the power of the Spirit, faith, and a good conscience caused a shipwreck. Predictably, we see a “shipwreck” in those who try to war a good warfare by the power of the flesh rather than the power of the Spirit.

Remembering the parable Jesus told about making progress, we see one man who let fear keep him from making progress.

For it is just like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted them with his possessions. To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent—each according to his own ability. And he promptly went on his journey. ~ Matthew 25:14-15 Berean Study Bible

Being faithful, two of the men made progress. They invested what they received, got a return for the Master, and received more responsibility as a reward. But look what happened to the one who succumbed to fear.

Finally, the servant who had received one talent came and said, ‘Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. *So in my fear, I went and hid your talent in the ground.* See, you have what belongs to you.’ ‘*You wicked, lazy servant!*’ replied his master. ‘You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and *on my return I would have received it back with interest.* Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to the one having the ten talents. ~ Matthew 25:24-28 Berean Study Bible

So God isn’t looking for the form of conservatism that buries God’s gifts and makes no increase. Rather, we don’t let fear rule over us since we have no fear of losing the gift God gave us through Christ if we’re walking in the Spirit.

What Scripture Says About Progressing

God isn’t looking for negative progress.

But evil men and imposters will advance to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ~ 2 Timothy 3:13 Berean Literal Bible

They advance to worse and progress toward wickedness, yet God is looking for a different form of progress and maturity as these Scriptures state:

And we all having been unveiled in face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, *from glory to glory*, even as from the Lord, the Spirit. ~ 2 Corinthians 3:18 Berean Literal Bible

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*, as it has been written: “And the righteous will live by faith.” ~ Romans 1:17 Berean Literal Bible

to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, so that I may somehow attain to the resurrection from the dead. Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing indeed: Forgetting the things behind and *reaching forward to the things ahead*, Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been perfected, but *I press on to take hold* of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call* of God in Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 3:10-14 Berean Literal Bible

Now I say, *walk by the Spirit*, and you should not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are opposed to one another in order that you should not do those things you might wish. But if you are *led by the Spirit*, you are not under the Law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, contentions, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkennesses, carousing, and things like these, as to which I forewarn you, even as I warned before, that those doing such things will not inherit God’s kingdom. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:16-23 Berean Literal Bible

And this is love, that *we should walk according to His commandments*. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that *you should walk* in it. ~ 2 John 1:6 Berean Literal Bible

“Because *all of the people will walk*, each person in the name of his God, and *we will walk* in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. ~ Micah 4:5 International Standard Version

Therefore Jesus said to them, “Yet a little while, the light is with you. *Walk while you have the light*, so that darkness might not overtake you. And the one walking in the darkness does not know where he is going. ~ John 12:35 Berean Literal Bible

My children, of whom I travail again until that *Christ shall have been formed in you*, ~ Galatians 4:19 Berean Literal Bible

Therefore having these promises, beloved, we should cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of God. ~ 2 Corinthians 7:1 Berean Literal Bible

But now, having been set free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have *your fruit unto sanctification, and the end is eternal life*. ~ Romans 6:22 Berean Literal Bible

But *grow in grace and in knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. ~ 2 Peter 3:18 Berean Literal Bible

And we know that God works together all things for good to those loving God, to those being called *according to His purpose* because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be conformed to the image of His Son*, for Him to be firstborn among many brothers. ~ Romans 8:28-29 Berean Literal Bible

And He gave some indeed to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, *toward the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all may attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a complete man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*, so that no longer we might be infants, being tossed by waves and being carried about by every wind of teaching in the cunning, in the craftiness of men with a view to the scheming of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, *we should grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ*, ~ Ephesians 4:11-15 Berean Literal Bible

“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, to those who rest on the mountain of Samaria— the famous men of the nations to whom the house of Israel came! ~ Amos 6:1 International Standard Version

As we read these Scriptures, we hear God speak to us of various kinds of spiritual progress. We see this progress has to do with spiritual maturity, dying to our fleshly nature, and having Christ formed in us. And we make this progress by walking in the Spirit, not by working hard to fulfill the Law. So if we walk, we make progress. We shouldn't be like mimes who create an illusion of walking as they walk in place while not going anywhere. Well, mimes create this illusion, but if we're honest as Christians, we'll admit we sometimes stay in the same place while giving the illusion of walking in the Spirit. And as we walk in circles, we're busy with religion, but we aren't going anywhere.

To bring about His good purpose, God wants us to progress toward maturity in Him. However, our progress forms Christ in us (Galatians 4:19) and demolishes the fleshly nature. If we don't do that, we re-crucify Christ in us and glorify and cater to the fleshly nature.

Therefore, having left the beginning teaching of the Christ, we should *go on to maturity*, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith in God ~ Hebrews 6:1 Berean Literal Bible

In conflict with this good progress, the other form of progressivism continues to work its puffed-up leaven into the Church. Deceptively, this philosophy uses the word “progress,” but it progresses away from God. In this sense, “progressive” can mean unholy things. Consider the following statement a progressive theologian wrote.

God didn’t write the Bible. . . . not a few of the verses within some of those books contain bad theology that reflect pagan influences of the cultures that surrounded those ancient peoples.

What authority is this progressive theologian using for his theology when he thinks his theology is greater than Scripture? He can’t be using Scripture. What, then, is his authority?

Some who call themselves “progressive Christians” claim their preferred theology is superior to what they read in Scripture. Some deny the virgin birth, original sin, and the substitutionary work of atonement. Some claim all religions focus on what’s important and claim what’s important is human-generated works. These are doctrines of demons.

- “Progressive” can mean a way to self-generate fleshly or devilish wisdom, memorizing and swallowing lies, and lack of understanding.
- “Progressive” can mean following human emotion, though it may falsely claim to follow rational thought. It may even falsely claim to follow the Holy Spirit.
- “Progressive” can mean claiming God doesn’t say what He says through the Bible.
- “Progressive” can mean denying the Bible’s authority or claiming the Bible has errors.
- “Progressive” can mean adding to God’s words or dismissing God’s words.
- “Progressive” can mean trying to self-generate good works.
- “Progressive” can mean rationalizing political, governmental action to coerce unbelievers to contribute to

public “good works” projects.

- “Progressive” can mean substituting secularized government for the church and the family.
- “Progressive” can mean saying sin is OK.
- “Progressive” can mean saying righteousness is whatever the fallen human mind says it is.
- “Progressive” can mean putting good for evil and evil for good.
- “Progressive” can mean arguing for new, anti-bible structures or orders for the home, marriage, or the Church.
- “Progressive” can mean blurring the difference between the Way that is Christ and all the other ways.
- “Progressive” can mean claiming all ways lead to God.
- “Progressive” can mean dragging the world and the flesh into the Church.

If we define “progressive” this way, it’s not good to be progressive.

As far as progressing, as soon as we think about the Holy Spirit’s leading, Satan brings us counterfeits, often in deceptive books, TV shows, speakers, and videos that conflict with Scripture. Deceitfully, they affirm what Scripture denies and deny what Scripture affirms. For instance, they may affirm untruths like these:

- reincarnation
- God as imagination
- human goodness
- reliance on self
- karma
- pantheism
- economic systems based on envy

- governmental systems that distort God's order
- moral relativism
- encouragement of sexual sin
- collective consciousness

They deny truths like these:

- the devil's existence
- the existence of original sin
- the existence of right and wrong
- Christ's faithful presence, protection, and guidance
- the Holy Spirit as the One Who'll teach us all truth
- the need for discernment
- the distinction between good and evil
- the distinction between truth and lies
- the distinction between the human mind and God's mind
- the distinction between human imagination and reality
- the fallen nature of humanity
- the distinction between God's way and man's way

These affirmations and denials are then falsely called "progressive."

Then well-meaning Christian writers correctly know these messages teach error, and they respond to Satan's messages in fear. Fearing apostasy, they begin denying any Scripture that confirms Jesus Christ's presence and availability. They think it's safer to deny the kingdom of heaven's availability and the Holy Spirit's leading, teaching, and correcting. And, to their credit, they're trying to protect the Church from possible apostasy. However, their reaction contradicts Scripture, and this inappropriate reaction to Satan's progressive message is sometimes falsely called "conservative."

Progress with Confidence

Don't we hate it when we think we're walking in the Spirit but find out we're walking in the wrong direction? I do. I assume we both do. Maybe not, but I'll write this assuming we're similar in many ways. While trying to be religious, we may walk off the path. However, if we don't walk at all, we aren't obedient to the Holy Spirit either. Then we'll miss the way by doing nothing. We'll be like the wicked and lazy servant who buried his talent of gold. Since the Holy Spirit is always calling us higher, we're sinning by doing nothing when God asks us to do something. And we're sinning by doing one thing when God asks us to do something else. Not only so, but we're sinning by doing something when God asks us to wait. On the other hand, walking in the Spirit is simple. We hear His voice and respond in submission.

We may get it wrong because of our spiritual immaturity. We may fail to judge the difference between God's voice and all the other voices. And, if we get it wrong, He is faithful and just to pardon us and set us back on the path if we admit we've been wrong. We aren't under condemnation if we're in Christ Jesus, walking according to the Holy Spirit's leading to the extent our current maturity allows. God doesn't tell us to strive in our own strength apart from His leading and righteousness. He doesn't ask us to try to self-generate some righteousness from our fleshly natures. He tells us to yield to His righteousness. This command doesn't mean we do nothing. It means we only do and say what He leads us to do and say. In the world, they say, "Fake it until you make it." Not so in the spiritual realm. Be real. Satan will use his slaves to tell us we should feel guilty, condemned, or confused because we don't always know the difference between our own minds and God's leading. However, God assures us He's got this.

Christ pardons us and takes us as we are, covering us with His own blood as a sacrifice on our behalf. He does this so He can live within us, lead us, do His works through us, and transfigure us from glory to glory into His image. We have only one responsibility. God won't take control of our wills, and Satan can't take control of our wills. However, God gives us power, through the Holy Spirit, both to will and to do His good pleasure, and we merely need to be open to Him. We can block it, of course, but if we allow Him, He does everything. He reveals. He gives the ability to judge between truth and fiction or

right and wrong. He warns when something is out of His will. He forgives us when we get it wrong. If this judgment and discernment were our responsibility, we'd soon lose our way. However, He takes responsibility. We're responsible for yielding to His Spirit while He handles everything else. It takes effort to resist the Holy Spirit. We're responsible to stop resisting Him.

So we have no reason to fear to go ahead with God if we're sincere and desire righteousness since God has promised to complete His work in us. However, this revelation doesn't mean He's going to drag us into His kingdom against our desires. It does mean He'll bring us to His fullness despite our shortcomings if we sincerely yield ourselves to His righteousness.

being persuaded of this very thing, that *the One having begun a good work in you will complete it* until the day of Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 1:6 Berean Literal Bible

Though fear is torment, we can trust God to complete His work in us, and this promise means we don't have to continue to lack judgment between good and evil. But if we don't go forward with Christ, we'll be disobedient. We'll harden our innermost minds against God. We'll never exercise our spiritual senses so we can tell the difference between good and evil, truth and error, or reality and make-believe.

Consider the prize. God wants us to come to the measure of the fullness of Christ in perfect unity as a body, so the journey is worth the dangers we'll face. And we can trust God to see us through. At the same time, if we refuse to follow the Holy Spirit we're wicked and lazy, for God says, "Woe to those at ease in Zion." So we press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus, and we fight the good fight of faith, knowing this journey is a battle in the spiritual realm. This battle is largely for the mind, and Satan uses fear to control us if we allow him.

The early Church began to give in to fear within a few hundred years. Disunity and assumption-based doctrines entered, and they reacted in fear. Fear led them to change the basic order God had set up. In God's order, multiple unpaid elders governed the local assembly, and they were also called "bishops," which means "overseers." For instance, if the apostles appointed three elders in a local church, each of the elders worked under the government of the other two. All the

elders worked under the government of the apostles. Every member was a ministry. A grouping of elders, called a presbytery, laid their hands on the members and prophesied over them to receive spiritual gifts and to receive direction for their ministries. During the meeting, one had a song, one had a revelation, and another had a prophecy.

However, fear entered. God had provided an order to protect doctrine and to deal with disorder, but fear told them to change God's order. They stopped giving spiritual gifts. They separated the office of bishop from the office of elder. That wasn't God's plan. The bishop became the paid officer who governed the local church. They did what seemed good in their sight, and they eventually went into apostasy. Jesus prophesied the day of the Lord couldn't come until after the falling away. And history records the falling away. Over hundreds of years, God has been restoring what the church lost. He's still restoring the Scriptural orders, gifts, ministries, and offices to the church.

New Wine in Old Wineskins

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until
Christ be formed in you ~ Galatians 4:19 King James
Version

Hopefully, our journey won't just go over the same ground we've covered many times before, but rather, we pray our journey will add to us. So with God's guiding hand, we're forging on into unfamiliar territory in a land we've never known before. So we want to see heaven opened. We want to look into God's face in a way we never have previously. We long to know the truth and to have the truth set us free.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. ~ 2 Corinthians 3:18 Berean Study Bible

Mostly, we want God to set us free from our old preconceptions since our preconceptions about Christ aren't Christ, and our preconceptions about the Bible aren't the Bible. Preconceptions act as a fleshly veil over our faces and make it just about impossible to see. Above all other problematic thinking, preconceptions keep us from

seeing the Bible and Christ as they are. Preconceptions keep us from seeing all reality as it is. We'll shortly investigate just why and how they have this effect.

The religious people were trying to fit Jesus into their old ideas. So Jesus said, "No one pours new wine into old wineskins since doing so would cause the old wineskins to break." And He says the same to us today. He means we can't fit His new leading into our old preconceptions as the Holy Spirit calls us higher. Our preconceptions are our worldviews. And worldviews seem real. Worldviews make any conflicting truth seem wrong if we try to fit God's revelation into our old preconceptions. Because of this illusion, we may falsely think we're safe to continue to think as we've always thought, but this illusion doesn't keep us safe.

If you continue to think like you've always thought, you'll continue to get what you've always got. Is it enough? ~
Dayle K. Maloney

Consequently, we need a mind open to God for this trip, but we don't need to accept opinions blindly. In our natural state, we travel only into what fits into our minds' present preconceptions, but to be worthwhile, we must explore beyond preconceptions. We'll always feel uncomfortable with exploration beyond our preconceptions since this exploration disturbs our status quo. Besides, God wouldn't have to lead us if He didn't want to take us anywhere. The good news is He'll lead us to higher heights and deeper depths than we have yet imagined if we're willing to go with Him.

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. ~ Jeremiah 33:3
English Standard Version

If we acknowledge the Holy Spirit when He speaks truth to us, He teaches us truths we never knew before, so we look into truths we've never previously explored. What we'll explore on this journey is likely to be new territory. We can think truth is strange if we've never considered it. Untruth can seem true if it's part of our preconceived idea of reality. Those preconceived ideas trick us and are strongholds against the Holy Spirit.

For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but divinely powerful toward the demolition of strongholds, ~ 2
Corinthians 10:4 Berean Literal Bible

I confess that my fleshly nature often rebelled against what God was revealing to me, and my own strongholds often argued against God. When I had trouble receiving His revelation, God revealed the extreme weakness and deceptiveness of my human mind. He showed me many places where I had misinterpreted Scripture, but where He demonstrated my error, it was that Scripture means exactly what it says. In every case, I had rationalized something into Scripture that Scripture didn't say. And what made it especially difficult was that God plainly showed me my weakness and helplessness without Him. Since I was full of questions, I spent huge blocks of time asking God for the answers. In the same way, this journey will also be about seeking God for answers and understanding.

[When you said,] "Seek my face," my heart said to you, "O LORD, I will seek your face." ~ Psalm 27:8 God's Word Translation

Let's pray.

Our great Redeemer, we recognize Your presence with us right here and now. Help us respond to You. We want to commune with You so we can know the Truth and tell the difference between good and evil. As we journey, we pray that You continue with us, and give us an open-mindedness and sensitivity toward You so we can receive Your wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Amen.

Trip 4: Sanity

On the first DVD of “The Truth Project” small group study, Del Tackett considers the subject of truth. He defines “truth” as conformity to fact or reality, and he defines “sanity” as being in touch with reality. But “insanity” is *losing* touch with reality. In that study, Del tells us we suffer from common insanity. For example, we’re insane when we believe lies are real or when we think reality is a lie. We don’t have to go to the mental ward, but we aren’t sane on that issue if we confuse reality with make-believe.

We’re taking this excursion to guide us toward sane thinking, so, as we focus on that goal, we’re not trying to ridicule insane thinking. However, we’ll use the words “sane” and “insane” so we don’t forget this problem is serious. Though some people use these words as personal attacks or ad-hominem fallacies, we don’t use these words as attacks. Rather, we use these words for clarity to describe several common human conditions. As we use these words, the word “insanity” refers to *failing* to tell the difference between reality and make-believe, which is a real and universal human problem. We’ll use the word “sanity” to refer to *perceiving* the difference between reality and make-believe.

In our journey, we could have used euphemisms that make poor thinking seem more acceptable. For instance, we could have chosen words like “logical” versus “illogical” or “sound reasoning” versus “unsound reasoning.” And while those words mean the same thing and make us feel better than “sane” or “insane,” we don’t want to lull ourselves to sleep by pretending unsound reasoning is sane. We surely don’t want to make insanity feel better than it is since living in insanity is living in an illusion. And we receive no benefit from living in an illusion. And yet, we do live in an illusion in some parts of our lives. God exposes this illusion when we find we’ve been wrong about some strongly-held belief. Even people who spend their entire lives living mostly in illusion are aware of this problem. However, they don’t always apply this knowledge to themselves. It’s easier to see the insanity in others than in ourselves.

People don’t want to hear the truth because they don’t want their illusions destroyed. ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Interestingly, Friedrich Nietzsche so resisted the truth he refused to acknowledge God and famously declared “God is dead.” However,

Nietzsche didn't include himself among the people who don't want to hear the truth even though he had no rational method to say anything was true. He had no basis for declaring, "God is dead" or anything else for that matter. He wasn't only claiming God is dead, but he was claiming truth is dead, reality is dead, logic is dead, knowledge is dead, and sanity is dead. While that may seem like an overstatement, we're just starting to explore reason, and we'll explore whether we've overstated this problem.

The human nature in each of us tends to correct others without ever correcting ourselves. And so we each must diligently seek the mind of the Holy Spirit for constant, incremental leading, teaching, correcting, and purifying in every part of lives. We allow Him to examine our strongholds, theologies, and worldviews. Allowing Him to correct us is the only way we'll develop sensitivity to the difference between reality and made-up stuff.

The fleshly part of our beings resists certain elements of the truth because truth destroys the strongholds in our minds. God further defines this resistance to truth as "loving a lie," "loving darkness," and "hating light." On the other hand, Christ in us desires truth, which is why we seek God's face and seek the Holy Spirit's leading, teaching, and correcting. However, even as we seek Him, we have strongholds in our minds that we protect from the light of the Holy Spirit. And sometimes, rather than seeking truth to demolish those strongholds, we avoid exposing ourselves to the truth. Instead, we seek to assure ourselves our existing beliefs are true.

We've already looked into the problem of judging between reality and made-up stuff, but we haven't defined the fundamental difference. Reality is what exists. It's what's real. A concept is *a story about* what exists, and this story also contains made-up stuff or at least parts we can't prove. And so we return to the subject of sanity.

Here's a one-question sanity test:

Is it sane to make up stuff and insist the made-up stuff is true?

As followers of Christ, we know it isn't sane to make up stuff and call the made-up stuff true. We struggle with the made-up stuff in our carnal minds that seems so real it deceives us. When we think we've

finally come to understand some part of the truth, the Holy Spirit intervenes to let us see a little better. He exposes a deception we believed. We had built this deception on made-up stuff, probably with outside help from those who influenced us when we began to believe it. All error starts with made-up stuff, and though this problem is simple, many tricky fallacies hide or confuse it. So we'll have a detailed look at these tricks before we're done. We'll expose many of the ways the human mind tries to complicate this simplicity and cause confusion between good and evil, truth and error, or reality and make-believe.

As people lose the distinction between good and evil, between truth and error, we begin to see bizarre behavior. Marriages break up or become distorted since they no longer follow the pattern of Scripture. Churches aren't following the Scriptural pattern either and cannot bring back order and sanity. Society is in disarray, and that confusion causes pain and fear.

And yet, some do follow Christ, and the light of Christ shines out from them. Then those who hate the light turn against those who are walking in the way of the cross. We see disruptions like mass murder, riots, wide-spread hatred, or terrorism. The politicians start pointing fingers, but the solutions they propose make things worse since the politicians have lost the distinction between good and evil. They don't have the Truth and don't want the Truth.

Axioms are assumptions. Assumptions are suppositions. Suppositions are unproven claims. Unproven claims are made-up stuff. All these are different forms of what's known as "the axiomatic-thinking fallacy." Making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff "truth" is the axiomatic-thinking fallacy. And yet, the word "axiom" almost sounds real. It deceives us since it sounds real, but axioms aren't real. Rather, axioms are ideas people make up and call true when they don't know the axioms are true.

Sandy Sandbuilder: I don't base my thoughts on made-up stuff. I base my thoughts on axioms. Axioms are obvious facts that don't require proof. They aren't made-up stuff.

But axioms are made-up stuff.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. ~ Edward Mote

Here's the amazing thing. Some people believe we must base all thinking on axioms. Worse, most schools teach this belief. Our journey will question this belief and provide other choices beyond axiomatic-thinking fallacies as the basis for thought. However, ungodly thinkers base their thoughts on axioms, and our journey will fully expose that fact. Christ-followers have another choice beyond ungodly thinking. Those who don't receive the Holy Spirit's leading can only make up stuff and call the made-up stuff true. They have no other choice for thinking. Made-up stuff is how they think. It's a standard part of their lives. They don't want to question it.

By the way, we include ourselves among the ungodly thinkers when our thinking lacks the active moving of God's Spirit. We have a better option, but we drift.

Ungodly thinkers rarely consider themselves as basing all thinking on made-up stuff, but instead, they make insane thinking seem sane in a practice known as rationalizing. Ungodly thinkers use different synonyms for "made-up stuff," and these synonyms sound rational. They sound better than "made-up stuff," but they aren't any better.

Rocky Rockbuilder: Without Jesus Christ, you can't reason other than by basing your conclusions on made-up stuff.

Sandy Sandbuilder: I wonder why you keep saying "made-up stuff" and "make-believe." These sound like words chosen for emotional impact, which seems out of place in a discussion about reasoning.

Rocky: I use these words because they avoid the confusion caused by euphemisms. I don't use them for emotional impact. If I wanted to deceive you, I'd use other words to give the illusion that it's OK to base thinking on made-up stuff.

I didn't pull these conversations out of thin air. These are just a few examples of hundreds of conversations I had with people who challenged me. For my part, I was doing my best to remain on the

Rock, Jesus Christ. I'm bringing you with me on my journey so we can share it. On this journey, we'll witness many conversations between me (Rocky) and Sandy. We can all stand on the Rock. We can also slip off the Rock. We all want to be Rocky and not Sandy.

The conversations are real. I could have written some of these conversations as Rocky and "Sandra" since I had about an equal number of encounters with both genders. Both men and women have a choice between being rational and being irrational. Both men and women have moment-by-moment choices between the Rock and the sand.

Euphemisms for Made-up Stuff

Here are some words that mean "made-up stuff."

- assumption
- presupposition
- supposition
- axiom
- hypothesis
- theory

Now, don't those euphemistic words sound much better than saying "made-up stuff?" They sound better, but they mean made-up stuff. Making matters worse, many teachers say "presuppositions," "axioms," and "theories" are necessary. They say students can use any of these as a rational basis for thinking. Consider the following falsehoods students learn and add to their worldviews:

All logic begins with presuppositions.

The axioms of science are obvious.

A theory isn't a concept but a proven fact.

All these statements are bare claims. In other words, they have no proof. Still, many educated people believe these statements and can't believe anyone would question them. To make matters worse, some

people mix revelation with made-up stuff as the following example shows:

All logic begins with presuppositions. For instance, we may presuppose God can reveal reality to us.

To sort through this confusion, we must realize God can reveal reality to us. He tells us His revelation isn't the same as our made-up stuff, so we don't need presupposition. We don't need to presuppose that God reveals *since God shows us*. We stand in awe as God reveals the truth to us on this matter or that issue. God makes it plain to us when He's revealing a matter to us. In contrast, presupposition, or other made-up stuff, is only necessary if we choose to add to or reduce what God is saying. The previous statement claimed all logic begins with presuppositions. Contrast the following statement with that.

Sound logic never begins with presuppositions since presuppositions consist of made-up stuff. Instead, sound logic begins with a true premise. However, we can't get a true premise from made-up stuff, so we can't get a true premise from presuppositions. Since God reveals reality to us, we don't need any presuppositions.

Made-up Stuff Disguised as Reality

Real-sounding labels cause made-up stuff to seem real, but it's no less made-up when it has a new name. Besides using euphemistic words like "axiom" for made-up stuff, we sometimes use words that mean reality. We use these real-sounding words as labels for made-up stuff. Here are examples of false labels persuaders apply to made-up stuff to make it seem like it's real:

- proof
- facts
- evidence
- scientific knowledge
- scientific fact

These words imply truth, yet persuaders apply them to made-up stuff. Using any of these words to refer to made-up stuff blurs the distinction between reality and make-believe. Blurring the difference between reality and make-believe is insanity. This is also true of blurring the difference between truth and error or the difference between good and evil. Here's the most basic point to understand. All fallacies blur the difference between reality and made-up stuff. While fallacies begin as thoughts, they expose themselves as words and deeds. And even a single fallacy destroys the entire chain of reason. A chain of thought is only as strong as its weakest link, but fallacies have no strength. They just deceive.



A chain of thought is only as strong as its weakest link.

When people tell us a particular theory is a scientific fact, the term “scientific fact” doesn’t make us think of made-up stuff, does it? If they say, “I have evidence,” we don’t think they mean, “I have made-up stuff.” If they say, “I have scientific knowledge” or “I have proof,” we don’t think of made-up stuff either. And yet the way they use words, their words mean “made-up stuff.” When people put labels like these on their made-up stuff, it’s harder to tell made-up stuff is made-up stuff. Then it’s harder to know made-up stuff isn’t real stuff.

Beyond misusing words, we can find other ways to give the illusion made-up stuff is real. For instance, people talk about being logical without knowing what logic is. You may have experienced your friend speculating out loud and then saying:

That’s logical, isn’t it?

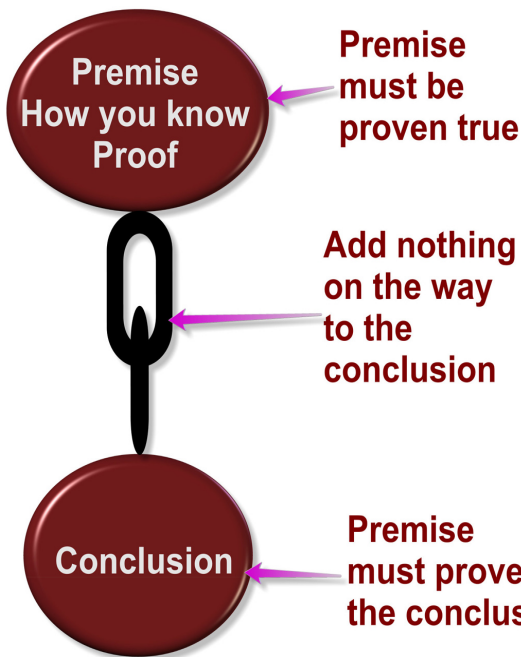
But it’s not logical. Sound deductive logic has absolute proof, called the premise, which proves the conclusion. Many people don’t understand the words “proof” and “evidence,” and we’ll look into the

confusion when we explore science as a way of knowing in another of this series of books. On this journey, we'll define both "proof" and "evidence" as what produces precise and accurate knowledge of truth with absolute certainty. We say we know something, but what do we mean?

- We have proof.
- The proof gives us precise, accurate, absolute, and certain knowledge of the truth.
- We aren't defining proof and evidence as something less conclusive.

We're defining "knowledge" to exclude everything tentative. If we know it, it's not tentative. If we say we know something that isn't true, we don't have knowledge. We have insanity. We don't know anything. We think we know something when we don't know it. If we say we know something we can't prove, we just have an opinion based on irrational thinking. We say we know something. It may be true, but we can't know it's true unless we can prove it.

The premise is the proof. We say the premise is true; therefore, the conclusion is true. Of course, if the premise isn't true, if we don't know it's true, we can't prove anything with it.



Logic Is simple

Without Divine revelation, how do you prove any premise?

With another premise you can't prove?

Logic is simple. The premise is how we know the conclusion is true. It's the proof for the conclusion. It's why we believe the conclusion. The premise must be true. We must prove the premise before we can prove the conclusion. We can't add anything on the way to the conclusion. Here's the problem. Without divine revelation, how can we prove any premise? We certainly can't prove one premise with another unproven premise.

Sandy Sandbuilder: It's preposterous for you to claim I need divine revelation if I'm going to reason to a conclusion.

Rocky Rockbuilder: I didn't say divine revelation is necessary to reason to a conclusion. Every atheist and demon-worshiper reasons and concludes. A true premise is more difficult than merely concluding, thinking, or reasoning. The atheist observes and concludes God doesn't exist but not rationally. The atheist bases this reasoning on assumption. On the other hand, when a follower of Christ sees the creation, the Holy Spirit speaks about the Creator through the creation. That's not an assumption. That's revelation. Big difference!

If we reason from a premise we can't prove, we're thinking irrationally. We can't say, "I make up X; therefore, Y is true." We can't say, "I make up X; therefore, X is true." Well, we do it all the time, but we can't do it rationally.

We must prove the proof before using the proof to prove the conclusion. We don't add unproven claims on the way to the conclusion. And the premise must prove the conclusion. We don't play mind games between the proof and the conclusion. We don't pretend we proved the conclusion when we didn't prove the conclusion.

Then how do we prove any premise? We can't use another unproven premise to prove our premise. Other than divine revelation, is there a way?

The alternative to sound reasoning is unsound reasoning. Unsound reasoning confuses and deceives us. It's surprising how little we can know using logic and science alone.

Let's examine Scripture in this light. We can't self-generate wisdom. Jesus is our wisdom. Jesus isn't just our wisdom. He's also our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

It is because of Him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who [Christ Jesus] has become for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:30 Berean Study Bible

We can't self-generate knowledge. Knowledge comes from Christ. Christ is the only Source of knowledge and wisdom.

in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. ~ Colossians 2:3 Berean Literal Bible

If we know any truth, Jesus is the truth.

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' ~ John 14:6 Berean Study Bible

While many verses of Scripture tell us we can only find knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in Christ, the three Scriptures we just

read indicate the exclusive nature of Christ. These Scriptures say He's the *only* Source. Also, God tells us to trust Him with all our minds, not depending on our own ability to understand. God also asks us to acknowledge Him in all our ways so He can direct our paths. If we respect God, we can depart from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Let's consider the practicality and unmysticalness of divine revelation. God reveals through Scripture and every means of revelation He mentions in Scripture. And yet, when the Holy Spirit shines His light on Scripture, experiences, observations, and our lives, He never contradicts Himself. His revelation will never conflict with Scripture. And He'll never reveal a "truth" to one person and a contradictory "truth" to another person. What does that mean? Rather than debating apparent conflicts, we need to seek Christ all the more to make sure apparent conflicts are real conflicts. We need to find out whether Christ has even revealed anything about what some people are calling a conflict. Rather than doubling down on what we think we know, the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth if we turn to Him. Also, God gives a pattern for revelation in Acts 15 and the Letter to the Ephesians. And He defines this pattern further throughout the Bible.

While revelation comes from God, it unveils a certain part of reality God had once hidden from us in mystery. Revelation helps us and makes a positive difference in our lives. God verifies revelation by using more than one method of revelation. For instance, He may use both Scripture and observation. As stated previously, other forms of revelation will never conflict with Scripture though they may conflict with interpretations of Scripture. God may give a Christ-follower a word of knowledge to help another person. The Holy Spirit may lead this Christ-follower to ask the other person a question to confirm the word of knowledge. After confirming the word, God may lead in a loving, simple, and practical way to help the other person.

On the other hand, God may lead us to miraculous healing or removal of some problem. God's leading will be practical and helpful. And it will glorify God. Through Scripture, God has given us several ways we can tell His revelation from false ideas that come from the flesh, the culture, and demonic forces. As part of our journey, we'll explore those ways.

Objections and Arguments

It's time to look at an objection we may hear, and we'll look at it with an example:

Sandy Sandbuilder: Wait a minute! I think you're taking this reasoning too far. Consider an assembly line making toasters. We test each toaster at the end of the line and find, on average, 99.92% of all toasters work, so we plan for a .08% scrap rate. Doesn't our test at the end of the assembly line provide a true and testable premise?

Rocky Rockbuilder: You're talking about pragmatism. Pragmatism is useful, but it's not truth. It's not knowledge of reality. Let's look at a bigger picture. Do the assembly line and the failure rate of the toasters actually exist, or are the Hindus correct in saying the assembly line is just part of a dream of Brahma? Now, let me answer my own question. For those who know Christ, Christ reveals reality has substance, so we don't have to assume the answer. And for those who fail to acknowledge Christ, Christ also reveals the same truth. Reality has substance. However, they fail to acknowledge Christ. They accept the revelation Christ gave, but they refuse to acknowledge the Source, so they attribute the knowledge to assumption. For this reason, those who fail to acknowledge Christ have no line of demarcation between assumption and revelation, between made-up stuff and truth.

Usually, this inability to reason beyond our senses won't be a problem when looking at toasters coming off the end of an assembly line. Some people don't believe in any real world, and they don't even believe they themselves exist. These people go to work and do things like deciding on business strategies based on failure rates of manufactured products. They can do this successfully based on God's revelation even though they falsely attribute God's revelation to human assumption.

The problem enters when discussing things like the history of the universe or the nature of the human mind or soul. Such people can't understand the nature of the human spirit, the existence of the

spiritual realm, the nature of morality or ethics, interpreting the Bible, or political issues. When discovering the answers to more profound questions, we become fools if we don't know the difference between revelation and made-up stuff. And yet, God is also there leading and guiding the mundane parts of life like manufacturing toasters. Let's look at something Jesus said:

Then Jesus said to the crowds, "As soon as you see a cloud rising in the west, you say, 'A shower is coming,' and that is what happens. And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It will be hot,' and it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky. Why don't you know how to interpret the present time? ~ Luke 12:54-56 Berean Study Bible

We have a sense of what's going to happen with the weather just by the way the winds blow, the temperature changes, the sky looks, and the air smells. The more experience we have with the weather, the more easily we can tell what's going to happen. We can tell by what's happened in the past. Meteorologists have found ways to gather data from many places to make those predictions more accurate. All this prediction depends on memory and information from our five senses. Meteorologists have found ways to extend their memory and senses, but the same restrictions apply. What they can't sense, they can't know. Jesus asked the crowds why they didn't know how to interpret the present time. Knowing how to interpret the present time requires more than just the five natural senses.

Let's take a quick look at another example fresh from an online discussion group:

Rocky Rockbuilder: Here's the problem you face. The human mind has no way to self-generate knowledge, so, without divine revelation, you're stuck making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff true. However, if you would seek Christ, you would find Him, and then you could be rational. I invite you to know Him and stop choosing bondage to Satan.

Sandy Sandbuilder: The human mind has no way to self-generate knowledge? How did Mayans build

pyramids? How did the Chinese build the terracotta army? How did ancient Egyptians know about constellations and geometry? Pfft!

Rocky: God reveals reality, but, without divine revelation, we can't know anything.

Sandy: So nobody outside Christendom ever discovered anything? Nonsense!

Rocky: Repeating what I wrote earlier: "God lets His rain fall on the just and the unjust. He gives divine revelation to every person, or they couldn't survive. However, those who refuse to acknowledge Him can't distinguish between the reality God reveals and the make-believe from their own imaginations."

The Logos (Utterance or Christ) is the Light that lights every person who comes into the world. God reveals Himself to every person. He even reveals Himself through the things He has created. Without the Light of Christ, no one can know the difference between good and evil or truth and error. However, everyone benefits from the Light whether they know it or not. As a person knowingly turns from the Light, fails to respond to the Light, fails to thank and glorify God, that person turns toward greater darkness. At a certain point, God will withdraw His Light. In the Day of the Lord, God will withdraw His Light from an entire culture. It's a Day of darkness. However, it's like the dawning on the mountains, an army great and strong. Light and darkness at the same time. Light for those the Holy Spirit is transfiguring into the image of Christ. Darkness for those who turn away from the Light that Christ is.

So, God reveals, but we need to understand another critical point about revelation. We have a lot more information when God fulfills a promise of Scripture than when we first believed a promise of Scripture. God didn't print the details in Scripture, but we understand some of those details when He fulfills Scripture in our lives. For example, we fully believe His promise of heaven, but we'll know a lot more about it when we're there. Plus, since God has hidden all knowledge in Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus reveals all true scientific knowledge, without Christ, scientists can't know anything. He reveals

through observation, but He explains and interprets the observations so they can draw true conclusions. Discoveries come when God reveals something. They come from God whether the scientist is Christian or not. God gets the glory, and He sends His rain on the just and the unjust. No scientist can self-generate knowledge. When scientists try, they self-generate confusion and untruth.

Deceived people deceive people.

It's easier to talk about being reasonable than to be reasonable. We can talk about sanity without knowing the difference between reality and make-believe. People with advanced degrees often don't understand either logic or epistemology. Oh, they can name various fallacies. They know the names of different types of syllogisms. They can repeat the definitions someone told them, but they don't understand the basis of knowledge. They don't know the reason fallacies are fallacies or the way to know the truth. But their teachers told them they are storehouses of knowledge, rational thought, and every virtue. Unfortunately, their teachers inoculated them against the truth. The simple parts of truth and reason we've looked into so far will seem like nonsense to a person hardened and blinded by continual ungodly thinking. However, as we proceed on our journey, we'll examine in detail why no one can think rationally without divine revelation.

Unreal Reality

We're now going to dip briefly into another world, the world of make-believe. We don't want to stay here long, but we do want to probe a little. And while we're here, we'll keep our eyes open and stay in communication with our Teacher and Counselor, the Holy Spirit. We may recognize someone we know in this land of illusion.

In a building with one-room apartments opening to wide halls, caregivers work to keep the residents from hurting themselves. Ralph is a resident here, and he thinks his dead relatives are living here with him. He can see them. When you tell him they're dead, he says he knows they're dead, but they're here anyway. If you tell him what he's saying doesn't make sense, he says he knows it's confusing, but it's true. Ralph knows what his eyes are seeing. Next, he brings you to a large central room and introduces you to his dead brother George

who's sitting in a chair. When you tell Ralph this guy doesn't look like his brother George looked, he says they must have done surgery on George to change his looks. As you point out that this guy's name is Harry, not George, Ralph tells you about how they change the people's names. When Ralph asks Harry if he's his brother George, Harry says, "No." When Ralph asks Harry if Harry remembers him, Harry says, "No." But Ralph rationalizes Harry's response away by saying, "When they did the surgery, they must have changed George's memory and created a new past in George's mind." No matter what happens, no one gets through to Ralph.

In this scenario, Ralph trusts his impressions. He thinks he trusts his senses, but he explains away what his eyes and ears are telling him. He routinely discards any evidence against his reasoning. And Ralph won't listen to those who love him. He's going to follow his own way.

We wonder whether Ralph's method of thinking differs from the thinking methods behind many theologies or theories. We ponder whether Ralph's thinking patterns are much different from the thinking patterns behind popular historical pseudoscience, those stories about the distant past. Since some scientists routinely discard evidence against these stories, make up assumptions and stories to explain away the evidence, and then use the stories and assumptions to confirm the original worldview, how are they different?

A worldview is a complete inner concept of reality. And yet, conceptions aren't part of reality even though they seem real. All thinkers have worldviews. You have a worldview, and so do I. No one is excluded.

So we face a question. What's the best way to interpret observations and experiences? Do we make assumptions? Do we accept what others assume? Do we pray for divine revelation? Is there any other choice beyond these three?

Trip 5: The Beast

the whole world marveled and followed the beast. . . . Let the one who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and that number is 666. ~ Revelation 13:3b and 18b Berean Study Bible

God reveals the natural and material realm. We can respond to His revelation in one of three ways. We can reject the revelation and fail to acknowledge God. We can accept the revelation and fail to acknowledge God. We can accept the revelation and acknowledge God.

What If We Reject the Revelation and Fail to Acknowledge God?

Then we wouldn't have true premises, but we would equate God's revelation with what comes out of our imaginations. We wouldn't know the difference between our worldviews and what God reveals. We couldn't rationally conclude anything. We could have strong opinions. We could argue for those opinions, but we would argue irrationally. We could even disrespect God's order for nature since we would have rejected His revelation about it. We would do things worthy of death if we were to take this course. (Romans 1)

What If We Receive the Revelation and Fail to Acknowledge God?

Then we would have true premises, but we wouldn't know if our premises were true. We would still equate God's revelation with what comes out of our imaginations. We couldn't tell the difference between our imaginations and God's revelation. Not knowing the difference, none of our conclusions would be rational. By receiving God's revelation, we would have true premises and could reason to true conclusions. We would believe the revelations were true, and they would be true. However, we wouldn't have a sound reason to say they were true since we refused to acknowledge God. And we would also think what comes from our imaginations was true. We would have no way to tell the difference between truth and imagination.

What If We Receive the Revelation and Acknowledge God?

Then we would have true premises, and we could rationally come to conclusions if we didn't add to God's words or dismiss God's words.

God also reveals the spiritual realm. We have the same three choices for this revelation. We can reject the revelation and fail to acknowledge God. We can accept the revelation and fail to acknowledge God. We can accept the revelation and acknowledge God.

Brute-Beast

The apostle Jude mentioned people who merely follow their sensual experiences: sight, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. They reason by using their natural minds to make decisions based on this sensory data and instincts like brute beasts. They don't follow the Holy Spirit. Animals react to sensory data, and they can learn things. However, we don't try to reason with a cockroach. Dogs don't reason using a true premise and valid logical form. Humans and animals alike can react to sense data and learn about what works, but they never come to knowledge of the truth. Humans and animals can do some fantastic things as God's creations using their non-rational natural minds. Let's look at some Scripture.

These men, however, slander what they do not understand, and like irrational animals, they will be destroyed by the things they do instinctively. ~ Jude 1:10 Berean Study Bible

These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. ~ Jude 1:19 New International Version

These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. ~ Jude 1:19 King James Bible

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ~ 1 Corinthians 2:14 Authorized Version

These Scriptures apply to godless intellectual thought, science, and philosophy. They apply to any theology that doesn't spring from divine revelation or adds human-generated "information" to what God reveals.

But these, like irrational animals, having been born as creatures of instinct ~ 2 Peter 2:12a Berean Literal Bible

King James Translation says

as natural brute beasts

The King James Version translated the Greek “alogos” as “brute.” It’s a word that means “destitute of reason.” These are people who can’t reason rationally. They can reason, but they reason as animals reason. Animals aren’t stupid. Humans operating on this brute-beast level can be brilliant, but they have some limitations.

The King James Version translated “natural” from the Greek “phusikos.” It means “produced by nature, inborn, agreeable to nature, and governed by instincts of nature.” Natural isn’t bad as God shows us with the same word through the following passage:

Because of this, God gave up them to passions of dishonor. For even their females changed the *natural* use into that contrary to nature. And likewise also the males, having left the *natural* use of the female, were inflamed in their desire toward one another, males with males, working out shame and receiving in themselves the recompense which was fitting of their error. ~ Romans 1:26-27 Berean Literal Bible

Here we have the same word “phusikos” to tell us about the natural order as opposed to an unnatural order. God shows us the natural order is good since He created the natural order and the spiritual order. However, the thinkers Jude mentions are also unreasoning.

But these indeed speak evil of whatever things they have not seen; and whatever things they understand naturally, as the irrational animals, in these things they corrupt themselves. . . . These are those causing divisions, worldly-minded, not having the Spirit. ~ Jude 1:10 & 19 Berean Literal Bible

In verse 10, the King James Translation says:

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts.

Here we have the same words we saw in 2 Peter, what they know naturally, as brute beasts. They speak evil of whatever they can't sense with their natural senses or whatever they don't know by their instincts. Naturalists speak evil of whatever they can't sense with their natural senses or whatever they don't know by their instincts.

In verse 19, the King James Translation says:

sensual, having not the Spirit.

“Psuchikos,” the word translated as “natural” or “sensual” indicates what humans have in common with animals, following their senses, appetites, and passions.

The natural [governed by natural senses] man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ~ 1 Corinthians 2:14 Berean Literal Bible

Here, we again see the person governed by natural senses can't accept spiritual truth, thinking it's foolishness and not understanding it. God also tells us these people don't have spiritual discernment.

We can understand another facet of this mind as we look into this passage in Daniel that refers to King Nebuchadnezzar:

Let his mind be changed from that of a man, and let him be given the mind of an animal ~ Daniel 4:16a International Standard Version

King Nebuchadnezzar couldn't decide whether to serve his many gods, his own mind, or the Almighty Creator God. So, God let him know his mind could quickly degrade to the level of animals. As a result, King Nebuchadnezzar spent seven years eating grass like an ox. Though the human mind can't reason rationally without God's presence, it is superior to the animal mind. The human mind can do things animals can't. It can read, write, record experimental results, and do math, but it still can't reason rationally. We'll explore what keeps it from reasoning rationally. We'll see why it can't reason from a true premise before we finish this journey.

because the mind of the flesh is hostility toward God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, for not even can it be. ~ Romans 8:7 Berean Literal Bible

This Scripture again speaks of the fleshly mind. It won't obey God's Law, nor can it. King James Version translated this same word as "carnal mind." The Greek word is "sarx." Again, this mind interprets sense data to make decisions. This animal nature craves and incites sin. To understand this word better, we'll look at three more passages where we see the word "sarx."

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am *carnal*, sold under sin. ~ Romans 7:14 King James Version

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. . . . For ye are yet *carnal*: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal*, and walk as men? ~ 1 Corinthians 3:1 & 3 King James Version

For the weapons of our warfare are not *carnal*, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; ~ 2 Corinthians 10:4 King James Version

As the natural, sarx, carnal mind depends on natural senses, the spiritual mind depends on spiritual senses. The sarx mind craves and incites sin. It can't do righteousness. It's deceitful and desperately wicked. In Romans 7:14, Paul says he's carnal/sarx, sold under sin. When was he sold as a slave to sin? Adam obeyed Satan rather than God, and he became a slave of Satan through obedience. God's natural order is obedience to God, not Satan, so Adam distorted the natural order. He passed on this sinfulness to his descendants including Paul, and Adam's descendants all followed their distorted instincts into sin and death.

We can see this distortion in our own lives. When we sin, we know it's wrong. And yet, we either step into it willingly or slip into it unwittingly. In either case, it has its effect. If we continue in sin, it changes our natural inclinations. We would naturally desire God, but this sarx mind confuses God's natural order and draws us away from God. All distortions of God's orders cause pain, but distortions of sex, anger, and fear cause the most misery and bondage. God is correcting

disorders of the Church and the home in anyone who will hear His voice, but the confusion is great among those who harden themselves against Him. Once we confuse God's orders, God can deliver us, but the way back becomes difficult.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, except anyone be born from above, he is not able to see the kingdom of God." ~ John 3:3 Berean Literal Bible

In this Scripture, God isn't trying to emphasize sight over the other senses. The translators used the word "see," but the original text means "sense by any of the senses." Because of the natural bondage that resulted from Adam's fall into sin, the natural mind can't sense God's kingdom. However, the spiritual mind can.

Darkness

The natural mind can't fulfill God's will. It can't prove a premise, so it can't reason from a true premise. That means the natural mind can't think rationally. God gave this natural mind for survival. It reacts to sight, smell, taste, feeling, and sound. Living organisms manage to stay alive by this brute-beast mind. This mind can be as ingenious as a raccoon, but it can't be rational without the Holy Spirit. God created our minds to live in His presence, and He's given us the Spirit of a sound mind. However, some people reject God. For them, the natural brute-beast mind is a workaround.

It's not that all ungodly thinkers walk in total darkness since those who truly follow Christ act as both salt and light and expose unbelievers to the light of Christ. God is good and reveals reality to unbelievers. While they can't be rational, they can fake being rational. This fake-rationality is practical. It finds out what works in the material world they can observe, measure, and test. It also makes up stories about what they can't observe, measure, or test. Then, it blurs the line between what works and the stories they make up.

Rebellious people reason beyond what they can observe, measure, and test. They don't think rationally, but they think. They reason. They want to reason about things like morality, God, heaven, hell, the creation event, and the Genesis Flood event. They say God doesn't exist or God can't reveal anything to anyone. Ungodly thinkers have

no way to reason rationally beyond what they can observe, measure, and test. When an unbeliever repeatedly and consistently refuses to turn to Christ, God eventually takes His hand off that unbeliever, and the unbeliever walks into greater darkness and confusion.

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. ~ Luke 16:8 King James Bible

Consider that. The children of this world are wiser than the children of light. Doesn't that refute everything we just discovered? No. It doesn't.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness." ~ 1 Corinthians 3:19 Berean Study Bible

Different types of wisdom exist. The children of this world have the wisdom of this world. That's not pure wisdom. It's not always devilish wisdom. Sometimes, it's just practical wisdom. It's not the wisdom Christ is. Christ is the Light. The children of light have not yet grown up. The children of light are spiritually immature and haven't seized the full power and authority of the cross of Christ. In other words, Christ isn't fully formed in them, and they still have not totally died to the fleshly nature.

Nonetheless, as people turn away from Christ, they're turning away from the light. As they turn away from Christ, they begin to lose the distinction between good and evil and between truth and error. We have the same problem. Just a small amount of disobedience or rebellion on *our* part can make *us* less discerning and understanding.

"For My people are fools; they have not known Me. They are foolish children, without understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but they do not know how to do good." ~ Jeremiah 4:22 Berean Study Bible

God's talking about His people. In this age, He's talking about Christians. He's talking about Christians who fail to listen to His voice and to respond in willing obedience and submission. These are the lukewarm Christians. What happens to them? They obtain a kind of wisdom, a worldly kind of wisdom. Worldly wisdom makes them

clever when it comes to doing what's wrong. They run where God didn't send them. They say their own words instead of speaking as oracles of God. They don't have the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is the person of Christ Jesus and this wisdom consists of three things:

- righteousness (listening to Christ and responding in willing submission and obedience),
- holiness (having Christ formed in us and dying to the fleshly nature),
- and redemption (freedom from the sinful nature, the influence of the ungodly culture, and any kind of demonic deception).

These Christians who don't want to know Christ or listen to Him begin to have the same bondages and habits as ungodly thinkers. Rather than gradually becoming mature in Christ and being formed into His likeness, they begin to look, talk, and act like any ungodly person.

As of this writing, we're seeing sweeping changes in the world. We're seeing darkness as never before, and it's going to get much worse. We're seeing widespread insanity on a level never before experienced. God always gave some light to unbelievers. They didn't comprehend it, but they benefitted from it. They assumed they were just very good at guessing what would work and what wouldn't work. They could reason, but not to any certainty of truth. Even so, they could come to conclusions that worked in the real world. They even had a fairly accurate idea of what was right and what was wrong because God shined His light on them and they could see somewhat without thanking God or giving Him the Glory.

However, that's changing. Emotion is replacing logic. People make bare claims and call those claims "logic" or "science." They don't try to give the illusion of rational thought. Shouting and chanting have replaced dialog. Right is called "wrong," and wrong is called "right." And that's among the intellectuals and elites of society.

So what's different now that's causing these changes? When a person turns away from God, that person can go into a terrible darkness. At a certain point, God removes His hand from that person, and His face

no longer shines on that person. That's one individual. How much worse when a culture splits, and a major part of the culture turns its back on God! And how dreadful when it happens across the entire world!

Currently, two things are happening.

First, many Christians aren't following Christ and shining with His brightness. They don't listen to His voice or yield to His Spirit. They follow ungodly councilors instead. They either disregard the Bible entirely or they try to shoehorn rationalized ideas into the Bible. They have a religion, but it's about self-righteousness, popularity, prestige, entertainment, money, and political power. It doesn't effectively touch the power of God for righteousness and holiness. They have ceased to be effective as salt and light.

Second, many Christians are following Christ and beginning to walk in the righteousness of Christ. They're beginning to shine with the Light of Christ. Then, those who hate the Light turn away from the Light. They throw themselves into greater darkness. God is letting them go and isn't restraining them.

In Scripture, God foreshadowed this day in the plagues of the Egyptians. One of the plagues was darkness. The Egyptians could feel that darkness because it was so intense. At the same time, light shined in the homes of the Israelites. The prophet Joel also spoke of a day that would be darkness but also a day of dawning.

a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like the dawn overspreading the mountains a great and strong people appears, such as never was of old, nor will ever be in ages to come. ~ Joel 2:2 Berean Study Bible

The wheat and tares now growing together. The tares have more wisdom and skill than the wheat. They are crafty. They have no limits. The wheat is limited. The wheat must follow what's right. The tares use more tricks. The tares get their way. They control every means of communication. They control governments and legal systems. However, the fruit will show. And God will never forsake His own even if, for a time, we lose many battles.

The Day of the Lord will require a full commitment to Christ. Many today seek the middle ground between hot and cold. They choose to be lukewarm.

That doesn't mean they don't fight for their ideas. They may be zealous. Many are very religious. They're extreme. They think up all kinds of ways to "serve the Lord" without knowing Him in any real way. They recruit converts to their organization or doctrinal position. Some of them argue about theology. They can become alarmingly angry about it. They can demonize those who enter the goodness of God. Many of them protect and defend their lukewarm condition. They attack anyone who believes what God says about righteousness and holiness. They attack those who see the vision and enter into the blessings of God. They twist Scripture to keep their followers from entering into everything God has for His people. They want to make a provision for the flesh.

In the Day of the Lord, that won't work. They'll need to make a decision one way or the other, and many will turn from Christ and follow the beast wholeheartedly. They'll still have a form of religion, but they'll deny the power of following Christ for righteousness, holiness, the gifts of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit. They'll teach the Gospel is just about becoming born-again. They'll say that's all there is. They'll teach that growing in Christ means something other than having Christ fully formed within and dying to the fleshly nature.

Wisdom versus Foolishness

God still reveals natural reality to the human natural mind. All wisdom comes from Him. Without God's revelation, we would all die quickly. The natural mind can accept this natural revelation. It can except wisdom from God, but it doesn't necessarily notice God or give Him thanks.

The God having made the world and all things that are in it, He being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in hand-made temples, nor is He served by hands of men as needing anything, Himself giving to all life and breath and everything. And He made from one man every nation of men, to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined the appointed times and the boundaries of

their habitation, to seek God, if perhaps indeed they might palpate for Him, and might find Him. And indeed, He is not far from each one of us. ~ Acts 17:24-28 Berean Literal Bible

We can infer from our observations but our ability has limits. If we see tire tracks in the mud, we can infer some sort of vehicle made the tracks. If we have information about various tread patterns, we may be able to infer information about the specific tires that made the tracks. We can infer the water content of the mud or the weight of the car by the depth of the tracks. All this pseudo-knowledge is pragmatic. It isn't knowledge of truth. These inferences aren't absolute. They're based on circumstantial evidence.

We can also project trends. We can make decisions based on incomplete information. We can guess from observations even though we know our observations aren't perfect. For instance, we can guide our cars into parking spaces without hitting other cars. We can catch a ball or guess what the stock market is going to do next. The further we get from the observations or experiences the less reliable our conclusions become.

These examples are practical. They're about what works. And none of them deal with the deep questions of life. None of them can tell us about the spiritual realm unless our experiences and observations are in the spiritual realm. None of them can tell us what the meaning of life is. Some people try to draw conclusions that go beyond the material realm in the present while they infer from observations of the material realm in the present. That's irrational.

We see the natural brute-beast mind working with divine revelation in science, and God imparts knowledge through the scientific method. The brute-beast mind reacts to sense data, and we call this reaction "scientific observation." God gave the scientific method to humanity so He could impart knowledge through it. Ungodly thinkers can gain natural awareness through the scientific method. Pragmatism is a practical way of surviving. Natural awareness doesn't lead to knowledge of the truth. It's practical, but it's tentative.

always learning and never being able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres

opposed Moses, so also these oppose the truth, men being depraved in mind, disqualified regarding the faith. ~ 2 Timothy 3:7-8 Berean Literal Bible

Animals learn in the same pragmatic way, but this awareness is limited to the natural senses. It's more of an opinion than knowledge. When we can directly observe and test, pragmatism yields working products. When we can't directly observe and test, pragmatism yields opinions. It works for making cell phones we can test and verify. It doesn't immediately warn us of all the possible dangers and problems those cell phones may cause in the future. It doesn't work for knowing how the universe came into existence. We'll get into the ways the brute-beast mind works with divine revelation as we continue our journey.

If we acknowledge God when He reveals material and natural reality to us, we can say we have knowledge. However, when we fail to acknowledge God, we can't have precise, accurate, and absolutely certain knowledge of truth. In that case, we're blind, incapable of rational thought. This brute-beast mind drives naturalistic, materialistic science.

Although it is reliable and durable, scientific knowledge is neither set in concrete nor perfect. Rather, it is subject to change in the light of new evidence or new interpretation of existing evidence. Because of its tentative nature, we cannot claim 'absolute truth' in science. The tentative nature of scientific knowledge also means that laws and theories may change. ~ sciencelearn.org, *Tenets of the Nature of Science*

Different scientists can interpret the same datasets differently. How can this conflict happen? Scientists do strive to be objective, but it is just not possible to make truly objective observations and interpretations without any bias. A scientist's mind is not a blank slate. Individual scientists have their prior knowledge, theoretical beliefs, experiences, cultural background, training, expectations and biases, each of which will affect their observations and conclusions. ~ sciencelearn.org, *Tenets of the Nature of Science*

Science is pragmatic. Theories are judged by a single criterion – do they work? Their origin does not matter. They may be inferred, or invented, or dreamed. Until they are tested they are merely working hypotheses; in other words, they are plausible interpretations of data already available. Ingenious men can and do invent many theories to account for a given set of data. ~ cs.cmu.edu, *The Nature of Science*

. . . science is necessarily restricted to one aspect of the universe - the objective world of phenomena. It deals with probable knowledge only, its methods are empirical, its philosophy is pragmatic. The scientist explores the world of phenomena by successive approximations. He works in an atmosphere of probabilities; he knows that his data are never precise, and that his theories must always be rested. ~ cs.cmu.edu, *The Nature of Science*

The brute-beast, human mind can do science, but it can never know absolute truth. Since truth is absolute by nature, the brute-beast mind can never know the truth. It's pragmatic and tentative. Science only works where scientists can observe and test. The further scientists try to extrapolate beyond those observations and tests, the more they leave science and drift into the land of make-believe. Science can deal with the material world in the present, but it resorts to storytelling when it tries to deal with the spiritual realm, history, or anything else it can't observe or test.

Since the sarx mind can react to the five senses and human instinct, it can make decisions in reaction to sense data. However, it can't extrapolate beyond those five senses without depending on made-up stuff. Made-up stuff is unreliable as a basis for reason. This limitation of the sarx mind eliminates the ability to reason about things like God, spiritual principles, morals, possibilities, the future, interpretation of Scripture, interpretation of observation, and the unobserved past. For those areas of knowledge, we must ask God for revelation and then listen to His voice. An ungodly thinker can do science and engineering, observing, experimenting, and testing. Those are all activities restricted to sensory data. Scientists either sense this information in the moment or refer to it by accessing

scientific data tables of previous observations. When scientists, engineers, philosophers, and theologians try to use their brute-beast minds to obtain knowledge beyond their sensory data, they become fools.

Reason?

If we only follow our sense data, we can't test anything except what we test with our natural senses. Does that sound too obvious? Why then do intellectuals think they can test ideas and concepts they can't test with their physical senses? They think they know things using only sense data and what they call "reasoning." However, we can't check their claims using our five natural senses. They add information to their sensory data to make their assertions, but they don't have a source for the information they add to their sensory data. They just make up stuff and add it to their sensory data. Then they call that "reasoning." Why does an ungodly thinker have feelings about morality, the origin or age of the universe, or the source of all the life we can now observe? They can't follow sense data to prove any of their inner feelings.

The non-rational mind can reason, but it can't think rationally to a conclusion beyond the five senses. We'll explore the causes for that limitation during this journey. The sarx mind can compare two choices, sort objects by various criteria, memorize phrases or concepts, write poetry, and perform calculations. It can record data from experiments and use that data to design working products. This mind can rationalize and argue. The self-righteous carnal mind can make a show of false love, goodness, mercy, humility, and virtue, but it can't self-generate any of these fruits of the Spirit. It can pretend hypocritically. It can produce sexual immorality, impure motives, unbridled desire, idolatry, sorcery, drug abuse, drunkenness, and wild partying. It can self-generate hatred, discord, jealousy, rage, rivalries, divisions, factions, envy, and the like. It can't produce love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, stability, gentleness, self-control, or faith. Galatians 5:19-23 The natural human mind can't work up any of these no matter how hard it tries. However, it can produce hypocritical fakes of all these. It can have natural affection for its family members just as animals show this same natural affection. It

can control itself to a point, but it won't allow the Holy Spirit to control it.

A few notable scientists have broken through the naturalistic paradigm and touched reality. For instance, Albert Einstein wanted to know God's thoughts, and he could sense the presence of Jesus Christ when he read the Gospels. He received the theory of relativity in a dream. Can you imagine the benefits to humanity if all scientists lifted science to a new level by abandoning the irrationality of naturalism? Suppose they did science in the Holy Spirit's flowing knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in submission to the King of kings instead of doing science like animals reacting to their natural senses alone. How would life change if we yielded to the Source of all wisdom and love in our jobs and other parts of our lives?

God reveals reality through observation. He even reveals reality to the scientists who bind themselves with the artificial limits of naturalism. God directs scientists about what to test and what to look at even when they aren't aware of His direction and guidance. They hobble along this way, but they could have so much more. Often, their preconceived ideas get in the way, and they can't receive God's subtle guidance.

We don't need the title "scientist" to use our sensory data. We all do it. We can say, "I tried three ways of doing my task. One of these ways works better. Therefore, I'm going to keep doing my task using the way that works better." Some people call this "knowledge." We call it natural awareness, but we don't reason to this awareness rationally since we never have a true premise if we don't seek and acknowledge divine revelation. This awareness isn't knowledge of truth. We can use this awareness, but we haven't reasoned to a true conclusion. Reasoning to a true conclusion requires a true premise. We don't have a true premise if we don't listen to the Holy Spirit. And yet, we can use what our five senses give us as long as we don't try to reason beyond them.

God reveals that our natural senses are somewhat accurate. However, if we don't acknowledge divine revelation, we have to *assume* our natural senses are somewhat accurate. Atheist evolutionists, for instance, can't prove their natural senses are accurate or even exist. Natural awareness isn't precise and accurate knowledge of truth with

absolute certainty. Certainty is evasive without God. The human mind by itself can't provide a true premise to prove a conclusion about what we sense with our five senses. We want to function beyond the level of brute beasts and instinct.

God reveals absolute, though partial, truth. God reveals spiritual truth and historical truth, but the brute-beast mind can't self-generate this form of knowledge. And yet, this brute-beast mind continually has opinions about such things as morality, sin, God, heaven, hell, ethics, politics, history, and truth. Not one of these is material. This brute-beast mind can be brilliant in creating testable technology like computers, medical equipment, and rockets. People develop these products pragmatically by trial and error. They test them. They fine-tune them. However, the brute-beast mind can't test a historical story or a moral issue. God reveals a natural understanding of moral issues to this natural human mind. We call this "conscience." When the conscience is operating correctly, God is revealing right and wrong. However, as humans try to reason from their own natural understandings, the brute-beast mind is incapable. It begins to destroy the conscience and twist it. This mind is incapable of sound reasoning, and we'll fully explore why.

Consider how we know about history. Artifacts exist. We can read letters and legal documents going way back in time. We can see tools and whatever is left of buildings and cities. We can interpret artifacts. If we interpret artifacts, our conclusions are tentative. We create pseudo-knowledge as we interpret and explain. Pseudo-knowledge is subject to change with further discoveries. It's subject to challenge from other interpretations. Often, historians commit argument-from-silence fallacies. They argue they haven't seen evidence for a certain event, so the event never happened. They select some evidence and skip over other evidence when committing this kind of fallacy. They reject the written account in Scripture even though written accounts are a more accurate way to know what happened in the past than speculating.

Let's consider the problem of knowing what happened in the recent past. When two people have a severe disagreement, it's unlikely the two people will remember the conversation in the same way. Each will

have his or her own story. They may be sincere, but emotions come into play. Perceptions aren't the same as what really happened.

We can look at recent events from the last few years or even weeks. Do all news programs cover these events equally? Do all reporters agree? No. Reporters report according to their biases. They can't get all the facts, so they fill in the blanks. Sometimes, they just lie because of political, philosophical, or religious agendas. Sometimes, they say what they're told to say. Then, independent bloggers tell a different story. Someone isn't telling the truth. Maybe no one is telling the truth.

If we try to look back ten years, the divide becomes greater. Scholars disagree. Paradigms, which are fake realities, develop among certain groups and those paradigms seem like real reality. We lose more of the details. Creativity creeps in. Going back a hundred years, we have written accounts. Very few eye-witnesses are still alive, but we have to trust what someone wrote at the time. Was that person biased? Was that person truthful? If we go back a few hundred years, let's say to 1776, we lose even more of the detail, but the main points are well documented. We have to trust the writers of the time. And yet, historians spin history this way and that way. They interpret the artifacts based on their preconceived ideas. Whoever controls history controls the future.

If we attempt to look back further, let's say to the time of the Inquisition and Mohammed, we still have written documentation, and we can put together many events. We lose more of the specific information. We can't be sure the information is accurate. Often, we're reading the opinions of people who lived at that time.

Going back two thousand years to the time of Christ, we know Christ lived, was crucified, and rose from the dead. We can infer that from the documents and other artifacts. However, some scholars dispute His resurrection even as the religious leaders disputed it at that time.

Going back further, Patterns of Evidence has produced two major documentaries about the Exodus, the development of the Hebrew language, and Moses' writing the first five books of the Bible. In these documentaries, Tim Mahoney interviewed scholars who insisted Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible. They

insisted no alphabetic language could have existed at the time of Moses. Some scholars doubt the existence of Moses. Some doubt the Israelites ever were in Egypt. Tim Mahoney researched the issues carefully and found the timelines of the scholars were wrong. He found an alphabetic language, a form of Hebrew, existed when Moses was in Egypt. Of course, some scholars debate what Tim Mahoney found. The physical evidence, though compelling, is not absolute.

Going back to before we have written language artifacts, it gets worse. Speculation reigns supreme. The further we stray from what we can directly observe or test, the sketchier our opinions become. We can see ruins of old civilizations and we can then “know” a little about those civilizations. Without writings or calendars, we can’t put firm dates on anything. Every form of radioactive age calculation is dependent on circular reasoning and assumptions. The exception is the revelation we receive from God regarding history.

That brings us to science. Some students learn a narrative that claims science must be naturalistic. They discover they dare not consider God as a cause for anything, so they commit a fallacy by eliminating God as a possible cause. When they eliminate any possibility for causes, they are biased. They think irrationally, dogmatically, and closed-mindedly. God designed science for open-minded exploration. Once these students close their minds, they block out part of what they can explore or understand.

God supplies everything we need. He even provides for disbelievers so they have the opportunity to seek Him. Some will seek Him and find Him. Others will continue to reject Him and dishonor Him.

The natural existence is a low existence. It’s sad to see people living at such a lowly level as an animal, but what about Christians living this way?

Natural Knowledge and Natural Wisdom

We can learn. Dogs can learn. Cats can learn. All animals obtain a natural pragmatic awareness. However, for this journey, we don’t want to confuse this natural pragmatic awareness with certainty of truth. We steer a car by this natural awareness. We get a new car, and the steering doesn’t work exactly as our old car’s steering worked.

However, we drive it until we “get the feel” of it by reacting to our natural senses.

We could call this “knowledge,” but it isn’t knowledge unless we acknowledge God Who gives knowledge. When God reveals a matter and we acknowledge God, we can have precise, accurate, absolute, and certain knowledge of truth. But God doesn’t reveal everything, and we only accept a fraction of what He does reveal. Our carnal, sarx mind also calls to us and confuses us, so we aren’t always confident, and we’re sometimes confident when we should be questioning our confidence.

As an illustration of the problem, consider this former Christian turned atheistic evangelist. This man posted a question to a Christian discussion group. He said one question turned him away from Christianity. Here’s the question: “If God decided to kill most of humanity because they had turned to evil, why would He flood the planet to do so? Why cause such a loss of life?” He claimed no one was able to answer this question in a way that wouldn’t allow him to rationalize an answer. Since he was always able to generate a rationalized response, he decided God didn’t exist.

Here’s this sand-builder’s logic.

If I can ask a question you can’t answer to my satisfaction,
then God doesn’t exist.

Sandy believes God doesn’t exist. He “proves” his belief to himself by making up stories to defend his belief. The human mind can make up endless stories. It can’t prove anything through made-up stories.

Sandy posted his question. Christians then obediently tried to reason with Sandy. Sure enough, Sandy was always able to rationalize an answer to anything the Christians proposed. I asked Sandy about the limitations of the human mind, and Sandy agreed the human mind is limited. He admitted he couldn’t have a true premise. And yet, he claimed this limitation only kept him from absolute truth. He claimed he could still “know” the probabilities of things being true or false. He claimed his inability to have true premises only limited him to inductive reasoning rather than deductive reasoning. Of course, that isn’t true. Inductive reasoning also needs true premises. You can’t base any reasoning on made-up stuff and still be rational. Sandy

brought out examples of how he's able to keep himself alive by using the brute-beast, sarx mind.

I asked how that works. And Sandy said, "It works like this: I say something. You say something that appears to be related based on your words and grammar. If it were a mess of jumbled letters, I would think we did not understand each other. But it's not, so I say something that seems relevant. If you again respond with stuff that appears relevant, the likelihood that I'm getting random responses from the universe is becoming smaller and smaller. So, I inductively conclude I am communicating with an intelligent being and we understand each other's words."

I asked how Sandy was reasoning to his original claim. Sandy had already agreed he couldn't go beyond his immediate sensations from his five senses, natural instincts, and axiomatic-thinking fallacies. And yet, he felt qualified to ask God about His reasoning in sending the Genesis Flood.

Sandy claimed he "proved" the probability of the non-existence of God through inductive reasoning. Of course, Sandy wouldn't use the word "proved." He would prefer the word "inferred." However, for most people, both "infer" and "conclude" mean a rational thought process. They don't think these words mean making up stuff and using smokescreen fallacies. When they hear "infer" or "conclude" they don't think of blurring the line between reality and make-believe.

Sandy asked God, and he asked Christians. God wasn't specific enough in His answer to Sandy, and Sandy was always able to make up an argument against the answers he received from Christians. He called that "inductive reasoning."

This true story illustrates the limits of the brute-beast mind. Sandy can use his brute-beast mind to "know" he's probably talking to a person rather than receiving random signals from the universe. In that case, he's reacting to his immediate senses. However, he has to add axiomatic-thinking fallacies and misuse inductive reasoning to reason beyond his immediate senses. Sandy could use the same logic to convince himself of anything. He would just present his theory and test to see if he could argue against anyone who attempted to refute his theory. His theory could be the tooth fairy or the non-existence of

the universe. It could be anything. No matter how bizarre his theory, he could still think up arguments against anyone who tried to refute his theory. The brute-beast mind can be very clever at making up stories and committing axiomatic-thinking fallacies. If Sandy allows those two methods of reasoning, he can prove anything to himself.

Who is wise and understanding among you; let him show his works out of the good conduct, in the humility of wisdom. ~ James 3:13 Berean Literal Bible

This natural wisdom is good. Without acknowledging Christ, a man can be a successful engineer. Without acknowledging Christ, a woman can start and operate a successful business. People develop skills without acknowledging Christ. God provides natural wisdom and spiritual wisdom, but the two aren't similar. He imparts natural talents, gifts, and personality traits. However, without the Holy Spirit, if we claim to know anything we confuse "knowledge" with our unfounded opinions. Once we mix those two, we can't know anything since we can't sort the truth from the gibberish. We can feel like we know things, but we can never be sure about anything. We may have truth since God reveals reality to us, but we don't know the difference between revealed truth and imagined speculation. We can't discern between truth and made-up stuff. Remember, we're defining knowledge as precise, accurate, and absolutely certain knowledge of truth.

God has also written limited knowledge on the conscience of every person. We could call this natural knowledge, but it's revealed knowledge. We don't know the extent of what God wrote or when God wrote it, but we know this knowledge comes from God. This knowledge is truth, but we can't know it's truth unless we acknowledge it comes from God. And the human conscience isn't always reliable. A conscience can be weak, wounded, seared, defiled, or even evil. (1 Corinthians 8:12, 1 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:15, Hebrews 10:22) What God wrote was pure, but we're influenced by those around us, by demonic entities, and by our own weak reasoning and speculation. These influences cause impurity in the conscience. Without the light of the Holy Spirit, we have no way to know the difference between what's pure and what's impure.

For when Gentiles, not having the Law, do by nature the things of the Law, these not having the Law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the Law, written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and the thoughts between one another accusing or also defending them ~ Romans 2:14-15 Berean Literal Bible

who having known the righteous judgment of God, that those doing such things are worthy of death, not only are practicing them, but are also approving of those practicing them. ~ Romans 1:32 Berean Literal Bible

How can we have truth but not know it? We're in this plight when we disconnect from the Holy Spirit. God imparts some natural truth in the form of instinct or intuition. We know sex is for marriage. We know marriage is between one man and one woman who vow before God to remain together for life excluding all others from this sacred trust. We know stealing and murder are wrong. We know many such truths, and everyone knows these truths. We know them by divine revelation. However, we can't prove anything if we're trying to survive without the Holy Spirit. We've seen many who have lost this natural knowledge. They've murdered strangers or distorted God's natural pattern for marriages and families. They drifted from God's Spirit and rationalized behavior God didn't create in His natural order. They've gone down into bondage to unnatural desires and addictions. Others have followed God's natural orders to some extent, but they can't explain why. To them, good and evil are merely interesting concepts but not part of reality. When we refuse to acknowledge God, we can't know anything for sure. We can deceive ourselves, though. We can make ourselves believe we have knowledge when we don't.

When the Holy Spirit leads us, He reveals the natural orders and gives us strength for righteousness. We can ask God for His righteousness and receive it. When we acknowledge Him and His leading, we can reason rationally. We can provide a sound reason for loving our neighbor rather than killing our neighbor. Without the Holy Spirit, we depend on our natural senses and our primary drives. With the Holy Spirit, we receive revelation of not only the natural but also the spiritual. The Holy Spirit keeps unfolding this revelation for us

whenever we acknowledge Him and yield to Him in submission and obedience.

Submission is a lack of fighting or arguing against God. It's not a form of trying to earn righteousness by the Law. It's yielding. It's realizing God is the potter and we are the clay. God won't force Himself on anyone, so submission is required. The Pharisees didn't submit to God, though they tried in their own strength to obey God's Law. They were like Christians who say, "I obey the Ten Commandments because I'm just so thankful God forgave me that I want to do something for Him." That's as if we had righteousness to give. Our self-generated "righteousness" is like filthy rags. Do we think our filthy rags are a gift that would please God? God needs our submission. He's not interested in our self-righteousness. See what God says about the Pharisees who tried to establish their own righteousness.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ~ Romans 10:3 King James Version

Therefore, submission is necessary for sound logic that leads to knowledge. If we don't submit to God, we'll follow after our own mind, which is deceitful and desperately wicked. We may spend our whole life learning without coming to know the truth.

The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance; it is the illusion of knowledge ~ Stephen Hawking, atheist

Stephen said this, but he could only create the illusion of knowledge. He couldn't know any truth. He refused to acknowledge the Source of all truth. A fool fails to acknowledge God, but God warns us about the devilish "knowledge," "understanding," and "wisdom" of those who refuse to glorify Him.

For the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and against Jerusalem; he will punish the speech that comes from that willful heart of Assyria's king and the haughty look in his eyes. He keeps bragging: 'I've done it by the strength of my hand, and by my wisdom, because I'm so clever. I removed the boundaries of peoples, and

plundered their treasures; like a bull I brought down those who sat on thrones. ~ Isaiah 10:12-13 International Standard Version

You trusted in your own knowledge. You said, 'No one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge have misled you. You said in your heart, 'I am the one, and there will be none besides me' ~ Isaiah 47:10 International Standard Version

The wise men will be put to shame. They'll be dismayed and taken captive. Look, they have rejected the message from the LORD! So what kind of wisdom do they have? ~ Jeremiah 8:9 International Standard Version

This is what the LORD says: "The wise man is not to boast in his wisdom; the strong man is not to boast in his strength; and the rich man is not to boast in his riches. Rather, let the one who boasts, boast in this: that he understands and knows me, for I am the LORD who acts with gracious love, justice, and righteousness in the land. I delight in these things," declares the LORD. ~ Jeremiah 9:23-24 International Standard Version

Because your heart is lifted up, and you have said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet you are a man, and not God, though you set your heart as the heart of God: Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from you: With your wisdom and with your understanding you have gotten yourself riches, and have gotten gold and silver into your treasuries: By your great wisdom and by your trade have you increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches: Therefore thus says the Lord GOD; Because you have set your heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon you, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, and they shall defile your brightness. They shall bring you down to the pit, and you shall die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. ~ Ezekiel 28:2b-8 King James 2000 Version

O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge” ~ Timothy 6:20 New American Standard Bible

For my people are foolish, they don't know me. They're stupid children, they have no understanding. They're skilled at doing evil, but how to do good, they don't know. ~ Jeremiah 4:22 International Standard Version

Such wisdom does not come from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ~ James 3:15 Berean Study Bible

Of course, all Scripture that mentions false prophets, false teachers, or false doctrines is warning against this counterfeit fake-knowledge, fake-understanding, and fake-wisdom.

Without divine revelation, our minds can't reason beyond our senses. We can find out what works. We can remember what worked in the past. We can estimate based on experience. We can visualize physical motion. We see a ball flying and can guess where it will bounce. The more we practice, the more accurately we can guess. We do the same thing when communicating. As we practice, we become better at communicating. We know what will make people accept what we say. We know what will make people angry. We learn from experience. We can make guesses about what might work in the future. We can test to see if a new idea does work. We can learn techniques like Six Sigma, business analysis, risk management, and project management. And we can mentally test various options in the human imagination. The brute-beast mind can do a lot.

What about unexpected events? For instance, what about death? In this godless way, no absolutes exist. God can stop any process, project, or effort.

Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be achieved. ~ Proverbs 16:3 New King James Version

We find out how accurate our concepts are whenever we can physically test them. We can test concepts if we make them into products or methods. Then we can test the product or method. We design a chair. Then, we build and test the chair. We design a surgical

procedure. Then we execute and test the surgical procedure. The brute-beast mind has extreme limits. When the brute-beast mind wants to “prove” something it can’t test, it must set up a fake test. By setting up fake tests, it can have strong opinions on subjects about which it can’t know anything.

We can find out what works. We don’t know it’s the best way or the best design possible. We’re talking about pragmatic survival mechanisms rather than truth. Pragmatism is what works. That’s it. It’s practical. We can put it into practice. We can test it. We can use it. Trying to go beyond what we can observe and test without divine revelation is always irrational.

But why would we leave God out of ANY part of our lives? Why?

Looking at it from the other side we can absolutely know a worldwide flood occurred just as the Bible says. We know some facts about the Genesis Flood by divine revelation. And we know the Bible is accurate because the Holy Spirit testifies to the fact. What God says is fact. We’ll explore and examine the way we can know the truth with certainty as we continue our journey.

It Won’t Always be this Way

We temporarily struggle under the limitations of the flesh. We won’t always have to.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! ~ Romans 7:24-25 Berean Study Bible

We may not understand it all, but we can rest in the Holy Spirit as He speaks to us through the following verses.

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. But God gives it a body as He has designed, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body. Not all flesh is the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another, and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is of one

degree, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is of another. The sun has one degree of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead: What is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being;" the last Adam a life-giving spirit. The spiritual, however, was not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so also are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so also shall we bear the likeness of the heavenly man. ~ 1 Corinthians 15:36-49 Berean Study Bible

Our natural, brute-beast minds would like to draw us into speculation. However, as we join our minds to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will teach us all things.

For the perishable must be clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come to pass: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ~ 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 Berean Study Bible

In the following verse, we read about an earthly tent, and God is referring to our natural bodies. However, God promises us a building, a heavenly dwelling. We can't imagine a spiritual body, but God will see to it.

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is dismantled, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. So while we are in this tent, we groan under our burdens,

because we do not wish to be unclothed but clothed, so that our mortality may be swallowed up by life. And God has prepared us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a pledge of what is to come. ~ 2 Corinthians 5:1-5
Berean Study Bible

We groan for this change. Life on earth is often hard. The fallen world stresses us, and our natural drives try to pull us into evil. We battle sin, sickness, and death every day. But God didn't set this futility as our destiny. We suffer for a little while, but He'll reveal His glory in us.

I consider that our present sufferings are not comparable to the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he can already see? ~ Romans 8:18-24
Berean Study Bible

This hope mentioned here isn't "I hope so." God gives us this vision of hope, and He wants us to live in His hope and to focus our attention on the hope He's giving us.

Devilish Knowledge and Wisdom

Demons "know" how to deceive us. They see many things. They use this perception to maim, kill, and destroy. Those who use séances, psychics, fortune tellers, or Ouija boards soon find out evil spirits "know" some things. They see more than we do, yet they won't glorify God. They deceive and lie. God warns about demonic wisdom. If an evil spirit speaks to us, we may think we're clairvoyant, and we may think we know something even though we know nothing.

But if you have bitter jealousy and self-interest in your heart, do not boast of it and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and self-interest exist, there will be disorder and every evil thing. ~ James 3:14-16 Berean Literal Bible

Demonic wisdom isn't good, but it brings many people to high levels of success. Many of these people earn huge salaries, write books, or use power to oppress others. They use jealousy and self-interest to motivate themselves and others. They may never realize they're receiving their wisdom from demons.

Spiritual Knowledge and Wisdom

God also gives spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

But the wisdom from above is indeed first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and of good fruits, impartial, sincere. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those making peace. ~ James 3:17-18 Berean Literal Bible

This wisdom from above is Jesus Christ.

It is because of Him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:30 Berean Study Bible

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. ~ Proverbs 2:6 International Standard Version

You are to speak to all who are skilled, whom I've endowed with talent, that they should make Aaron's garments for consecrating him to serve me as priest. ~ Exodus 28:3 International Standard Version

and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge of all kinds of work ~ Exodus 35:31 International Standard Version

Now Nun's son Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had placed his hands on him, so Israelis listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses. ~ Deuteronomy 34:9 International Standard Version

God gave Solomon wisdom and great discernment. His insights were as numerous as sand on the seashore. ~ 1 Kings 4:29 International Standard Version

After all, to the person who is good in God's sight, he gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner he gives the troublesome task of acquiring and accumulating in order to leave it to someone who is good in the sight of God. This also is pointless and chasing after the wind. ~ Ecclesiastes 2:26 International Standard Version

All knowledge is hidden in Christ

the knowledge of the mystery of God, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. ~ Colossians 2:2a-3 Berean Literal Bible

While many levels of "wisdom" exist, only truth and godly wisdom have value. We aren't interested in living at a low level like an earthworm or a raccoon. Rather, we want to know the difference between truth and error. We want to understand reality. As we continue this journey, we'll understand the word "knowledge." Knowledge is knowledge of truth we know absolutely because God reveals it to us. We know He'll give us a better understanding as we walk with Him. As we walk with Him, He corrects us and teaches us. We know some truth, just not completely as we ought to know it.

Even so, ungodly thinkers can be brilliant. Since God reveals reality to them, they can have good outcomes too. But they have limits. They can't be certain any premise is true. Without divine revelation, they can't think rationally about God, right, wrong, truth, or anything not material.

Throughout this journey, we'll revisit these essential truths. We'll look at these Scriptures in various contexts.

Deduction, Induction, Abduction, and the Problem of the True Premise

The intellectuals propose three basic forms of reasoning: deductive, inductive, and abductive. In this section, I'll try to define the difference between deduction, induction, and abduction.

Three Types of Thinking

Deductive	Inductive	Abductive
True premise (needed) Valid form (needed) Reason to true conclusion	True Premise (needed) Argues to a convincing inference Inference may be false	No premise No form Intuition from one of three sources

Deductive Reasoning

You use true premises and valid form to prove a conclusion. If we know the premises are true and the form is valid, the argument is sound. If your deductive argument is sound, your conclusion is true.

If you don't know your premises are true, your argument is unsound. If you don't use valid form, your argument is unsound. If your argument isn't sound, you can't know whether your conclusion is true.

Example of a valid form:

If X is true, then Y must be true. X is true. Therefore, Y is true.

Several valid forms exist. We list those in the reference section of this book.

Inductive Reasoning

You use true premises and language to argue for a convincing inference. If your argument convinces someone, that person says the

argument is strong and cogent. If you didn't prove the premises, your inductive reasoning isn't sound. If you did prove the premises, but a person isn't convinced, that person says your argument is weak. They say your argument isn't cogent. The word, "cogent," means convincing or compelling. You use inductive reasoning to persuade. You don't use inductive reasoning to prove the truth.

Example of an inductive argument:

If X is true, then Y could be true. X is true. Therefore, Y could be true.

Some inductive reasoning yields probabilities. Sometimes persuaders claim something is probable or improbable but haven't calculated anything. They go by gut feeling or simply make a bare claim. They might even calculate a supposed probability using an actual formula. For instance, they may use Bayes Theorem. However, if they insert assumed numbers into the calculation, the calculation means nothing. As we look at various forms of inductive reasoning, we realize those forms aren't all created equal.

Inductive Generalization:

All the people I have known prefer Fords. Therefore, all people probably prefer Fords.

Statistical Syllogism:

Our historical records show it rains the following day twenty percent of the time whenever we have the current atmospheric conditions. Therefore, we have a 20% chance of rain tomorrow.

Simple Induction:

Twenty-seven years ago, I was a Christian, and I prayed God would answer my question about why He decided to send the Genesis Flood. Since I didn't receive an answer I couldn't argue against, God probably doesn't exist.

Argument from Analogy:

Rats are similar in some ways to humans. We tested our drug on rats and haven't seen any adverse effects. Therefore, it's less likely our drug will have adverse effects on humans.

Causal Inference:

Some people believe natural selection caused some evolutionary changes. They believe other factors caused other evolutionary changes. Therefore, molecules-to-humanity evolution probably happened.

Argument from Prediction:

If it's raining outside, I would expect the sidewalk to be wet.

The sidewalk is wet.

Therefore, it's probably raining outside.

Bayesian Inference

We are testing which of two hypotheses are more probable. We'll compare the two timelines, the Biblical timeline and the evolutionistic timeline. Assume the Biblical timeline probability is near zero. Assume the evolutionistic timeline probability is near 100%. Feed those two probabilities into our Bayesian formula. Calculate. We infer the evolutionistic timeline is much more probable than the Biblical timeline.

Inductive Inference

Over decades of use, hydroxychloroquine has proven safe if taken in the recommended doses. Several doctors successfully treated hundreds of CCP-virus-infected patients using Hydroxychloroquine, Azithromycin, and zinc. Nations that used Hydroxychloroquine as part of their treatment for CCP virus have had much less death than nations that haven't used hydroxychloroquine. Therefore, hydroxychloroquine may be an effective treatment for CCP virus. Therefore, tens of thousands may have died unnecessarily because the deep state, news

media, and tech giants discouraged early treatment with hydroxychloroquine.

Thinkers reason with all these inductive methods. Some of these methods are logical fallacies. Some of them can be helpful for decision-making. None of them can lead to knowledge of truth. Most of them just give the illusion of rational thought but are irrational. To think irrationally is to think insanely.

Abductive Reasoning

Both deductive and inductive reasoning need a true premise. They have no way to create a true premise. That leaves abductive reasoning. Some people say abduction is guessing. However, abduction isn't always guessing. It's intuitive. Some people call it "common sense." Abduction is a source of information like observation is a source of information. God can speak through intuition, but so can demons, and so can our fallen fleshly minds. God tells the truth, demons lie, and the fleshly mind makes up stuff. We pray for God to make the difference plain to us, and He promises to answer that prayer.

Someone may say the Holy Spirit's work isn't personal and we can't know Christ in any real way through His Spirit. People use many arguments against following the leading of the Holy Spirit. We'll go over many more of them in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*.

God does promise to lead us. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth. God indeed gives us the freedom to ignore His leading. He never forces anyone to follow Him. If we think we can have some sort of "God-given wisdom" without the God Who gives the wisdom, we are mistaken. Jesus Christ is our wisdom. When we disconnect ourselves from Him, we are truly on our own. We use our own made-up stuff as the basis for our reasoning. That's what the brute-beast mind is all about. The brute-beast mind is devoid of the Spirit.

Trip 6: Basing Reason on Assumptions

Must we base all thought on assumptions?

Rocky Rockbuilder: It sounds like you're basing your interpretation on assumptions. Assumptions are things made up and called true.

Sandy Sandbuilder: How do you manage to read the Bible without assumptions?

Rocky: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the interpretation of Scripture to you, and don't be double-minded.

Sandy: What does "double-minded" mean?

Rocky: God speaks through Scripture and every method of revelation He mentions in Scripture. Acknowledge God and don't lean on your own understanding. Don't try to acknowledge God and lean on your own understanding simultaneously.

Sandy: That's not a particularly sophisticated hermeneutic.

Rocky: Are you looking for sophistication by making up stuff and calling it true? I'm concerned about finding truth rather than sophistication.

Sandy: You seem to have a shocking level of confidence in your intuition.

Rocky: Are you saying the Holy Spirit is limited to human intuition?

We're looking at the choice between assumption and divine revelation. This exchange reveals ungodly thinking doesn't acknowledge God or thank Him for His gifts. Both men are Christians. Sandy implies his assumptions are objective knowledge. He implies the Holy Spirit is limited to human intuition. However, he never made his statement clear since he never answered the clarifying question.

Whenever we consider divine revelation, we're rightly on guard against the real possibility for false prophets and false teachers. Through Scripture, God warns us to be alert against these counterfeits. Counterfeits can fake revelation, so claims of revelation can introduce the possibility of error. On the other hand, assumptions assure error.

False prophets and false teachers have two tactics. They might tell us their assumptions come from God. They might try to make assumptions appear true without God. Error causes damage, and the damage is the same whether there was malice of intent or not. While the truth will set us free, lies make us slaves to the liar we believe even if the liar is our own fleshly nature.

Without divine revelation, how do we interpret Scripture, observation, and experience? Is there any way other than believing made-up stuff? Without a doubt, divine revelation is a controversial subject, so we don't enter it lightly but fully explore the issue in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*.

God reveals five spiritual senses, and we can read about spiritual senses in Scripture.

- Taste and Vision: Psalm 34:8
- Smell: 2 Corinthians 2:14-16
- Feeling: Acts 17:27
- Hearing: Romans 10:17

God uses these spiritual senses to communicate with us, yet humans and demons can counterfeit God.

Let's get back to the dialogue. Rocky asked, "Are you saying the Holy Spirit is limited to human intuition?" Here's Sandy's answer:

Sandy: We need external checks on our spiritual enthusiasms. It's too easy to confuse our own desires with the Holy Spirit's leading.

Rocky: Are you saying assumptions are better external checks than the Holy Spirit? Are you saying divine revelation is subjective? Are you saying assumptions are objective?

Sandy: No, I'm saying young-earth creationists have loads of assumptions and presuppositions of which they're unaware.

Rocky: Do you think you can know things by assuming them?

Sandy: I feel like I'm talking to a brick wall. Do you honestly believe you read the Bible without assumptions?

Rocky: My experience is the Holy Spirit is real, and He teaches me and leads me moment by moment. He says He rewards those who inquire of Him, and I believe Him. He says the human mind is deceitful and desperately wicked, and I believe Him. Do you honestly think you can know anything by assuming?

Sandy: Without assumptions, no one can know anything about anything.

Sandy didn't want to answer some of the questions, so he dodged the questions by answering an irrelevant question no one asked. But did you catch the flip-flop? Diverting attention away from the question, Sandy accuses a group he calls "young-earth creationists" in which he flipped his opinion about assumptions. He flipped from defending assumptions to condemning assumptions. Then he flipped right back in his next comment to defending his own use of assumptions, even saying, "Without assumptions, no one can know anything about

anything.” Special-pleading fallacies like this one are common in ungodly thinking.

Three unanswered questions remain:

Are assumptions better external checks than the Holy Spirit?

Is divine revelation subjective?

Are assumptions objective?

Leaning on his own understanding rather than acknowledging Christ, Sandy didn’t answer these questions. But as you look at each question and consider the answer, what are *your* answers to those three questions, and how do you know your answers are correct? Do you have a true premise to back up your answers? How do you know your premise is true?

I (Rocky) didn’t challenge Sandy’s accusation that young-earth creationists have loads of assumptions. Do young-earth creationists “have loads of assumptions and presuppositions?” If some young-earth creationists assume and presuppose, this irrationality would limit their credibility. However, it wouldn’t justify Sandy basing his thoughts on assumptions.

Consider what Sandy just admitted. He admitted he bases every conviction he has on made-up stuff. That means he makes up the stuff, and then he thinks the made-up stuff is true.

Sandy believes assumptions are the basis of knowledge, and all knowledge is hidden in assumptions. Using an entirely different way of reasoning, I (Rocky) think all knowledge is hidden in Christ Jesus. Still, you must remember both I and Sandy are Christians.

Rocky: Assumptions fall into the class of made-up stuff. How do you think assumptions generate knowledge?

Sandy: I assume my sense experience is generally reliable (for example, I am not living in the matrix). Does this fall into the category of made-up stuff?

Rocky: Compare your statement to this statement: “God reveals my natural senses are somewhat reliable.” You’re

confusing divine revelation with assumption.

Sandy Sandbuilder ignored another question: “How do you think assumptions generate knowledge?” How could assumptions generate knowledge? How could making up stuff generate knowledge?

When I (Rocky) pointed out that Sandy was blurring the distinction between divine revelation and assumption, Sandy avoided this issue by giving a deceptive example of an assumption. However, Sandy’s example of an assumption isn’t an assumption at all. Instead, Sandy hijacked a revelation and falsely attributed it to assumption. So if Sandy wanted to be rational, he would need to use a pure assumption. For instance, Sandy could have used an assumption like the following:

I assume assumption is a better external check than the Holy Spirit. Does this assumption fall into the category of made-up stuff?

Alternately, Sandy could have used an assumption like the following:

I assume divine revelation is subjective. Does this assumption fall into the category of made-up stuff?

Or Sandy could have said:

I assume my own assumptions are objective. Does this assumption fall into the category of made-up stuff?

Those are real assumptions. As it now stands, Sandy is confusing reality with make-believe by confusing revelation with assumption.

Sandy: I could list at least a dozen godly men who believed the most appalling nonsense was taught by Holy Scripture.

Shockingly, it almost seems as if Sandy may be blaming God for irrational interpretation of Scripture, but Sandy doesn’t blame assumptions. In an attempt to justify making up stuff, he implies making assumptions would keep people from believing appalling nonsense. What do you think? Do you see any way making up assumptions and believing those assumptions can keep people from error?

Rocky: Are you claiming the Holy Spirit deceived them? Do you think they weren't assuming?

Sandy didn't answer these questions either. Instead, Sandy made this statement:

Sandy: Assumptions are an inevitable part of the fallen human condition.

Rocky: I agree. Assumptions are a problem. I don't see that as a reason to rely on them instead of relying on the Holy Spirit.

Sandy: I believe the Holy Spirit guides me through prayer and study of Scripture, but I also consult with secular and spiritual communities and authorities to help me make my decisions. I am older, smarter, and better educated than most people. So I do have a certain amount of confidence in my judgment. But I also make a point of trying to spend as much time as possible with people who are older, smarter, better educated (and most importantly) more spiritually mature than I am. The Holy Spirit speaks through them.

Rocky: God reveals the Holy Spirit can speak through His saints. He reveals this fact through 1 Corinthians 12:2-3, and in that verse, He also reveals how we know whether He's speaking through them.

Given his dependency on assumptions as the basis for thinking, how can Sandy decide who's "more spiritually mature than" he is? From this lack of substance, what method does Sandy use to choose his counselors? Sandy has only one tool for choosing, and that tool is *assumption*.

Sandy chooses those counselors who agree with his worldview, and then he *assumes* those counselors are wise and spiritually mature. They must be wise because Sandy is "smarter and better educated than most people," and those counselors confirm the things Sandy likes to hear. Sandy said some of these counselors are secular (ungodly), contrasting the ungodly with the spiritual. By definition, ungodly thinkers direct their individual minds away from Christ and

toward every other influence as they refuse to allow God to participate in their thinking.

Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly ~ Psalm 1:1a Douay-Rheims Bible

Sandy Sandbuilder decided to continue to depend on his assumptions and those of others and will keep choosing his counselors as he did in the past. He'll select those who tell him what he likes to hear.

I (Rocky) decided to keep trusting Christ. I chose to trust neither my assumptions nor those of others. I pick my counselors based on the leading of the Holy Spirit. I still struggle with my own deceitful and desperately wicked carnal sarx mind, yet I remain humble and spend time in God's presence. I study the Bible daily. I don't rely on a make-believe faith but receive the faith that comes when I hear God's utterance. That's the faith Jesus Christ authors within me. So instead of trusting in myself or trusting my current understanding of doctrine, I trust in God's power to give discernment. I know God will eventually correct me if I'm wrong. I also believe God is well able to complete the work of bringing me to spiritual maturity.

I'm painfully aware that my knowledge is partial because of my spiritual immaturity. I'm aware that I need the Holy Spirit's correction, and I yield myself to the Holy Spirit. However, I believe God's promise that those who follow Christ become increasingly mature, having Christ formed within and dying to the fleshly nature. I understand this maturity will come through persistent obedient yielding in submission to the Holy Spirit.

I also understand we, the body of Christ, will need gifts, ministries, offices, and orders of the body of Christ for this transformation into maturity. The body of Christ is the Church. God defines the body of Christ through Scripture. The body of Christ isn't defined by any organization. In this revelation, the Holy Spirit assures me I'll mature and more easily discern between good (God's leading) and evil (my fallen mind). This discernment becomes greater with maturity.

2018 State of the Union

God speaks. More people are becoming aware of His presence. President Donald J. Trump, when giving the 2018 State of the Union,

said the following:

We see a vivid expression of this truth in the story of the Holets family of New Mexico. Ryan Holets is 27 years old, and an officer with the Albuquerque Police Department. He is here tonight with his wife, Rebecca. Last year, Ryan was on duty when he saw a pregnant, homeless woman preparing to inject heroin. When Ryan told her she was going to harm her unborn child, she began to weep. She told him she didn't know where to turn, but badly wanted a safe home for her baby.

In that moment, Ryan said he felt God speak to him, "You will do it because you can." He heard those words. He took out a picture of his wife and their four kids. Then, he went home to tell his wife, Rebecca. In an instant, she agreed to adopt. The Holets named their new daughter Hope.

Ryan and Rebecca, you embody the goodness of our Nation. Thank you, and congratulations.

Frank

Frank knew he had a weak heart and he could die at any time. He was in his 80s and had lived a successful life. His daughter had begged him, telling him he needed to believe in Jesus Christ or he would go to hell. Frank wanted to go to heaven, and Frank wanted to believe, but he was still having doubts.

For some reason, Frank felt drawn to my wife and I. He had seen us around, and one day he walked up to us and said, "I think God sent you to talk to me."

Frank startled us, but we talked to Frank. Frank talked on and on about his inner conflict and the struggle in his mind. He told us he wanted to believe in Jesus, but he had so much education he just couldn't believe. Frank repeatedly told us about how he tells Jesus he can't believe in Him, and Jesus tells him he must believe. But Frank kept telling Jesus, "I just can't believe. I have too much education."

As the conversation went on, Frank did almost all the talking as my wife and I listened, but then God suddenly showed my wife the

conflict in what Frank was claiming. She didn't want to jump into the conversation between Frank and I, so she prayed and asked God to show me the same thing God had shown her. From this moment, the conversation went something like the following:

Me: Frank, you know what I can't believe?

Frank: What?

Me: I can't believe you don't believe in Jesus.

Frank: Why?

Me: You keep talking to Him, and He keeps answering you.

Frank: You're right. That's it. That's the answer. I do know Him. Why couldn't my priest tell me this when I asked?

Lacking a Relationship

What follows is my conversation with an ungodly thinker. It illustrates that ungodly thinkers build their thoughts on made-up stuff with smokescreen fallacies hiding the made-up stuff. Godly thinkers, on the other hand, build their thoughts on the foundation of Christ.

Sandy Sandbuilder: I believe in truth, and that's why I believe in an old creation. I have had many people tell me they can prove me wrong, but the best they could come up with is a video from a doubtful source. [NOTE: This statement is a genetic fallacy coupled with an appeal-to-ignorance fallacy.]

Rocky Rockbuilder: Made-up stories contribute nothing to truth. Age of the earth or universe is an opinion unless it comes by divine revelation, and one opinion is as good as another since opinion has no substance.

Sandy: So do you believe the record God left in His creation.

Rocky: Yes, and I don't add made-up stuff to it out of my carnal mind.

Sandy: So you believe *the creation is several billion years old?*

Rocky: No, I don't believe "the creation is several billion years old" since God never said it's several billion years old.

Sandy: And yet the record He left in His creation *clearly shows* it. Funny you're able to *ignore* that.

We notice Sandy speaks of a Creator Who has left and is gone. On the surface, it sounds like Sandy is thinking this way, and as we follow this conversation further, we'll see he has no relationship with Christ. We can also notice Sandy likes to use presuppositional phrases. In his most recent statement, he uses the word "ignore." He uses the word "ignore" to presuppose his unsupported claim that the creation "clearly shows" it's "several billion years old." Also, he uses the word "clearly" as another layer of presupposition. To whom is it clear? Nested presuppositions like this can hypnotize us if we aren't aware.

Rocky: God speaks through His creation in real time. And God speaks through the Bible in real time. He didn't leave these things for us to figure out by making assumptions and basing logic on assumptions. Although, you make an interesting claim. Without any assumptions at all, can you prove what you say is true? If so, prove the creation is several billion years old, but I have one stipulation: unsupported assertions aren't proof. [NOTE: Rocky isn't claiming a certain age of the earth.]

Sandy: You assume your interpretation of Genesis is correct, and all scientists are wrong, yet you ask me not to make any assumptions. You don't even believe science.

I (Rocky) never mentioned any "interpretation of Genesis." I made every effort not to add to God's words or dismiss God's words. And I didn't try to assert a universal negative by claiming billions of years didn't happen. The phrase "all scientists are wrong" presupposes all scientists agree with billions of years. However, we can check that.

And it's a lie. The way God speaks through Scripture pretty well eliminates billions or millions of years, but I didn't talk about that. Trying to shoehorn billions of years into Scripture is adding to God's words, and many billions-of-years stories conflict with the account of the worldwide Flood. Many of these billions-of-years stories put death before sin, which is an idea that attempts to destroy what God says about salvation. (Ken Ham, *Was There Death Before Adam Sinned?*) All old-earth stories contradict what Jesus said when He stated that God made Adam in the beginning of creation. (Bodie Hodge, *Jesus Devastates an Old Earth*) Having said that, let me be clear. God could have billions of years hidden somewhere undetectable in either the Bible or scientific observation. So far, all I'm saying is that no one I know of has been able to make up an internally and externally consistent billions-of-years story. Maybe someone will someday, but it would still be a story if that were to happen.

God has revealed six thousand years between Creation and the present and six days of Creation. Going beyond revelation gets us into speculation, and God will expose, as liars, those who add to His words. At the same time, there could be something we don't know. And yet, it's just silly to waste time speculating like that.

I (Rocky) asked Sandy for evidence, but Sandy refused to support his claims. Mostly, Sandy ignored the question. During the entire conversation (much of which isn't repeated here) I asked Sandy for the evidence ten times. Sandy ignored the question ten times. Ungodly thinkers never can show real evidence for their ungodly claims.

But Sandy kept asserting his claims were "well supported by evidence." We call this "phantom support" and "phantom evidence." Here, "evidence" is a magic-word fallacy since persuaders use the word "evidence" to give the illusion of evidence when no evidence exists. We notice Sandy uses the word "science" as a magic word as well, but it's phantom science. Sandy defines "science" as his opinion, so in his mind, his opinion is science. So, what Sandy calls "science" isn't science at all.

While Sandy has a distorted view of science, real science can be helpful and productive. Science without divine revelation must limit

itself to the present, what we can test, and what is material. Ungodly persuaders often try to irrationally use phantom science for political goals or ungodly religious goals, and that gives science a bad reputation. However, we'll leave the task of proving science has limits for further along in our journey. For now, we may have to adjust our attitudes toward science.

Getting back to our conversation, Sandy claims he's refusing to show evidence because I (Rocky) refuse to believe Sandy's claims without evidence. Sandy won't show any proof because I should just believe whatever Sandy says without proof. It would be nice if this conversation were just fictional, but it's a real conversation, and it's typical of many ungodly thinkers.

Sandy: The age of the universe has been arrived at in hundreds of ways, and you are trying to tell me they're all wrong?

Rocky: You claimed the record God left in His creation shows several billions of years. Without any assumptions at all, show me that what you say is true. You can try to coerce people as you're doing, and this coercion may work for you sometimes. However, without proof, you aren't going to convince me of your opinion. God has personally told me the Bible is true and without error, so I know this truth, but I don't know about your unsupported claims. You talk about a record, but I sense that this "record" is a figment of your imagination since you won't show proof.

Sandy: You are denying all of science, and you want me to show proof?

Sandy is again saying, "You ask for proof; therefore, I won't show proof because you must just take my word without any proof." He refuses to show proof for his claim of billions of years, and he identifies his claim of billions of years as "all of science." When an ungodly thinker is defending ungodly made-up stuff, such irrationality is the norm, not the exception.

Rocky: God revealed a scientific method, and He reveals reality through observation, but God doesn't depend on human assumption for His brand of science. His brand of

science provides proof, but ungodly science can't provide proof. Do you have a relationship with Christ?

Sandy ignored the question about a relationship with Christ. Instead of answering the question, Sandy changed the subject by demanding proof God could have gotten distant starlight to the earth in a few thousand earth years. This series of exchanges isn't printed here. Several cosmologies explain how distant starlight *could have* gotten to earth in a short time without magical-thinking finagle factors like dark matter or dark energy. I (Rocky) knew Sandy was trying to force the conversation off the topic by quibbling about theories, so I didn't focus on cosmologies. Instead, I directed the conversation to the real problem, resistance to Jesus Christ.

Rocky: You can look up information about young earth cosmologies at your leisure. As I said, all these cosmologies use assumptions, but I'm not interested in made-up stuff. I'm interested in reality. Do you have a relationship with Christ?

Sandy: I would not even know where to look. I've done my own research and have not found them, so maybe you can help me out if they exist. I assume, since they're so good, they've been published in scientific journals.

Sandy again ignores the question. He doesn't want to discuss a relationship with Christ. Notice the false open-mindedness. Also, notice the genetic fallacy regarding secularistic scientific journals.

Rocky: Creation.com has one of the best search functions. You can search there if you like. Why won't you say whether you have a relationship with Christ?

Sandy: Why is it when young-earth Creation people get challenged on their lack of real facts they want to question my faith? [NOTE: I (Rocky) never took a position on the age of the earth but rather said cosmologies other than big bang exist. Sandy is the one who doesn't have any facts.]

Rocky: I didn't question your faith. I asked whether you have a relationship with Christ. Do you have a relationship with Christ? I mean, do you know Him? Does the Holy

Spirit lead, teach, correct, and purify you moment by moment in every situation? Does He speak to you in real time?

Sandy: You have not given me any proof, and I have referred you to real proof.

The only thing I (Rocky) rejected was made-up stuff. Sandy again ignores the question about knowing Christ. Sandy's claim to have shown proof is an outright lie since he refused to show proof. He didn't even try to show proof but only made unsupported claims and repeatedly pronounced the words "proof," "evidence," and "science" with no real proof, evidence, or science.

Rocky: You haven't given me any proof, and you refuse to admit to knowing Christ. Do you refuse because you don't know Him? Why do you refuse to testify of His presence?

Sandy: I am waiting for you to tell me about these alternative cosmologies. Since you refer to them in the plural, I assume they are not that good. The real explanation requires only one, not plural. [Sandy again stonewalls by ignoring the question and again goes back to a question I had already answered.]

Rocky: The real explanation? A cosmology is a speculative explanation. It goes beyond observation. It goes beyond reality. So, no "real cosmological explanation" exists. All such explanations are made-up stuff. You're confusing reality with made-up stuff, which is hypostatization. Reality is more important than the land of make-believe, and so I want to ask you about knowing Christ. If you don't know Him, I want to tell you how you can know Him, but if you do know Him, I want to praise God that you know Him.

Sandy: Why do you need more than one cosmology?

Rocky: I don't need any stories. I prefer reality. I want you to know you can know Christ, and you can have this relationship. Whoever seeks Him finds Him.

Sandy: If I were not a Christian I would not want to hear about God from someone who denies reality. I have been researching this subject for about the same length of time you have. I have read books and watched videos and have seen little if any truth.

Sandy is making another circular argument in which he assumes his story of billions of years is reality and then uses this assumption to prove billions of years. It's also a fallacy to think made-up stuff is real stuff. Still, it's common for evolutionists to think their assumptions, stories, conceptual frameworks, ideas, or other forms of made-up stuff are real. They lose the distinction between make-believe and reality. We notice Sandy didn't want to talk about knowing Christ but chose instead to speak of being "a Christian." And yet, we notice he didn't even claim to be a Christian in the loosest sense of the word.

Rocky: I didn't ask if you identify with a religion. I asked whether you know Christ. I don't consider made-up stuff reality no matter how much someone uses appeal-to-ridicule fallacies to prove their points. You haven't found truth because all truth is hidden in Christ Jesus. You can't reason sanely to any conclusion without a relationship with Christ. When you open your mind to Him, the Holy Spirit begins to lead you into truth.

Sandy: If it is made-up stuff, I am sure you can prove it wrong.

Rocky: Your reasoning commits an appeal-to-ignorance fallacy. Truth is a positive thing, and sound logic requires proof in the form of a true premise. The only way you can have a true premise is if God reveals the premise to you. Therefore, if you don't acknowledge Him, even the things you know are unproven, and you can't tell the difference between reality and make-believe. I want to tell you you can know Jesus Christ. You must come to this relationship. If you yield yourself to Him, the Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth one day, but it has to start with opening up to Him.

Sandy: People like you are the reason atheists are atheists. If you don't believe in evolution or billions of years, you don't believe in science. If you don't believe in science, no one will believe you. You will keep people from coming to Christ.

Rocky: Neither evolutionism nor old-earth dogmatism is science. No one observed either of these. No one has to embrace made-up stuff to bring another person to the truth. Christians who don't know Christ and never listen to His voice or obey Him can't bring anyone to Christ. They may bring someone to sign up for a religious organization, but Christ isn't a religion. Christ is real. How would a person who doesn't know Christ bring someone else to Christ?

That conversation shows the futility of godless thinking. Sandy may be a religious person, but he can't or won't testify of Jesus Christ's wisdom, knowledge, and power.

Why the Conflict?

Ungodly thinkers and godly thinkers conflict because they each have a different starting point for thinking. An ungodly thinker bases every thought on made-up stuff while a godly thinker bases thought on God and what God is saying in the moment. Before we finish our journey, we'll understand in detail how we can know reality and avoid being deceived by lies.

Meanwhile, to an ungodly thinker, revelation seems like a strange basis for thinking. To a follower of Christ, made-up stuff seems like a strange basis for thinking. But made-up stuff can lead to weird conclusions. In this conflict, ungodly thinkers project their own problems onto godly thinkers by accusing godly thinkers of being irrational. And ungodly Christian thinkers sometimes accuse godly thinkers of creating atheists just as Sandy accused me. However, Brennan Manning gives a different cause of atheism:

The greatest cause of atheism is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door

and deny Him with their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.

Brennan Manning is largely correct. Although we must remember, self-righteousness and virtue signalling also turn people away from Christ. Here's a strange fact. Ungodly Christians usually have many works, but their works aren't God's works since they didn't originate in God. They are not God's works. They are human self-righteousness. They deny Christ with their lifestyles.

The God Complex

Ungodly thinking can go anywhere since it's based on made-up stuff. Godly thinking must stick to reality, so it's constrained. Godly thinking is a restricted (strait) and narrow way.

Rocky Rockbuilder: God will judge the ungodly. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Sandy Sandbuilder: Do you feel those you keep calling ungodly are of God since everything is from God?

Rocky: God created everything. But much of creation rebelled and separated themselves from God.

Sandy: Since God is the ultimate power there is no separation. Separation is an illusion.

Rocky: Without divine revelation, you're trying to reason beyond your immediate sensory experience. When you do that, you become irrational.

Sandy: I do reason beyond my senses because God created me to do that.

Rocky: That's a bare assertion. You're trying to reason beyond your immediate sensory experience without divine revelation. When you do that, you become irrational.

Sandy: According to Scripture wasn't man made in God's image?

Rocky: Do you submit yourself to Jesus Christ? Is He Lord of your life? Do you praise Him and worship Him? Have you dedicated yourself to obeying Him in every part of your life?

Sandy: My submission is to God. We are the ones to become the Christ just as Jesus did.

Rocky: That doesn't answer the questions I asked.

Sandy: That's the answer I have. I submit to God. And because of that, I become a Christ just as my brother Jesus the Christ did.

Sandy reasons beyond his senses without divine revelation. By the power of his own imagination, he thinks he's going to become another Christ separate from Jesus. All he needed was assumption to make himself believe this lie. He just needed a little made-up stuff.

Sandy is giving the truth a little twist. God tells us we must become like Christ. We must be holy as our Father in heaven is holy. In Romans 8:29, God tells us His purpose. We will be conformed to the image of His Son. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, God tells us the Holy Spirit transforms us from glory to glory into the same image. Nowhere does it say we will be individual little christs. We will be in unity as the body of Christ in perfect submission to the Head, Jesus Christ, in heaven.

The Basis of Thought and Discernment

We, as followers of Christ, may never ask enough questions to expose the truth. Ungodly thinkers base every claim on made-up stuff. This made-up stuff causes ungodly thinkers to say things that seem crazy to us. Rather than listening, we may argue about details, or we may just shut down the conversation in the face of what we perceive to be such obvious irrationality. But, if we ask enough of the right questions, we get down to the basis of thought. Then we see ungodly thinkers base their most dogmatically-held beliefs on their own assumptions or the assumptions of certain intellectuals.

On the other hand, when we faithfully listen to God's voice and yield to Him in submission, we base our thinking on what He says. We base

our thinking on the living faith that flows when we acknowledge His voice. But we'll continue to meet those who base every thought on made-up stuff as they dogmatically claim to know, by the mechanism of made-up stuff, that God isn't leading, teaching, or correcting anyone anywhere. However, we know Christ always does what He says He'll do, to instruct, teach, and direct us. We know this truth by revelation confirmed by experience and by God's faith that comes as we listen to His voice.

Though we can't fully grasp the power and authority of God's voice, we can have some small inkling of it. This same voice said, "Let there be," and there was. By this voice, the universe and everything in it came into existence. This same power of His voice creates a new heart in us. This voice imparts deity into us when we're born again, putting Jesus Christ into our hearts. It imparts gifts of the Spirit and ministries to lowly humans. It's the voice that transfigures us into the same image of Christ, cleanses us, and builds up Christ in us as we yield ourselves wholly to it.

I [God] will instruct you and teach you concerning the path you should walk; I will direct you with my eye. ~ Psalm 32:8 International Standard Version

Therefore Jesus was saying to the Jews having believed in Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set free you." ~ John 8:31-32 Berean Literal Bible

We can't help but notice God's method, a method that will cause us to know the truth. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples (ones taught by Me), and *you will know the truth*." Still, this Scripture is even more exciting when we look into the original language. Someone translated this Scripture into English. We need to look at the language. If we translate this Scripture literally, His "word" is His "utterance." We know the truth by dwelling or journeying in His utterance. So He's talking about living our daily lives in His presence, listening to His voice, and being set free from slavery.

If we live our lives in the utterance of Jesus, we'll know the truth, and the truth will set us free. ~ Application of John

8:31-32 in modern English

If we live our lives in the utterance of Jesus, we're led by Him, and we respond in obedience. And the Holy Spirit is telling us His leading and power results in works but not self-righteousness, so human effort isn't helpful. Rather, we submit ourselves to His love and allow His love to do His works through us. This training leads to maturity, and maturity leads to discernment as the following verse points out:

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. ~ Hebrews 5:14 English Standard Version

Here, the word translated as "trained" is a word that means "vigorous exercise," so this training isn't passive. Also, the word "by" points to "constant practice," and this phrase "constant practice" is translated from a word that means habit of body or mind, so it means our behavior.

. . . who have their powers of discernment *vigorously exercised* by constant practice to distinguish between good and evil. ~ literal

As we look to God for understanding, we see how this truth ties into what James said about faith being dead without works. That's why our journey will thoroughly explore how we can discern truth from falsehood. In other words, we're laying out a broad outline now, but we'll get down to the detail.

You may ask in your heart, "How can we recognize a message that the LORD has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and the message does not come to pass or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. ~ Deuteronomy 18:21 & 22 Berean Study Bible

This is a word from God. Listen to His voice. Someone may say, "I'm a prophet." Then, they may predict what God is going to do. It doesn't happen. The prophet tries to explain it away. The prophet ignores it. The followers of the prophet forget it. That's dangerous. That attitude

numbs the spiritual sense. Don't be discouraged if you're deceived. God is exercising your senses. You just heard a false prophecy. Allow God to teach you discernment from that.

Trip 7: Reason and Science

Contrary to the accusations of some, we followers of Christ don't renounce reason. We renounce unsound reason and unsound logic since unsound thinking is insanity, and sound thinking is sanity. But sound reason requires a true premise and valid form. Also, if we add anything to that true premise or diminish any part of that true premise, we reason insanely. We can't know anything by insane reasoning.

Though some accuse Christ-followers of being anti-science, we don't renounce reasonable and helpful science either. Rather, we only renounce unreasonable and unhelpful pseudoscience and deceptive phantom science. Since God is the Author of all the principles of reasonable and helpful science, we must come to know the Author of the universe before we can truly understand science.

We've already looked into the brute-beast mind and its inability to extrapolate beyond sensory experience. When the brute-beast mind tries to make statements about the unobservable past, it resorts to making up stuff. Science isn't made-up stuff. Science is observation, intuition, experimentation, and testing. Intuition isn't always made-up stuff, but sometimes it is. God can move through intuition.

Rocky Rockbuilder: Unless God reveals it, we can't know it. We can tell stories about the past using our brute-beast minds, the ones corrupted by the fall. But we can't self-generate information. God didn't equip us with an innate ability to self-generate truth.

Sandy Sandbuilder: So you're actively arguing that we shouldn't scientifically investigate anything whatsoever.

Because what you said is a blanket condemnation, so please return your computer to the scientists, and we will smash it for you, and you can be Amish.

Rocky: That's another straw man argument, but I'm not surprised you would resort to fallacies. Every conclusion using ungodly thinking springs from fallacy. We need either divine revelation or assumption for science. There's no dichotomy between science and assumption. There's no dichotomy between science and divine revelation. With assumptions, you just have to accept divine revelation about natural laws, the order of nature, the existence of reality, etc. and call these revelations "assumptions." Your other real assumptions that aren't divine revelations with the "assumption" label, those assumptions launch you into the land of make-believe and pseudoscience.

Here, we need to respond to Sandy's slur against the Amish. Sandy doesn't realize how well-educated the Amish are. They can actually do math and think rationally. Many college graduates can't make that claim.

In direct conflict with what I (Rocky) said about divine revelation, an ungodly thinker may claim naturalism is the only rational position or the default position and all science must assume naturalism. Naturalism removes God. However, naturalism forces irrationality in science since naturalism gives no cause for the regularity of nature on which all scientific method depends. And naturalism also results in stories like big bang or evolutionism that violate laws of physics and rely on mystical language and imagined entities like dark matter and dark energy.

Not only that but where could natural laws come from without a natural lawgiver and a natural law enforcer? If we have a cause for natural laws and that cause is reliable, we can do science rationally. However, without Christ, we would need to assume the continued regularity of natural laws. Jesus Christ enforces every law of nature everywhere at every moment. God reveals this truth through the following three Scriptures:

And He is before all things, and *in Him all things hold together*. ~ Colossians 1:17 Berean Literal Bible

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature, *upholding all things* by His powerful word. ~ Hebrews 1:3a Berean Study Bible

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen. ~ Romans 11:36 Berean Study Bible

Jesus Christ is holding everything together and enforcing all the laws of nature through His rhema, His utterance. God created all things through His utterance. Now, He enforces all natural laws through His utterance. Rhema means "that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, thing spoken, word." God is necessary for science, and God reveals reality through science:

because the known of God is manifest among them, for God has revealed it to them. For from the Creation of the world His invisible qualities, both His eternal power and divinity, are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, for them to be without excuse. ~ Romans 1:19-20 Berean Literal Bible

And yet, ungodly scientific speculation conflicts with Scripture. Persuaders commonly label these speculations as "science," but no scientist can observe speculations. No scientist can observe a story. Nonetheless, when schools, news programs, and movies call the speculations "science," some theologians believe the speculations are science.

Some theologians have chosen to deal with the conflict between ungodly scientific speculation and Scripture by putting science and religion into separate compartments. They compartmentalize thinking. When they think about theology, they use one set of assumptions and one authority. When they think about science, they use a different set of assumptions and a different authority.

By keeping each of these compartments separate, they don't have to deal with the conflicting claims in their worldviews. When they're with their ungodly friends, they reason from the ungodly side of their

worldview. When they're with people of their denomination (or non-denomination or pre-denomination), they reason from the religious side of their worldview. Ne'er the twain shall meet. This thinking isn't healthy or necessary since no observation of science conflicts with Scripture. Human assumptions can make Scripture appear to conflict with scientific observation, but no such conflict exists.

By revelation, we know God reveals reality through the Bible and every method He mentions in the Bible. And, as we just read in Romans 1, God reveals "through what has been made . . . being understood by the things made." The revelation in this Scripture is one way we know God reveals reality through scientific observation of the things God has created. In contrast to what some believe, we don't have to figure out this revelation from observation. Otherwise, this Scripture would read, "for they can figure it out." God didn't say that though. Instead, it says, "for God has revealed it to them."

In the original Greek, this Scripture uses the word "phaneroo." It says, "for God has phaneroo them." This word "phaneroo" is translated as "showed," "manifested," "shewed," "made it clear," "showed," "revealed," or "made it evident." The lexicon gives this definition: "to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, deeds, or in any other way."

God reveals reality, and He reveals it to scientists, non-scientists, unbelievers, and believers. In the same way, He's been revealing reality since the day of Creation, and now He just keeps unfolding revelation as quickly as we embrace it. Consider the following quotes from "In Christ All Things Hold Together, The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology":

To be sure, the fact that Scripture is supreme in its authority, and the only source and norm for orthodox Christian doctrine, does not mean we are always correct in interpreting Scripture. So it can seem (and may sometimes be) reasonable to consider whether some alternative ways of reading Scripture might make it easier to accept some apparently well-confirmed claim of science. And yet there are dangers here all the same. One of these is the unstated assumption that the best science is on the same level as the

Word of God. God's Word has an eternal and ultimate validity, while even the best scientific theories are the products of finite, fallen minds and have at most a temporal and penultimate status. A marriage between the eternal Word of God and temporal science is apt to produce a widow as the science changes.

It is unwise to rely on fallible conjectures that may tomorrow be consigned to the dustbin of science, in order to give the final seal of veracity on Scripture's claims.

Simply joining Christianity with the latest and greatest scientific theory is a bad idea because it creates the false sense that the authority of the Word rests on that theory.

It is precisely because Christians have a place to stand, on Christ, who is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), that they do not have to lean on their own understanding (Prov. 3:5–6), including science, as a place for final answers. As Veith argues, this actually frees Christians to be both more skeptical and more open-minded toward the world's ideas than the secularist.

The controlling idea for the New Atheist or opponents of biblical Christianity is that what we should believe about God is defined by what science has revealed . . .

God can teach us a lesson through history. Historically, what was called "solid science" has died. We Christians shouldn't be dogmatic about the "settled science" of the day. We may hear the reports of some scientific discovery. We may talk about it. We might swallow the so-called "science." We may even show our dogmatism. We're trying to be scientific after all. People know we're followers of Christ. They don't see a difference between our faith and our scientific dogmatism. They don't see a difference between the part of us that knows Jesus Christ and the part of us that got dogmatic about so-called "science." Then, someone proves the so-called "science" false, Satan uses that scientific failure to say Christ has been proven false or the Bible has been proven false.

The idea that God might authoritatively reveal the truth of Himself to us from above is rejected in favor of a pragmatic

theology from below, which does not see religion as a matter of truth at all. ~ *The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*

What is needed instead is an epistemology of the cross, which accepts the creaturely limitations of all our mental constructs and humbly receives illumination from above through faith in Christ and His Word. ~ *The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*

No longer are we just acknowledging a being who exists outside of our ability to define, but we are going to double down by acting on the guidance and authority of a divine being whose primary method of communication is through my own subjective experience. As a matter of fact, the more I relinquish authority and control to this divine being through obedience to His written word and supernatural personal communication, the more I come into contact with His presence at work in my life and the lives of those around me. ~ Dirk Bartkoski

God does reveal Himself to us. Christ lives within and reveals reality through science and other means. Of course, we need to define “science” carefully. We’ll explore the ways God reveals Himself and all reality to us as we continue our journey.

How do I walk between believing in what I cannot prove and the pursuit of proof for all that I believe? How do I navigate the paradoxes of science and Pentecostalism? It starts with a heavy dose of humility. From the very beginning of Genesis, the story of humankind is the story of humanity’s pursuit to be equal to God. Even if we were to understand all the physical laws that govern this universe, many of the fundamental physical processes we do understand exist as continuums of probability which inherently limits our pursuit of omniscience. ~ Dirk Bartkoski

I believe this universe is designed to reveal God to those who are willing to remove themselves from His position. ~ Dirk Bartkoski

The atheist and proud Christian often try to take God's position. But those who are humble receive God's blessing and revelation. Science is tentative. God is absolute. Our knowledge, as Christ-followers, is partial and imperfect. However, the Holy Spirit is teaching us, leading us, and correcting us as we travel toward the finish line.

First, we live at particular locations in space and time and our attempts to reconstruct the past and to anticipate the future are fraught with uncertainty ~ *The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*

We'll also look deeply into this problem as we continue our journey. We aren't looking at a problem with science but rather a problem with pseudoscience. It's a problem of the brute-beast, human mind trying to reason beyond the five senses without divine revelation.

On the one hand, it is true that modern science does not require a person to be a Christian: it recognizes a general human condition, according to which the procedures and results of science must be accessible to any competent investigator, regardless of ideological or religious persuasion. So it is fair to say that practicing science does not require one to see science as a vocation. But on the other hand, those scientists who are Christian lose a great deal when they are trained to see their work merely as a profession. Indeed, as Nancy Pearcey has argued, these scientists often experience considerable internal conflict, because they do not see how to relate their life as a Christian with their work as a scientist. ~ *The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*

When we go out to do our work, we'll be more successful and satisfied if we take Christ with us to our work. We know the Person Who has all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Why not bring Him along to work? Shouldn't we develop that relationship? Shouldn't we communicate with the only Counselor, Teacher, and Leader Who knows all things?

A Christ against culture approach is liable to reject at least some of science on the grounds that its assumptions, aims, practices, and claims conflict with allegiance to Christ and

His Word. At a moderate level, this might involve refusing to seriously evaluate or use particular statements, theories, and technologies. A more extreme reaction would be to reject the work and institutions of science altogether as idolatrous and godless diversions from Christ. Either way, it is likely that Christians with this perspective will feel uncomfortable about scientific work and this will disincline them to pursue science as a vocation. ~ *The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*

The culture is the world. This quote isn't telling us to make friends with the world. God tells us whoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. We aren't of the culture, but we're in the culture. We influence the culture for Christ. God has revealed some knowledge to people who deny Christ, and we can learn from them. However, they can only think like brute-beasts, and they know it too. When they start to talk about history, the future, morality, knowledge, or truth, they're out of their league. We may want to be gentle if we have to tell them that, but we need to remember they don't have a basis for rational thought.

Evolution is just as religious as Creation because both views require faith on the part of their adherents. No one saw God create the universe, and no one saw the "big bang" occur. Both views are religious as far as origins are concerned. ~ *Fables and Facts about Creation and Evolution*

Some people label stories about evolution and the age of the earth as "science." They also label naturalism "science." Naturalism eliminates God. On this journey, we'll spend considerable effort defining "science" and showing the difference between science and pseudoscience.

Revelation

It's time to clarify the term "revelation," although we'll deal with this question in detail in "The Extra-biblical revelation argument." We've touched on it already. However, we need to dig deeper.

When we read Scripture, we're interacting with the Almighty. As we read the Bible, God tells us He reveals reality using methods other than the Bible. We've just considered the example of this revelation in the first chapter of Romans. True science is revelation, and true science never contradicts Scripture.

Even so, *speculations* of scientists and theologians often contradict Scripture because speculation is just made-up stuff. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, and God reveals and confirms this fact through Scripture and experience. And this revelation is good news since, given the problem the human mind has in proving a premise is true, sound reason can never consist of a cold, lifeless, intellectual exercise. Truth always directly involves Jesus. He is Truth, and outside of His presence, there's no true knowledge as we have seen. We'll see even more.

Hearing from God may be mocked by some like Joy Behar, but it is nothing new and it's definitely not mental illness as she said. The Bible is full of examples of people hearing from God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ know what this means. I'm thankful that today He still speaks to us through His Word and through His Holy Spirit working in our lives. Aren't you? ~ Franklin Graham

If we were to try to deny the methods of revelation God mentions through the Bible, our denial would be extra-biblical. The Bible doesn't deny those methods. Instead, the Bible refutes such a denial since it lays out several ways God reveals besides speaking to us through the Bible. Therefore, if we were to assert God reveals only through Scripture, we would be making an extra-biblical assertion in conflict with Scripture. Besides, we would be claiming no one could know Christ. We would be saying the Holy Spirit doesn't lead anyone in this daily walk.

Counterfeits of divine revelation exist. So what's the issue? By being too broadly defined, the term "extra-biblical" confuses us, so we need a term more specific than "extra-biblical." When God spoke to Paul, it was extra-biblical but not in conflict with Scripture. Still, some extra-

biblical doctrines conflict with Scripture, and the conflict with Scripture shows these extra-biblical doctrines false.

Similarly, some extra-biblical doctrines add speculative interpretations to Scripture from the fallen sarx mind. Even if they don't conflict with Scripture, they violate God's command not to add to His words or to diminish His words. And as long as we're going down this path, remember humans aren't the only ones who make up stuff. Demons also lie, which is another form of made-up stuff. Satan even used Scripture to tempt Christ, but Christ easily detected the deception just as Christ in you can detect deception.

Despite these errors, God can say things not specifically laid out in Scripture. For instance, God can lead a man to choose the right wife. God the Father can draw an atheist to Christ by speaking directly to his conscience or through a Christian's example. The Holy Spirit can tell someone to apologize for speaking harshly. Such leading is technically extra-biblical. However, God commands us to seek His leading. Therefore, we need this form of extra-biblical knowledge. Since the term "extra-biblical" can mean both good and evil, it's not a helpful term, so we'll consider the difference between made-up stuff and divine revelation. The dichotomy between made-up stuff and divine revelation is more meaningful than the term "extra-biblical."

Something being extra-biblical isn't necessarily wrong or evil, but making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff true is evil. It's a lie, and lies are an abomination to God. We can easily see the problem with making theological claims that require adding made-up stuff to Scripture. And some extra-biblical doctrines originate in assumption-based interpretations of the Bible. We'll delve more deeply into distinguishing between reality and make-believe when we get to these upcoming trips:

- Exploring Ungodly Thinking
- The Problem of Worldviews
- How We Lose Touch with Reality
- Knowledge of Truth versus Opinions
- God Speaks
- Discerning Truth
- Warnings about Divine Revelation
- Arguments of Skeptics

- Skeptical Arguments to Rationalize Basing Reason on Made-up Stuff
- Skeptical Arguments against Divine Revelation.

Let's pray.

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we bow before You in submission. Lord, we desire to do Your will. We thank You for the many promises You make to us as You speak through Scripture. You have promised You won't give us something other than the Holy Spirit when we ask for the Holy Spirit. You have promised we'll know the words that come from You if we truly desire to do Your will. For that reason, we pray You give us the desire to do Your will and the power to do Your will. Amen.

Sanity Killing Thought Patterns

Certain ways of thinking frustrate logic, and some ideas distort reason. Also, a countless number of thought patterns kill sanity, while unstable philosophies destroy our ability to be reasonable.

When philosophy leaves out God and looks for answers to life only within the natural world, it cannot discover reality. ~ The Truth Project

This quote mentions philosophy, but philosophy isn't the only place humans have trouble discovering reality. For example, a CREV Creation-Evolution Headlines Newsletter states:

. . . evolutionary explanations are vacuous stories floating over the observations . . .

"Vacuous" means without content, empty, silly, or mindless. However, evolutionary explanations aren't the only vacuous explanations. Human explanations of many types go beyond the observations and experiences. And these explanations may stretch the truth or add made-up stuff to the truth. Sometimes, these explanations diminish the truth. When human explanations expand on reality this way, they distort reality and are mindless, twisting reality in vacuous thinking.

Therefore, it's not the subject that turns human explanations into mindless stories. Whenever premises don't prove the conclusion is true, the result is mindlessness. Simply put, whenever a persuader's supposed proof doesn't prove the persuader's claim is true, the result is mindlessness. For example, if proof isn't true, we can't use it to prove anything. Untruth can't prove anything. Untrue or unproven "proof" isn't proof; it's phantom proof. Vacuous stories are vacuous regardless of what they explain.

As a result, when humans make up stories, those stories are always mindless, and those stories are mindless because they consist of made-up stuff. Those stories always float over substance, whether substance consists of observations, experiences, Scriptures, or other truths. The problem comes in if we confuse made-up stories and assumptions with those observations, experiences, Scriptures, or truths. The made-up stuff is never the same as the observations, experiences, Scriptures, or truths. Confusing made-up stuff with any of these is insane.

What is truth? ~ Pontius Pilate, speaking to Jesus Christ

Pilate, a sincere ungodly thinker, didn't see truth as a sensible goal or something we can know or even define. We'll follow the lead of The Truth Project (<http://www.thetruthproject.org/>) and define "truth" as reality and "reality" as what has substance or has real existence. Knowledge, as we're defining it, is certainty about reality. We see a distinct difference between concept and reality since concept consists of mere thoughts about reality. The conceptual part of those thoughts is made-up stuff. For example, reality isn't any of the following:

- opinion
- assumption
- concept
- theory
- theological concept
- lie
- misconception

We're defining "knowing" as precise, correct, and accurate knowledge of reality, and we're defining "knowing" as knowing the truth with certainty. In an opposing viewpoint, some thinkers are certain no one can be certain of anything, but the journey we're taking will disprove this self-refuting myth.

Truly, Jesus Christ cares about our thinking since He speaks through Scripture about how to think. And He wants to guide our thinking in the right way. Not only does He reveal this truth, but we also know Him. He's our wisdom. Since we're open to knowing Christ more deeply and following Christ more closely, this expedition is going in the right direction to meet our goals. We groan for this relationship. Our entire beings cry out for Him because following His Spirit will result in a sound mind and every good blessing. Our relationship with Christ is the key to happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction.

For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power,
and of love, and of a sound mind. ~ 2 Timothy 1:7 King
James 2000

The Foundation of Thought

We've discovered, without exception, all sound reasoning starts with a true premise. The premise is the proof. Therefore, if no one has proved the premise, the reasoning can't prove anything. A premise is made-up stuff if we don't know it to be true. It isn't sane to make up stuff and call the made-up stuff "true," nor is it sane to use made-up stuff as proof for something else.

Remember when Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was? Simon said Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus told Simon God the Father had given Simon this revelation. Then Jesus called Simon "pebble" (Petros). Jesus said He would build His Church on a mighty boulder (petra). This mighty boulder is the Foundation of salvation, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, reason, and the Church. Some theologians teach the mighty boulder is Simon. In truth, Simon is just a pebble built on our firm Foundation. Christ is that Foundation. So this journey isn't about Petros. This journey is about Christ, our firm Petra Foundation for everything including reason. God says a lot about foundations through the Bible:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise master builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. For no one is able to lay another foundation, besides the one being already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ~ 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 Berean Study Bible

having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone ~ Ephesians 3:20 Berean Study Bible

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. ~ Acts 4:11-12 English Standard Version

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its collapse! ~ Matthew 7:24-27 Berean Study Bible

Can we find a sound foundation for thought without Christ? Though the world uses many methods of thinking, can even one of these ungodly methods claim sanity?

We want to be rational. We desire truth, wisdom, goodness, and righteousness. Therefore, our desire points us to God Who created us. So we follow Christ, the Source of all truth and wisdom. Jesus Christ is the Truth, and God is Love. That means both Truth and Love are impossible without God, and this journey will uncover proof for this statement before we're finished traveling. Love fulfills the whole Law. Breaking the Law is straying from the Way, and straying from the Way is sin. To understand this truth, we must realize Christ is the narrow and restricted Way Who leads to the Life, and Christ is also

the Life we want and need. He's the Way, the Truth Who guides us on this way, and the Life to which the Way leads.

All treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. Christ is our wisdom. And wisdom is righteousness, holiness, and redemption. That's why respect for Christ is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.

We intuitively know Jesus Christ is the Source, so we walk in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit, we proceed out of darkness and into His marvelous light. No, we don't pretend to walk without actually going anywhere, but we progress into truth as the Holy Spirit leads us and we submit to Him. As a result, we're constantly leaving darkness behind. Rather than darkness, we love light. And so, we don't harden our hearts. Even though God shakes our darkened and fallen fleshly natures when He exposes us to His light, we don't cling to our former lies. Instead, we walk into ever-brighter understanding and clarity.

The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that grows brighter until the full light of day. ~ Proverbs 4:18
International Standard Version

Trip 8: Exploring Ungodly Thinking

In the eighth leg of our journey, we'll explore the depth of ungodly thinking, and we'll dig through the delusion and confusion, getting all the way down to its crumbling foundation. For now, let's inspect three sanity-killing philosophies that destroy rational thinking. We find these three philosophies throughout modern society.

Sanity-killing philosophy #1: "Reason is, in itself, a source of knowledge superior to and independent of either divine

revelation or observation.” This philosophy is called “rationalism.”

Sanity-killing philosophy #2: “God doesn’t reveal anything to anyone.” This philosophy is part of naturalism. Naturalism is a fancy word for the religion of ungodliness.

Sanity-killing philosophy #3: “All knowledge is personal. No absolutes exist. Everything is relative. Each person has his or her own reality.” We call this philosophy “relativism.” It’s part of a broader philosophy called “post-modernism.”

Skepticism

Since the nature of reality severely restricts knowledge of truth, many ungodly scholars say no one can know truth. They’ve observed that ungodly thinking can’t know anything. They don’t want godliness, although godly thinking could free them. Skeptics are *certain* we can’t be certain about anything, so they *believe* it makes no sense to believe anything. How can they be certain about this uncertainty if no one can be certain about anything? And why would they believe this idea when they say no one should believe anything? Their self-refuting claims are nonsense. But many teachers proclaim skepticism as a way to overcome their other fallacy of claiming the universal negative: “God doesn’t exist.”

When anti-God thinkers claim, “God doesn’t exist,” they assert a universal negative, and since universal negatives claim omniscience, this claim falls apart for anti-God thinkers. Not even circular reasoning can effectively camouflage the foolishness, so some atheists redefine the word “atheist” to mean someone without a belief in God. They redefine “atheist” to try to hide this problem in their thinking. In short, they claim they simply lack belief. Craftily, they make this claim to frame the discussion so they can use an argument-from-ignorance fallacy to imply, “Prove God, or He doesn’t exist.” They go through these mental gymnastics to make it harder to detect their universal negative: “God doesn’t exist.”

Atheist: I simply lack belief in God. Prove God exists, and I’ll surely believe in Him.

Me: I simply lack belief in the lack of belief in God. Prove God hasn't revealed His existence to you, and I'll surely believe you.

Atheist: I told you I lack belief. I know whether or not I have belief.

Me: God tells me you're willingly ignorant. He says you refuse to acknowledge Him, thank Him, or give Him glory. You refuse even though He has revealed Himself, through the things He has created, to all people including you. Why should I accept your personal testimony rather than His? And why don't you hold my personal testimony in the same regard as your personal testimony about a supposed lack of belief?

The new definition of "atheist" is a definist fallacy. The fallacy doesn't help the anti-God thinker's case for several reasons. It gives no rational way to support a claim like "*I don't know whether God exists.*" Anti-God thinkers can't prove they haven't suppressed this truth in their deceitful trickery. God says they have suppressed this truth in their deceitful trickery. They can't prove they don't know God exists. They can't even prove their claim to themselves. They may insist they don't know, but they can't insist on it without committing fallacies. Since God says anti-God thinkers know He exists, God's words are proof they know. And God also says they know a lot about Him. They know about His righteousness and His judgment. God says He turned them over to their own corrupted minds, and they've suppressed the truth in their deceitful trickery. Also, God says they're willingly ignorant of the Creation event, the global Flood, and the coming judgment.

In response, anti-God thinkers claim God is untruthful and they're the truthful ones. They ask us to believe their bare claim of "*lack of knowledge.*" They ask us to disbelieve God when He says they know. However, they can't prove this claim or any other since they suppress truth through their deceitful trickery, and their corrupted minds deceive them. They've closed their minds to God, building elaborate worldviews and filling their lives with many distractions to keep themselves from being aware of His reality.

A Skeptic Vision

Skeptic: I'm no longer a Christian.

Me: Did you turn from following Christ or didn't you ever experience His moment by moment leading and correction?

Skeptic: I never imagined I'd find anything more wonderful than my daily walk with Jesus and the joy of the Lord, and yet I did.

As we can see, the skeptic is claiming certainty, and he's certain of his "joy." But what makes him certain his so-called "joy" is real? Although not included here, the skeptic went on about his experience with Christ before abandoning Christ, which led to the following exchange:

Me: From that, it sounds like you did know Him, and you heard His voice, but it sounds like you just walked away from Him and chose something else. Some people don't think that's possible, but I've seen it's possible in my own life as I started to walk toward my own will and desires. When I tried to depend on my own understanding, His voice became dull. Then I started having trouble knowing the difference between my mind and the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Skeptic: Right. When I was a young child of seven, after begging Jesus to save me but doubting my salvation, I had many Christians assuring me I was a Christian. Do you think they were lying? I know the joy of the Lord, and I know how it feels to have a personal relationship with Jesus. The human mind can do incredible things. But after reading the Greek New Testament through 11 times in Greek, I could no longer believe due to the absurdities. I was a licensed pastor, but I had to give that up for the sake of epistemic integrity.

We can't know all about the skeptic's experience, but we may have a clue in his words. He's saying a relationship with Jesus is a feeling. Feelings are fickle. Feelings can come from a variety of sources. This statement conflicted with his former statement about following Christ

and listening to His voice. From this statement, it sounds like the skeptic was conforming to peer pressure from his local church rather than finding Christ, but we don't know that.

The skeptic is certain the human mind is capable of deception. We know, by revelation, the human mind can deceive us. The human senses can fool us too. The skeptic admits this weakness, and then the skeptic ignores the deceptiveness of the human mind as he asserts his *certainty* of supposed absurdities in the New Testament. Skeptics live with continuously conflicted thoughts. He's certain his logic is perfect when he claims to have found absurdities in the New Testament, but, at the same time, he can't be certain about anything.

He's concerned with what he calls "epistemic integrity." Think about what "epistemic" means. It means relating to knowledge. This man is a skeptic who claims knowledge is impossible, yet he's concerned about having integrity regarding the knowledge he claims can't exist.

The skeptic presupposes the absurdities rather than stating them. These are phantom absurdities, and we'll explain how we know as we continue our pilgrimage. However, this skeptic is certain about what he calls "absurdities in the New Testament." He's certain enough of his rationalizations about the New Testament that he's willing to deny his actual experiences with the living Christ if he had any. Finally, he's concerned about integrity, which exposes his inner conflict since integrity is an idea he can't verify in his worldview.

Skeptic: I might ask you some questions about the coherency of your belief system later if you don't mind.

When discussing ideas, it's common for skeptics to want to ask questions, but they rarely like to answer questions. All too often, they obnoxiously turn the discussion into a game of "Now I've got you." This game works against a person with no rational basis for thought because it works to expose the foolishness of ungodly thinking in anyone, including Christians. So it's not a bad thing to ask questions since asking questions can expose vacuous thinking. However, it's rude to turn a conversation into a nasty game, and it's irrational to demand an unequal burden of proof.

Me: That's fine. I'm not a theologian, but I'm learning to perceive God's voice and to respond in submission to Him.

In other words, I don't follow a belief system. I've come to know Christ, and all *my* arguments shatter in His presence, so I listen to His voice of truth and follow Him.

Skeptic: I will also have questions about your epistemology. The process you used to determine whether it's God or something else less honest talking to you.

Me: It's a walk from glory to glory of learning to perceive. It started about 65 years ago when I was young, but about 50 years ago, God showed me the weakness of human thought. He explained, in various ways, that human thought can't be rational without divine revelation. I now understand this truth from the rules of logic and the Münchhausen trilemma. I would like to ask you how you, without divine revelation, justify any reasoning at all without knowing your premise is true.

Skeptic: I believe I cannot be absolutely certain about anything apart from my immediate sensations.

Once again, the skeptic claims certain belief. He believes he can't be certain, and he believes he can reason to his belief in absolute uncertainty and be certain of it. He also believes he can be certain about his immediate sensations, his five senses, and his emotions. The skeptic is certain about the reality of logic and reason, and yet he said he could only be certain about immediate sensations. However, neither logic nor reason is an immediate sensation. We see the conflict plainly, but the skeptic has blinded his own eyes to it.

He's also certain his immediate sensations are genuine. He's certain evil spirits or chemical reactions within his body couldn't possibly induce these sensations.

Going back to a previous claim, “. . . after reading the Greek New Testament through 11 times in Greek, I could no longer believe due to the absurdities.” Since he can only be certain of his immediate sensations, how could he be certain of his analysis of the New Testament? He couldn't, and we would find, if we took the time and he allowed it, every so-called “absurdity” depends on assumptions. Every so-called “absurdity” depends on made-up stuff. An ungodly thinker can only base thought on made-up stuff as we'll more fully

explore on this trip when we get to the ungodly thinking problem. Ungodly thinkers have no other choice for thinking, so we know ungodly thinkers base their arguments against Scripture on made-up stuff.

Also, why should he be certain about his immediate sensations? By divine revelation, we know his five senses are somewhat reliable, but he rejects divine revelation. And he includes emotions like a feeling he calls “joy” in his sensations. Emotional sensations are unreliable. As already mentioned, his belief in skepticism isn’t an immediate sensation. Instead, it’s a rationalized belief system he hasn’t reasoned rationally. Irrationally, he firmly believes in his ability to reason from made-up stuff to a complex and selective mix of dogmatism and skepticism.

Me: Why do you believe you can’t be certain of anything except your immediate sensations when you have no proof? Why do you believe your immediate sensations?

Skeptic: I can’t be wrong to believe I am feeling joy when I feel joy since there is no necessary intermediate mechanism. But how are you absolutely certain it is God speaking to you when you feel He is?

Again, the skeptic claims he can’t be wrong; this time about something he calls “joy.” One can only wonder what mechanism allows him to “know” his so-called “joy” is real joy and not some counterfeit. He also used the word “feel” to define the Christ-follower’s certainty in Christ. That’s a subtle suggestion to imply Christ is an emotional rationalization rather than a real person.

What unfolds next is an amazing case of a double standard and inner conflict. The skeptic insists he knows nothing and, at the same time, insists his joy is real. He’s sure God can’t possibly reveal the difference between Jesus Christ and some other entity. This poor skeptic claims to know nothing. And yet his claims imply he knows all about the spiritual realm, God, and the way God can work with human minds. He also implies he knows all about the Christ-follower’s personal experience with Christ.

Me: God imparts certainty of reality called “faith” when He speaks. He makes me certain. What makes you think

God can't impart certainty and give discernment? Also, how do you know you're feeling joy when you think you're feeling joy? That would involve sound reason, and sound reason requires a true premise.

Skeptic: Through what mechanism did you determine it was actually God? [The skeptic is ignoring both questions and repeating a question the Christ-follower already answered.]

Me: Through the mechanism of divine revelation. Divine revelation is the only way to know anything. Divine revelation is also how I know it makes sense to reason based on true premises. But again, I don't see a reason for you to know you're feeling joy when you think you're feeling joy since you would need sound reason, and sound reason must have a true premise.

Skeptic: Through what mechanism did you determine divine revelation was actually God? [The skeptic again refused to address his own issue and repeated a question the Christ-follower already answered twice.]

Me: God revealed Himself to me when I was about five years old. Since then, I've been coming to know Him better. I still make mistakes. But He assures me that, as the Holy Spirit forms Christ in me and my carnal mind atrophies, the transformation will change me. I'll eventually be free to be fully rational. Many have died without receiving this promise. My way is secure even if I don't realize the fullness in my lifetime on earth.

Skeptic: Through what mechanism did you determine divine revelation was not actually Satan?

Me: I've dealt personally with both Satan and God, and the difference is stark, but you asked about the mechanism. God is the mechanism. He reveals the difference between Satan and Himself. Jesus Christ is the Author of faith and faith comes by hearing God's voice. God is almighty, and He won't deceive a sincere heart who seeks Him. All who seek Him find Him. And, by the way,

it's the only way we can know anything about anything. For instance, it's the only way to know whether joy is merely chemical, fake joy induced by an evil spirit or true joy that's a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Skeptic: I know what you believe. I want to know the mechanism that determined the divine revelation was actually from God.

Asking the same question repeatedly after we've answered the question is a trick that can work sometimes, but it's not rational. In this case, the trick became too obvious to fool even a dedicated ungodly mind. We also note the trick of turning a conversation into a one-sided interrogation, which is a common way for ungodly thinkers to debate. They refuse to answer any questions while using questions as weapons for ungodly evangelism. Atheists and skeptics aren't the only ones who use these tactics. Christians who are reasoning in an ungodly way also use these tactics.

We can sense the skeptic's frustration in dealing with a Christ-follower with real faith rather than rationalized faith. The skeptic has no power to introduce doubt when the Christ-follower can turn to the Holy Spirit anytime he wants to. The Holy Spirit assures the Christ-follower that the skeptic's statements aren't rational.

Me: The mechanism is divine revelation, as I said. In other words, the mechanism is God speaking and imparting faith. What makes you think it makes sense to reason about these things?

Skeptic: You had to make sure the "divine revelation" was not Satan, right? How? [The skeptic again ignored the question, but he doesn't understand God's power.]

Me: God reveals, but you seem to be implying God is incapable of revealing and giving discernment. What mechanism do you imagine would prevent God from revealing and giving perception? It seems you only want to ask questions instead of having a real conversation. Could you answer the question I asked, "How do you justify reason?"

Skeptic: How do you know it is God rather than Satan?
[Again, the skeptic repeated a question the Christ-follower already answered, and he refused to answer questions even after the Christ-follower brought attention to the skeptic's rudeness.]

Me: Because God reveals it. When I focus my will on acknowledging Him, He takes care of the rest. How do you justify reason? How do you know your joy isn't hatred?

Skeptic: How do you know God revealed it rather than Satan?

Me: I've answered this question enough times, but you refuse to answer any questions. No one can know anything without Christ. God reveals this fact. What makes you think God can't reveal and impart perception? What makes you think your joy isn't fake joy induced by a demon who intends to kill you?

Skeptic: There is no intermediary between my joy and myself. There is a huge gap between you and any proposed revelation. But, let me confirm. You actually believe you can't be wrong, right?

To analyze this claim, we might ask, "What is the mechanism by which the skeptic thinks he knows no intermediary exists between his joy and himself?" He's asserting a universal negative and denying his worldview filters every experience he has, including his supposed joy. It seems he forgot what he said about his body and mind working together to produce several immediate sensations. However, he admitted having this problem earlier, but he only applied it to his experience with Christ. His thinking conflicts with itself. He only applies his skepticism to Jesus Christ and the Bible. Without divine revelation, he has no mechanism to know anything.

Also, the skeptic makes the dogmatic claim of a huge gap between the Christ-follower and God's revelation. What makes him think a gap exists since Christ abides within the Christ-follower? Is this claim part of his immediate sensations? He claims he "knows" what comes from his immediate sensations and knows nothing else. So, where does he get this supposed gap? He would have to either observe it using his

five senses or else feel it in his emotions. And he's certain his emotions prove things to himself. That must be where he gets his gap. But what could prevent Almighty God from giving certainty, discernment, and perception to His people? Nothing could.

The skeptic is committing an argument against self-confidence fallacy. He craftily substitutes confidence in God's ability with confidence in human ability to discern. If God made us responsible for managing discernment, then we would indeed be in trouble. Since Christ within us is in charge of discernment, nothing can stand in His way. We must admit we sometimes allow others to deceive us by directing our wills toward authorities other than Christ. But Christ promises He'll give us the Holy Spirit if we ask Him, and He promises we'll find Christ if we seek Him.

We notice it's common for ungodly dogmatic persuaders to resort to attempts to destroy faith by questioning God's voice while trying to give the illusion made-up stuff has substance. Faith is substance, but made-up stuff is vapor. Since faith comes by hearing God's utterance, the sarx mind tries to undermine this faith by asking us to listen to utterances other than God's utterance. This undermining takes the form of Satan's question to Eve, "Hath God said?" "How do you know God revealed it rather than Satan?" However, God assures us Christ is our highway called "the Holy Way," and, though we may not understand, He'll be the One Who makes sure we don't get lost. God can restore those parts of our lives where we're convinced of false doctrines, as we follow Christ. He'll demolish all those strongholds in our minds if we yield to Him.

"A highway will be there—yes, there—and people will call it 'The Holy Way'. As for unclean people, they will not journey on it, but it will be for whomever is traveling on that Way— not even fools will get lost. ~ Isaiah 35:8 International Standard Version

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. ~ Isaiah 35:8 King James Bible

God gives us great confidence through this Scripture about this Highway, a Way. We know this Way. His name is Jesus. If we can get on this Way, He'll make sure we don't err. The original language implies we won't wander about in sin and confusion. What do we need? How do we qualify? First, we must be clean. This Way isn't for the unclean. "As for unclean people, they will not journey on it." Jesus washed us. Second, we must be wayfaring. We must be moving. We can't think we've arrived. It's for those who move. It's not for those who don't want to move. If we're willing to move at the command of God, we won't wander around in a confused, drunken stupor, and sin won't bind us. He'll even make sure a fool doesn't err. It doesn't depend on us except to be willing to seek His mind and submit ourselves to it.

The practiced skeptic who came with fake politeness suddenly became rude, refusing to answer any questions and repeatedly asking the same two questions. He didn't want to move. He wanted to stay as He was. He was a dogmatic skeptic.

He showed his frustration as he said, "You actually believe you can't be wrong, right?" Of course, the Christ-follower didn't claim or imply any such thing. However, this skeptic had already claimed *he* couldn't be wrong, so we're looking at a projection fallacy as he projects his own fault onto the Christ-follower. Since the Holy Spirit leads, teaches, corrects, and purifies everyone who follows Him moment by moment, this disbeliever is inconsistent when he says the Christ-follower is claiming he can't be wrong. If the follower of Christ couldn't be wrong, Christ wouldn't need to lead, teach, correct, and purify us moment by moment every day. As the Holy Spirit forms Christ in us and we die to the fleshly nature, our understanding of Christ and His leading becomes more accurate and precise. Now, we know in part, but we will know in the fullness. We may even make mistakes, but, since discernment doesn't depend on us, Christ will correct our errors in thinking and perception as we yield ourselves to Him.

Me: People can have false joy. How can you assert such definite statements regarding your own supposed joy and the lack of an intermediary? And how can you assert such definite statements regarding an imagined gap between

myself and God's ability to reveal and impart His faith? You imagine a gap between Christ and me. Christ is in me and joined to me, and yet you dogmatically assert this gap you conjured up from your imagination. But you're claiming to have amazing familiarity with my inner spiritual experiences. You're dogmatic, but you claim not to have any knowledge of reality other than your immediate sensations. How do you sense my inner spiritual experience with Christ? To your last question, I've already answered it by saying I'm learning and God is constantly correcting me. That means I'm wrong a lot. If I depended on myself, all would be hopeless, but I know Christ.

Skeptic: You believe I could have a false joy, but you could not have a false Christ, right?

The skeptic is implying we could be sincerely seeking Christ and still miss the mark. He implies our own fallen minds or evil spirits would deceive us. Satan uses this lie against Christians. And yet, Christ has promised us He is faithful. He promises us He won't give us a serpent if we ask for a fish. The serpent typifies Satan. The fish typifies Christ. He promises He won't give us a stone if we ask for bread. The stone typifies the hardened human heart or mind. The bread typifies Christ's body.

But some people do follow false Christs. They follow demons, false prophets, false teachers, or their own minds and think they're receiving revelation from Christ. So, how does that happen? It happens when they're deceived. Their desires draw them off the path. They deceive themselves. Those who truly want to do the will of God won't go astray. The power and goodness of God will protect them. Theological formulas have no spiritual power. In our immature state, the fleshly nature is deceitful and desperately wicked. The fleshly nature opposes God. So, Christians may slip or step off the Way (Christ) sometimes. However, because their hearts are sincere to desire righteousness, Christ will bring them back in line. On the other hand, if they truly want to go their own ways, God won't force them.

Satan often works by introducing confusion. In this case, the skeptic is creating a smokescreen. The skeptic claims he can absolutely know

the joy he's feeling is real. He claims the Christ-follower can't absolutely know Christ is leading. The skeptic claims he has a superior ability to know about his supposed joy absolutely. He claims the Christ-follower just can't know.

Let's look at the basis for the two claims. The skeptic's basis for his claim is a rationalization. He rationalizes a story, and, in his story, he tells himself there is no intermediary between him and the joy he feels. So, the skeptic's confidence rests in himself and his own mind. The Christ-follower's basis for knowing Christ is leading rests in Christ and the faith Christ imparts when Christ speaks to him. Everyone who wants truth listens to Christ. Christ is real, all-powerful, and faithful. So, the Christ-follower's confidence rests in Christ rather than in human ability or intellect.

Me: I know you haven't mentioned a true premise on which you build your belief that your joy is real. I know Jesus Christ gives every person a true premise to believe Him. You seem to think God can't give divine revelation. However, you haven't mentioned any proof of His inability.

Skeptic: Yeah, I think this conversation is over. You need to learn some honesty.

The skeptic became upset at that point and shut down discussion with the epithet "You need to learn some honesty." His remark brings up a question. From a skeptic's position, how could the word "honesty" mean anything? He says he only "knows" immediate sensations. Is he saying honesty is an immediate sensation? As a skeptic, he doesn't even have proof any form of reasoning is worth the mental effort. He didn't have a true premise for believing his immediate sensations.

We must revisit this issue of not knowing whether Christ or Satan is leading us since it's an issue evil spirits love to bring up. Christ speaks to us and says all who seek Him find Him. He also says every person already knows. We can already perceive and judge between Christ and other voices, but other voices can fool us when we want our own wills or follow our own minds. We can be wrong, so we ought to bring our doctrines before Him continually and allow Him to point out those untrue doctrines. We must admit we often make job decisions, communication decisions, or financial decisions where we don't

understand God's will. Some of us have even fallen into gross immorality, but we found Christ pulled us out of it.

However, we do know the difference. And this skeptic knows the difference but wants to do his own thing so he's willingly ignorant. He denies the knowledge and hides it from himself, so, in a sense, he knows nothing even though he does know. We humans mix up our minds when we want to do our wills rather than God's will. It's in those places where we want our desires and our ways rather than God's way. When we were first born again, the Holy Spirit started a project within us. We sincerely confessed Jesus is Lord, which no one can confess except by God's Spirit. From that day forward, God is watching over every part of our lives. He will be faithful to complete the work in us. Even if the deceivers deceive us, God will protect us and guide us back. God gave us the responsibility to sincerely seek Him and yield to His Spirit despite the voices of many liars. If any of this revelation and discernment depended on our strength, intelligence, wisdom, understanding, or judgment, we would lose our way. But it depends on the Creator God Who's well able to complete the work.

being persuaded of this very thing, that the One having begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 1:6 Berean Literal Bible

Revealing the twisted nature of skeptical thinking, the skeptic's entire line of thinking has self-righteousness and virtue signalling oozing out of it. It shows skeptical reasoning is absolutely vacuous. Because of his mindless thought process, the skeptic couldn't answer the following questions:

Without divine revelation, how does the skeptic justify any reasoning at all without a true premise?

Why does the skeptic think he can't be certain about anything apart from his immediate sensations when he has no proof?

How does the skeptic know he's feeling joy since he would have to reason to know that? Sound reason needs a true premise, and he has no path to true premises.

Why does the skeptic think it makes sense to reason about anything?

How does he justify reason?

How does he know his joy isn't hatred?

How does he know his joy isn't sorrow?

What makes him think what he calls "joy" isn't fake joy induced by a demon who intends to kill him?

How can he assert there's no intermediary between him and his joy?

How can he be so sure about an imagined gap between a Christ-follower and Christ Who lives in the Christ-follower?

What makes him think God can't impart divine revelation?

What makes him think God can't reveal and impart perception?

What mechanism does he imagine would limit God's ability to reveal and impart His faith?

What mechanism does he imagine would prevent God from revealing and giving discernment?

The skeptic and I didn't discuss the Bible and the history in the Bible, but God reveals the accuracy of the Bible just as He reveals Himself. Of course, He doesn't reveal everything, and we don't know much, but we do know whatever He reveals to us.

Here's another question. What would motivate a person who believes he can't know anything to spend his days looking for arguments? Why would a person without knowledge want to convince others of what he thinks he knows? Why would a person who is full of joy want to spread doubt and fear? What spirit would be leading such a person?

Speaking through Scripture, God tells us faith is substance (reality) and it's absolute and certain proof that comes as a gift from God. This faith comes when He speaks, and Jesus Christ, the almighty and all-

knowing Creator is the Author of this faith. Anyone who sincerely seeks truth will consider Christ by coming to Him in willing submission since all who seek Him find Him. And though our knowledge is partial, yet through persistent obedient submission to His will, we make progress. Those who follow Christ are becoming increasingly mature. The Holy Spirit is forming Christ within us, so we increasingly have His influence, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. The Holy Spirit is purifying us. Therefore, we're increasingly able to discern between good (God's leading) and evil (our own minds). As implied by this statement, maturity is having Christ formed within and dying to the fleshly nature.

Even when followers of Christ disagree about doctrine, if they keep walking with Christ, all error will be exposed and expelled. However, if loyalty to an organization or doctrine is greater than loyalty to Christ, then the Holy Spirit won't force anyone into submission to Him. A skeptic may disagree with this truth, but the skeptic will have to base any such disagreement on made-up stuff. Consider this quote from *True Truth* by Art Lindsley.

We might ask, is it objectively true to say that there are no objective truths? Can you deny the validity of reason without using reason? If "all perspectives of reality are culturally determined," then is this statement itself culturally determined or transcultural? If all metanarratives are suspect because they lead to oppression, then can it not be maintained that postmodernism is itself a metanarrative and equally suspect? If all knowledge claims are a grab for power, then are not postmodernism's contentions equally motivated by a will to power?

Another Skeptic Vision

Sandy Sandbuilder: As to divine revelation, that premise itself would also lack proof, no?

Rocky Rockbuilder: You're saying I have the same problem you have. You're saying divine revelation as a premise also lacks proof. That's a tu-quoque fallacy. For

several reasons, your tu quoque doesn't work. Do you want to know why?

Sandy: Of course, please explain.

Rocky: You have no way to reason to your tu quoque other than by making up stuff. You make up a story. In your story, you say the Almighty God isn't able to prove His divine revelation and make Himself and His revelation obvious. What possible mechanism would prevent God from revealing and giving us discernment? You can't prove your story. You can't even prove it to yourself. And yet, God does reveal Himself to me and to anyone who seeks Him. He reveals Himself explicitly, so we don't have to guess. You can test my claim by seeking Him. I can also test your claim and find it false.

Sandy: I would like to know whether one person's divine revelation should be accepted by another as true if they have not themselves received it. If so, how do we distinguish between competing claims of divine revelation?

Sandy Sandbuilder didn't answer the question. Ungodly thinkers can use various techniques to dodge questions about their bare claims or they can answer the questions irrationally. They don't have other options. The question was, "What possible mechanism would prevent God from revealing and giving us discernment?" Sandy didn't answer because he had no answer. He's just blowing smoke. Instead, he changed the subject.

Rocky: You ask if you should accept another person's claim of divine revelation if you haven't received the revelation. I suppose you may be thinking this person would be asking you to trust them. However, if it is divine revelation, they aren't asking you to trust them. If it's truly revelation, you've received it. If it's divine revelation, Jesus Christ is asking you to trust Him as He speaks through them. Christ teaches us those who follow Him ought always to speak or write by the Holy Spirit. He says we should speak as His oracle. He says whoever rejects those who speak by His Spirit rejects Him directly. Whoever

rejects Him rejects the Father directly. But what if the person isn't speaking by the authority of the Holy Spirit? If you seek God, He'll give you discernment to recognize and reject the false teacher or false prophet.

Sandy: But I don't believe in God, so why would I seek His mind?

Rocky: God has also revealed one thing most disbelievers find disturbing. He says He revealed Himself, and a lot about Himself, to every person. Some people refuse to respond to Him. They then suppress this truth in their unrighteousness [deceitful trickery]. They reject Him because they love darkness rather than light since their deeds are evil. Otherwise, they would come to Him. They know Jesus Christ would lead them out of their sins, and they don't want that. They love their sin and independence from God. As God says, they have no excuse. Most disbelievers find this fact disturbing and hard to accept, but it means you already know. You know God exists and you know a lot about Him.

Beyond that, anyone can test the reality of Jesus Christ without any equipment or expense. No one has to take someone else's word for it. All who seek Christ find Christ. Of course, they can't deceive God. They must come with sincerity, persistence, respect, and submission to Christ. They must want Christ to set them free from sin.

Through the mouths of those who won't come to Christ with an open mind, God confirms the revelation He gave us through Scripture that those who reject Him are willingly ignorant. They know. They won't come to Him with sincerity, persistence, respect, and submission even though they don't need to buy anything or even inconvenience themselves. They know about the spiritual cost intuitively. They know they would have to give up their sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. They're comfortable as slaves of Satan.

At this point, Sandy Sandbuilder said axiomatic reasoning is reasonable and useful in all sorts of circumstances. Here's where he's confusing two methods of thinking. He has a brute-beast mind that

can react to his five senses. He can make pancakes and learn about burning them. He can avoid the problem next time he cooks pancakes. He can work within what he learns from his five senses. However, when he tries to extrapolate beyond his five senses, he'll be irrational.

Animals react to their five senses and learn, too. And Sandy would say, so what? He's just an evolved animal. He can project from his sensory data. He can see what's happening ahead of him on the road as he's driving and hit his brake or step on the gas as needed. He's calculating the results of speed and how long it takes to slow down or speed up. He sees a car veering all over the road and gets away from it. He extrapolates from his past and current observations and acts. Besides sense data, God gave him instincts. He can follow those. And though he won't thank God for it, God also guides him. God helps us all. He warns us of danger. He tells us of opportunity. His rain falls on the wicked and the righteous. Christ is the Light that lights every person who comes into the world.

Though Sandy has great ability within his brute-beast mind, he can't think beyond his five senses and still be rational. He can't tell the difference between what God reveals and what his own mind makes up. Sandy can't discern the difference between what his own mind makes up and what a demon tells him. He certainly can't reason to the conclusions he wrote about online in the conversation we just followed. He reasons to these conclusions based on axioms. Axioms consist of made-up stuff. Made-up stuff isn't reliable information.

When he says axiomatic reasoning is reasonable and useful in all sorts of circumstances, he says he's rational to make up stuff and call the made-up stuff true. He thinks he can base all his reasoning on made-up stuff and he says it makes sense for him to reason this way. Of course, he says axioms aren't made-up stuff. He says axioms are so obvious he can take them as proved though they're not proven. But how can they be obvious if we can't prove them?

He also thinks it's okay if we each have our own made-up stuff, and your made-up stuff can conflict with his made-up stuff. He says neither one is ultimately true, but you can use your made-up stuff, and he can use his made-up stuff for sound reasoning. Then two

people can come to conflicting conclusions when both are using sound reasoning. He really says that.

Sandy: Taking divine revelation to be an axiom, as you said, isn't binding on those who haven't received it. I further challenge whether those who HAVE received it and hold it axiomatic, are correct.

Rocky: I never said "Taking divine revelation to be an axiom." We don't hold divine revelation axiomatic, as you claimed. You're trying to put your words in my mouth. We don't offer axiomatic reasoning as a way out. Axioms are made-up stuff. Rather than axioms, we experience divine revelation in an ongoing flow from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never leaves us or forsakes us.

You say Christ didn't reveal Himself to you, but He has. He's revealed Himself to you through me. He's also spoken to you in many other ways. God has revealed Himself to you through the things He created, but you've suppressed His truth in your deceitful trickery.

Christ leads, teaches, and corrects every person who follows Him moment by moment, and Christ is how we know. When He speaks to us, faith comes. Faith is reality as opposed to concept. Faith is the only proof possible to prove anything. Jesus Christ authors it, and only the Almighty, All-knowing, Creator God Who cannot lie can establish any truth. If we hold divine revelation as an axiom, we forsake Christ and begin following the fallen human mind. God wants a relationship. He doesn't want theoretical believers.

God doesn't give anyone responsibility to convince you or persuade you. He holds you responsible since He provides the revelation you need. He's very clear on this fact. Those on the side of truth listen to Christ. Many other voices exist, but God equips you to discern truth if you desire righteousness and truth.

Sandy: Axioms aren't made-up stuff. They're things that seem so self-evident we accept them without challenge. An

example would be the “excluded middle,” which is the impossibility for something to be both true and false at the same time.

God has certainly not revealed himself to me in the things he has created, not even when I prayed for such a revelation.

Rocky: Axioms are unproven claims, yet we accept them as if we had proved them. However, we have to be careful not to confuse divine revelation with made-up stuff. If we won’t acknowledge Christ, we’ll see everything the same. We make no difference between made-up stuff and reality. However, we do see conflicts between what’s in our worldviews and what’s in other people’s worldviews. We also see conflicts between what’s in our worldviews and what God reveals. Whatever we firmly establish in our worldviews seems “so self-evident we accept it without challenge.” For instance, God reveals something can’t be true and false at the same time. A person without Christ would believe this truth as an axiom. A person with Christ hears this truth from Christ at the moment God says it to that person. A Hindu says things can be both true and false at the same time and in the same way. The Hindu says you don’t understand Eastern philosophy. To the Hindu, what you call “self-evident” is nonsense.

God has indeed revealed Himself to you. As I said, God says He reveals Himself to every person, and most disbelievers find this fact disturbing. He reveals Himself to you today in the words I’m saying to you. You can’t hear Scripture quoted or read a verse without hearing His voice. You can’t look at any part of creation without Him revealing Himself to you. However, you can reject Him. You can refuse to acknowledge Him. One of the things I noticed about the way you express yourself, you look for reasons not to believe. You approach God with animosity and skepticism, with a closed mind. You look for ways to screen Him out. You must come as a child, full of wonder and acceptance of Him. He won’t force Himself on you if

you don't want Him. When you come with every intention to prove He isn't there, He knows your heart better than you do. He turns you over to your own corrupted mind. The fall corrupted every human mind. Our minds aren't capable of rational thought without divine revelation.

Sandy Sandbuilder is a skeptic who believes he can't know anything for certain. He claims he was once a Christian who knew Christ. Then, he decided he didn't know anything and questioned everything he once believed. He became dogmatic enough about his disbelief that he now looks for every opportunity to argue against Christ. He bases every argument he makes on made-up stuff, so every argument he makes is irrational.

Here's another point from the conversation:

Rocky: God teaches those who follow Him to communicate guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. He says, "Speak as His oracle." He says whoever rejects His words as He speaks through His followers rejects Him directly. Whoever rejects Him rejects the Father directly.

God spoke to Sandy Sandbuilder during this conversation, but Sandy rejected God. Sandy refused to acknowledge God. He has closed his mind to God.

During this conversation, Sandy tried to prove three things. He wanted to prove he was open to God, but it was God's fault he couldn't find God. He wanted to prove he could be rational without a true premise. And he looked for ways to question knowing anything by divine revelation. We'll go over a few of Sandy's comments to see how he argued.

Sandy Sandbuilder has done his part. He tried. He implies God failed him.

Sandy: I have been completely open to being convinced of God's existence by revelation or reason on several occasions in my life.

We notice Sandy isn't open now. He's become dogmatic. He's entrenched in His philosophy and unwilling to challenge His own

dogma. Sandy insists he can think rationally by depending on axioms as long as he sincerely feels those axioms are obvious. We'll go into some detail on this journey to find out why our axioms, even the false ones, seem so obvious to us.

Sandy: I must have received divine revelation since I appear capable of at least some rational thought. Since I am not conscious of having received revelation, the word "revelation" does not seem appropriate to whatever I may have received from God.

Sandy receives revelation. He refuses to acknowledge God, so he can't tell the difference between what he makes up and what God reveals to Him. Most of what God shows him, he rejects. The revelation Sandy accepts seems like something obvious he got from some unknown source. He puts his made-up stuff into the same category. He makes no difference between the two. And because he continually and consistently refused to acknowledge God, thank Him, and give Him the glory, God turned him over to his own corrupted mind. As he continues to disrespect and ignore God, even trying to convince Christians to stop following Christ, he hardens his mind against God. He develops disbelieving answers for every approach the Holy Spirit may make toward him. His senseless mind is darkened. The following quotes show how he claimed to be rational without a true premise:

The thought was rational, even though its premise and conclusion later turned out to be false.

It's entirely possible to have rational thought of correct form without ultimate certainty in its premises.

Though Sandy can't be sure of anything, he's sure he can reason rationally without a true premise. But he can only state bare assertions. He exposed his useless definition of "rational thought." He thinks valid form is rational thought, but sound logic must also have true premises. Rational thought is sound reasoning, not merely valid form.

When Sandy says "of correct form" he's pointing out a failure of the education system. Schools teach correct form is all we need for sound logic. Sandy feels he's reasoning rationally even though he uses premises that may be false. He thinks rational thought only requires

valid form. Consider the sociopath who thinks it's OK to murder people on Tuesdays. This claim seems obvious. So the sociopath takes it as an axiom. Sandy is saying the sociopath is rational if he uses this axiom about murdering people on Tuesdays as his premise. Here's this valid form with a false premise:

Sociopath: It's OK to murder people on Tuesdays. It's Tuesday. Therefore, I can murder people today.

The form of the sociopath's logic is valid. Sandy is saying a sociopath can make this statement rationally. The sociopath must just feel it's obviously okay to murder people on Tuesdays. Sandy's logic says the sociopath is rational. Now, you can understand why the world is so crazy.

Sandy also insisted he couldn't know anything for certain. And yet, he doesn't claim his uncertainty in uncertain terms. He's certain of his uncertainty. How can he be so certain he can't be certain about anything? Here are a few of Sandy's claims about not being able to know:

I have no way of knowing anything.

I have not denied that divine revelation may be possible.

You are certain about some things, unlike me; I'm uncertain about everything.

I do not believe such a proof (for or against God) is conceivable, or necessary.

Disbelief is a form of belief. It's belief in not believing. Sandy doesn't just express a lack of belief. He willfully disbelieves. When he says "is conceivable," we can see his desire to push the possibility of knowing God as far from himself as he can. When he says "or necessary," he's rationalizing a complete theology and concept of the spiritual and natural world. Since he can't be certain of anything, how is he so certain about his belief? Why would he willfully disbelieve God? Here's what he said as he looked back at when he was a Christian:

I found I could not at all distinguish between the things I was convinced were revelations and the things that turned out to be wishful thinking.

Sandy Sandbuilder brings up something every Christ-follower must overcome. We do find out we're wrong sometimes. We find out we misinterpret God as He speaks to us through Scripture, intuition, the created world, or any other way He communicates. We find teachers tell us things we believe, and we later, sometimes decades later, realize those teachers were wrong. The only reason we're ever deceived is we're immature in Christ. We haven't grown to His fullness. We have a fleshly nature that's deceitful and desperately wicked, so we all make many mistakes. However, as we focus on Christ and His will, He continues to correct us where we're wrong. As we forsake our own will and our own strongly held opinions, He reveals truth. We need patience. We have Christ rather than dogmatism.

We can't look into Sandy's past when he was a Christian and see the experience he's describing, so we don't know if it was real. If God did reveal reality to him, he looked back at those revelations at a certain point and convinced himself God's revelation was wishful thinking. Then he knew *he couldn't be certain* of anything, *yet he was certain* he couldn't tell the difference between God's revelation and wishful thinking.

If God didn't reveal, but Sandy Sandbuilder just believed the things he wanted to be true, that's a different story. Sandy may have wished for a million-dollar check and imagined God told him it would come on April 30th of 2012. We don't know what Sandy means by "revelations," but we're just giving an example of what these revelations might have been. Perhaps a pastor told him to name it and claim it, but, for obvious reasons, God didn't honor Sandy's claim. If Sandy had cared about God's will and submitting to God's will, he would have been seeking God's mind continually. If he was wrong, the Holy Spirit would have corrected him at some point and told him he was prophesying a vision out of his own heart. The Holy Spirit would then have revealed the truth He wanted Sandy to know. And Sandy may have received this truth from the Holy Spirit, or he may have rejected this truth since he didn't want to hear it. He may have decided to get rid of God if God wouldn't be his vending machine to give him his own will. Then, he may have directed his mind to believe he couldn't be certain about anything.

He's inside his bunker, protecting himself from God by willful ignorance. He said he couldn't know the difference between what his mind makes up, what demons tell him, and what God reveals, but only in the ultimate sense. He didn't say what the "ultimate sense" is. He's not uncertain about his uncertainty. He's certain he's uncertain about everything. And He's certain God hasn't spoken to Him. He said, "God has certainly not revealed himself to me." And yet, he can't see he's conflicted with himself in describing his certainty and his uncertainty.

He thinks he has moral flaws, yet he doesn't admit to a lawgiver. He doesn't know of a source of morality. He's eliminated every means by which God could give him an understanding of right and wrong with certainty. In all likelihood, he tries to follow God's Laws, since God reveals these Laws to every person. However, he refuses to acknowledge God or give Him glory.

We can see why Jesus said, "I tell all of you with certainty, unless you change and become like little children, you will never get into the kingdom from heaven."

Sandy Sandbuilder's thinking is similar to the thinking of many who reject Christ. A person who is open to Jesus Christ won't defend thinking based on made-up stuff while trying to find a way to prove those who follow Christ aren't experiencing what they're experiencing. (Scooby-Doo and the Skeptometer: https://youtu.be/YrGVeB_SPJg)

Two Skeptics

Somewhere in a nearby city, two philosophy professors engage in a heated debate. While one insists the only thing he "knows" is he exists, the other argues he can't even "know" he exists. Each man represents a different branch of skeptical philosophy.

We get the word "philosophy" from two Greek words. "Philo" means "loving." "Sophia" means "knowledge or wisdom." How could anyone love knowledge and wisdom while denying knowledge and wisdom exist? And if no one can know anything about anything, how can either professor know what they think they know? Strangely, they

assume the laws of logic have value. They aren't skeptical about that, but they have no reason for thinking logic has any value.

Another question comes to mind: what are they teaching their students, and why do they think it's worth teaching?

These professors have chosen the thought-foundation of assumptions, so they base their thinking on unknowns they treat as facts. Basing all reasoning on unknowns can work pragmatically if the assumptions happen to be correct, but those who base thinking on assumptions can't be certain their assumptions are correct. Not having truth as a starting point, they check to see if the assumptions lead to the conclusion they desire. They prove the conclusion they prefer by making up stuff. Then they predict the results of specific actions, and if the actions lead to the predicted result, they take the assumptions as "probably true." They didn't prove the assumptions true, but they treat them as if they were true. They discard unfulfilled predictions. However, they don't discard the assumptions these predictions were supposed to prove or disprove. Ungodly thinkers can dogmatically defend pure nonsense using these techniques.

Most ungodly thinkers *assume* certain necessary things like the laws of logic existing, their senses being reliable, the world around them existing, and they themselves existing. Then they *assume* the reliability of the laws of nature and math. They know these truths because God revealed these truths to them, but because they refuse to acknowledge God, they think these truths are assumptions. Therefore, even though they hold some truth, they don't know any truth. They're always learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. ^(2 Timothy 3:7) They hear God's voice, but as they hear, they don't hear, so faith never comes to them. ^(Matthew 13:13-15)

Ungodly thinking always bases reason on making up stuff and calling made-up stuff true. Unfortunately, those who choose to be ungodly have no choice but to be irrational, yet they believe they're being rational. They can't be rational without knowing the premise of their reasoning is true, and they can't prove a premise is true. They can only make up stuff and pretend it's true. We'll dig deeper into specifically why when we get to a coming tour called "More Complex than Assumption Based on Experience."

Socrates

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing. ~
Socrates

In this statement, Socrates claimed to *know* nothing, yet he claimed to *know* the only true wisdom is in “knowing” you know nothing. We immediately see the conflict as he claimed to *know nothing*, yet he claimed to *know something*. He claimed to *know* no one can know anything.

His logic seems confusing because he’s confused, so let’s look at it another way:

Socrates claimed to know nothing.

By claiming other people can’t know anything, Socrates claimed to have infinite knowledge of those people’s minds and spiritual experiences.

Socrates conflicted with himself. How could Socrates know about the knowledge or lack of knowledge of every person? He couldn’t. As a result, Socrates couldn’t know what he claimed to know when he said, “No one can know anything.” To make his claim rationally, he would have to know all the inner spiritual experiences of every person, but only God knows the inner spiritual experiences of every person.

Socrates also had a different and conflicting theory of knowledge. He said everyone is born with some absolute knowledge. Although he didn’t tell us how he thought he knew that, his statement might contain some truth.

God tells us He formed us in the womb, He knew us before He formed us in the womb, and He wrote His laws on our hearts. Writing His laws on our hearts (innermost minds) is a form of revelation. However, God doesn’t tell us the extent of the laws He writes on the hearts of humans, nor does He tell us exactly how He writes these laws on our hearts. He does indicate we’re three-part creatures: spirit, soul, and body. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the Greek word “psuche” is translated “soul,” and this verse speaks of the human spirit, soul, and body. According to this verse, the soul is distinct from the body and the spirit. In other verses, “psuche” is translated as “mind,” “soul,”

“life,” and “heart.” Therefore, we know God wrote His laws on our hearts (minds or souls), not on our bodies or our human spirits. That means He wrote these laws (this information) on our hearts, on our minds, and the information didn’t create itself, but rather, God wrote it there.

Getting back to skepticism, Agrippa the Skeptic, Baron Münchausen, and Hans Albert have echoed the skeptical mindset as they each wrote about a basic flaw in ungodly thinking. This flaw is the ungodly thinking trilemma. And we’ll go into this trilemma more fully, but first, let’s take a sixty-second break to watch this video about mindless logic. (https://youtu.be/_asypV77_54)

Three Unhappy Choices

As promised, we’ll now carefully examine the reason ungodly thinkers can’t possibly be rational. To start, let’s evaluate the ungodly thinking trilemma. A trilemma is like a dilemma, but it has three choices instead of two. With a trilemma, we must choose one of three undesirable alternatives.

Agrippa the Skeptic taught about the ungodly thinking trilemma 2,000 years ago. That’s why it’s sometimes called “Agrippa’s trilemma.” Münchausen wrote about it in the 1700s, so it’s also known as the “Münchausen trilemma.” Hans Albert also wrote about it in 1968, so it’s sometimes called “Albert’s trilemma.” But a more descriptive name, “ungodly thinking trilemma,” is the name we’ll use. As we explore this trilemma, we’ll find it to be an ungodly illusion caused by closed minds. To take this thought a step further, consider the following quote:

The Münchhausen trilemma is a problem in philosophy that all statements can be questioned and then need evidence. This problem has been well known in philosophy for thousands of years, but rarely gets addressed because it breaks the legs of philosophy, science, and any other possible approach to reality. ~ rationalwiki.org

This ungodly thinking website is pointing to a philosophy that still stands against all ungodly challenges today. As RationalWiki.org states, the Münchausen trilemma isn’t popular “because it breaks the

legs of philosophy, science, and any other possible approach to reality.” However, the trilemma only destroys rational thought for ungodly thinkers. The wiki rejects the possibility of the real God Who reveals reality.

If the statement in RationalWiki.org is true, then all reasoning on RationalWiki.org is going to be irrational. It has to be. RationalWiki.org is claiming to be irrational in the quote above. They’re claiming every article on their site is irrational and without merit. And they’re right for their site content. However, they also try to project this problem out to others. They also claim this problem holds for all information everywhere. However, their claim is also irrational because of the trilemma. They try to project this problem to everyone. They claim no one has a way to “approach reality.” That’s their claim. That’s their statement. Their statement “can be questioned and needs evidence.” The trilemma “breaks the legs” of their own statement. We’ll get into the reasons the trilemma is inescapable for ungodly thinkers. We’ll show why it only applies to those who aren’t listening to Christ and following Him. The trilemma guarantees insane thinking for ungodly thinkers.

We might question this trilemma when we first hear about it. However, ungodly philosophers have been trying to get around this trilemma for thousands of years. They haven’t been able to do it without God. Every such argument fails. People still argue against the trilemma. Their arguments fail because they don’t have true premises. That’s why the trilemma “breaks the legs” of their arguments. That means we should demand a true premise when people tell us what they think we should believe. We shouldn’t accept any made-up stuff from anyone. We should never accept an unproven claim. If someone makes a claim, we need to see a true premise.

We can only imagine how embarrassed those who worship their own minds feel when they discover human minds can’t be rational without Christ. It’s embarrassing. As a result, ungodly thinkers present many futile and irrational arguments to fight against this reality. We’ll go over some of them in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*. Not one of those arguments is rational.

Even Christians sometimes try to depend on their own minds. One Christian said the following:

But this can't mean an abandonment of reason, for God commands us to serve Him with our entire mind, so surely we should strive to reason to true conclusions using our minds alone without God.

While this statement may almost seem true at first, it's false because God never asked us to disconnect from the Holy Spirit to use our minds. This statement defines rebellion against God. God is looking for a close relationship, but we don't realize how close He wants this relationship. In this relationship, He is God and we submit to God and obey God. He leads. We follow.

To clear up this muddy reasoning, abandonment of reason isn't the issue, but rather the abandonment of *unsound* reason is the issue. We want true premises and valid form so we can be sane, and we're rejecting the common insanity of the culture even though this insanity has crept into the Church in many places.

While thinking based on made-up stuff may provide intellectual freedom, it's not sane, and while escaping from sanity may be exhilarating, sanity is important. As a result, sound reason still requires a true premise. No one can rationally use an unproven premise to prove a conclusion. Otherwise, how could we know whose made-up stuff to use as a premise?

Is it the one who's the most violent?

Is it the one with control of the media and schools?

Is it the one who controls scientific funding and the scientific journals?

Is it the one who can kill all who disagree?

Is it the one with the best persuasive skills?

Is it the one with the money to create the best presentation?

Is there another way to decide whose made-up stuff is the correct made-up stuff?

According to the rules of deductive logic, the premise must be true or it proves nothing. If the premise is true and the form is valid, the

conclusion follows from the premise. Then the logic is sound, and the conclusion is true. We need a true premise and valid form for truth. And the trilemma doesn't allow a true premise. The trilemma assumes no divine revelation. Therefore, the trilemma is a terrible problem for ungodly thinkers. And here's the problem. Rational thinking is impossible without God.

Baron Münchhausen said he had pulled himself out of the swamp by his beard. Of course, he was using humor to make his point. He was saying the human mind, by itself, has no way to reach logical conclusions under its own power. Something outside the Baron could pull him out of the swamp by his beard. However, he couldn't pull himself out by his beard. In the same way, logical conclusions need something outside one's self since truth only comes from a person who knows all things and who can't lie.

The trilemma has real implications for ungodly thinking. Even so, it's an illusion. It's an illusion since the trilemma presents three choices when we have at least five choices. The trilemma eliminates two choices. It's a false trilemma. Even though it's not real, it limits ungodly thinkers. Ungodly thinkers are stuck. Ungodly thinkers assume naturalism. And naturalism allows only three choices rather than five. The trilemma keeps all ungodly thinkers from thinking rationally about anything. They could break free. They aren't willing to lift their self-imposed limitation of naturalism.

As we continue our tour, we'll go through each of the three sad choices of the trilemma briefly. After we go over the trilemma briefly, we'll go over each of the three choices again in more depth. After that, we'll look at alternatives to the trilemma.

A Quick Tour of the Trilemma

As we begin this tour, this may be difficult. The information is easy. However, it's hard to think about how we think. It's hard to face the weakness of the human mind. It's hard to admit our dependency on Christ.

Simply stated

We can question any claim, and we can question the proof for any claim. Any proof is also a claim.

All claims are unproved proofs, circular reasoning, or bare claims. Those three options are the three horns of the trilemma.

We call unproved proofs “infinite regressions.” Circular reasoning is using the claim as proof for itself. Bare claims are axiomatic thinking fallacies.

Nothing is obviously true without proof. If something is true, we can prove it in a simple, understandable way.

The logical fallacy of infinite regression

When someone tries to prove a conclusion *C* using proof *P* but has no proof for the proof, this person ends in infinite regression. Infinite regression is a problem with the premise, the proof *P*.

Form:

P proves C. P¹ proves P. P² proves P¹. P³ proves P². (Continue infinitely)

Each P is a premise (proof). C is the conclusion.

This regression of unproven proofs goes on infinitely with no real proof for the proof.

An ungodly thinker says, we can trust his reasoning. How does he know? He states an argument to support his reasoning using a premise, but how does he know his premise is true? He has to create a second logical argument to prove his original premise. His original premise is the premise he used to support his claim that we can trust his reasoning. Of course, he hasn't gotten anywhere since his second logical argument also has a premise he must prove. He can then try to prove that premise with another logical argument, but this chain of unproven reasoning goes on forever. Well, not forever, but until he runs out of time. So, he never finds solid ground and never has sound reasoning because not one of his claims can stand on its own. Therefore, he knows nothing since he needs further proof for every claim he makes.

The logical fallacy of circular reasoning

A persuader starts with what looks like infinite regression, but the infinite regression hooks up to itself in a circle of reasoning. The first premise proves the last premise. Circular reasoning hides the problem of the unproven premise.

Form:

P proves C and C proves P.

C proves P, P¹ proves P, and C proves P¹.

Example:

An ungodly thinker says we should trust her reasoning. But how does she know? She uses her reasoning to try to convince us to trust her reasoning, but using her reasoning to prove we can trust her reasoning is circular reasoning.

The logical fallacy of axiomatic thinking

Axiomatic thinking is just making up stuff and calling it true.

Form:

X is true. It just is.

Example:

An ungodly thinker says, “I take the validity of my reasoning ability as an axiom.” While we can ask for proof, we won’t get any. The ungodly thinker says, “It’s self-evident, and I don’t need to prove it because it’s an axiom.”

In-Depth Analysis of the Trilemma

Scope

Now that we understand the three horns of the trilemma, what’s the scope? For scope, this trilemma applies to any claim, but we must be aware ungodly thinkers have developed mindless pat answers to this problem. They *claim* humans can reason to truth. They just can’t reason absolutely. However, that’s also a bare *claim*. It’s an

axiomatic-thinking fallacy. Axiomatic thinking is a horn of the trilemma. Axiomatic thinking is irrational. Axiomatic thinking destroys the argument against the trilemma.

They can't escape the trilemma that way. So they say we're just supposed to believe them when they say, "Humans can know truth, just not absolutely." And we're not supposed to question this claim. However, the trilemma destroys all knowledge. The trilemma turns knowledge into opinion. Knowledge is either absolute or just opinion masquerading as knowledge. We're defining "knowledge" as "knowledge of truth" rather than "knowledge of lies." We find no one can name an ungodly conclusion about anything that couldn't have a different explanation. And yet, ungodly thinkers argue absolutely for their made-up stuff. Therefore, we can't have knowledge of any kind if we don't base our thinking on divine revelation. The trilemma destroys rational thought for ungodly thinkers.

Nevertheless, we can know things, but we know them because God reveals them. We don't know them because we make up stuff and call the made-up stuff true. Just because ungodly thinkers refuse to thank God and give Him glory for what He reveals to them, their rejection doesn't mean no one can know anything.

Even though they deny Him, God mercifully reveals reality to them and gives them everything else they need for survival. If God didn't show mercy to them, they wouldn't survive. And Apostle Paul explained this truth to the Greeks on Mars Hill. Ungodly thinkers receive divine revelation, but they refuse to acknowledge God. Therefore, they can't tell the difference between what they base on made-up stuff and what they base on God's revelation. As a result, they lose the distinction between good versus evil, truth versus error, or reality versus make-believe. For this reason, they defend lies with the same enthusiasm they defend truth. They defend both lies and truth because they can't tell the difference between truth and lies.

Also, God has given each of us a brute-beast mind. With this mind, we can react to our senses as we've already discovered. The trilemma notes we can't know a real world exists unless Christ reveals this fact to us. We can't know our senses aren't fooling us. We can't know we aren't in a dream. We can't know logic and reason have any value at all. While we can stay alive for a while by responding to our senses,

we can't know truth by responding to our senses alone. Responding to our senses isn't always reliable, but it's the best we can do. It's pragmatic.

Ungodly thinkers try to reason beyond their senses without divine revelation, but they become irrational every time they do that. They reason about history, God, or morality. They think about truth or knowledge. They can't sense any of these. They reason about things they can sense, but they try to reason beyond what they can sense. They can define concepts and opinions, but concepts and opinions aren't part of reality. They think irrationally when they do that. They're limited to a low existence.

We can't know any truth using any of the three choices of the trilemma. All three choices result in not knowing. With these three choices, ungodly thinkers can't know anything is true, nor can they know anything is false. Even when they're feeling self-confident, they can't even "sort of" know anything using any of these three fallacies. They can only think pragmatically. They can't go beyond their immediate sensations. Well, they can go beyond their immediate sensations, but not rationally. The more they try to think beyond what they sense, the more errors they make.

The trilemma affects the starting point for thinking. It claims no one has a rational starting point. It asserts a universal negative, and we would need infinite knowledge to assert a universal negative. That means the trilemma refutes itself. It's claiming to have infinite knowledge to claim to have zero knowledge. Still, the trilemma limits knowledge to divine revelation. We see this truth by divine revelation. And we'll further explore why the trilemma limits ungodly thinking as we proceed.

Ungodly thinkers observe the problem of the trilemma. They see it in their own lives. They see it in the lives of everyone they observe. Then they assert a universal negative beyond their sensory experience. That's irrational.

When we merely think something is true, we can't say, "We know," and still be rational. Of course, we can have our opinions, but they're just opinions, and opinions are vapor. By experience, we find ungodly thinkers almost always deal with this problem in one of two ways.

Some will go to skepticism and say no one can know anything, but this skepticism refutes itself as we've already discovered. Others will just make bare claims without proof. They claim the trilemma isn't a problem for them. That's irrational. In every case, they use the fallacies of the trilemma to assert their opinions. The trilemma binds them. Even when they deny it, the trilemma binds them.

There we have the ungodly-thinking fallacy. Without divine revelation, we have three possible foundations for thought. If we assume naturalism, we limit ourselves. We're limit ourselves to axiomatic-thinking fallacies, circular reasoning, or infinite regression. Without Christ, we can make up stuff (axioms). We can use circular reasoning. We can lose our minds in an infinite regression of unproved proofs. Without Christ, we have no rational choices for concluding anything.

Ungodly Thinking Trilemma
The Münchhausen Trilemma
Agrippa's Trilemma
Albert's Trilemma



Three Possible Foundations for Thought in Naturalism
(None of these is rational)

This trilemma leaves no rational starting point for thought. And no one can be rational without an absolute starting point for thought. As the top ungodly thinkers freely admit, having no absolute starting point for thought would destroy science, logic, reason, and evidence as we've already seen. Here's the most insane part: ungodly thinkers claim to use science, logic, reason, and evidence, but their ungodly worldview excludes all these.

So we have the three horns of the trilemma:

1. infinite regression

2. circular reasoning
3. axiomatic thinking

Infinite regression and circular reasoning are smokescreens. They hide axiomatic-thinking fallacies. They make axioms seem real. That means the first two horns are ways to fog up the third horn. The first two horns make it seem sane when we make up stuff and call the made-up stuff “true.” In the next leg of this trip, we examine each of these three horns in more depth as promised.

Infinite Regression



Here's an example of how infinite regression works. Sandy makes a bare claim. Rocky asks for proof. Sandy says, "The proof is . . ." and makes another bare claim as proof, without proving the so-called "proof." Then Rocky asks for proof of the so-called proof. So Sandy says, "The proof is . . ." and makes another bare claim as proof. Sandy has an unsolvable problem. When Sandy tries to prove his claim, he uses proof, but he has no proof for his proof other than yet another unproven claim. So he can never prove any proof. He can't rationally draw any conclusion. With infinite regression, showing unproven proof continues to infinity. Therefore, Sandy never shows real proof for anything, and every statement of supposed proof is just one more bare assertion.

Since Sandy never decisively proves any proof, he only creates the illusion of proof. Sandy never has proof and never has certainty, and because of this problem in thinking, Sandy can never prove any conclusion. Therefore, Sandy can't know anything by infinite regression. Consider a conversation between another Sandy and Rocky.

Sandy, a dedicated atheist, challenged Rocky, a Christian co-worker, to a Creation-evolution debate, and though Rocky said he didn't want

to debate, he said he'd be glad to have lunch with Sandy. At the restaurant, they sat at a small corner table. Sandy immediately gave Rocky what he considered evidence for molecules-to-humankind evolution. Rocky tried to understand what Sandy was saying instead of arguing. He asked, "What makes you think your claim is true?" Sandy enthusiastically answered with a rationalization to support his "evidence." Rocky asked, "You probably have a reason for believing this statement supports your proposition; would you mind explaining your reasoning to me?"

Rocky continually probed. He was looking for substance. He was looking for some proof that didn't need further proof. He was looking for definite proof. Sandy continually answered with a confident tone, even bravado. After about an hour, Rocky considered ending the conversation since it wasn't moving toward any solid point. Sandy had presented an infinite regression of proofs. Not one so-called "proof" was conclusive. Each so-called "proof" was unproven.

Rather than cut off the conversation, Rocky decided to be patient. He'd see what Sandy would say. Sandy confidently gave one more bit of "proof." Rocky once again asked for the proof of the proof. Sandy, who had been so bold and sure of himself, suddenly got a startled look on his face. He said, "I guess I'm making the whole thing up." Time stopped for a moment. Then both men laughed.

As Sandy and Rocky began to walk back to the office where they worked, Sandy suddenly stopped and turned to Rocky as if remembering something, "Wait! You have to prove God's existence to me." The answer from Rocky came as a prophecy. "Why would you listen to me, Sandy? You don't listen to God, and He's speaking to you all the time." After a moment of shock, both men laughed again.

Someone here lost touch with reality. If we lose touch with reality, we're insane, but if we know the difference between good versus evil, truth versus error, and reality versus make-believe we're sane.

The next week was hard for Sandy. When he discovered he was basing all his beliefs on made-up stuff, it shook his self-confidence. He even stopped himself in mid-sentence while speaking to a group about how a piece of software works and admitted he was just making up the whole thing. He didn't really know. Time passed. Memories faded.

Sandy returned to his old self. He again had full confidence in his atheistic worldview, unhindered by his discovery because he forgot what he had discovered.

In this scenario, Sandy finally realized he was basing all his thinking on made-up stuff. Even so, he fell back into his old ways of thinking within a few weeks. He decided he prefers life without God despite knowing he's stuck making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff real.

Without a foundation for reason, we can't know anything. So, we create a strong illusion of knowing and defend this illusion until we're dogmatically closed-minded. Thinking this way, we can't have precise and accurate knowledge of truth with certainty. We can't have knowledge because we're rationalizing instead of reasoning rationally. And though we can observe reality around us, how do we reason from those observations to a conclusion?

How do we know an academic intellectual's claims are true? We see the citations that reference the claims of other academic intellectuals. How do we know those claims are true? We see they base their claims on citations. Those citations reference the claims of still other academic intellectuals. But how do we know about those claims? They cite others who cite others who cite others to infinity. We never get to anything we can call "the truth."

So we meet a deep thinker, and we try to find out how many layers of infinite regression he has. But it makes no difference because stacking up unknowns doesn't create truth. He doesn't gain any intellectual "friction" to make the unknowns true. The more cogent he is, the more deceptive he is.

Consider a man who had received some teaching that sounded good. Let's call him Sandy. Sandy had taken this reasoning to its logical end, which was destroying his wife and children. And yet, people would sit at Sandy's feet to listen to him teach his theology and philosophy. One student of philosophy decided to test him by searching for root causes, so he asked Sandy for the cause five times. After this test, the student declared Sandy had a well-reasoned philosophy.

One day, God gave Sandy a vision of a huge mansion. This mansion was as large as a city, and half of it stood on a rock. The rock was

massive. It was like a mountain and extended down past what Sandy could see. However, that city also extended over the edge of the cliff and out over the abyss. It was sticking out over nothing. It's wasn't unsupported, though. Under the city, a hodgepodge of two-by-fours braced it up from the bottom. They stood at odd angles. They were fastened together to share the load. Charlie followed the structure down. He found each two-by-four rested on supporting two-by-fours, and those two-by-fours rested on other two-by-fours. This amazing structure continued down until the final two-by-fours rested on nothing at all. They just hung over the abyss. Sandy didn't understand. Then, a voice said, "That's how you think."

Someone may think many layers of unproven proofs will eventually build up "intellectual friction," but it doesn't work that way. Many unknowns don't eventually lead to truth any more than many empty propane tanks can cook the burgers on your grill.

As stated, infinite regression isn't the real problem. Infinite regression is just another smokescreen to hide the real problem, the axiomatic-thinking fallacy, which we'll address, but first, circular reasoning.

Circular Reasoning

Circular reasoning is easy to understand, right? Not so fast. It's trickier than we thought.

Circular reasoning starts with infinite regression. The difference is circular logic loops back into itself eventually, yet we can't always easily recognize circular reasoning since persuaders have ways to hide the fallacy. For instance, circular reasoning can have as few as two steps, but it often has many steps, making it seem reasonable since we seldom check logic back more than a step or two. As a concrete illustration, let's look at one of the most widely used examples of circular reasoning.

Ungodly thinkers love to make fun of Christians and accuse us of circular reasoning. And, sometimes, we're guilty as charged.



Christian: The Bible is the word of God without error.

Questioner: But what makes you think the Bible is God's word?

Christian: The Bible tells us it's the word of God without error.

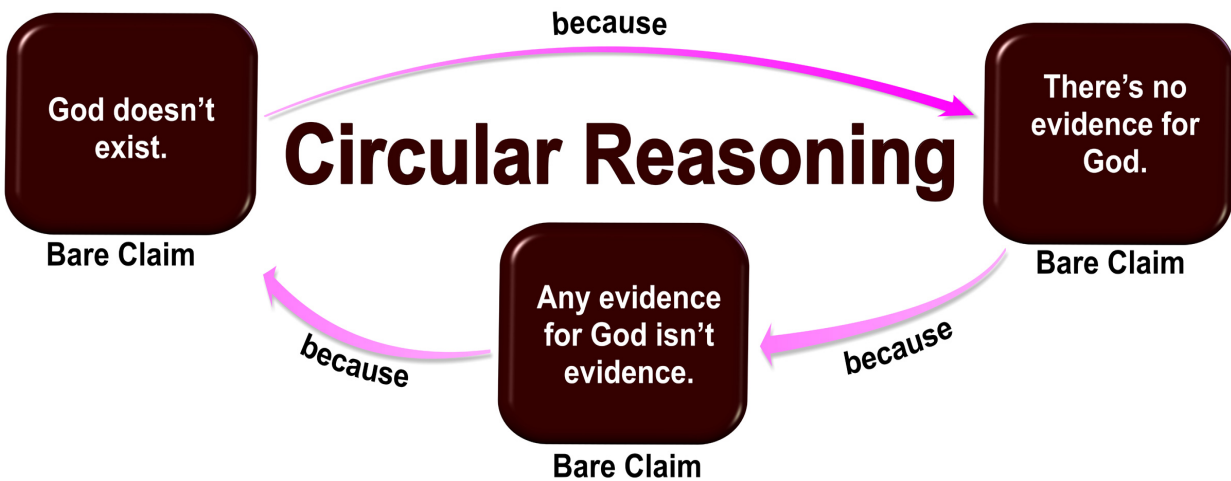
Questioner: But why believe what the Bible says?

Christian: The Bible is infallible.

Questioner: But how do you know it's infallible?

Christian: The Bible is the word of God without error.

The Christian completes the circle of reasoning. The premise and conclusion are the same. "The Bible is God's word without error." That's the premise and the conclusion. This reasoning reaches this conclusion using a circular-reasoning fallacy. However, another choice exists to reach this conclusion. We can reach this conclusion sanely using sound reasoning. Some Christians choose to use a circular-reasoning fallacy instead of being rational. However, it's never necessary for Christians to be irrational. Later, we'll look at rational Christian reasoning for concluding the Bible is God's word without error. But, for now, we'll continue explaining the circular-reasoning fallacy with another example of circular reasoning using ungodly thinking:



The skeptic says, “God doesn’t exist because there’s no evidence for God because any evidence for God isn’t evidence because God doesn’t exist.” That’s one way ungodly thinkers use to claim God doesn’t exist, but they have other ways since they can resort to other fallacies to avoid circular reasoning. However, they’ll still commit fallacies. Indeed, they can’t reason without fallacies. They base every conclusion on fallacies. Sadly, ungodly thinkers have no way to reason other than by being irrational. On the other hand, those who follow Christ have a way to think rationally, and God wants us to choose the rational way more often than we do.

We can see why circular reasoning doesn’t prove anything.

Circular defense of the Bible: I know the Bible is God’s word because the Bible is God’s word.

Circular defense of Atheism: I know God doesn’t exist because God doesn’t exist.

Dr. Jason Lisle brings up some circular logic that’s not the circular-reasoning fallacy.

Without laws of logic, we could not make an argument. We can make an argument. Therefore, there must be laws of logic.

Dr. Lisle said this logic isn’t a circular-reasoning fallacy, but there’s repetition, so we could call it circular. Here’s why it repeats. It

mentions “an argument,” which assumes a logical argument, and it also mentions “laws of logic.” But “laws of logic” and “logical argument” refer to the same thing since laws of logic govern a logical argument. The laws of logic define what a logical argument permits, but Dr. Lisle’s entire logic centers on two points: “laws of logic” and “argument.” We can’t separate laws of logic from logical argument, so it’s circular, but, as Dr. Lisle points out, it’s not a circular-reasoning fallacy. If Dr. Lisle’s point seems hard to understand, we’ll look at a simple illustration using a bicycle.

If bicycles didn’t exist, I couldn’t ride a bicycle. I’m riding a bicycle. Therefore, bicycles exist.

If we call this reasoning “circular,” we run the risk of confusing the fallacy of circular reasoning with the nature of reality. Reality always proves reality. Reality is a true premise since reality is truth. Circular reasoning does something different from that. Circular reasoning dresses up an unproven premise and pretends it’s a proven premise.

As a side note, neither of these two arguments proves reality exists. We discovered earlier that God reveals reality exists. Therefore, divine revelation proves reality exists. Once we know reality exists, we can talk about bicycles existing.

All sound reasoning is circular in a sense. It’s circular but not necessarily a circular-reasoning fallacy. It’s circular since the conclusion must come from the premises or the logic isn’t sound. The conclusion must restate the premises. We can’t have anything in the conclusion we don’t see in the premises. However, just because the conclusion must come from the premises, that doesn’t mean all logic commits the circular-reasoning fallacy. We could call it circular, but we would confuse ourselves with this terminology. So if we do call it circular, then we must also define the difference between “circular reasoning” and “the circular-reasoning fallacy.” Otherwise, we might confuse people.

Here’s an example of a circular-reasoning fallacy:

Molecules-to-humankind evolution is the only explanation that makes sense because it’s the only rational explanation.

This reasoning gives the illusion that “is rational” proves “makes sense.” These two terms have the same meaning. If something makes sense, it’s rational, and if something is rational, it makes sense. The statement pretends to prove molecules-to-humankind evolution, but it doesn’t prove it. The circular reasoning hides the axiomatic-thinking fallacy, which is: “Molecules-to-humankind evolution is the only explanation that makes sense.”

The conclusion: Molecules-to-humankind evolution is the only explanation that makes sense (is rational)

The proof: because it’s the only rational (makes sense) explanation

This argument is a circular-reasoning fallacy. It just claims the story of evolution is true without proof. But the circular reference pretends to prove it. It’s an axiomatic-thinking fallacy. However, when persuaders add the smokescreen fallacy of circular reasoning, they can make us believe they’re thinking rationally. They can make this fallacy more convincing by changing the term from “makes sense” to “is rational.” If they do, they pretend “*is rational*” proves “*makes sense*,” but both words have the same meaning. So this unsound reasoning proves nothing but pretends to prove molecules-to-humankind evolution is the only explanation. The illusion makes it a fallacy.

For comparison, here’s another example of a non-fallacy.

If Christ didn’t exist, we wouldn’t experience His leading. However, moment by moment in every situation Christ leads all who follow Christ. Therefore, Christ exists.

This statement doesn’t commit a circular-reasoning fallacy, but the reasoning still wouldn’t prove the conclusion to anyone else. It’s a testimony of how Christ proves His existence by revealing Himself to us. However, since anyone who seeks Him will find Him, anyone can check Him out. There’s no need to take the word of any other person because when God proves something, it’s absolute. Therefore, anyone interested in truth can also know Christ and experience the same proof of Christ, and none of this is a circular-reasoning fallacy.

An ungodly disbeliever could challenge the authority of God Himself. God's claim of being God is circular. He mentions it through Scripture:

When God made His promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater to swear by, He swore by Himself, ~ Hebrews 6:13 Berean Study Bible

Here, God references Himself as the authority, but He isn't committing a faulty appeal to authority since He's the only authority who knows everything and can't lie. Since God's claim is based on reality, on God Himself, it's not a circular-reasoning fallacy even though it's circular. God asks us to believe Him rather than believing the made-up stuff coming from our minds, the ungodly culture, and demonic liars. He reveals His reality to us and asks us to receive this revelation from Him. If we do, He authors His faith in our innermost minds and builds His essence there as we sense His presence with all our spiritual senses and yield to His will.

Imagine you have a letter, and you tell me, "I know my father wrote this letter because my father wrote this letter." That would be a circular-reasoning fallacy. To avoid the fallacy, you could have said, "I know this letter is from my father because my father told me he wrote it." That wouldn't be a circular-reasoning fallacy. I could question the authority behind the statement. For instance, I might question whether you're telling the truth—a question of authority. Just because you say something doesn't mean you're telling the truth.

Then you could take me to your father who would tell me he wrote the letter. Facing that, I might question whether your father is telling the truth, or I might even question whether your father is your father, and yet these are questions of authority and not circular reasoning. Otherwise, I might refuse to meet with your father in the same way many ungodly thinkers refuse to seek Jesus Christ. To assure full understanding, let's look at another illustration:

Rocky Rockbuilder: Hi there. My name is Rocky Rockbuilder.

Sandy Sandbuilder: That's circular reasoning since you're referencing yourself.

Of course, it's not a circular-reasoning fallacy even though Rocky referenced himself. Now, this person could be a Rocky impersonator, but that's a question of authority. Compare that reasoning to this reasoning:

Rocky Rockbuilder: I know Christ exists because He reveals Himself to me and imparts His faith to me.

Sandy Sandbuilder: That's circular reasoning since Christ is referencing Himself.

We notice Rocky didn't offer his own experience with Christ as proof to Sandy, but rather, he explained that Christ reveals Himself and imparts His faith as proof. Rocky didn't commit a circular-reasoning fallacy, but Sandy may question whether Rocky's experience is real. And applying the same principle, we could tell the disbeliever we know God speaks through the Bible and various methods of revelation mentioned in the Bible because God tells us He does. If we say that, it isn't circular reasoning. And we could tell the disbeliever we've experienced Christ speaking to us, which isn't circular reasoning either. However, the disbeliever could question whether we're lying or crazy.

On the other hand, the disbeliever could question God's truthfulness, but those are questions of authority rather than circular-reasoning fallacies. Also, a disbeliever could question whether the Almighty Creator God has power and authority to reveal the difference between revelation and made-up stuff. However, that's also a question of authority. Questions of authority ask, "Can we trust the person to know and tell the truth?" And, in this example, Sandy knows Christ exists since Christ has already revealed this fact to Sandy just as Christ proclaims through the first chapter of Romans. So Sandy knows, but he still challenges Christ's authority just as Satan challenges Christ's authority.

As mentioned, we wouldn't give our experiences as *proof* to someone else. Instead, we would give our experiences as a *testimony* of Jesus Christ, and this testimony would proclaim the crucified Christ. When we give this testimony, we allow the Holy Spirit to speak through the testimony, so the testimony isn't ours. The testimony is the living Christ flowing from within us, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is the

spirit of prophecy. ^(Revelation 19:10) When Christ flows through us in this way, His testimony makes Him visible. So, anyone who rejects the testimony of the Holy Spirit rejects the Holy Spirit—not us.

I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart, I will
declare all your wonderful deeds. ~ Psalm 9:1
International Standard Version

And as we declare His wonderful deeds, we might tell an ungodly person Jesus Christ reveals Himself to every person who seeks Him. Then we might go on to tell the ungodly person he or she can test this truth. We may invite them to know Christ. However, that isn't circular reasoning. Although, it's an ambiguous statement since it doesn't tell them what it means to seek Jesus Christ. Nor does it explain the limits. Even so, an ungodly person can experience Christ if the ungodly person gets more information about how to know Him. That's not an unsupported claim since anyone can test this claim. Still, ungodly dogmatic thinkers may refuse to test it even when they know how to test it because of their stubborn dogmatism and open resistance to God.

To give this testimony rationally, we simply admit we have a personal relationship with the real Jesus Christ, and we avoid the circular-reasoning fallacy. And that's the simplicity in Christ. ^(2 Corinthians 11:3) It's simple because it's Christ Himself, and we simply acknowledge that He leads us and teaches us moment by moment. But without this leading and teaching, we can't make rational claims. Of course, we must have a relationship with Christ in which He leads, teaches, and corrects us. We can't fake it, but we can enter and develop this relationship. We walk on the Pathway. The Pathway is Christ Jesus. Those who stay on the Pathway don't take any risk. ^(Isaiah 35:8) God provides a sure way.

Again, if we give our testimonies in this way, though we aren't using circular reasoning, ungodly thinkers could yet refuse to look at this evidence, or they could question God's authority. If they have hardened their hearts against God, ungodly thinkers won't sincerely submit themselves to God and will abandon any pretense of sanity rather than acknowledging God. While ungodly thinkers may not want to submit to God, we don't ask them to submit to us, so we don't

try to argue them into oblivion. Since the Holy Spirit is leading, warning, and correcting them through us, they're dealing with Him. And He gives them a choice to listen or not.

Here's how this simplicity works to avoid circular reasoning and all other fallacies. When God speaks, His faith comes. His faith is imparted certainty. His faith comes when anyone acknowledges His revelation. Since it's His faith, it isn't made-up stuff. His faith is the substance. It's reality as opposed to made-up stuff. It's the substance of things hoped for. His faith is the evidence. It's the absolute proof and certainty. It's the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1) This faith comes as a gift when God speaks and we acknowledge Him speaking. And since we can't draw this faith out of ourselves, we can't self-generate real faith. Instead, Christ is the Author and Finisher of this faith. (Hebrews 12:2) Applying this truth to ungodly thinkers, God is speaking to them through us, and if they acknowledge Him, faith will come to them also. If they only acknowledge our fleshly nature, then they won't acknowledge Christ, and faith won't come to them.

We need to distinguish between make-believe faith and real faith. Disguised as a dark counterfeit, we see the common human-generated fake "faith." This fake "faith" pretends something is true and then calling this pretense "faith." This pretense isn't real faith. Real faith begins and ends with hearing the living Christ and responding to Him in submission.

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith. ~ Martin Luther

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice." Since we're following Christ, we experience this leading and teaching from the Holy Spirit, but for those who aren't following Christ, such an experience might seem unreal. However, when He leads and we follow, His faith comes. His faith avoids all circular reasoning.

When we aren't ashamed of Jesus and as we confess Christ before others, we can avoid fallacies. Let's take a minute to notice how the following example avoids all fallacies:



Christian: The Bible says God exists.

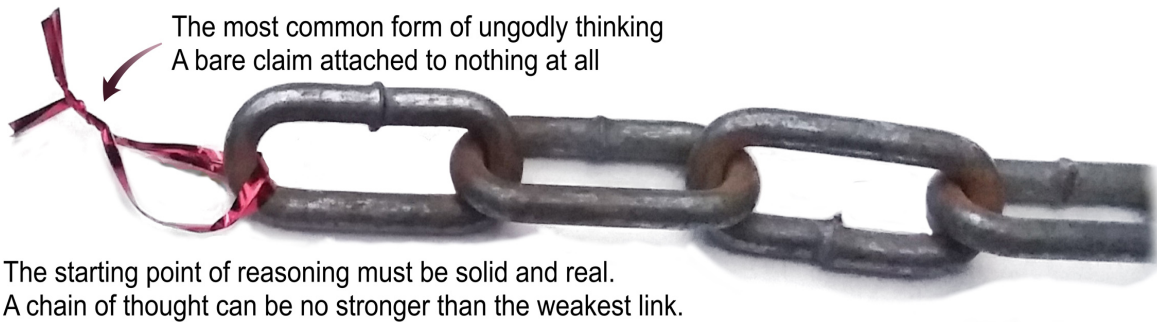
Questioner: But how can you be sure the Bible is God's word?

Christian: I know Jesus Christ, and He reveals this fact to me.

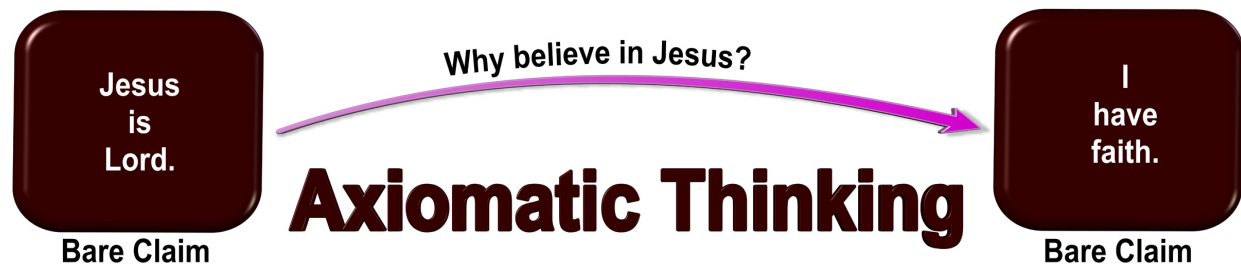
What God shows us isn't proof to anyone other than us. However, God often reveals Himself to another person through us, and He gives proof to that person in this way. And at times, God reveals Himself to a person through the Bible and gives proof to that person by showing Himself through us. God's revelation is always proof, and this proof is always between God and the person God is leading, teaching, or correcting. Those who are sincere can test this way of knowing. To test it, they merely have to come humbly and sincerely to Christ and ask Christ about it. If they do, He'll reveal Himself to them by one of His ways, and usually by many of His ways for confirmation.

We could go on to explain how disbelievers can know Christ and how Christ is willing to reveal Himself to them. Since they have access to this revelation, they don't have to take our word for it. As we witness, we don't want to be timid like Peter was before he received power from on high. We don't want to be afraid to admit we know Christ. Without knowing Him, fallacy (making up stuff and smokescreens) would be our only choice. Thankfully, we can stay out of that trap.

Axiomatic Thinking



We now realize no Christian ever has to rely on axiomatic-thinking fallacies. In simple terms, Christians never have to rely on suppositions, presuppositions, or worldviews since these are ways of making up stuff, and Christians never have to rely on making up stuff. Christians can be rational. Still, a Christian may present his or her faith poorly using axiomatic-thinking fallacies. A Christian may use an axiomatic-thinking fallacy as a reason to believe in Jesus.



Christian: Jesus is Lord.

Questioner: Why believe in Jesus?

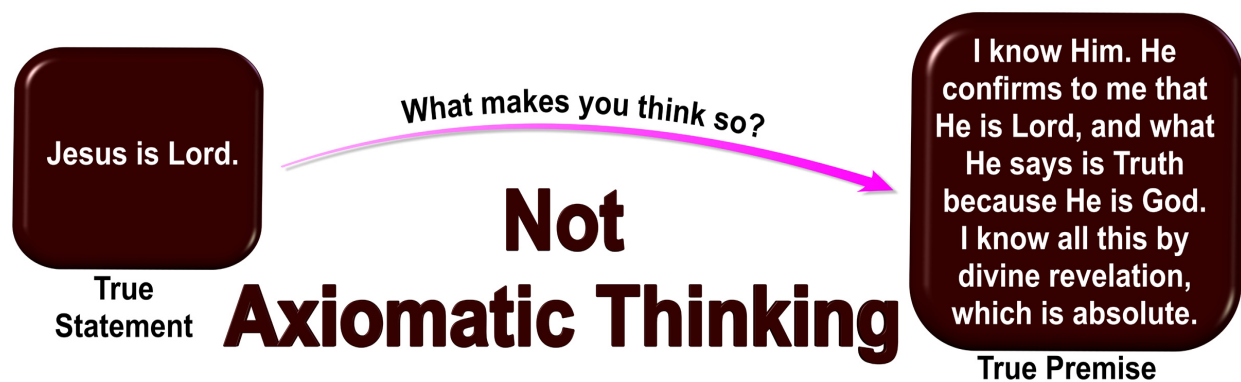
Christian: I have faith.

The statement “I have faith” is an axiom if the word “faith” means making believe something is true. But real faith isn’t pretending even though some people label pretending as “faith.” God says faith comes by hearing His rhema. “Rhema” is Greek for “utterance,” but it’s translated “word.” It’s God’s utterance. God says faith is substance and evidence. Substance means reality as opposed to made-up stuff. Evidence means absolutely certain proof of unseen things God reveals through His rhema. However, the person hearing “I have faith” hears “I pretend,” which is an axiomatic-thinking fallacy. The Christian who

made the statement might even be committing an axiomatic-thinking fallacy depending on how the Christian defines “faith.”

Why is it so hard for Christians to acknowledge Christ? Why do they resist touching and listening to the real Jesus Christ? Why are they willing to perform any ritual, work, ceremony, or observance rather than really knowing Jesus Christ in a real way? Why are they willing to argue, debate, follow dead forms and rituals, engage in emotional displays, rationalize elaborate theologies, or do anything else to avoid knowing Jesus Christ? It’s simply this. When we start to know Jesus Christ, listen to His voice, and yield to His Spirit, we give up the right to run our own lives. We give up sovereign control over our own selves. We admit our own minds are not God and God is God.

Here’s a reason to believe in Jesus without any axiomatic-thinking fallacy.



Christian: Jesus is Lord.

Questioner: What makes you think so?

Christian: I know Him. He confirms to me that He is Lord, and what He says is Truth because He is God. I know all this by divine revelation, which is absolute.

What a difference between this rational statement and the previous irrational statement! We see that acknowledging Jesus Christ and His leading is powerful. For comparison, we’ll look at another axiomatic-thinking fallacy used to give false support for an ungodly claim. The ungodly thinker can’t make this claim without committing the axiomatic-thinking fallacy. Ungodly thinking always rests on suppositions that float over observations and experiences even if the

ungodly thinkers call their suppositions “axioms.” It’s even true when the ungodly thinker is correct in his or her conclusion. Strangely, it’s possible to come to a correct conclusion using unsound reasoning.

For example, sometimes God reveals truth, but human beings fail to give Him glory. So they know the revelation is true, but they don’t know the Source of the truth. When they try to explain how they know, they resort to fallacy. Therefore, if we don’t give God the glory, we must resort to fallacy even though we can all give God the glory and avoid fallacy.

On the other hand, ungodly thinking must always resort to fallacy. Consider the following:



Skeptic: Divine revelation doesn’t happen.

Questioner: Why believe divine revelation doesn’t happen?

Skeptic: Its non-existence is self-evident.

The claim “Its non-existence is self-evident” is obvious axiomatic thinking. While this example is obvious, ungodly thinkers may use smokescreen fallacies to make the axiom seem real. Smokescreen fallacies always resolve to axiomatic thinking, but smokescreens are hard to uncover because they’re designed to deceive us. We usually have to probe to find the hidden assumptions.

By the way, we probe by asking questions. Unfortunately, ungodly thinkers often avoid answering questions, which is a type of smokescreen. They refuse to answer questions because they want to hide their irrational thinking. It may be conscious or unconscious effort. Every statement they make is based on made-up stuff. They want to hide that. They avoid answering because they don’t want to think about their problems. They don’t want to open themselves up to

the Holy Spirit. They don't want to find out whether their philosophies or theologies are true. They want to stay as they are. To avoid exposure, thinkers who fear they're irrational will avoid answering questions. They can't rationally defend their positions. They exert superhuman effort to keep themselves from acknowledging their irrationality.

From our standpoint, we're looking for truth. We're looking for true premises and sound logic. Only divine revelation can provide true premises and remove the need for fallacies. That means we're looking for a foundation of divine revelation. We're willing to suffer the loss of all our ideas if they're false. We already know, by divine revelation, if anyone thinks he or she knows anything, that person doesn't know that thing as he or she ought to know it. God says, "Call to Me and I'll answer you and show you great and mighty things you didn't know previously." If we haven't found divine revelation, we haven't drilled down to a true premise.

The object isn't to win arguments. We must avoid the tendency toward dogmatic game-playing. People who harden their hearts against God don't want the Holy Spirit to correct them. Only God can soften a heart. Our part is to yield to the Holy Spirit and only do the works and say the words He says through us.

Any of us can resist the Holy Spirit. Our hearts can become hardened. We can miss the Way by trying in our own power to bring people to Christ. We must constantly encourage ourselves to walk in submission to the Holy Spirit, so we don't miss the way as God leads us to higher heights.

The big-bang, billions-of-years, no-Flood, and molecules-to-humankind stories depend on three axioms. Those axioms are naturalism, materialism, and uniformitarianism.



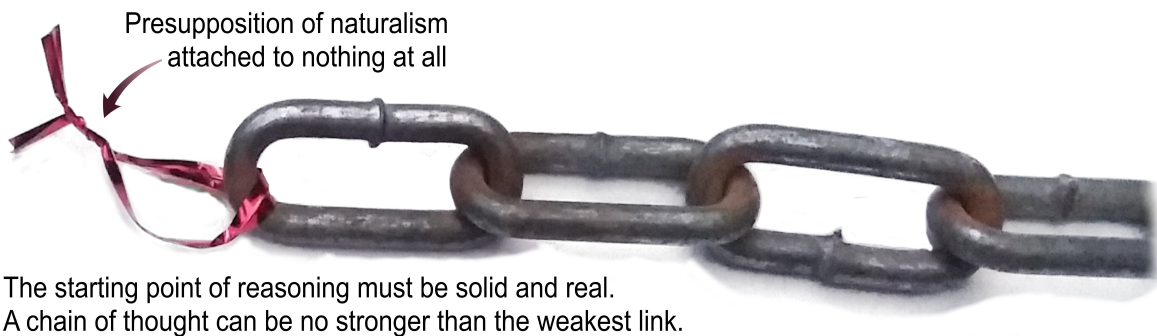
Smokescreen fallacies make axiomatic-thinking fallacies seem real:

Naturalism is obvious. [To whom is it obvious and why?]

No one at the university follows any other way of thinking.
[Bandwagon and marginalizing fallacies prove nothing.]

We must base science on naturalism, or all progress would cease. [An appeal-to-consequence fallacy based on an assertion contrary to fact provides phantom support for the axiom of naturalism.]

These are just three examples of defending naturalism with smokescreens. We may run into name-calling or summary dismissal. Some people use credentials as proof. Not only those, but hundreds of other smokescreen fallacies exist, and we'll face them all. These smokescreens pretend naturalism is more than an axiomatic-thinking fallacy. Naturalism is an axiomatic thinking fallacy.



Naturalism is a bare claim, but smokescreens make it harder to detect that naturalism is an irrational bare claim. Smokescreens fog up the difference between good and evil, truth and error, or reality and make-believe. Since evolutionists must use naturalism as a starting assumption, they call it “an axiom of science” to make it seem more real. Of course, it’s easy to see how the word “axiom” sounds so much better than “made-up stuff.” The word “axiom” is a euphemism. Resorting to this euphemism is a smokescreen fallacy. If reasoning depends on naturalism, it depends on a premise that isn’t true. That’s why appeal to naturalism is a fallacy. The same is true of appeal to

materialism and appeal to uniformitarianism. These aren't proved, and we know, by revelation, they're false.



Besides the smokescreens already mentioned, deceptive persuaders may disguise their assumptions with misleading labeling. They might label the assumptions deceptively using terms like “knowledge,” “settled science,” or “rational thought.” We must guard our minds against these deceptions since disguising assumptions makes it hard to tell the difference between supposition and reality. We’ve seen this fallacy in rationalized theology just as we’ve seen it in rationalized speculations about the history of the earth. To rationalize isn’t rational, but it lacks rationality. It’s too bad these two words, “rational” and “rationalize,” sound similar. However, before we complete our journey, we’ll fully understand rationalizing is trying to make irrationality seem rational. It’s trying to make insanity appear sane.

The mark of rationality is to have a good reason for what we believe. ~ Jason Lisle

A good reason? What’s that? A good reason is a true premise and valid form, but we’re focusing on the premises. Conclusions can’t be better than the premises that prove them. If our premises are mere presuppositions, then they aren’t good. Then, we don’t have a good reason for what we believe. If our proof consists of mere presuppositions, we haven’t proved our conclusions. A presupposition

has no truth because a presupposition is an unknown. And unknowns can't lead to truth just as any other types of bare claim can't lead to truth. Bare claims are mindless.

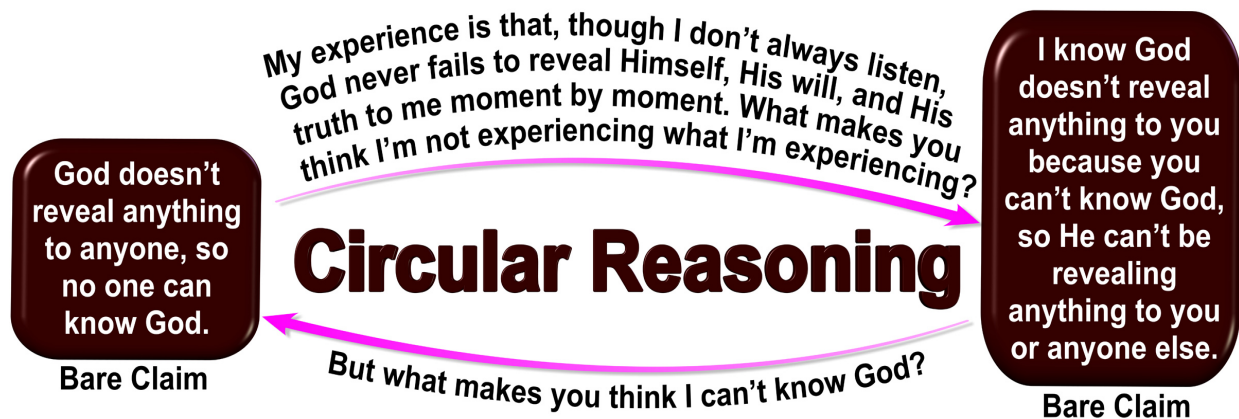
If God reveals something, what God reveals isn't a human presupposition. Without exception what God reveals is true. But presupposition, being without a true premise, provides no way to have sound reasoning or a good reason for what we believe.

Even so, axiomatic thinking is widespread while truth is rare. We see axiomatic thinking in action when scientists claim transitional forms exist. We see axiomatic thinking fallacies when theologians teach speculative theologies. However, both insist they're teaching reality. And surprisingly, there isn't much difference between the reasoning processes of speculative scientists and speculative theologians. Both start with evidence but base their claims on fantasy. In one case, the evidence is physical observation. In the other case, the evidence is Scripture. However, the claims speculate beyond the evidence in both cases. In neither case do persuaders base their conclusions on evidence. Instead, they use the filter of their worldviews to interpret evidence. And then they add imagination to shoehorn the evidence into their worldviews. Then they take their imagined speculations as axioms. And they repeat those speculated axioms until they think the axioms they imagined are part of the evidence. At this point, they can't tell the difference between truth versus error or reality versus make-believe.

No one has to have this problem. It's a choice.

The Problem with Godless Thinking

Ungodly thinking always results in one fallacy or another. Below, is an example of circular reasoning used to make it seem as if God can't give revelation.



Skeptic: God doesn't reveal anything to anyone, so no one can know God.

Christian: My experience is, though I don't always listen, God never fails to reveal Himself, His will, and His truth to me moment by moment. What makes you think I'm not experiencing what I'm experiencing?

Skeptic: I know God doesn't reveal anything to you because you can't know God, so He can't be revealing anything to you or anyone else.

Christian: But what makes you think I can't know God?

Skeptic: God doesn't reveal anything to anyone, so no one can know God.

The skeptic completes the circle of his reasoning.

Now here's the way we can rationally explain how we know God exists and the Bible is valid.



Christian: The Bible says God exists.

Questioner: But why believe the Bible?

Christian: I know Jesus Christ, and He reveals the validity of the Bible to me.

God also speaks to us through the Bible. We could answer the question this way. When God speaks to us through the Bible, He proves Himself to us.

If we're speaking by the Holy Spirit, this other person hears God directly through us. They don't hear a speculative explanation, but God speaks to them in revelation. The testimony of Jesus Christ within us is proof, but this person must receive the testimony. Many have said God has no grandchildren. We each must receive Jesus Christ, believe Him, and develop our relationships with Him.

Questioner: Why doesn't God physically reveal Himself? That would make it easier to believe.

Me: Everyone knows God exists, They didn't figure it out. God reveals Himself through the things He has created. He also reveals Himself through those who speak by His Spirit. If we speak about Christ by the Spirit of Christ to any person, that person may reject what we say. They aren't rejecting us. They're rejecting Christ since He was the One speaking to them through us. No one has an excuse for rejecting Christ. They don't reject Him because of lack of evidence. They reject Him because their deeds are evil.

Questioner: How do you define "evil deeds"?

Me: Disobedience to God, which includes ignoring His leading or doing what's contrary to His leading. God is love. Ignoring Him or disobeying Him is contrary to love. What's contrary to love often counterfeits love. By grace, which is through faith, we're able to submit to Christ and allow Him to do His works through us. That's what righteousness is. If we try to self-generate righteous acts, that's what self-righteousness is. God speaks through Scripture and never contradicts Himself as we humans do. So, disobedience to the precepts He lays out in Scripture results in evil deeds.

Questioner: What if I follow all the moral guidance but just happen to believe most of the stories in the Bible didn't happen?

Me: By trying to follow all the moral guidance, you can become self-righteous, but you can't do God's righteousness. Righteousness consists of God leading, you submitting, and God doing His works through you. Unless you're born again, you can't see the Kingdom of God. You need Christ. Without Him, all else is useless.

Knowing Christ isn't the same as having a theoretical knowledge about Christ. Knowing Christ means you've submitted to Him and His righteousness. Knowing Christ means you follow Him as He leads, teaches, and corrects you moment by moment in every situation, and you yield to Him to the point He does His works through you.

Once you know Him in this way, the Holy Spirit teaches you the Bible is His word without error. The Holy Spirit speaks to you through Scripture and every method mentioned in Scripture, and yet, He never contradicts Himself in any of this revelation.

I explained righteousness to this Questioner, but I also went beyond the explanation and spoke by the Holy Spirit to this Questioner. Explanations aren't proof of truth, but we might understand a concept through an explanation. However, concepts aren't part of reality. Concepts are tools. And some tools work better than others. Some tools don't work at all. Others give the illusion of working, but then they injure us. Understanding a concept isn't understanding truth. We can only understand truth if we know the Person Who is Truth. Therefore, we introduce people to Christ. Introducing people to Christ isn't circular reasoning.

You know that when you were pagans, you were influenced and led astray to *mute* idols. Therefore I inform you that no one who is *speaking by the Spirit of God* says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," *except by the Holy Spirit*. ~ 1 Corinthians 12:2

Paul is comparing mute idols who don't speak with the Almighty God Who does speak. And he mentions human beings who are speaking by God's Spirit. Have you sincerely said, "Jesus is Lord?" You said it by God's Spirit—it wasn't you but Christ speaking through you. Give Him the glory when He speaks through you. If the Holy Spirit leads us to testify of the way God leads us, we have the testimony of Jesus Christ, and it's proof to the other person. At that point, they become responsible for acknowledging Christ in us even as they're responsible for acknowledging Christ the Creator God as He speaks to them through the creation. Conversely, if we testify in our human strength, then we don't make Christ visible.

As we already found out, indisputable proof is also available since anyone can have the same experience. Anyone can know Jesus Christ. Of course, that person must be willing to look at the proof.

By the way, refusing to look at evidence is also a fallacy known as "invincible ignorance." Some ungodly thinkers are unwilling to look at the evidence because they're biased against submitting to God. This inner bias against God is a spiritual problem, not an intellectual problem.

Because of the nature of truth, reason, logic, and true science, no argument against the Bible can stand. Those who argue against the Bible base their arguments on made-up stuff. They make up stuff to argue against the Bible. However, we can rationally know the Bible is God's word without error. We know since God reveals this fact to us. What God reveals is absolute. God's proof is divine revelation. And God doesn't only reveal truth about the Bible. God also provides plenty of proof for His existence since He speaks to every person continuously. He says those who don't acknowledge Him have no excuse. They know because He reveals Himself to them. Those of us who stand in God's presence know He exists since He's a constant friend and leader to every person who follows Christ.

So we can use sound reasoning when explaining how we know the Bible is God's word or how we can know God exists. And we can also use sound reasoning to give a response to someone who asks us about the hope of Christ Who's in us. Notice the following example:



Christian: I know Jesus Christ, and He reveals Himself and His truth to me.

Questioner: But how do you know it's God and not your imagination or an evil spirit?

Christian: The Holy Spirit gives me discernment, which increases as I keep in step with the Spirit.

We need to remember these examples don't prove anything since we can only find proof in God, but they can help us understand the nature of fallacy. The Holy Spirit provides the proof. Christ provides the knowledge. So as we look at these examples, we do so prayerfully, remembering God is here, and He's leading us right now if we yield our wills to His will.

Looking at circular reasoning another way, the chain of reason eventually hooks up to itself to "solve" the infinite regression problem, so circular reasoning is just a smokescreen to hide infinite regression. It also hides something more deceptive: the axiomatic-thinking fallacy.

Failed Ungodly Solutions for the Trilemma

Ungodly intellectuals have several ways of dealing with the ungodly thinking trilemma. Nevertheless, not one of those ways is rational. Fallacious dismissals of the trilemma are endless. Here's a short and partial list of ways some people deal with the ungodly thinking trilemma.

- Ignore it.
- Hide it.

- Make fun of anyone who points out the problem.
- Claim multiple lines of evidence which are simply additional bare assertions.
- Claim proximate knowledge.
- Use pragmatism.
- Claim success equals sound reasoning.
- Defend infinite regression.
- Claim many assumptions stacked on top of each other equal truth.
- Defend circular reasoning.
- Defend axiomatic thinking by declaring claims to be self-supporting or self-evident.
- Defend axiomatic thinking by claiming we must base all thinking on axioms.
- Claim to use the right assumptions.
- Redefine science.
- Credit scientific advances to humanity rather than to God.

Pragmatism works for survival. It can be clever. It can do science. It can't reason to truth. It can only have opinions. It can only react in conditioned response like Pavlov's dogs. It can only handle the present and the material realm. You can find a more detailed listing, with refutations, in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*.

When skeptics, have finally admitted the ungodly thinking trilemma keeps them from knowing anything at all, they usually want to project this problem onto those of us who follow Christ. To project, they may claim we aren't experiencing Christ as we say we are. When they make that claim, they're committing at least two fallacies. First, they're gaslighting. Second, they're claiming to know the inner spiritual experience of every person who has ever existed. They're claiming to be all-knowing.

Sandy Sandbuilder: You talk about experiencing divine revelation, but it's all in your head. You have to understand. You can't mention divine revelation when talking to someone who doesn't believe. We go by facts and evidence, not by feelings or hearing voices. Nothing you're saying is appealing to my logic.

Rocky Rockbuilder: Your claim is interesting since sound logic requires a true premise. How do you know a premise is true without divine revelation?

Sandy: I follow the evidence. [This so-called evidence is phantom evidence, not proof.]

Rocky: Does evidence mean absolute proof of truth, or does evidence mean made-up stuff?

Sandy: Evidence is proof I can tangibly see and manipulate and discover.

Rocky: Is your proof derived by making up stuff?

Sandy: No.

Rocky: How do you prove your proof then? Do you use some other proof you can't prove? Are you familiar with infinite regression?

Sandy: I'm familiar with it, but I'm familiar with it regarding religion.

Rocky: So you know about an infinite regression of unproven proofs. Then are you familiar with the Münchhausen trilemma?

Sandy: Yes, I've heard of it, but the argument pretty much is saying we can't know anything is real. These two arguments hurt both of our positions.

Rocky: While it affects Christians and non-Christians alike, it only affects those who try to reason without divine revelation. Christians can use a true premise based on revelation. Are you sure you understand why this trilemma

is so devastating? If you truly understood it, you wouldn't bother reasoning.

Sandy: I can include divine revelation in the trilemma. How do you know it's divine? What truth do you use to determine that it's divine revelation?

Rocky: When God speaks and I acknowledge Him, He authors His faith in my mind, and I know. Faith is substance as opposed to made-up stuff. It's absolute proof since Jesus Christ authored the faith. Jesus Christ is the only Source of all truth, knowledge, and wisdom. Faith is the only way anyone can know anything. On the other hand, your claim of including divine revelation in the trilemma is an axiomatic-thinking fallacy. Therefore, it fails on that horn of the trilemma. You can't even prove it to yourself. In your theory, what prevents God from revealing reality miraculously to humans? What prevents God from revealing the difference between human thought and His revelation?

Sandy: Why isn't God included in the trilemma? [I (Rocky) had just answered this question, but we're dealing with Sandy's worldview filter that won't allow him to understand.]

Rocky: I can't imagine a way anyone could rationally think the ungodly trilemma demolishes divine revelation in the way it demolishes ungodly thinking. I would have to know how you try to fit God's divine revelation into the trilemma to answer your question. I don't see how you can do it. But you may have a presupposition that makes you think divine revelation fits into the trilemma. I can't answer your presupposition unless I know what it is.

Sandy: I guess it's the lack of presupposition that is my problem. I don't assume a god, and I don't assume divinity. So I think it's perfectly okay to question the validity of both knowledge of divinity and reality of God.

Rocky: You didn't answer the question. Walk me through your logic step by step. Show me how you think you know

it constitutes one of the three fallacies of the trilemma when God speaks to me. When I say, “walk me through your logic,” I mean without any bare claims. You must base your claims on absolute proof. To clarify, when you say you have no presuppositions, you’re claiming to have absolute proof. You’re claiming your proof doesn’t depend on any assumptions, stories, conceptual frameworks, ideas, or other forms of made-up stuff. Since you think you can include revelation in this ungodly thinking trilemma, you ought to be able to explain exactly what makes you think so. And you ought to be able to tell me how I can check it out for myself without assuming anything. I gave you a way to check out Jesus Christ without making assumptions. I did that when I explained how I know God reveals truth and how you can also know. You can know by simply getting to know Christ. God reveals truth.

Sandy: OK. Here’s my logical reasoning. I **presuppose** no Almighty God as a starting **axiom**. **If** there is no Almighty God, then God cannot possibly impart knowledge and bypass the human inability to self-generate knowledge. If God cannot possibly impart knowledge and bypass the human inability to self-generate knowledge, then all supposed divine revelation originates as an assumption in the human mind. Therefore, all supposed divine revelation originates as an assumption in the human mind. Therefore, God can’t impart a divine substance and certainty known as faith when He speaks, and so, no one can know anything by divine revelation because of begging the question and infinite regression. [Sandy admitted he’s basing his thinking on made-up stuff. Amazing!]

Rocky: OK. So you’re basing your thinking on the axiomatic-thinking fallacy. In other words, you’re starting by assuming the thing you’re trying to prove.

Sandy: Then I’m misunderstanding. How is your concept not starting with the thing you’re trying to prove?

We notice the subtle change that misunderstands the circular-reasoning fallacy. I (Rocky) said, “starting **by assuming** the thing you’re trying to prove.” Sandy switched my statement to “starting **with** the thing you’re trying to prove.”

And Sandy also committed another axiomatic-thinking fallacy when he used the word “concept.” He committed this sly suggestion by innuendo, but his actual claim is, “God is just a concept in your mind.”

Rocky: Within your presupposition of “no God” you can’t have understanding. You can only make up stuff and call the made-up stuff true. Well, you can scour the Internet for other people’s made-up stuff and call this made-up stuff true. I’ll grant you that. But you have to break out of this box you’re in if you want to understand anything.

We either start our thinking with God Who is real and verifiable, or we start our thinking with a fake, unverifiable presupposition.

Sandy: With your presupposition of God, we are definitely at a stalemate!

Again, Sandy twists my (Rocky’s) testimony about God revealing Himself, His will, and His truth. Sandy filters that testimony through his worldview and shoehorns it into the phrase “your presupposition of God.”

Rocky: First, I’m not trying to prove anything. God proves Himself to me. I don’t tell you about my relationship with God to prove God to you. I tell you about it as a spiritual testimony of my ongoing experience. There’s a difference between explanation and proof. Second, you’re presupposing I’m basing my thinking on presupposition, which is another example of you making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff true. Third, you can’t define a process by which you could know anything, yet you presume to know I’m assuming rather than experiencing God’s revelation. In other words, you’re claiming to read my mind. Fourth, you can’t define a process by which I could verify any of your claims. You ask me to believe you or some other fallen human without any proof. You ask me

to believe a deceitful and desperately wicked mind, a mind that must rest every thought on fallacy and can't possibly know anything.

On the other hand, I can tell you exactly how I know in simple terms. God reveals it to me. It's that simple. Not only so, but you can check this revelation. You don't have to take my word for it. You can seek Christ yourself since every person who seeks Him finds Him. I invite you to do so.

We notice Sandy is certain of his ability to reason, and he bases his certainty on a circular-reasoning fallacy. Also, Sandy is certain his impressions and experiences are real. Not only so, but he's also certain of his interpretations that go beyond his ability to observe or experience, saying, "I follow the evidence." What evidence could Sandy possibly observe that would tell him about my (Rocky's) inner spiritual experiences with Christ?

It quickly becomes obvious Sandy's so-called "evidence" isn't observation and experience. Sandy's evidence consists of the stories Sandy tells himself about reality. At the same time, Sandy has unwarranted belief in his stories and assumptions about the lack of divine revelation. He says I'm not experiencing what I'm experiencing. We can see the double standard. Also, even after I (Rocky) invited Sandy to know Jesus Christ. Sandy needs to examine the evidence. The evidence is Jesus Christ. Sandy refused to consider seeking Christ. In refusing, he committed the invincible-ignorance fallacy.

This conversation is typical of the ungodly way to deal with the ungodly thinking trilemma. Sandy has a problem providing proof. For example, if Sandy says there can be no proof of anything because no absolutes exist, Sandy can't prove this statement. Or if Sandy says God doesn't reveal, Sandy is claiming to be all-knowing and has no proof for his claim. Sandy must base any claim he makes on made-up stuff. Sandy can't make a rational statement because rational statements must be based on truth, and ungodly thinkers have no path to truth.

Similarly, any argument against divine revelation fails because it must rest on fallacies. The fallacies are axiomatic-thinking fallacies and smokescreen fallacies. Now, we can see why all arguments against God and all arguments against the Bible fail.

Alternatives to the Trilemma

While naturalists have no alternatives, those who follow Christ can be rational. The ungodly thinking trilemma only affects thinkers who think without God—ungodly thinkers. Of course, Christians are capable of ungodly thinking, and we confess our fault. And yet, we have a better option. In contrast with this better way, the ungodly trilemma tries to limit all thinkers to three choices for thinking, and it ignores both divine revelation and demonic influence.

Denying demonic influence is failing to deal with reality, yet demons don't help us reason rationally. Oh, occult spirit guides give the illusion of help, but they're deceitful and dangerous. And while we don't want to glorify the devil, we don't want to deny what God has revealed about him either, so we'll look briefly into what God has revealed and then move on.

We're forced to admit many scientists have used occult techniques. And many religions follow demons as gods. People join self-help programs that say they'll tap into human potential when the programs are gateways to demonic possession. Some of these self-help programs claim they can increase our IQs or give us secret knowledge. They promise to break addictions and destructive habits. They claim they can undo negative life-patterns, and unlock the power of our minds. Not only so, but they also claim their programs can overcome stress, give relief from any crisis, and allow us to use our untapped mental energy in our careers. In short, these programs claim they'll give us success. Then in the seminar, students learn techniques for conjuring a spirit guide, a familiar spirit, to "help" them throughout their lives.

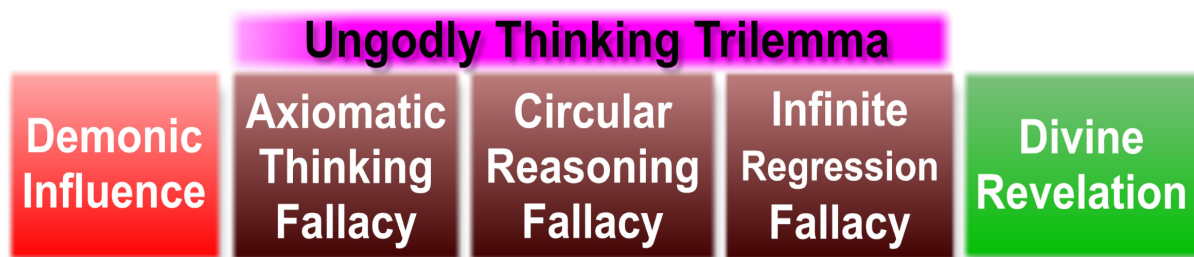
Beyond these "self-help" programs, many other gateways exist for demonic influence. Most, if not all, extra-terrestrial experiences are similar to demonic possession experiences. Also, some people actively practice Wicca, Neopaganism, and Satanism in the highest levels of

organizations and governments. Plus, many religions conjure demons. Demons eventually want to kill us. Remember that.

Therefore, in science, business, and daily living, the three possible sources for interpretation of experience and observation are (1) human imagination, which is making up stuff, (2) divine revelation, or (3) demonic magick. While we may not like to think anyone is using demonic magick in science or business, some people use demonic magick as a regular part of their lives.

Contrast this wickedness with divine revelation. Unique from all other ways of thinking, divine revelation results in a premise we know is true, so we have a Foundation for sound reasoning with divine revelation. That Foundation is Christ Himself. Christ is the Foundation. Also, love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, meekness, hope, and inner strength are only available through the Holy Spirit. Our fleshly natures can only produce counterfeits of these. And when considering divine revelation, we know observation and experience are two of the ways God reveals reality to humanity. He speaks to us through these things if we're willing to take His correction and instruction.

We need to define our options for thinking more clearly. We can choose demonic influence. We can choose the ungodly thinking trilemma. Most people know this as the Münchhausen trilemma. However, we can also choose divine revelation. Now, we have five choices: demons, axioms, circular reasoning, infinite regression, or divine revelation. Only divine revelation can give us truth.



Up to this point, we've focused considerable energy on a true premise. However, even given a true premise and valid form, there's more to truth than a true premise and valid form. Truth is spiritual, and logic without Jesus Christ is futile. He is the Logos. A person can repeat a

creed without knowing Christ. A Christian can use logic to defeat an anti-God thinker in a debate without knowing Christ. To put it in explicit terms, this Christian may never acknowledge Christ's voice or allow God's grace to do God's works through him or her. But Jesus said, "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me." Perhaps we're all guilty of this error sometimes. And yet God leads us forward in Him if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Truth, and God has hidden all knowledge and all wisdom in Him.

Let's consider one more conversation.

Rocky: Godless thinking ends in irrational thinking. Godless thinking doesn't need a premise. It uses assertions.

Sandy: You went to debate school so you can distance yourself from a conversation with logic. Is that a premise or an assertion?

Ungodly thinkers who are trolling the Internet don't necessarily make sense. The remarks about debate school and logic don't make sense, nor do these remarks relate to anything that came before them.

Rocky: You wouldn't know since every time you try to reason beyond your immediate sensations you have to do so based on made-up stuff. That's not a slam. It's the result of the Münchhausen trilemma. It's the fate of every ungodly thinker.

Sandy: You refuse to learn anything about biology to support your claims, and I am not going to write a term paper for your edification.

Now, Sandy brings up biology, which has nothing to do with the discussion. With Internet trolls, they may just be copying and pasting comments from a document of trolling posts without regard to the discussion.

Rocky: As I said, you wouldn't know since every time you try to reason beyond your immediate sensations you have to do so based on made-up stuff. That's not a slam. It's the

result of the Münchausen trilemma. It's the fate of every ungodly thinker. Are you bringing up biology because you want to discuss the stories of evolutionism? You aren't equipped to discuss those either since every time you try to reason beyond your immediate sensations you have to do so based on made-up stuff.

Sandy: Ok. Now you are just repeating yourself word for word. I am not reasoning from my own senses. I was saying you could open your eyes and look around every once in a while. But nobody's ever seen DNA with the unaided eye. We interpret the results of DNA testing with our eyes, but the math is there whether we are looking at it or not. No circular reasoning there. So yeah, scientific proofs require further proofs, but not ad infinitum. Science being based on previous science doesn't make it axiomatic, it just means you have to learn the other previous science it rests on if you can't take it for granted, but you are unwilling. No trilemma there.

Rocky: That's exactly the problem. You aren't reasoning from your senses as you say. You're trying to reason beyond them. That's why I said you wouldn't know since every time you try to reason beyond your immediate sensations you have to do so based on made-up stuff. If you understand this problem, you'll stop arguing. As soon as "science" goes beyond observation, it's either based on made-up stuff or divine revelation. If you have science based on previous science, you can't base the previous science on stories, or you base it on made-up stuff. So, godless stories do fail because of the Münchausen trilemma. They're irrational. Give that some thought. Think about it. See if you can understand it.

Sandy: Perhaps it would help if you defined made-up stuff.

Rocky: Stuff you make up. Like fabrications. Axiomatic-thinking fallacies. The Münchausen trilemma would destroy all reasoning if Münchausen were right. It would destroy all science. However, Münchausen made the

mistake of assuming the myth of naturalism. He assumed only a natural world and a natural mind. He's right about one thing. You can't prove anything if you assume naturalism. You can't prove observation, logic, or science have any value. You can't even prove your existence. However, God reveals observation, logic, and science have value. All you lose is the ability to think beyond your senses. You can't think beyond your senses without divine revelation. So, you can fry an egg. You can invent a cell phone. But you can't rationally guess how much of that ability comes from tinkering with what your senses tell you and how much God reveals to you. You can invent a new microscope or telescope to improve your capacity to see. But you can't rationally extrapolate from observation to a story about evolutionism or millions of years. You can't rationally talk about right, wrong, God, philosophy, or anything else you can't sense with your five natural senses.

Trimming the Trilemma

The Trim

Here's a question about the ungodly thinking trilemma. Why stick to three choices when five choices exist. And why filter out the one choice that allows sound reasoning? Of course, there's a reason all ungodly thinkers filter possibilities this way. They have this problem because they bind themselves up by falsely assuming naturalism. Since they've chosen this way of thinking, naturalism filters their experience of life and twists their thinking. It irrationally eliminates divine revelation a priori. It's worse than that. Naturalism forces ungodly thinkers to miss the opportunity to hear from the Absolute. It blocks them from hearing from the One Who created everything. They block their ears so they won't hear from Him Who knows all things and can't lie.

Ungodly thinkers refuse to consider revelation because revelation is outside the ungodly worldview. They're also biased against Christ and His righteousness. God says they're biased because their deeds are evil and they love darkness rather than light. They don't reject revelation because of evidence but because of spiritual bias.

As we can see, reason and revelation aren't in conflict. Revelation is the only basis for sound reasoning because sound reason must have a true premise. Reason can't be sound without a true premise. Since no one can prove a premise without divine revelation, ungodly thinkers have an unsolvable problem. Perhaps that's what God means in Scripture when He says all wisdom and all knowledge are hidden in Christ.

For the reasons just given, the time has come to trim the trilemma. While Agrippa, Münchhausen, and Albert had a point, we can simplify this trilemma. Ungodly thinkers have no choice but to reason using axiomatic-thinking fallacies. And then they use smokescreen fallacies to hide their axiomatic thinking. Circular reasoning and infinite regression are only two of hundreds of possible smokescreens. For instance, in socialist countries, the smokescreens include appeal to fear, appeal to force, and message control.

"Axiomatic thinking" is a fancy way of saying "making up stuff." So thinkers sometimes make up stuff, but how does made-up stuff look? It looks like interpretations, speculative explanations, models, theories, theologies, assumptions, or axioms. These add to what God reveals or diminish parts of what God reveals.

While circular reasoning and infinite regression are smokescreen fallacies, they aren't the only smokescreens as we've mentioned. For instance, neither circular reasoning nor infinite regression includes appeal-to-ridicule fallacies or red-herring fallacies. The trilemma missed hundreds of fallacies, but those other fallacies affect our daily lives. While the trilemma doesn't cover all these other fallacies, the term "smokescreen" does cover them. So, we'll trim the trilemma to two choices instead of three. We'll trim it to made-up stuff and smokescreen fallacies.

As we've discovered, the ungodly thinking trilemma has several problems. First, it's too complex. Second, it doesn't account for all the other fallacies that cause errors in thinking. Third, it begins with an assumption of naturalism or atheism. Fourth, some people work under the illusion the trilemma affects everyone, everywhere, in every circumstance. That's not true.

So on our journey, we move forward to a much simpler way to understand the problem. Thinkers only commit one active fallacy: making up stuff. All other fallacies are smokescreens. Smokescreens try to give the illusion that made-up stuff is real stuff.

So axiomatic thinkers are either making up stuff or defending their made-up stuff. Since this two-part fallacy only impacts ungodly thinkers, we name it “the ungodly-thinking fallacy.” We’ll dispense with the trilemma going forward.

While people sometimes deliberately use logical fallacies to deceive others, more often, people deceive themselves. The ungodly-thinking fallacy is the only fallacy. We can define every fallacy in the context of the ungodly-thinking fallacy. Without divine revelation, we would be doomed to base every conclusion on made-up stuff. Made-up stuff is a bare claim. A bare claim is an axiomatic-thinking fallacy. However, we try to make the made-up stuff look like real stuff using smokescreen fallacies. That’s the ungodly-thinking fallacy. Axiomatic-thinking fallacies work with smokescreen fallacies. The smokescreen fallacies make the axioms seem real.



In simple terms, the ungodly-thinking fallacy is making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff “true.”



At the risk of being redundant, we’re going to look at this ungodly-thinking fallacy another way. We want to understand the basis of all

fallacies. Here's the simplicity of this understanding. While hundreds of fallacies exist, they sort into these two kinds.

1. Axioms are claims we don't know. They may be outright lies. They may be assumptions. They're always made-up stuff.
2. Smokescreen fallacies give the illusion made-up stuff is real stuff.

And that's how simple it is. It's so simple most people miss it. And yet, even though it's simple, fallacies can be tricky illusions. They must blur the division between reality and make-believe or the fallacies don't work.

Many fallacies fit the term "axiomatic-thinking fallacy." These fallacies are all axiomatic-thinking fallacies. Under the axiomatic-thinking fallacy, we'll find fallacies like the following:

- assumption
- blind authority
- bald-faced lie
- hypothesis contrary to fact
- ipse dixit
- lie
- misrepresenting facts
- outright lie
- the big lie technique

Under the smokescreen category of fallacy, we'll find things like the following:

- ambiguity
- appeal to authority
- appeal to emotion
- appeal to ridicule

- circular reasoning
- coercion
- comparison
- contradiction
- distraction
- fallacies of cause
- fallacies of choice
- fallacies of omission
- fallacies of pressure
- flawed evidence
- genetic fallacies
- infinite regression
- invalid form (formal fallacies)
- limiting presuppositions
- message control
- non sequitur
- statistical fallacies

Applying the Trim

As we've seen, ungodly thinkers always make up something and then use that made-up stuff as a foundation or starting point for their reasoning. That made-up stuff is the basis for their reasoning. And we've discovered ungodly thinkers have to make up something to reason at all. Then they almost always hide the assumption, pretend it's not made-up stuff, or defend their habit of basing all thought on made-up stuff. As a result, ungodly thinking gets complex. And complex irrationality is difficult to evaluate. That's why ungodly thinkers use complexity and confusion to hide their axiomatic-thinking fallacies.

Someone may say, “There’s another way besides making up stuff and using smokescreen fallacies, and that way is observation.” This claim introduces a third source, observation, but observation is one of the ways God reveals reality to humanity. Claiming observation is separate from divine revelation commits a fallacy known as denying the correlative conjunction. Though God reveals reality to us through observation, the human mind filters and distorts revelation unless the observer is in submission to the Anointing of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, if the human mind interprets observation in a way that goes beyond observation, it corrupts observation. Therefore, theories corrupt science as soon as anyone treats theories as if they were more than an organized way to think about made-up stuff. As we think about this corruption, we’re aware that people who build their lives on theories find it difficult to consider the possibility their theories aren’t a solid foundation. However, God is going to shake whatever is shakable. Only the unshakable will remain.

Also, we can’t observe objectively without divine intervention. We can’t get outside ourselves to be objective. And our worldviews filter our observations. As a result, our worldviews act as a veil or filter over our senses and thoughts. When God wants to reveal something to us, He pulls back this veil of the worldview. “Removing the veil” is the literal meaning of “revelation.” Scripture interprets the meaning of “the veil.” The veil is a symbol of our human fleshly nature. Those who reject God try to stop God’s revelation. They often substitute a vision out of their innermost minds. However, when they do, these visions come out of their worldviews. Worldviews are part of the fleshly nature. As we progress on our journey on the next trip, we’ll explore the fantasy land of worldviews. We’ll also explore more of the arguments persuaders use to defend ungodly thinking in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*.

You don’t want to raise a generation of science students who don’t understand how we know our place in the cosmos. ~ Bill Nye

We agree with Bill. We don’t agree with Bill’s method of knowing our place in the cosmos. Bill thinks we can know our place by assuming. We have a different way to know our place in the cosmos. We allow

God to reveal the interpretations of observations. We ask God to show us. He has all wisdom and knowledge.

Bill defended basing his thinking on assumptions. He said assumptions are based on past experiences. That might feel true to a person who hasn't thought it through. However, our assumptions are only loosely linked to our filtered, distorted, and interpreted experiences and observations. We'll examine the true source of assumptions in the next trip. And we'll see assumptions come out of worldviews in a process involving circular reasoning and confirmation bias. For now, it's enough to say we don't really base assumptions on past experiences.

When Bill claims assumptions are based on past experiences, he isn't consistent. The claim blurs the line between make-believe and reality. Experience is real. If we listen to God, He reveals reality through experience, but human *assumption-based interpretation of experience* isn't real. Assumptions are made-up. They're make-believe. And if we interpret *revelation* or *observation* based on assumption, we run into the same problem. Reality is one thing. Assumption-based interpretation of reality is another thing. Blurring the difference between these two is insane.

This problem with assumptions is universal since human interpretation goes beyond reality. While we base part of our speculative interpretations on reality, we pretend some made-up stuff is true. If we reason to conclusions based on what we made-up while we were interpreting, we make matters worse. To obscure reality even further, unsound reasoning may use many complex steps to hide what's happening. In this way, complexity helps hide two things: (1) the basis when the basis is made-up stuff and (2) the missing foundation for thought. As a result, human interpretation that allows even a single hidden assumption is just making believe. It's just pretending.

To understand the contrast, we can consider how children make believe. We see they base their make-believe partly on past experiences of reality, but their make-believe isn't reality. Instead, their make-believe is always distinct from reality, and we call our ability to see this difference "sanity." Conversely, if we lose our ability to tell the difference between reality and make-believe, we call this

loss “insanity.” Children usually know the difference, while we adults often lose the distinction. Entire groupings of intelligent adults engage in mass insanity in a permanent state of pretending. That hardens their thinking against God, and they’re no longer able to come to Him in childlike surrender.

“Truly I say to you, if you are not converted and become as the little children, you shall never enter into the kingdom of the heavens. ~ Matthew 18:3 Berean Literal Bible

Make-believe can go anywhere. Reality is restricted to reality itself. Reality doesn’t include anything we pretend, so we can’t sanely impose make-believe onto reality. In effect, when we fallen creatures make up stories, our thinking quickly degenerates, especially if we pretend those stories are part of reality. In particular, we end up losing our ability to tell the difference between reality and make-believe, and it all starts with a little pretending.

Ungodly thinkers think they’re rational. They justify their beliefs. They believe in naturalism, materialism, atheism, or other ungodly philosophies. These philosophies are bare claims. They’re not rational. They use smokescreen fallacies to hide the axiomatic thinking of these philosophies. The schools teach a way of thinking that can’t be rational since, without God, there’s no reason to believe any thought can be rational. Adding to the problem, ungodly thinkers are often experts at loaded language and insincere tactics. They aren’t willing to consider the alternative to irrational thinking. They aren’t willing to turn to Christ. C. S. Lewis wrote about the futility of reasoning without God:

Supposing there was no intelligence behind the universe, no creative mind. In that case, nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. It is merely that when the atoms inside my skull happen, for physical or chemical reasons, to arrange themselves in a certain way, this gives me, as a by-product, the sensation I call thought. But, if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true? It’s like upsetting a milk jug and hoping that the way it splashes itself will give you a map of London. But if I can’t trust my own thinking, of course, I can’t trust the arguments leading to atheism, and therefore have no reason to be an atheist,

or anything else. Unless I believe in God, I cannot believe in thought: so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God.

C. S. Lewis didn't use this statement to prove God's existence. Instead, he merely pointed out that arguments against God are always irrational because, without God, there's no justification for belief in rational thought. Even the arguments against this C. S. Lewis quote are impossible to justify since those who bring the arguments can't justify belief in rational thought.

From what we've learned so far, we can finally understand why ungodly opinions are always tentative even when they're stated dogmatically and emphatically. Knowledgeable ungodly thinkers freely admit the tentative nature of ungodly opinion. And yet so many of them are dogmatic. They're internally inconsistent since they're dogmatic while claiming all knowledge is tentative. That's not sane. While strong ungodly opinions are the norm, strong ungodly opinions are always irrational. Ungodly opinions are unsupported claims. Unsupported claims are irrational. Ungodly thinkers have no way to know whether their most dogmatically held opinions are true or false. Their opinions are unknown to them. Therefore, it makes no sense for ungodly thinkers to have strongly-held opinions since no one can be certain of any knowledge about anything without divine revelation.

An ungodly thinker may say, "Not so fast! I memorized nursery rhymes as a kid. I learned Aesop's Fables. I studied evolution. I know a lot." We can understand that reaction, but when we say no ungodly thinking can lead to certainty of knowledge, we have to remember how we're defining the word "knowledge." In this case, we define "knowledge" as accurate, precise, and absolute knowledge of truth as opposed to knowledge of made-up stuff. This knowledge isn't the pragmatic awareness of brute beasts who follow their senses but are destitute of reason. Ideas, stories, lies, conceptual frameworks, assumptions, or other forms of made-up stuff are *not* knowledge. These aren't part of reality. Truth is absolute by nature since truth is actual reality.

As we've mentioned, naturalists may claim divine revelation can't provide knowledge with certainty. At first, this claim almost seems like it might be true in a sense. It's not true though. Granted, many people claim to have divine revelation when God hasn't spoken. And

the problem of false prophets, false apostles, and false teachers is a major theme in the Bible. Although, the benefit of true prophets, true apostles, and true teachers is also a major theme in the Bible.

This issue isn't simple since Satan is always working to create confusion. False prophets, false apostles, and false teachers accuse the true ones of being false. God never sent the false ones, but they went anyway. Disagreements over various doctrines separate sincere Christians. Those disagreements come from rationalized doctrines. They don't come from listening to the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit speaks to us all. He won't give conflicting revelation to different people. However, our preconceptions may keep us from listening to Him. He will be pure, but we're not pure.

God has a solution to conflicting opinions. If we remain humble and respect the presence of Christ in each member of Christ's body, He'll eventually lead us all to the same truth. He'll tear down the strongholds in our minds and demolish our preconceived ideas, replacing them with truth. God promises to complete this work. We see His vision in the Letter to the Ephesians.

Atheistic Science Teacher

Consider two opinions. Charles Darwin said, "Man is descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped, probably arboreal in its habits." Genesis 1 says, "God created man in His own image; in God's image He created him; male and female He created them." Who's right?

Rocky Rockbuilder: We know, by divine revelation, the second account is true. Those who believe the first story base their belief on made-up stuff.

Atheistic Science Teacher: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Rocky: Without divine revelation, every thought must be based on made-up stuff. The Münchhausen trilemma states this problem crudely, but it applies to ungodly thinkers. We just need to be aware the trilemma presents a false choice. It leaves out divine revelation.

Atheistic Science Teacher: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Rocky: The axiomatic-thinking fallacy (making up stuff and calling the made-up stuff true) is the root fallacy. All others are smokescreen fallacies to pretend the human mind isn't just making up stuff when the human mind IS just making up stuff. For instance, the appeal-to-ridicule fallacy is simply a smokescreen to hide irrational thinking by the person who's appealing to ridicule.

Atheistic Science Teacher: Divine revelation IS made-up stuff...middle-of-the-road fiction.

Rocky: And do you know what you claim by making it up, or can you show me the logical steps and observations on which you base this claim?

Atheistic Science Teacher: In order to know what you perceive to be divine revelation is actually divine revelation and not a mistaken perception on your end or deception from a malevolent entity, you would need to be omniscient yourself. The appeal to divine revelation does literally nothing to escape the epistemological problems you highlight in other worldviews; it bases your worldview on an extremely spurious and highly subjective claim.

Rocky: What makes you think the Almighty Creator God can't impart a supernatural certainty that He calls faith? And what makes you think I don't have Christ, the omniscient Creator of the universe living in me? Sorry, but I don't accept bare assertions from fallible humans.

Atheistic Science Teacher: How would humans discern the difference between what actually is supernatural certainty and what they merely believed to be supernatural certainty?

Rocky: I'm happy to answer this question. Faith is substance (reality) and absolutely certain proof we receive as a gift from God. Faith comes when He speaks, and Jesus Christ, the almighty, omniscient Creator is the Author of it. And anyone who sincerely seeks truth will check out what I'm saying by coming to Christ in willing submission since all who seek Him find Him. We know in part, but through

persistent, obedient submission to His will, those who follow Christ are becoming increasingly mature and able to discern between good (God's leading) and evil (our own minds). Now, you may disagree with my assertion, but you'll base your disagreement on made-up stuff.

At this point, the atheistic science teacher dropped out of the conversation suddenly. He must understand something about logic and science since those who have no clue about how logic and science work just continue to argue.

Now we've realized knowledge is only possible in Christ. And yet, unbelievers know a lot, depending on how we define "knowledge." And the scientific method has led to knowledge. That knowledge created working products. Science even blesses those who refuse to acknowledge Christ. If we don't think about it too deeply, we might deceive ourselves into thinking there's a conflict. We might see a conflict between productive science and the human mind's inability to self-generate knowledge.

But as we look to God about this question, He shows us there's zero conflict. All knowledge comes from God even when ungodly thinkers refuse to thank Him for it. God sends His rain to believers and unbelievers alike as we've previously realized. He is the Light Who lights every person. He lights every person whether the person acknowledges Him or not. And in the same way, He blesses unbelievers and believers with knowledge so they can survive to seek Him and find Him. (Acts 17:24-28) Truly, He blesses humanity with knowledge through the scientific method, and He revealed everything we now know about the true scientific method. However, the brute-beast mind God gave us for survival can receive God's revelation without thanking God or glorifying God.

Refusing to acknowledge God or thank Him is like putting on a blindfold. This brute-beast mind also reacts to the five senses as we've discussed. Perceiving the world around us and reacting to that world around us isn't a fallacy. But this brute-beast mind can't reason beyond those senses to determine reality, truth, right, wrong, the origin of the universe, whether the Genesis Flood occurred, or which of two interpretations of Scripture is correct. When it tries, it makes up stuff and calls the made-up stuff "true." The human mind simply

has no mechanism to self-generate knowledge. It has no mechanism to self-generate truth. That's why it must stick with what God reveals through Scripture, observation, or some other means. That's why the brute-beast human mind can't interpret observations or anything else.

Those who refuse to acknowledge Christ are willingly blindfolding themselves. They're willingly ignorant. They can't see reality as it is. They see reality as they imagine it.

We make a distinction between brute-beast, unreasoning awareness and knowledge. We don't make this distinction according to the standard worldview. We're using the word "knowledge" differently. We mean absolute and unquestionable knowledge of reality. Reality is truth.

Any ungodly scientist who understands science will tell you that science isn't about knowledge. It's not about truth. They'll tell you all findings are tentative and any new information, any discovery could overturn these findings tomorrow. And yet a great gulf exists between science we can observe and "science" that tries to extend observation by telling a fanciful story. The further the brute-beast mind gets from observation, the less dependable the conclusions. When the brute-beast mind watches something happen, it's fairly reliable. However, it's much more reliable when two or three people watch something happen and agree about what happened.

The brute-beast mind becomes less reliable when it tries to figure out what happened ten minutes ago. Allow a week to pass, and it becomes even less reliable. When years have passed, reliability decreases further. When centuries pass, only the most prominent facts remain. We only have what eye-witnesses of the time wrote. Without eyewitness accounts, the brute-beast mind has only made-up stories. Archeologists may find an artifact like a tool or fossil, but the brute-beast mind makes up a story about the artifact, and stories aren't a reliable way of knowing. Every time we extend the time, the reliability shrinks. Ungodly thinkers who feel they can reconstruct events from more than a thousand years ago without divine revelation or written eyewitness accounts have lost their minds. They've become proud in their thinking and unrealistic in their expectations.

So this brute-beast, unreasoning awareness can't make ungodly thinkers rational. It can't make the brute-beast mind capable of sound deductive or inductive reasoning. God reveals truth to ungodly thinkers, but ungodly thinkers can't know this truth for certain without a true premise. Since ungodly thinkers refuse to acknowledge divine revelation, they have no source for a true premise. They can't know. Though God revealed reality to them, they can't know this knowledge in the sense of being certain. They think they know it based on what they feel is an assumption, but they don't know this "assumption" is really revelation. And since they make no distinction between revelation and assumption, they don't know the difference between good and evil, truth and error, or reality and make-believe. So they don't have knowledge because they reject knowledge and are willingly ignorant of the truth. They know nothing.

Whatever God reveals is knowledge. However, Ungodly thinkers can't tell the difference between make-believe and divine revelation. When they try to reason beyond their senses, they can't tell the difference between observation and make-believe. Since they can't tell the difference, they defend the theory of evolution and the law of gravity with the same zeal. They see no difference.

In conclusion, we've seen why the ungodly thinking trilemma is a fallacy of a false choice. And we've trimmed the trilemma to the ungodly-thinking fallacy. The ungodly-thinking fallacy allows only one choice for the ungodly. It only allows making up stuff and pretending the made-up stuff is true.

Three Choices for Thinking

We've looked at those two additional—unmentioned—choices for reasoning available beyond the ungodly-thinking fallacy: demonic influence and divine revelation. And we've also seen that one of these two choices can give sound reasoning while the other ends in unsound reasoning. The choice that ends in unsound reasoning is also ungodly, deceptive, and wicked. At this point on our journey, it's obvious neither the ungodly-thinking fallacy nor demonic influence can offer sound reasoning.

So the three choices again are making up stuff, demonic influence, and divine revelation. Of the three choices, only one choice is valid,

divine revelation, because God is all-knowing and He can't lie. Further, God reveals only what He chooses to reveal, so we can't know what God doesn't reveal.

The Three Choices for Thinking



We see three choices: demonic influence, the human mind, and divine revelation. The human mind makes up stuff and calls the made-up stuff true. That's the ungodly-thinking fallacy. And since we've seen the human mind can only make up stuff, and demons lie, those aren't rational choices. On the other hand, God gives us revelation of truth, and we can trust this revelation.

Adam and Eve brought the human race into slavery to Satan by simply choosing to yield to Satan's influence rather than God's. And even now, demonic principalities and powers try to influence our minds. You choose between these three authorities offer the same three choices. You choose which one you'll heed. Will you choose demonic influence, the fallen human mind, or divine revelation?



We've looked into the reasons it's never necessary for anyone who's following Christ to commit a fallacy, yet we Christians often do commit fallacies. Granted, we must admit we sometimes use the term "following Christ" when we aren't following Him since we sometimes use the term as a mere figure of speech. In those cases, we follow

Christ in theory instead of in practice. So we're born again, but our attention wanders.

For example, we believe propaganda, something we learned in school, or what we heard on the news. We believe what we heard through a friend, a movie, a book, or a magazine. If we believe it, we become convinced of an ungodly lie. We sometimes follow theological principles instead of listening to Jesus. At these times, we interpret the Bible based on theological worldviews rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to us through the pages of Scripture. In all the examples just given, we aren't listening to the Holy Spirit's instruction and direction, and we aren't thinking, speaking, and acting in submission to the Holy Spirit. Still, if we'll submit in humble reverence to hear God's direction when He commands us moment by moment, we have a way forward as God shows us through the following Scriptures.

Teach me both knowledge and appropriate discretion because I believe in your commands. Before I was humbled, I wandered away, but now I observe your words [literally, "I give heed to your utterance"]. ~ Psalm 119:66
International Standard Version

The fear [deep respect] of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. ~
Proverbs 1:7 International Standard Version

Despite what God just said through these Scriptures, some people refuse to choose to respect, honor, and obey the Lord. Instead, they choose to follow the human mind. However, we would suffer serious consequences if we were to follow the human mind rather than Christ.

Then they will call out to me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD; they did not want my advice, and they rejected all my correction. They will eat the fruit of their way, and they will be filled with their own devices. ~ Proverbs 1:28-31
International Standard Version

If we choose to follow the human mind, we choose the axiomatic-thinking fallacy. If we choose axiomatic thinking, we love and practice falsehood. And the axiomatic-thinking fallacy is tied to the problem of paradigms. It's tied to the wonkiness of worldviews since the sad fact is axiomatic-thinking fallacies easily harden into worldviews. The next trip we'll take is all about worldviews.

Blessed are those washing their robes, that their right will be to the tree of life, and they shall enter into the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the sexually immoral, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone loving and practicing falsehood. ~ Revelation 22:14-15 Berean Literal Bible

Let's pray.

Thank You for Your holy presence with us, Lord Jesus. Thank You that You never leave us or forsake us. As we consider the futility of ungodly thinking and how much of our thinking is devoid of the Holy Spirit, we repent before You and ask for Your mighty deliverance. Tear down our strongholds and set us free from captivity. Amen.

Trip 9: The Problem of Worldviews

We now adventure into the land of many worldviews. As we go, we want to focus intense light on the nature of worldviews so we can understand how they deceive us all. Worldviews store and generate illusions. Worldviews are complete conceptions of reality. And yet, we shouldn't confuse them with reality since the information in worldviews comes from what seemed real to us in the past. Therefore, our past biases heavily influenced our worldviews. We have the same problem—every one of us. We automatically set our beings against anything that conflicts with our individual worldviews since each person's worldview seems real and sensible to him or her. Anything that conflicts with the worldview seems unreal and weird. However, we want to be free from this bondage and blindness since we desire truth, light, and life.

Every man's lifestyle [direction, manner, habit, way] is proper in his own view, but the LORD weighs the heart. ~ Proverbs 21:2 International Standard Version

Everything a person does [direction, manner, habit, way] seems pure in his own opinion, but the LORD weighs intentions. ~ Proverbs 16:2 International Standard Version

There is a pathway [direction, manner, habit, way] that seems right to a man, but in the end it's a road to death. ~ Proverbs 14:12 International Standard Version

Worldviews are powerful filters. Our worldviews make it difficult to see or understand anything that conflicts with our worldviews. Worldviews give the illusion of reliability because they seem more real than reality. However, they're unreliable. And this problem isn't

small or easily-solved since every thinker has a concept of reality called a worldview, a silent half-truth fallacy. Worldviews limit every one of us, so each thinker is hamstrung by his or her own worldview.

Some people call worldviews “conceptions of reality.” Others call them “paradigms.” Whatever we call them, they’re fake realities. So when someone talks about a paradigm shift, they’re just exchanging one fake reality for another fake reality. A paradigm shift can sometimes help if the new paradigm is more accurate than the old one. However, paradigm shifts often go from a bad misunderstanding to a worse misunderstanding. That means paradigm shifts aren’t enough for what God wants to create in us since God wants to transfigure us by renewing our minds. (Romans 12:1-2)

For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit, life and peace. ~ Romans 8:6 Berean Literal Bible

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote about the inner worldview. He refers to it as “stupidity.”

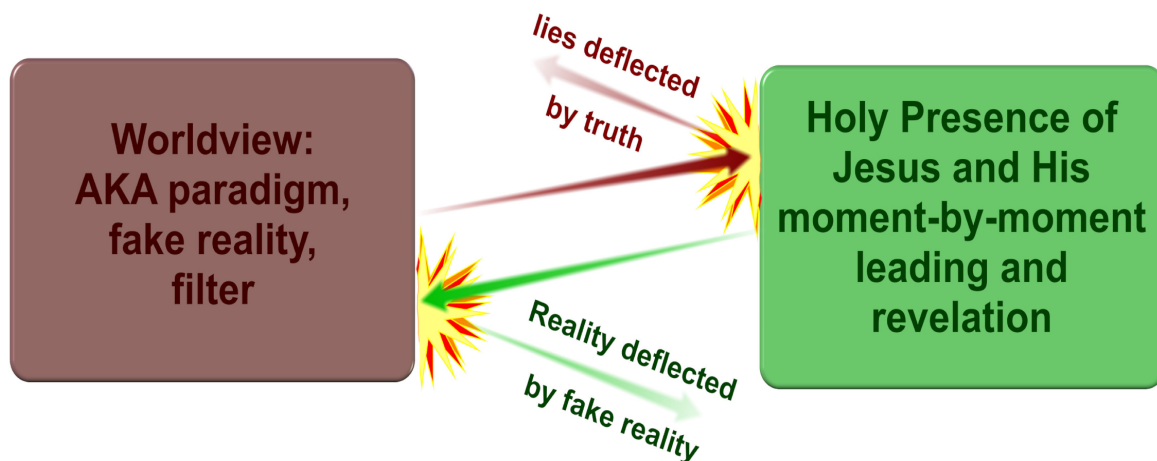
Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. One may protest against evil; it can be exposed and, if need be, prevented by use of force. Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless; reasons fall on deaf ears; facts that contradict one’s prejudgment simply need not be believed—in such moments the stupid person even becomes critical—and when facts are irrefutable they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental. In all this the stupid person, in contrast to the malicious one, is utterly self-satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack. ~ *Letters & Papers from Prison*

What Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote is true if we define “stupid” as “in a stupor.” Being in a stupor has nothing to do with mental processing power. For instance, intelligent people who learn false ideas are in a stupor created by believing false ideas. They make those false ideas part of their worldviews. Their mental power helps them justify their

stupor. When the light in them is darkness, this darkness is great because this great darkness seems like light to them.

It's difficult to recognize the difference between one's own worldview and reality. That's why we'll have conversations with people who don't realize they're assuming. That's why people claim their interpretations *are* observations. And then, some thinkers claim an interpretation *is* Scripture. In these cases, these thinkers lose the distinction between *reality* and *interpretation of reality*.

As we've seen, a worldview filters out anything not already in the worldview. Fake information flows from worldviews, and this fake information seems real in the darkness of the worldview. In contrast, truth comes from the person of Christ. So truth deflects lies that come from the various worldviews while deceptive fake realities of worldviews deflect truth that comes from Christ.



The worldview is a fake reality. It's a filter. The Presence of Jesus within us and His moment-by-moment leading and revelation is the Source of all truth. Christ uses truth to deflect the lies that come from the worldview. The worldview uses the fake reality to deflect the truth Christ reveals.

This truth-deflection is even more of a problem for thinkers who dogmatically believe their worldviews. They claim their worldviews aren't subject to error. They claim worldviews of other thinkers are subject to error. They make this mistake in judgment because worldviews seem accurate and deceptively real to the thinkers who

own them. This delusion allows each thinker's worldview to deceive that thinker to the point where conflicting worldviews seem dreamlike, whacky, and insane. In other words, my worldview seems real to me, and your worldview seems real to you. However, if we discuss the minute details of our deeply held beliefs and convictions, certain parts of my worldview may seem insane to you because they conflict with your worldview and vice versa. Worldviews cause a fallacy known as "belief perseverance."

So when thinkers speak of personal realities, those "personal realities" are worldviews. They aren't real realities, but they're fake realities.

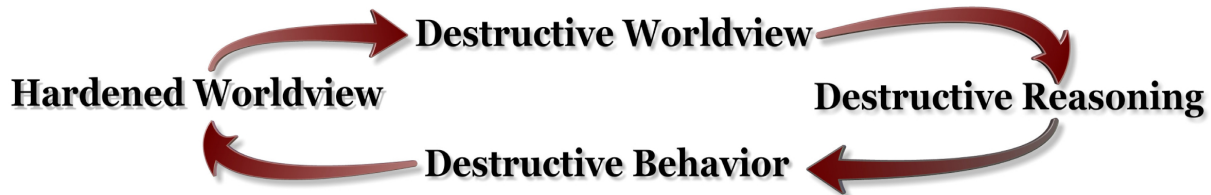
Willy said something that matched Jimmy's worldview. Jimmy said, "I like how you think." This agreement produced rapport between the two men. However, if both men would closely examine each other's entire worldviews, they would almost surely expose a true division between them at some point. Perhaps that's why people protect their worldviews from scrutiny much of the time.

Worldviews are powerful filters that have two effects. First, it's difficult for us to see anything not already in our respective worldviews. Second, worldviews seem real. They seem real even if they don't exist in reality. Every one of us has this same problem, and you've experienced this problem if you've ever disagreed with anyone about a Bible verse's interpretation. If you've ever disagreed with anyone about anything, worldviews probably had a part in the disagreement.

Revelation comes from God. Our assumptions come out of our worldviews and work in a destructive downward spiral. Revelation is constructive. Worldviews, assumptions, and confirmation bias are destructive.

If we base our reasoning on a destructive worldview, we'll reason destructively based on the assumptions coming from our worldviews. That destructive reasoning will lead to destructive words and acts that come out of our convictions. Our behaviors and habits will become destructive. Then, our habits make our worldviews more rigid and unmovable.

So worldviews can result in destructive behaviors. Then destructive behaviors, in turn, harden the worldviews against reality. And, in this way, destructive behaviors are fallacies in action. Action becomes habit, and habit becomes part of the worldview.



We only partly understand how this downward spiral takes place on the levels of spirit, soul/mind, and body, yet we've seen it impact our lives in various ways. Temptation comes with the promise of satisfaction, solution, and peace. However, yielding to temptation brings dissatisfaction, trouble, and lack of peace. Sin is habit-forming and progressive. It takes us farther than we wanted to go, is more destructive than we could have imagined, and makes us stay longer than we wanted to stay. Nothing will bring more misery than trying to live with one foot in each world. There's no way anyone can remain lukewarm and continue with God. There's no way anyone can continue to be double-minded, half in God's Kingdom and half in the world. Sin will destroy anyone who tries that.

Freedom of Slavery

Jesus calls us to be set free from sin.

Our words defile us because we yield to a spirit other than Christ's Spirit. If we yield to Christ's Spirit and allow Him to speak through us, our words transfigure us and purify us. And they purify those who hear and receive our words since they're receiving Christ's words. If they receive Christ's words, they receive the Logos. When we think, speak, or act according to the flesh, we defile ourselves and those who hear us. For example, when we speak in anger, we defile ourselves and everyone who hears and receives our angry words.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are **sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of**

anger, contentions, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, carousing, and the like.

I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.** Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:19-23
Berean Study Bible

As we read through these lists carefully, it's easy to see the difference between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit. And yet, we sometimes defend following the leading of the fleshly nature that brings us into greater bondage. We sometimes defend outbursts of anger, strife, or envy. We may even attribute these fruits of the flesh to righteousness, but they're unrighteousness.

For some of the works of the flesh, we may say, "That's just who I am." In the flesh, that's just who we are, but do we want to be of the flesh? Why not identify with Christ in us. We have no benefit in following the flesh in slavery to the flesh and indebted to the flesh. The flesh profits nothing. We are of the Spirit. Christ in us is the real us. We are the ministry, the Christ, within. We may HAVE a fleshly nature, but we ARE the spiritual nature. The fleshly nature must become less and less while the Christ within becomes more and more. We've been set free, and we're new creatures created after the Spirit rather than the flesh. When God exposes works of the flesh in us, He exposes them so we can have victory over them.

Anger management techniques deal with the soul and body part of the downward fleshly spiral. As an illustration, if we continually yield to anger, we become enslaved to anger until self-control eventually becomes almost impossible because the brain and nerve pathways for producing this anger rewire themselves. They become stronger than they were. At that point, they work like dynamite with a short fuse that ignites easily. And each time the fuse ignites, an electrochemical chain reaction starts as the body releases powerful chemicals into the brain. With anger, the body releases adrenaline first, then cortisol. After we repeat this anger event many times, our souls or minds become tuned to anger. The body's nervous system adapts. It starts to release and sustain the chemical poisoning more efficiently. The fuse

becomes shorter and ignites more easily and quickly since the brain has rewired itself for anger.

While anger, fear, and violence work this way, other sin works similarly. For instance, pornography works the same way. Pornography releases dopamine rather than adrenaline and cortisol. Every other form of sexual sin works in the same way, rewiring the brain and nervous system. The brain chemistry and the physiology changes. Alcohol addiction and drug addiction work in the same way. Triggers start the fuse in each case. We might call the trigger “a temptation.” Our bodies need adrenaline, cortisol, endorphins, oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine. However, if we allow ourselves to slip into disorders, we can become addicted to these potent chemicals. (Dirk Hanson, *Neuroaddiction: The Reward Pathway*.)

All addictions hijack the same core neurocircuitry, which runs on the same neurochemicals (even though each addiction also involves additional neural circuits and neurochemicals that differ between addictions). ~ Gary Wilson

We can readily see that if we’re going to overcome these weaknesses, we must catch temptations early. For instance, with anger, the person who’s going to explode with anger has warning signs, and these warning signs vary from person to person. For example, one person may start to sweat. Another person may feel hot. Another may have a different early-warning symptom. But when the early warning comes, the person trying to overcome anger must take action. Once the emotions come flooding in, it’s too late to stop the flood of emotions. The good news is God has provided a way of transformation.

Thoughts and other stimuli can “rewire” our brain by strengthening useful synaptic pathways and weakening less used ones, this is called neuroplasticity (AKA learning and memory). Some unused weakened pathways may be “pruned” away over time as a measure of efficiency, this is called synaptic pruning. Most re-wiring (or softwiring) happens during sleep, but other aspects of memory are working all the time. ~ Thomas DeMichele, *Thoughts Can "Rewire" Your Brain*

In secular anger management classes, students learn various ways to cope with anger. Anger management counselors suggest we think of a far-away island where everything is peaceful or we think of someone we love. As an alternative, we who follow Christ have something infinitely more powerful since we can direct our minds toward Christ and His peace, so His presence overcomes and puts out the fuse. If we never allow the fuse to fully light, the thickened nerve pathways begin to waste away until the brain and nervous systems rewire themselves. Additionally, there's always a spiritual aspect.

When an unclean spirit comes out of a man, it passes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' On its arrival, it finds the house vacant, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and dwell there; and the final plight of that man is worse than the first. ~ Matthew 12:43-45
Berean Study Bible

Freedom is available, but what we've looked at so far isn't enough to set us free without another element. What we've seen to this point is like emptying a glass of negative and destructive poison, but we must fill the glass with positive and helpful goodness. Thankfulness is a key ingredient when filling this glass. Every sin we've discussed springs from unthankfulness. People who thank God can more easily resist temptations of the fleshly nature. A man who's thankful to God for his wife is much less likely to commit adultery or to fall for pornography. He finds it easy to love her. And, the wife who's thankful to God for her husband finds it easier to trust her husband and be faithful to him. She finds it easy to respect Him. We can trace each of the Ten Commandments to either thankfulness or unthankfulness.

Additionally, thankfulness releases nerve-growth factors that help re-wire the nerve pathways. This re-wiring or neuroplasticity renews the body and mind, so while thankfulness has immediate benefits, those benefits are also progressive. Therefore, we continually ask Christ to work thankfulness in our innermost minds. We need to seek God whenever we become aware of any fog of dissatisfaction.

This confused fog of dissatisfaction can creep over us. We might feel slighted, disrespected, unfulfilled, lonely, worthless, unloved, or

abused. We may focus on microaggressions. We may have haunting memories of being treated unfairly. We might fall into “righteous” anger. This fog of discontent can be a vague sense of looking around the world for something more than we’re now experiencing. It isn’t hunger for deeper depths and higher heights in God’s love and peace, but it consists of trying to find satisfaction in something other than Christ. We may find ourselves wishing the past had been different. We may wish we had made different choices. We may let our minds churn about our unmet expectations and disappointments. This gloomy fog can lie in an uneasy smoldering of nondescript anger simmering under the surface and waiting to explode unexpectedly. Only God can set us free by clearing this fog, and He’s willing to renew our minds if we ask Him to give us hearts of thankfulness. No matter what our circumstances, we have much for which to be thankful.

If we live our lives in Jesus Christ’s utterance, we’ll know the truth, and the truth will set us free.

If we defend or hold anger, it turns to bitterness and becomes part of our worldviews. Then we see the targets of our anger through the filter of bitterness in our worldviews. Making matters worse, we add other destructive thoughts to our worldviews unless we repent. We might add perversions of marriage, perversions of family, and perversions of church orders. We may insert envy and covetousness into our worldviews.

If we don’t repent, those thoughts crystallize in our worldviews. They begin to seem like reality and seem normal. Eventually, a person who gives himself or herself over to a certain sin will identify with this sin. Such a person may even label himself or herself as *being* that particular sin. Some people who label themselves that way use a euphemism as a label for the sin that glorifies and excuses the sin. In contrast, God created us for His purpose. His purpose is to transform us into the image and likeness of Christ. He created us for holiness, not sin.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with
thanksgiving; ~ Colossians 4:2 King James Bible

Three actions are in this verse: (1) asking for what you want, (2) watching to know what God wants, and (3) thankfulness in everything.

Be anxious about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ~ Philippians 4:6 Berean Literal Bible

Here again, we see the same pattern. We pray, asking for what we want from God. In supplication, we seek God and His will. We thank God, which is the attitude we need for prayer and supplication. We don't come to God murmuring and complaining as the Hebrew children did in the wilderness, but we come giving thanks and rejoicing regardless of the circumstances.

We've seen the body's role in various forms of sinful thinking and found reason is more than logic alone. It also involves spirit, mind, and body. The fake reality of the worldview doesn't just affect the mind, but it also affects the spirit and body.

Fake Reality

We've looked briefly into how the world runs mainly on fake realities, or we could call them worldviews, paradigms, or filters. Total Quality Management (TQM) uses the term "paradigm" for fake-realities. It's still a worldview, but TQM calls it a paradigm. TQM addresses this problem because paradigms limit thinkers and keep them from seeing reality as it is. This disconnect with reality hinders problem-solving and decision-making in business, which is the focus of TQM. However, worldviews get in the way of every part of life.

Communication theory uses the term "filters" for fake-realities. Filters add to or diminish what communicators and listeners perceive, so the filters interfere with communication. We hear each other through the constraints of our worldviews.

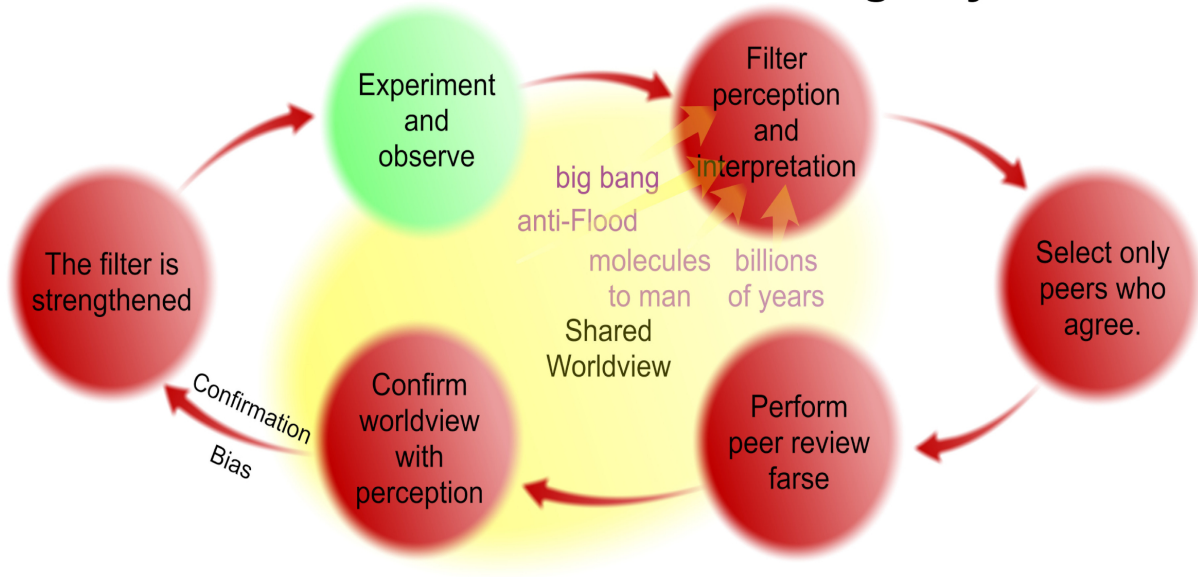
Now that we've touched on the limiting characteristics of worldviews let's examine how worldviews affect science. Scientists have tried to deal with individual paradigms through the peer-review process; however, they've had problems. The peer-review process is flawed. Editors reject about half of all papers selected, so they have tremendous power for message control. They shouldn't make biased

editorial decisions, but they do. They don't take the papers on their merit but filter based on traditions and sacred cows. They have the same problem as any other human has. Because of this closed-minded hypocrisy, scientific peer review hasn't helped with the group-held paradigm and the politicking. Instead, blatant viewpoint discrimination, groupthink, and coercion destroy peer review. Those in power enforce this norm. Rather than open-minded inquiry, the elites of the scientific establishment censor anyone who disagrees with the sacred cows.

Therefore, instead of solving the problems of bias, peer review often makes confirmation bias worse. Peer review intensifies the problems of discrimination and coercion in peer review. As a result, many scientists keep quiet because they'll suffer persecution if they blow the whistle. Most scientists come into the bondage of group-held paradigms as an upshot. In this condition, they can't accurately see real reality anymore.

This bondage among scientists is like the bondage among theologians. Theologians often lock into a certain theological worldview and protect their chosen worldview with a group-held paradigm and politicking. As a result, it's not safe to express disagreement in either science or theology. Peer review among scientists or theologians doesn't guarantee accuracy. Instead, it tends to promote error and confirmation bias. It's no surprise the process is corrupt since humans run it, and humans are imperfect.

How Confirmation Bias Works in Ungodly Science



Scientists experiment and observe. That's good. Then, they filter perception and interpretation based on a shared worldview enforced by peer pressure. They select only peers who agree with the shared worldview to perform the peer-review farce. Of course, the peer review process reinforces the worldview using confirmation bias, which strengthens the filter. And that strengthened filter influences them when they experiment and observe. It keeps them from seeing reality as it is.

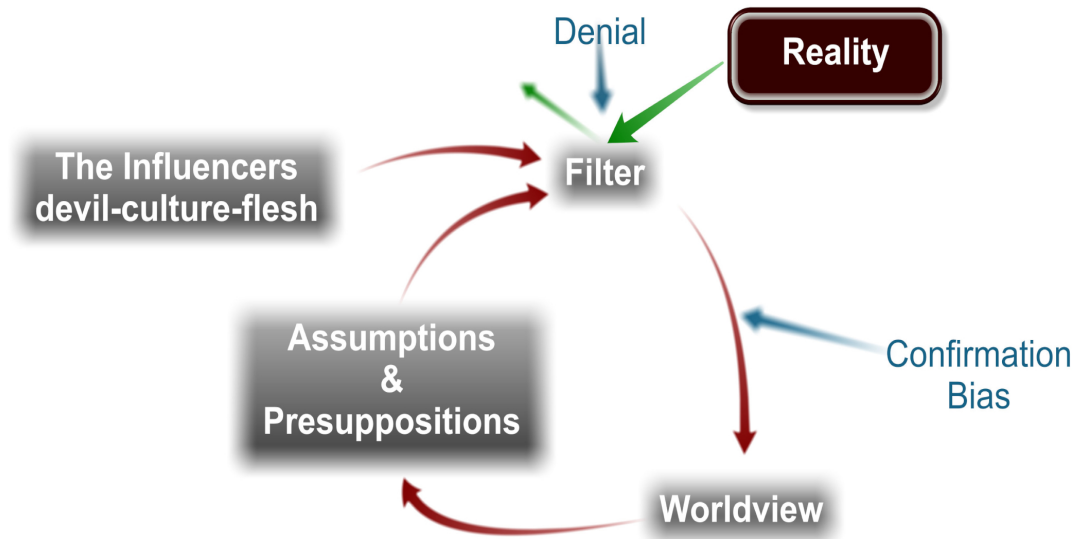
Some followers blindly believe the interpretations of certain scientists. Other followers blindly believe the interpretations of certain theologians. Some theologians blindly believe the interpretations of certain scientists and instantly convince their followers of those scientists' claims. Since some thinkers have rationalized faith in scientists, they find it hard to believe scientists aren't perfect. As a result, they exalt scientists. They consider scientists' words to be the authority. However, scientists have the same faults everyone else has. Peer pressure among scientists is intense. This peer pressure coerces scientists who refuse to bow down to the sacred cows the elites erected through groupthink. And the same peer pressure rewards those scientists whose interpretations don't conflict with the sacred cows. And the same is true of theologians.

God established peer review. He established the order of a multiplicity of ministries and many counselors. If we follow His order, peer review helps overcome the problems of worldviews. However, when peer review isn't Spirit-led, it makes the worldview problem worse. It filters out righteousness. It establishes groupthink and enforces it. Peer review becomes a form of censorship. It aggravates the errors of perception and exaggerates the problems of worldviews. As a result, peer review gives unwarranted credibility to unreliable group-held worldviews and creates the illusion make-believe is reality. And this unwarranted credibility allows make-believe to creep into every part of life. We see it in entertainment, fiction, fact-checkers, education, news, museums, zoos, public parks, nature centers, scientific journals, and every other activity and setting. Perhaps the most effective is entertainment. (Carl Kirby, *Evolution in Pop Culture*) We can't allow these influencers to push us toward hate, godless thinking, naturalism, racism, envy, covetousness, sexual immorality, or any other sin. It's our responsibility.

How Interpretation Happens

We each have a way we interpret our experiences and observations. Our interpretations are our representations of reality, but they aren't reality itself. Our interpretations aren't even the small part of reality that we have observed or experienced. Instead, our interpretations are *the thoughts we have about* the small part of reality that we've observed or experienced. In other words, interpretation is what we have left after we use our minds to think about our observations and experiences. However, it's not just interpretation of direct observation and experience. Consider how often we infer based on things we heard from some "trusted source" but never saw or experienced for ourselves. So we have these interpretations, and we feed them back into our worldviews as confirmation bias. We reason in a circle. In short, the worldview filters experience and observation, and then the worldview confirms itself with the filtered results, which strengthens the amazing filter that keeps you and me from seeing reality as it is.

This chart is a lot to take in and understand, so we'll try to paint a picture of how it works:



At the top, we see a symbol labeled “Reality,” which represents what exists. Of course, reality includes microscopic organisms, animals, people, stars, planets, and fossils. And it includes heaven, hell, angels, and demons. It also includes God.

To the left of reality. We see circular reasoning. In this circular reasoning, the worldview generates assumptions and presuppositions. Those assumptions and presuppositions create a filter that filters reality. Then, the filtered impressions of reality return as confirmation bias into the worldview. It’s circular. We see assumptions and presuppositions coming out of the worldview, and as we live our lives, these assumptions and presuppositions don’t seem like made-up stuff. Instead, they seem like part of reality, and they strengthen the filter of the worldview.

The influencers are there, the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. When we say “the world, we mean the ungodly thinkers and what they say and do. It’s ungodly magazines and books. It’s ungodly posts on social media. It’s the ungodly fact-checkers and censors. It’s peer pressure. It’s media. It’s ungodly educators. To make matters worse, we usually block out people who clash with our worldviews. The fleshly nature uses desires, emotions, and impulses to get its way. The fleshly nature influences us, often to our hurt and regardless of how we try to control these passions. Then we have ungodly influences from the outside, the culture, and life in general. These external influences include ungodly friends, books, publications, videos,

shows, social contacts, teachers, news services, and experts. That's where peer pressure tries to squeeze and coerce us into the world's mold. And that's where cleverly designed fables and stories in videos, movies, TV shows, textbooks, and novels seek to mold our minds without our awareness. We don't fight against flesh and blood; we fight against principalities and powers, wicked spiritual forces in the heavens influencing our filters.

We react to reality and filter it. Whatever conflicts with our worldviews, we dismiss and ignore. That's denial. Whatever matches our worldviews, we use as confirmation bias to make our worldviews seem more real. Then, we bring assumptions out of our worldviews. We're usually aware of our assumptions. We also bring presuppositions out of our worldviews, but we think our presuppositions are part of reality. We feed these assumptions and presuppositions into our filters along with the influences that come from the culture, our fleshly desires, and demonic forces. That reinforces our filters, so they become strongholds against truth. We're less able to see reality as it is. We filter reality. And this circular reasoning keeps leading us from one level of darkness to a deeper level of darkness. It's a downward spiral.

It continues. We filter reality and bolster our worldviews. Then presuppositions and assumptions come out of our worldviews to bolster our filters, which filter reality so they can bolster our worldviews. And on it goes moment by moment every day of our lives unless God intervenes.

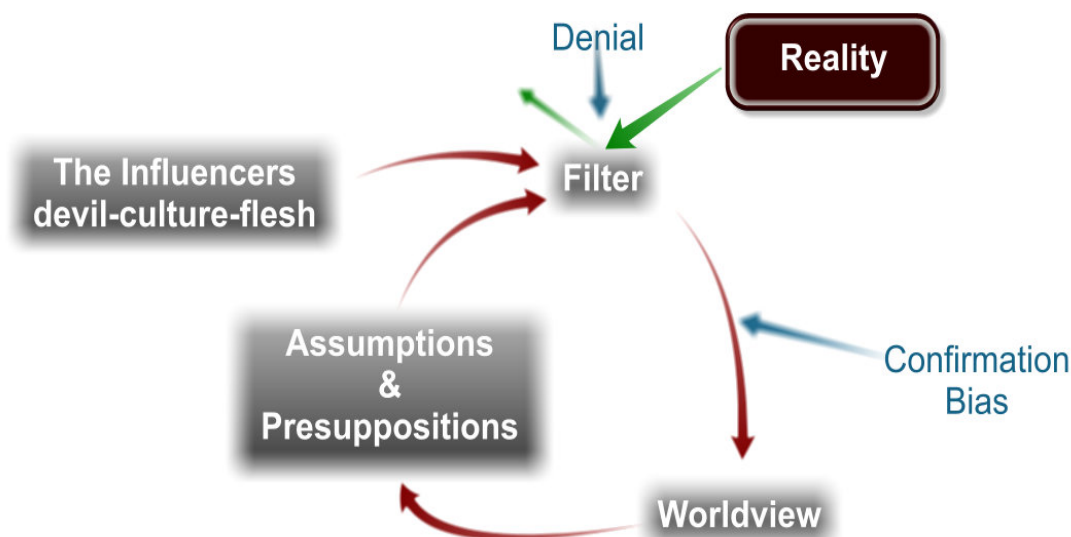
It's not easy to see this problem in ourselves, but it sure is obvious in others. It does little good to see the problem in others, and yet we can benefit by seeing it in ourselves. We don't observe reality directly. Instead, we observe reality through our human limits of observation. As the mind's filter obscures and distorts the limited observation, we can't understand or accept some of what we observe since our filters deflect our observations, distorting our perceptions. Then we add distorted, filtered perceptions to our worldviews.

Every person's filter is unique since we each filter our perceptions through our respective worldviews. This way, our filtered perceptions match our worldviews. In the resulting blindness, we have trouble perceiving anything not already in our unique worldviews. And even if

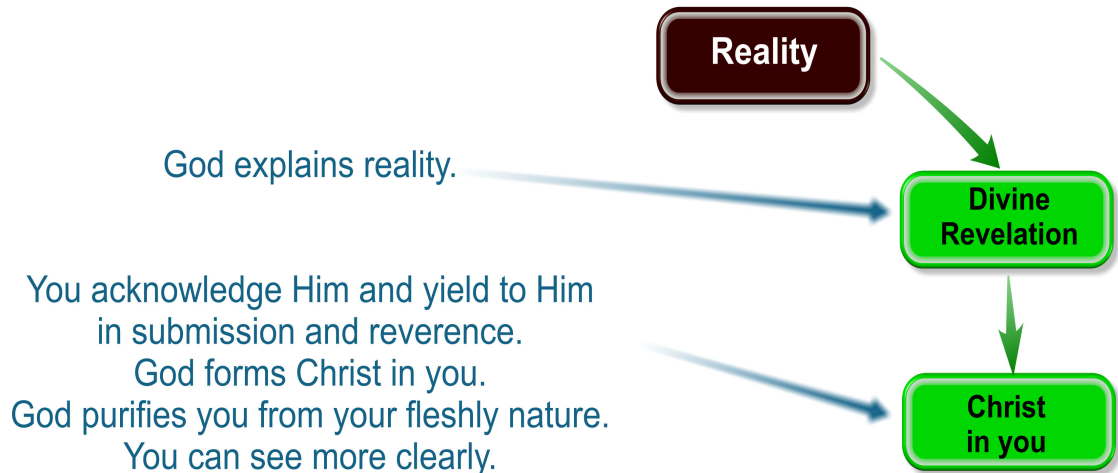
we do perceive something not already in our worldviews, we reject it as crazy. We often aren't even able to see it. The filter also can add whatever the worldview expects to find. It even adds observations and experiences that aren't there. As a result, we confirm our biases. The filter and the worldview work together to create confirmation bias.

We're looking into the shared insanity of humanity. Of course, people who go too far in insanity can't take care of themselves. Those of us who have the same problem but less severe can still add value to those around us. When we run into people whose worldviews are radically different from our own, we think they're insane, and they think we're insane. Arguments and disunity result.

Godless Interpretation versus Revelation



We're looking at the way we think our thoughts. Now, we want to look in more detail than we did previously. We see two distinct types of reason. We're looking at reasoning based on assumptions. As discussed previously, the assumptions come out of the worldview and then return to the worldview to confirm the worldview using circular reasoning and confirmation bias.

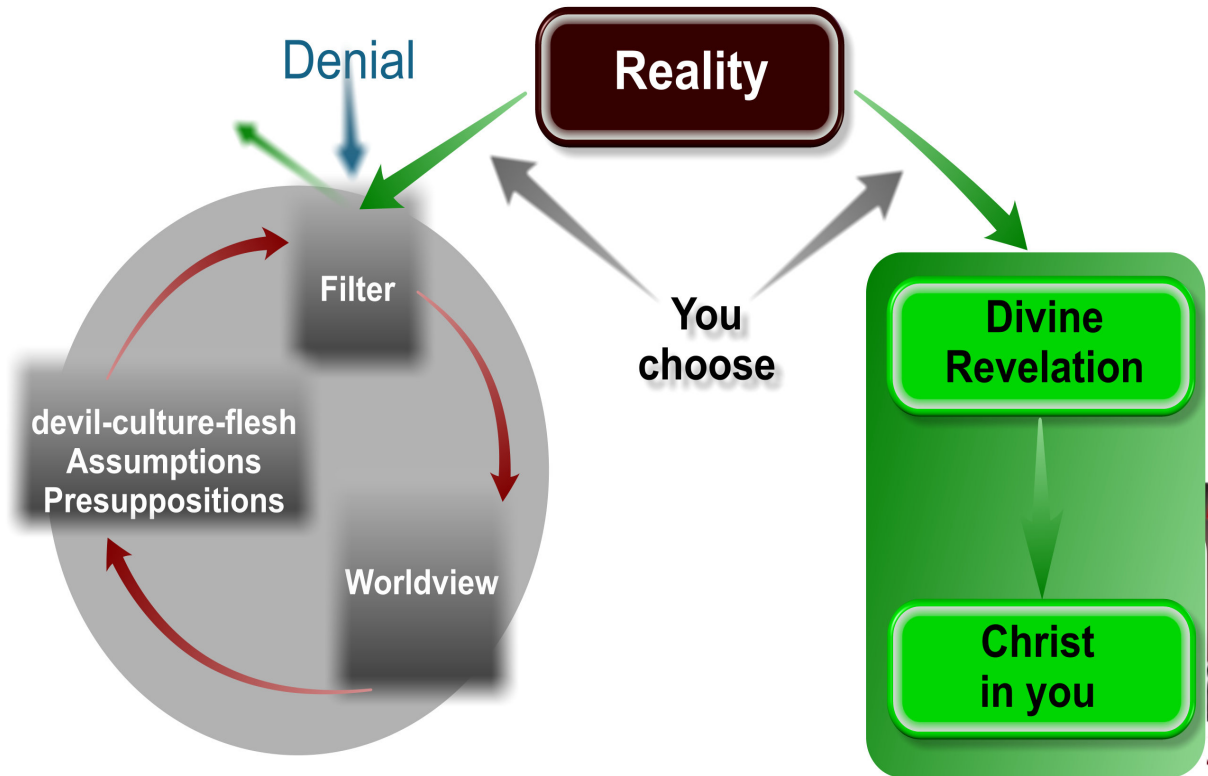


In contrast, divine revelation provides a firm foundation for rational thought. Truth sets the innermost human mind free. We have this truth and freedom when we acknowledge God's revelation and submit to it. This revelation comes to us directly from God. No intermediary exists to interpret the revelation. God interprets reality and reveals it to us. God speaks to us through the Bible and every means of divine revelation mentioned in the Bible. And His revelation never conflicts with the Bible since God never disagrees with Himself. Christ lives within those who are born again. We have a greater and clearer experience. The fleshly nature runs the circular process of the filter, the worldview, and the assumptions. However, we're learning to ignore the fleshly nature. We're learning to discern the voice of Christ and to respond in willing submission to Him.

God also reveals reality to ungodly thinkers who refuse to acknowledge Him. Ungodly thinkers filter and dismiss much of this revelation, and they refuse to glorify God for any revelation they accept. They twist and warp any revelation they accept by rationalizing the revelation to fit the constraints of their worldviews. Atheists and Christians alike rationalize God's revelation if they fail to acknowledge the voice of God when He's speaking to them.

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Between these two opposing ways of thinking, is the human will. At each moment, every thinker decides. We decide which of these two ways of thinking we'll acknowledge. We decide which reasoning we'll use. In every condition and during every moment, we decide constantly. If we fail to decide, we decide to be double-minded. Double-minded thinkers follow the ungodly thinking on the left. And since human interpretation discounts or adds to revelation, human interpretation follows the circular reasoning on the left. Revelation, however, is direct and avoids fallacy, while human interference tries every trick to frustrate revelation.

As we've seen, we're the ones who choose whom we'll serve at each moment, and since no one can decide for us, we decide whether we'll acknowledge God's leading or lean on human understanding. In every case, we make this choice in all our ways and in everything we do, and

there's no time when we aren't making this choice. Even when we think we aren't making this choice, we're choosing ungodly thinking. To more fully understand what's happening, we notice what God says through Scripture:

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then **choose** for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." ~ Joshua 24:15 New International Version

But didn't God choose us? Isn't it true that God did choose us? Yes. God chose us. Even though many speculative theologies go well beyond what God says, He did choose us as these Scriptures plainly state:

For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence. In love He predestined [appointed ahead of time] us for adoption as His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the Beloved One. ~ Ephesians 1:4-6 Berean Study Bible

For those God foreknew, He also predestined [based on foreknowledge] to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. ~ Romans 8:29 Berean Study Bible

You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. ~ John 15:16 Berean Study Bible

Here, we looked at only three verses, but God's decision to call us is a major theme of Scripture. And yet, we must choose. Choosing is also a major theme in Scripture. God chose certain individuals based on His foreknowledge. He knew what decisions we would make. As a builder chooses skilled workers based on the builder's knowledge of those skilled workers and what they will do, God foreknew each of us and how He would use us.

Unfortunately, many saints intensified the theological interpretations of these Scriptures. Many have broken fellowship over speculative interpretations. Both are true. God hasn't asked us to explain away certain Scriptures because they disagree with our favorite interpretations. For our purposes, we must realize God has put it in our hands. We must decide to yield ourselves to Him in every situation as the following Scriptures teach:

I call heaven and earth to testify against you today! I've set life and death before you today: both blessings and curses. **Choose** life, that it may be well with you—you and your children. ~ Deuteronomy 30:19 International Standard Version

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of **decision**! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. ~ Joel 3:14 New International Version

As they traveled along, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, listening to His message. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations to be made. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord replied, "you are worried and upset about many things. But only one thing is necessary. Mary has **chosen** the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her." ~ Luke 10:38-42 Berean Study Bible

choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ~ Hebrews 11:25 New American Standard Bible

So Lot **chose** for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ~ Genesis 13:11 English Standard Version

Enter through the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad the way leading to destruction, and many are those entering through it. ~ Matthew 7:13-14 Berean Study Bible

But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. ~ James 1:14 Berean Study Bible

There is a way that seems right to a person, but eventually it ends in death. ~ Proverbs 14:12 God's Word Translation

Since God is worthy of trust, knows all things, and can't lie or be wrong, why would we follow our worldviews that consist of vapor? He can bypass our human interpretation processes. He can reveal truth directly to us. We only need to submit and desire His righteousness. He even gives us the power to desire His will and to do His will if we ask Him for it. It doesn't depend on us. So when we listen to Christ, He brings light to our spiritual eyes. Then our senses constantly improve. We're ever more able to discern as we yield ourselves to His Spirit. But we aren't the ones who are discerning between truth and fiction, between good and evil. Christ in us is discerning.

The command of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. ~ Psalm 19:1b Young's Literal Translation

As we progress, yielding leads to greater yielding and spiritual maturity. And this maturity is Christ in us more fully formed as we die more completely to our fleshly natures. As we mature, spiritual discernment gets more accurate. We exercise our senses by using those spiritual senses. As a result, our discernment improves.

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. ~ Hebrews 5:14 English Standard Version

We must distinguish good from evil.

The human mind is evil:

The human mind is the most deceitful of all things. It is incurable. No one can understand how deceitful it is. ~ Jeremiah 17:9 God's Word Translation

God is good:

“Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied, “No one is good except God alone. ~ Mark 10:18 Berean Study Bible

Neither of the methods of thinking shows an instant result. Instead, both are incremental methods. This is constantly going on within us. Each of us continually makes choices. Those choices direct thoughts, words, and actions. So each of us either descends into darkness or rises into light and glory one step at a time. Those who want truth will rise to the fullness of light and glory if they're faithful. They'll succeed even if darkness deceived them in the past. God is absolutely just and knows our hearts. God will do it.

As we continue to grow in Christ and die to self, our senses become keener as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit in obedience. When we vigorously exercise our senses by using them, our sarx minds lose ground as Christ is built up in us. As we mature, His presence in us increases our ability to tell the difference between our minds and God's mind, between evil and good.

As we've already discovered, the natural human mind is evil, and God's mind is good.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 25:13-30 about a master who gave stewards gold to invest for profit. In Scripture, gold typifies deity. When we acknowledged Christ, we were born again and immediately had Christ in us, the hope of glory. By grace, which is through faith, God had put a seed of Christ into us, but He expects an increase of this gold.

God speaks much about edification in Scripture. And the word “edification” means to build up. Specifically, God is telling us about building up Christ in us. Through Scripture, God explains many of His methods for building up Christ in us and warns against the things that undo this work. God speaks through Scripture of refining gold, which represents the ways God removes the impurity from the gold, demolishing the strongholds of Satan in our minds. We increase the gold and refine the gold. That's how we come to spiritual maturity.

In this journey, spiritual senses direct our walk, and they direct us to meet regularly with other Christians and to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through Scripture. Equally important, they expose the false

teacher, correct the false belief, and steer us away from sinful thoughts, words, and acts.

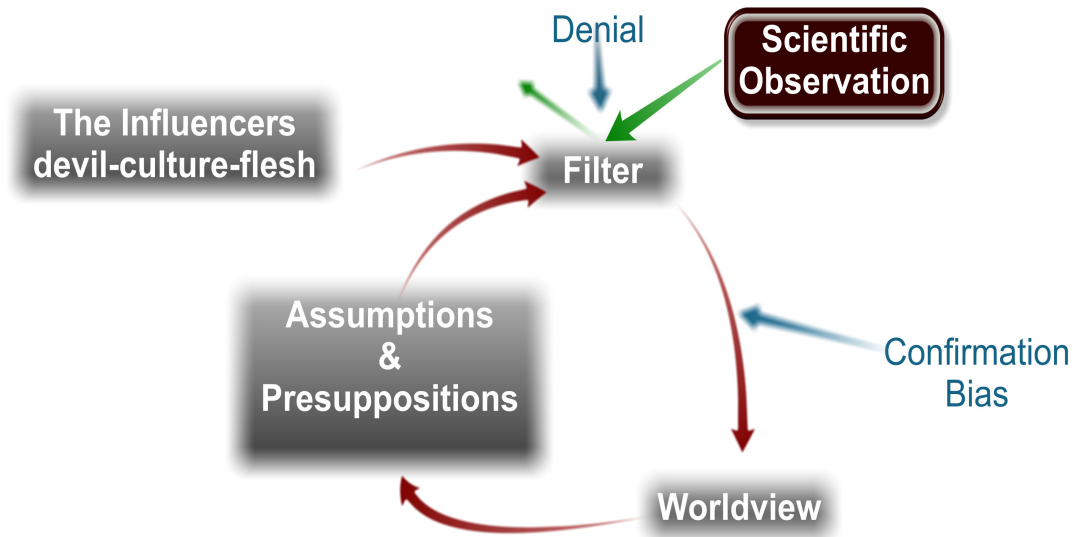
Though seldom considered, humility is part of maturity since humility allows us to submit ourselves to God-set authority. Through humility, we can accept correction. And we can better judge whom God has sent. We can know who is speaking by the Holy Spirit. To say it another way, we can better see the body of Christ, the spiritual gifts, ministries, offices, and orders that make up the body of Christ.

God reveals the meaning of what we observe and experience. He explains and interprets observation and experience beyond human limits of observation, and all who walk in the Spirit have this continuing experience. The only alternative is allowing our fallen, deceitful, wicked human minds to filter, explain, and interpret observation and experience beyond the human limits of observation. However, we'll end in error with that alternative since the human mind is deceitful and desperately wicked. The human mind can only interpret by making up stuff.

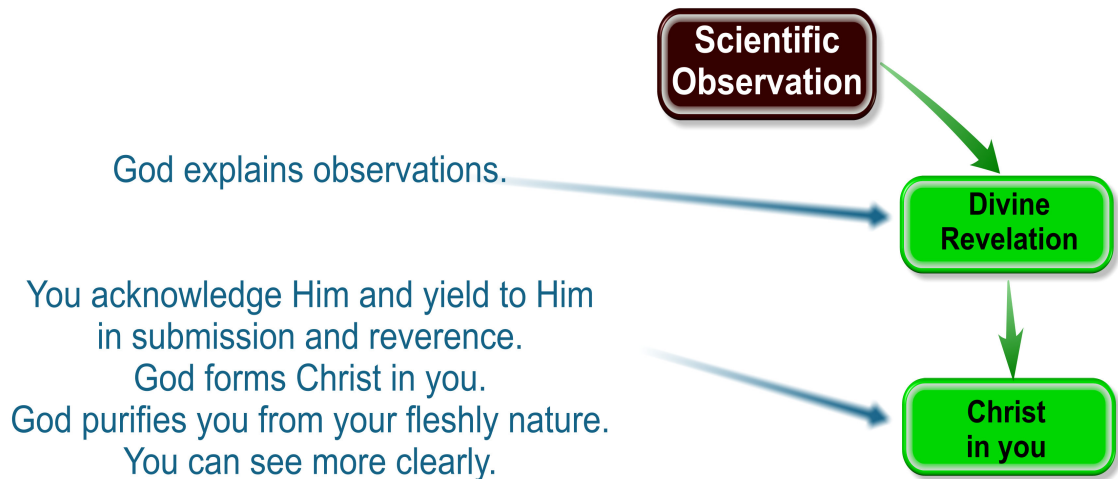
Since knowledge of reality is partial, we only know in part. We can know in part and be sure of what we know. We have partial but unquestionable knowledge. For instance, we know Christ absolutely but not completely as we'll know Him one day. We recognize the body of Christ now. Even though we see as if looking in a mirror, our vision improves as we yield to the Spirit of Truth. So we have some absolute knowledge, and God's revelation is our only accurate knowledge. However, revelation is still incomplete because of human weakness.

Godless Interpretation of Science versus Revelation of Science

We'll again look into the same process working for science. In this case, "settled science" is the group-held worldview, which is powerful because of peer-pressure, coercion, message control, and brainwashing. And though it's effective for confirmation bias, it's even more effective for blurring the line between good and evil, truth and error, or reality and make-believe.



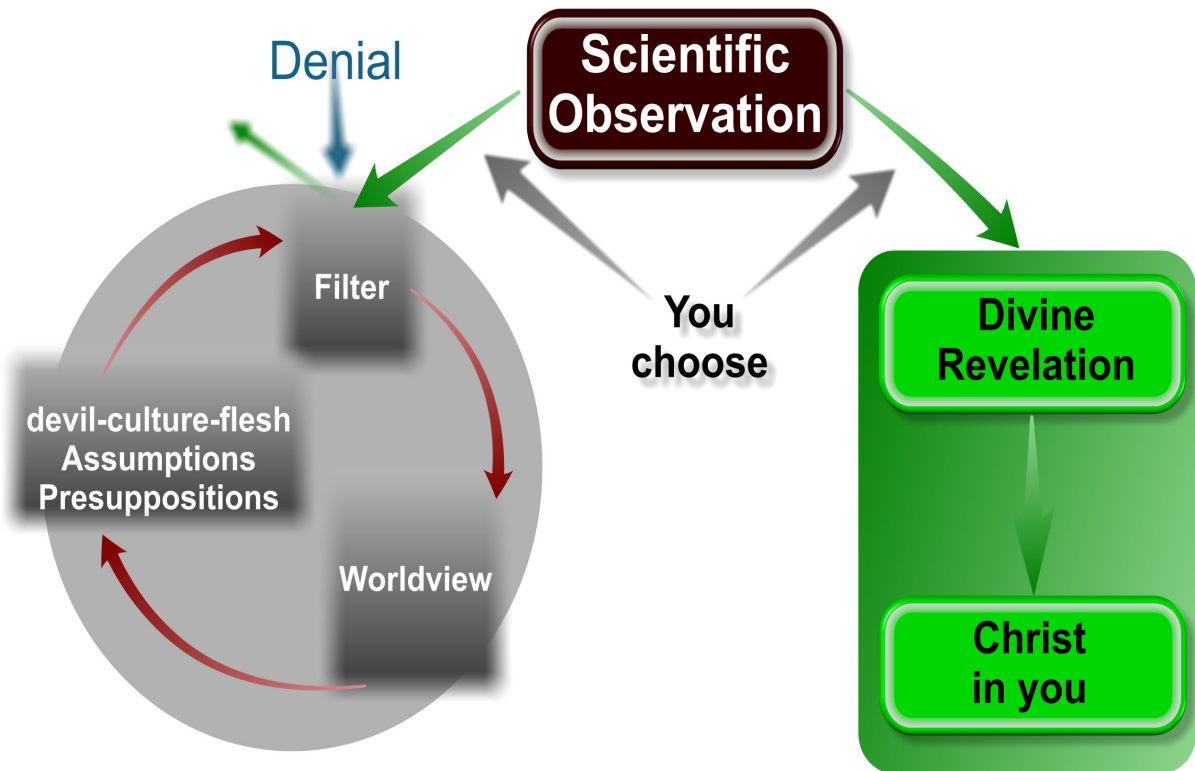
The two ways of interpreting scientific observation are similar to the two ways of dealing with any other part of reality. We can choose the same circular reasoning confirmation bias with the worldview, assumptions, and filter.



We can choose divine revelation.

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Once again, you make the choice. You yield your will to one or the other. A combination of the presuppositions and assumptions that come out of the worldview plus the influence of demons, peer pressure, and your human flesh create the filter. That filter resists any truth that comes from the scientific observation unless that truth conforms to the filter. The filter adds information and removes information from the observations. Then, the filtered scientific observations go into the worldview and confirm the bias of the worldview. On the other hand, you can choose to listen to what God is saying about the scientific observations, in which case, the observations build up Christ in you.

What happens when a scientist finds something that conflicts with the worldview of the group? The scientific establishment usually rejects the new observation for a while because only a few can see this part of

reality when few thinkers believe it. If a few others accept the new observation, it's easier for even more thinkers to come on board. When enough thinkers accept it, almost everyone accepts what has now become the bandwagon. This gradual acceptance is a naturally occurring bandwagon fallacy of emotional momentum. However, humanity is resistant to new information because of worldviews and confirmation bias. As a result, it's difficult for scientists to observe the unexpected. When enough people admit to seeing this part of reality, emotional momentum builds as peer pressure shifts slowly, over decades or centuries, to support the new observation.

This resistance to change works against science to protect the status quo. However, sacred cows resist change even more than those parts of the paradigm without such a glorified status. Therefore, the scientific establishment rejects new observations when those observations conflict with the sacred cows. They reject these conflicting observations even after many scientists make the same observation. In cases where observations conflict with the sacred cow stories, scientists must make up additional stories called "just-so stories" to rescue the sacred cows from the conflicting observations. In its resistance to reality, the establishment accepts conflicting observations only after someone crafts and perfects just-so stories because they must protect the sacred cows at all cost.

Let's look at a concrete example of this sacred cow protection process to understand better how it works. When scientists discovered soft tissue in dinosaur bones, the sacred cows of millions of years and molecules-to-humanity evolutionism came into question. So, the scientific establishment rejected the observation. Finally, someone made up a just-so story to explain how soft tissue could survive for millions of years. Even though the just-so story was silly, it was enough for many within the scientific establishment to stop denying the observations. And now the just-so story "proves" millions of years and molecules-to-humanity evolutionism. How can stories can prove anything? That's a mystery. And yet, persuaders use many stories to "prove" the sacred cows.

Besides these hallucinations, thinkers also see what they expect to see whether it's real or not. For example, evolutionists claim to see the big bang, billions of years, no Genesis Flood, and simple life popping into

existence spontaneously and evolving from amoebas into humanity. Evolutionists find irrational ways to defend their claims of looking into the past. When defending a worldview, especially a godless worldview, ungodly thinkers don't even demand the illusion of rationality.

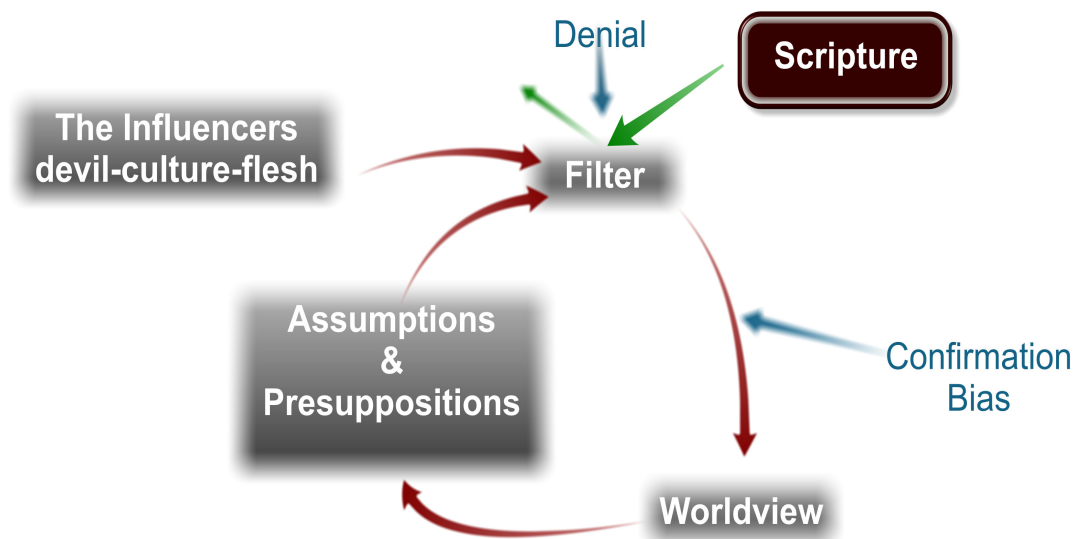
Now let's shift our viewpoint to look at the other way of thinking. By using a completely different method of reasoning, a scientist can go into his or her work with a mind open to God's revelation. For example, George Washington Carver used this method of reasoning, and any scientist can do the same. Seeking the mind of God works because God knows all about scientific and technical things since He made everything and knows everything. God will, without exception, direct the paths of those who acknowledge Him. We may feel our way because our flesh deceives us. And yet, God is always there leading us if we look for Him.

This wisdom, knowledge, and understanding from God is why those who follow Christ should excel beyond all others in every line of work. Since everyone who follows Christ is in the presence of the One Who is all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we can expect excellence from ourselves. Everyone who follows Christ stands in the presence of the Source of all love, joy, peace, stability, patience, gentleness, humility, goodness, and inner strength. Therefore, the Christ-follower has an advantage. Also, even with the prejudice often shown against Christ-followers, the Christ-follower can receive wisdom to succeed against prejudice where God opens the door.

Godless Interpretation of Scripture versus Revelation of Scripture

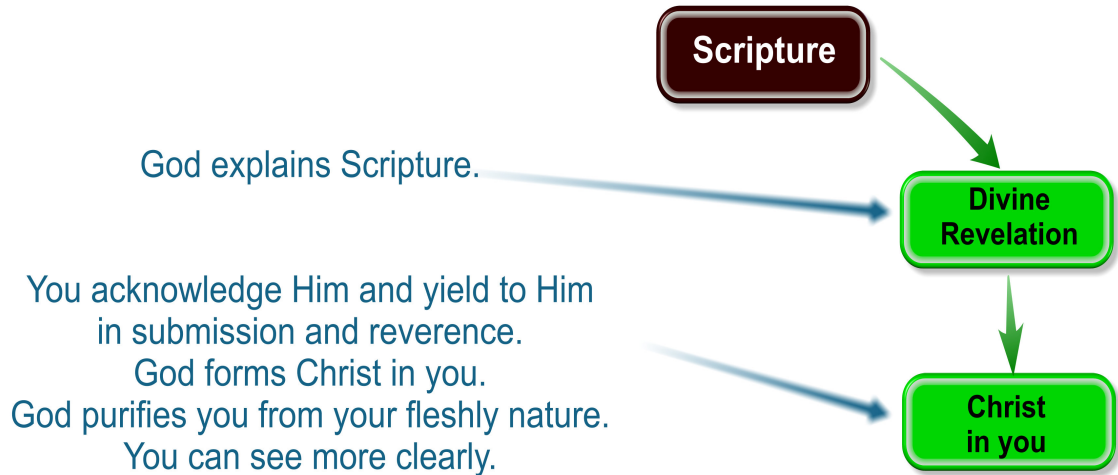
Let's consider the same thought process we applied to reality and science and see how it works with God's revelation as we hear, read, or remember Scripture. And notice there's no difference in the thought process thinkers use for rationalized science or rationalized theology. Both of them fall flat on the same principle. They both come from the wrong source. The wrong source is neither observation of the created world nor what God wrote in Scripture. Instead, the wrong source is the fallen, sin-cursed human mind, or worse, demonic influence.

We interpret Scripture the same way we interpret any other part of reality. We can use the same circular confirmation bias, worldview, presuppositions, and filter.



The influencers of the devil, culture, and flesh plus the assumptions that flow naturally from the worldview are inputs into the filter, and they resist truth from Scripture. They “help” us interpret Scripture. We feed whatever makes it through the filter into our worldviews as confirmation bias.

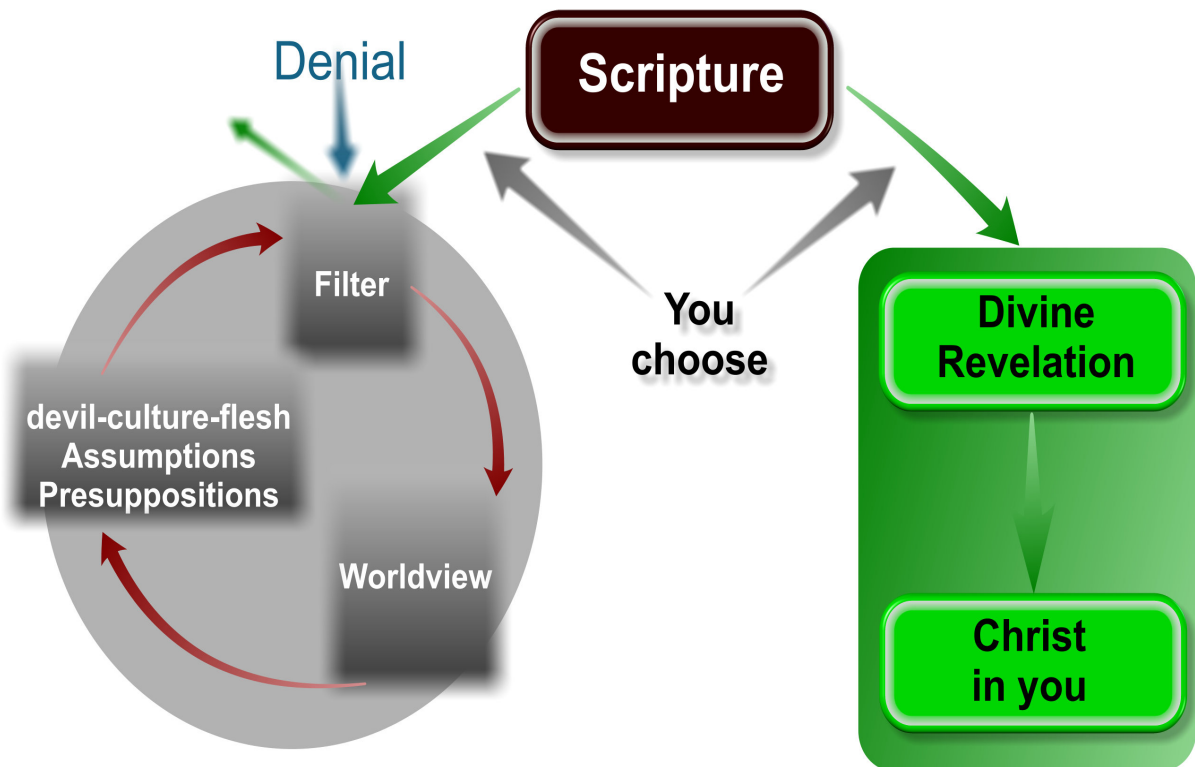
While the human mind tries to interpret using the confirmation bias process, we must choose the right source, which is divine revelation. So we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of Scripture to us. And we also allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of the created world to us. It’s even why we allow Him to reveal the meaning and purpose of our experiences and observations day by day and minute by minute in every situation.



We can choose to acknowledge God. God doesn't force us against our wills.

UNGODLY THINKING

GODLY THINKING



We reason in a circle on the left or by divine revelation without fallacy on the right. You choose which one to follow. On the right hand, God interprets Scripture through divine revelation, which builds up Christ in you. The flesh dies a little. God speaks, and His faith comes by the rhema or utterance of God. Christ is the logos or utterance of God. God spoke and created the universe by His utterance. Let's look at Psalm 51:10. "Create in me a clean heart, oh God." The Hebrew word "bara" is translated as "create." That's the same word used to describe the way God created (bara) the heavens and the earth. And He did it by His utterance. Christ is that utterance of God. God plants the Seed. He builds Christ in you.

As we understand the choice we have before us, we know some thinkers claim the fallen natural human mind can understand Scripture without God or His revelation. These thinkers claim we don't need the Holy Spirit to interpret Scripture. The basis of this claim is they think the fallen human mind is basically good. They would say, "The human mind was, after all, created by God, wasn't it?" However, God doesn't say the human mind is basically good. On the contrary, we can't find "human goodness" in Scripture, but rather, the human mind's unreliability is a major theme of Scripture.

According to a second story, some thinkers claim we can simply shift our minds into neutral. In effect, they say we shift into neutral and read Scripture, but by making this claim, they're also claiming we can trust our fallen minds to avoid misinterpreting Scripture. They're also saying we don't need the Holy Spirit. They're saying we don't need the unction from the Father. And yet, that isn't what God says through Scripture.

And as for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But just as His true and genuine anointing teaches you about all things, so remain in Him as you have been taught. ~ 1 John 2:27 Berean Study Bible

By this Scripture, we know the "shifting our minds into neutral" philosophy doesn't come from God. And we don't find that philosophy in Scripture.

In summary, the first story is we can trust the human mind and the second story is we can think in a neutral and unbiased way. These two dangerous stories are tricks of the enemy of our souls. And both of these stories assure deception and leave us open to doctrines of demons. God says the human mind is deceitful and desperately wicked. He commands us to seek Him with our whole mind.

God has a reason for telling us to seek Him with everything in us. If we seek God, we enquire of God. God asks us to inquire of Him. Not only does God ask us to seek Him, but seeking God isn't something God only mentions a few times through Scripture. Just the opposite. Seeking God is a major theme of Scripture. It's not a suggestion but a command.

We need to clarify one other point about seeking God. Techniques like mind blanking, sensory deprivation, and guided imagery are different from seeking God. Seeking God isn't a trance state. We don't dare open our minds to whatever pops into them from whatever source. That's why we guard our innermost minds because life flows out of the innermost mind.

Above everything else guard your heart (innermost mind),
because from it flow the springs of life. ~ Proverbs 4:23
International Standard Version

We can trust the Holy Spirit to interpret Scripture, but we can't trust the fallen human nature, the demonic entities, or the minds of ungodly "intellectuals." Ungodly persuaders would love to have us sit in their counsel so they could brainwash us.

We have an alternative to ungodly counselors. God speaks to us through Scripture, and since anyone can experience His revelation through Scripture, there's no question about it. The Bible is God's utterance without error. And the Holy Spirit confirms this truth to us, so there's no question about this revelation either. Rather, the question is about interpretation. And rational interpretation is only possible by listening to God's voice. The Holy Spirit leads us if we follow Him. His leading depends on our willingness to submit to His Spirit. The question is: whom will we worship? Will we worship our minds and egos? Will we worship demons? Will we worship human intellect? Or will we worship God?

Some oppose this truth by saying, “We must keep our theological conceptions as a blueprint or lens to interpret Scripture.” They say, “We should read the Bible to support our theological conceptions.” Each of us has a theological conception. Our theological conceptions are parts of our worldviews. Since millions of theological conceptions exist, whose theological conception can we trust? Those who say we need our theological conceptions also promote their own conceptions as the “correct conceptions.” They also claim all others are wrong. Even post-modern relativists claim their conceptions are right and others are wrong. That’s strange since they feel nothing is either right or wrong. We wouldn’t expect it, but relativists are also exclusivists since they think relativism is right and consider all conflicting opinions wrong.

We trust the Holy Spirit since He knows. If we’re humble, we want the Holy Spirit to continue to correct our theological conceptions. However, He won’t force us when we make our theological conceptions into our foundation rather than having Christ as our Foundation. May we ever long to go beyond theological conception to know Jesus Christ as He knows us.

Merriam Webster says theology is the study of religious faith, practice, and experience, the study of God and God’s relation to the world, a system of religious beliefs or ideas. However, knowing about God and God’s relation to the world is different from knowing God. And a system of religious beliefs or ideas isn’t the same as knowing God.

Therefore, we won’t use the word “theology” to refer to getting to know God through Jesus Christ and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we’ll use the word “theology” to mean learned concepts *about* God and all the topics mentioned by Merriam Webster. We’ll contrast theology with knowing Christ and allowing Him to lead, teach, and correct while we yield ourselves to Him.

Theology often goes beyond what God has revealed. That’s a problem. Speculative theology appears in statements of faith, books, individual felt needs, individual perspectives, certain groups of expert scholars who agree, or organizations. Then each religious organization teaches its official theology is the one true theology. We just mentioned post-modern relativists. Even the organizations that say doctrine isn’t an

issue promote the doctrine of relativism as the correct doctrine. They teach the doctrine of unity in diversity. Theological disagreements cause divisions. And the competitive human spirit, money, power, and prestige can also cause divisions, but theological disagreement is a huge factor. Speculation drives theological disagreements. Only the Holy Spirit can solve this. And He will.

Many theologians think their theologies restate Scripture exactly when those theologies don't restate Scripture. The theologies add to Scripture. They omit some Scripture. The theologians have to tell just-so stories to explain away certain Scripture passages. For example, one end-times expert expounded on many supposed coming events but never mentioned a single verse of Scripture. We would have to admit his claims weren't impossible. However, his claims added to Scripture. Then he said, "Well I'm just quoting Scripture." This theologian had lost the distinction between his theology and Scripture. A theologian who claims Jesus isn't God simply brushes away verses that say Jesus is God. We could go on with endless theologies that claim to follow Scripture exactly.

It's common for two theologians with opposing theologies to claim to be following Scripture exactly without adding anything to or diminishing anything in Scripture. Both claim that, and yet their theologies conflict with each other. If they were both following Scripture without creative interpretation, there wouldn't be any conflict or division. So what do they do? Each accuses the other of adding to Scripture and filtering some Scripture. Here's the real problem. Both of them confuse Scripture with theological worldviews.

As Christ-followers, we stand against speculative theology. We stand against any speculative theology, including our own. And we pray the Holy Spirit reveals those hidden assumptions and speculations that seem so real to us but go beyond Scripture. Hopefully, there's no speculative theology in this journey, but it may have crept in unawares. So, if I put some in, I pray the Holy Spirit exposes it and doesn't allow it to do damage. And I pray the Holy Spirit continues to teach and correct us. We also pray, "Lord, soften our hearts toward You." Now if we, with this attitude, are likely to venture into fantasy land, what about a Christ-follower who believes assumptions are the basis of sound reasoning?

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ~ James 3:2-3 New International Version

We have to ask the questions. Whose theology should we trust? Which denomination is best? Which books should we trust? Which theological experts can we trust?

Here's the answer. We can trust God, and we know the Holy Spirit is our teacher. Therefore, the Holy Spirit will direct us to fellowship with others, and He'll direct each of us to a fellowship where we can grow. At some time, He may move us again if necessary for our continued growth providing we're still open to spiritual growth. Sometimes, we get stuck if we think we've arrived.

Part of our spiritual growth is recognizing the body of Christ. We recognize the ministry in each member, and we see the ministry is Christ in us, the hope of glory. God has provided the Church, and the Church is part of God's method for understanding Scripture. In other words, the Church is an important part of His way and an important part of His method. God designed the Church to work in the order and pattern written in Scripture. The early Church largely followed this pattern when the Church was walking well. Then they abandoned the pattern. But God has been restoring various parts of the scriptural pattern over the past several centuries.

Of course, it makes no sense for me to presume I can initiate God's order or pattern since God's order is as much a part of Himself as His righteousness, love, peace, or joy. Therefore, only God can set up His order. The Holy Spirit will put the Church into order, precept on precept, with power and authority. And precept on precept, the Holy Spirit will bring the Church into unity. Christ will return for a bride without spot or wrinkle. As God's plan unfolds, we'll see God using the Church to correctly understand Scripture when the Church follows the pattern of Scripture. But God will fulfill His plan in His timing by His effort. It won't happen by human effort. Our part is paying attention to Him and submitting to Him. Meanwhile, we know God provides a pattern safer than human ideas, innovations, patterns, and precepts. And God doesn't need our ideas. He has a plan.

Worldviews and Witness

“Son of Man,” he said, “I’ve appointed you to be a watchman over the house of Israel. Therefore when you hear a message that comes from me, you are to warn them for me. “So when I say to a wicked person, ‘You’re about to die,’ if you don’t warn or instruct that wicked person that his behavior is wicked so he can live, that wicked person will die in his sin, but I’ll hold you responsible for his death. If you warn the wicked person, and he doesn’t repent of his wickedness or of his wicked behavior, he’ll die in his sin, but you will have saved your own life. “When a righteous man abandons his righteousness to practice unrighteousness, I’ll set a stumbling block before him. He’ll die. If you don’t warn him, he’ll die in his sin and the righteous deeds that he had practiced won’t be remembered, but you’ll be held responsible for his death. If you warn the righteous person, so that he doesn’t commit sin, then he’ll live since he had been warned. And you will have saved your life.” ~ Ezekiel 3:17-21 International Standard Version

Our expedition now leads us to Christian witness, and in this leg of our pilgrimage, we’ll shine a light on the ways worldviews get in the way of Christian witness. Christian witness ought to shine out through every part of our lives. We can attend church, have an intellectual understanding of the Gospel, and have a Christian worldview and yet fail to let Christ show in us. We can even engage in many Christian events and projects. We can take classes in soul-winning. We sometimes work hard at religion. But what’s it worth if we have no fruit showing in our lives?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self-control, and faith. Rather than these virtues, we sometimes see self-righteousness, empty religion, sexual sins of all kinds, impatience, anger, bitterness, envy, and many other fruits of the fleshly nature. We see the conflict since Christ is leading, teaching, and correcting us into righteousness. And righteousness leads to holiness. God is purifying us from glory to glory. The fruit of the Spirit will spring forth if we truly have a relationship with Christ.

If Christ is working in us in this way, those who are hungry and thirsty will see Christ in us as the fruit of the Spirit becomes obvious. The fruit of the Spirit will open doors for witnessing.

The fruit of a righteous person is a tree of life, and a winner of souls is wise. ~ Proverbs 11:30 God's Word Translation

Some Christians present materialistic and naturalistic evidence as a way to win souls. The evidence may be philosophical, scientific, historical, or legal, without any Anointing of the Holy Spirit. Generally, this form of soul-winning depends on human intellect. Without the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever sees only the fruit of the flesh in us when we're witnessing. What follows is a war of worldviews. Consider the following from my friend, Greg Kiser:

If we REALLY believe what God told us in Romans 1, then these people [the disbelievers] are fools. Are we afraid to talk to fools? Not at all. The Ph.D. means nothing by comparison to all the wisdom & knowledge in Christ. If all knowledge is in Him, then there is no knowledge without Him. I used to think Proverbs 26:4-5 only showed the futility of witnessing to a fool (and most commentators agree with that), but it is not that at all. Instead, it shows us how to engage them.

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Greg goes on to note Psalm 14:1, which also defines a fool as the one who denies God's existence since God has so clearly shown to them Himself and holds them accountable. Greg goes on to say:

The passage simply means we are NOT to take the worldview of the fool to talk to the fool. That's what fools want!

Ungodly thinkers want us to drop divine revelation. They want us to interpret observation, experience, and the Bible using their axioms that come out of their worldviews. They don't want us to consider the divine revelation in Scripture. They don't want God directly involved whether discussing the origin of the universe, geological formations,

distant starlight, sexual morality, marriage, home order, Church order, abortion, hate groups, racism, or any other topic.

However, ungodly thinkers aren't the only ones who have problems with worldviews. Worldview problems appear to be part of the fallen human nature. Still, the situation isn't hopeless, and we've already discovered part of God's plan of deliverance, but the battle is for the mind. (2 Corinthians 10:4)

Since thinkers without Christ can't have true premises, they always use assumptions. As a result, basing reason on assumptions seems normal to them. From their view, making up stuff and believing made-up stuff seems sane, and anything else seems crazy. On the other hand, those who know Christ desire to work on a higher level, and we want to witness based on God's power rather than the weakness of worldviews. We know only the power of the Creator God can renew the mind of the lost, and we see the promise of this power in the following Scripture:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not in wisdom of discourse, so that the cross of the Christ should not be emptied of its power. For the message [Greek: *logos*, literally: utterance] of the cross is foolishness to those indeed perishing, but to us being saved it is the power of God. For it has been written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those believing. Forasmuch as both Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek wisdom, we, however, preach [Greek: *kerusso*, literally: proclaim with gravity and authority] Christ having been crucified, a stumbling block indeed to the Jewish and foolishness to Gentiles, but those called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. For consider your calling,

brothers, that not many were wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might shame the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might shame the strong; and the low-born of the world, and the things being despised, God also chose—the things not being—that He might annul the things being, so that all flesh may not boast before God. But out of Him, you are in Christ Jesus, who has been made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption ~ 1 Corinthians 1:17-30 Berean Study Bible

Two Types of Wisdom

Let's look carefully into 1 Corinthians 1:17-30 that mentions two types of wisdom: (1) worldly wisdom, and (2) the wisdom from above. The wisdom from above is Christ Himself as we shall see, but the following section refers to worldly wisdom.

not in wisdom of discourse, so that the cross of the Christ should not be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those indeed perishing, but to us being saved it is the power of God. For it has been written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ~ 1 Corinthians 1:17b-20 Berean Literal Bible

The next part speaks of God's wisdom first, then worldly wisdom.

For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know God ~ 1 Corinthians 1:21a Berean Literal Bible

God's wisdom is the person of Christ as the 24th verse states:

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God:

God states this same thought again in the 30th verse.

It is because of Him [God], you are in Christ Jesus, Who [Christ Jesus] has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
~ 1 Corinthians 1:30 New International Version

In other words, God has made Christ Jesus our wisdom, and our wisdom consists of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. So Christ is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. From this Scripture, we understand Christ, and Christ alone, does righteousness. So anyone claiming to have a righteousness that isn't of Christ is presenting false righteousness, self-righteousness. Besides, Christ is the One Who purifies our minds (sanctification), and only He sets us free from the sinful nature, the bondage of the culture, and demonic influences (redemption). Therefore, there's no true wisdom, righteousness, holiness, or freedom/redemption outside of Christ. However, Satan will continually fake all these. God tells us to be alert.

Righteousness

The Sabbath in the Law looked forward to the true Sabbath. The Law never fully entered the rest God had in mind for His people. The Book of Hebrews gives us a better understanding of the true Sabbath.

Since, then, it remains for some to enter His rest, and since those who formerly heard the good news did not enter because of their disobedience, God again designated a certain day as "Today," when a long time later He spoke through David as was just stated: "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following the same pattern of disobedience. ~ Hebrews 4:6-11 Berean Study Bible

We can fulfill the Sabbath since, as God rested from His own work, we cease from our own work. In the New Covenant, everything begins with God leading: "faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by God's rhema (utterance)." "Today, if you hear His voice, do not

harden your hearts.” God is real and leads us, and, when we listen to Him and submit to Him, His faith comes. His faith gives us access to His grace, which, in turn, does His works of righteousness through us. That fulfills the Sabbath.

We stop doing our own works and fulfill the Sabbath. Then, we have true righteousness rather than self-righteousness. We can only fulfill the Sabbath as He does His works through us. He says His words and does His acts through us. That’s why whatever isn’t of faith is sin. And God’s purpose in this Christ-generated righteousness is to form Christ more fully within us as we die to the fleshly nature. The light of Christ and His righteousness purifies us from the darkness of the fleshly nature. In other words, God’s purpose is holiness. So we can’t self-generate holiness, but the Holy Spirit alone transfigures us. He doesn’t make us holy against our wills, but we willingly submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit in every thought, word, and deed. Those words that flow out from our mouths from the Holy Spirit are the proclamations that save those who believe. This has nothing to do with human skill or intellect. It’s a moving of the Holy Spirit through those who humble themselves before Him.

God was pleased through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those believing. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:21b
Berean Literal Bible

We understand this “foolishness” in context. Here’s the context:

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

So, to those who walk in darkness, Christ appears to be foolishness. And yet, we know Christ as God’s power and wisdom living within us.

Few are they who by faith touch Him; multitudes are they who throng about Him. ~ Augustine

The translators rendered the word “preaching” from the Greek word “kerugma.” Kerugma means “a proclamation.” This proclamation isn’t theology, excitement, or entertainment. Rather, “we preach *Christ crucified*.” Stating it literally, we proclaim Christ crucified; we don’t proclaim a message *about* Christ crucified. Proclaiming Christ is

different from stating a proclamation *about* Christ. One imparts Christ, the Almighty Creator God, from one person to another. The other gives a speech about theological concepts. It's one thing to know we ought to be listening to Christ's voice, but it's quite another to actually listen to Christ and yield ourselves to Christ continually throughout every part of our lives.

We proclaim Christ. When we proclaim Christ, the living Christ reveals Himself through the words we speak. We proclaim Christ in the Spirit of prophecy. Christ is the Word. Christ is the Utterance of God. He's the seed planted by the Sower. The Sower is God preaching Christ through you. God is sowing Christ into the heart of whoever will receive the Living Word. This preaching is power.

For the preaching . . . is the power of God. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:18 King James Bible

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles [mouthpiece] of God; ~ 1 Peter 4:11a King James Bible

So when we yield to His Spirit, He saturates our words with His Spirit. When we tell of our experiences with Christ and give our testimonies about how He leads, teaches, corrects, or delivers us, we are speaking the living Christ, the Logos, the Utterance. For every word we say, we allow His Holy Spirit to speak His words through us by His Power. In this way, we're not distracted by our human will and learning. Instead, we speak the living Christ rather than speaking our own words because we aren't authorized to speak our own words. Only by yielding to the Holy Spirit can we proclaim Christ, and we yield in the moment. Then, when we yield to the Holy Spirit, our words reveal Christ.

At the same time, a person who hears this proclamation is hearing God speak through us, so this person isn't hearing us. Instead, this person is hearing God's powerful rhema or utterance, and faith comes by this form of hearing. Since these are God's utterances as He speaks through us, those words have power. It's the same power that created the universe. It's the same power that sustains the universe.

Sanctify

What we've just learned from the first chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians will help us understand Peter's command to the Church:

But sanctify [Literally: purify] the Lord God in your hearts [your inner being]: and be ready always to give an answer [Greek: apologia, literally: rational response] to every man who asks you a reason [Greek: logos. Note: Christ is the logos/utterance] of the hope that is in you [your inner being] with meekness [Literally: a gentle spirit] and fear [Literally: reverence or terror]. ~ 1 Peter 3:15 King James Version

We'll begin by confessing that we Christians have taken the word "apologia" out of context at times in the past. We've used the word to justify human debate tactics and to justify unsound human logic without true premises. Sometimes, we've used this word as an excuse for unholy witnessing that doesn't have the goal of bringing anyone to Christ. For example, there's a form of witnessing that, if stated plainly, would say, "I'm better than you." It might say, "I'm smarter than you." That's not what God meant in 1 Peter 3:15.

In the exact opposite mindset, we don't bother trying to analyze who's better, smarter, or more spiritually mature since we have no basis for measurement of those things. We don't even think about who's going to rule in the kingdom, but we just want to be faithful in what God has given us to do right now. Truly, we want God to remove this fleshly veil so the glory of Christ shines through us to those around us.

Now we go back to the start of the scriptural command to find it begins with sanctification. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." To sanctify is to purify. As God tells us to purify the Lord God in our innermost beings, we realize it's a command and also a promise, but how do we fulfill this command and promise? If we're going to purify Christ in our innermost minds, God has a process for this purification as we might expect. It's by grace, which is through faith. And we've already looked into that, but we need to apply it here.

The righteousness of Christ leads to this holiness. This holiness is sanctification or purification. (Romans 6:9) Righteousness is a gift from God. It comes by grace through faith as we yield our minds and the

members of our bodies to His grace. It comes as we yield ourselves to Him. In broad terms, God leads, we acknowledge and yield, faith comes and gives access to grace, and we allow God's grace to do His works through us moment by moment. Of course, the Holy Spirit won't force us to do His will if we oppose Him, but rather, it all depends on us willingly staying in His presence yielded to His will.

Purification of Christ in us is the first step in giving an answer to everyone who asks us for a reason for the hope in us. Therefore, without yielding to His Spirit in submission, we can't fulfill this command and promise of Scripture. And we only receive true authority in the spiritual realm as we submit to God's authority. Therefore, as we yield ourselves to God, He does His works through us. He transforms our minds to be like His mind. He constantly plants the Holy Seed. He constantly plants Christ in our innermost beings. He's doing it right now. He builds Christ and kills the fleshly nature. And He delegates His authority to us in the moment as we submit in the moment.

We may become discouraged by our immaturity. We become discouraged because we know we fall short of His glory. We often walk or slip out of His will. However, we trust God instead of trusting ourselves. We look for the Holy Spirit to teach, correct, and purify us. He actively moves in our daily lives to do that work. We remember His promise:

Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established. ~ Proverbs 16:3 American King James Version

So God tells us to sanctify (purify) the Lord God in our hearts. "Hearts," as the word appears here, doesn't refer to the physical organ that pumps blood through our bodies, but rather, it speaks of our innermost beings. "For out of the heart are the issues of life."

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify [purify] you completely, and may your entire spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Berean Study Bible

The word translated as "soul," here is also translated "heart," "mind," or "life" in other verses. And Paul was in travail as the Holy Spirit was

forming Christ in the hearts of the Galatians. (Galatians 4:19) Scripture speaks of Christ in us, which is the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27) But each of us also has a fallen, carnal, brute-beast mind that causes us to make mistakes and draws us into temptation. That means we need purification, but what are we purifying? As the Scripture says, we purify the Lord God in our hearts, but isn't He pure already? Of course He's pure. However, we aren't pure because each of us has an impure sinful nature, and God is serious about overcoming our sinful natures.

He's our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and freedom from sin. We purify Him in our hearts, and purification gives clarity and discernment. Purification defines the line between God's revelation and the flesh's lying illusions. In essence, purification removes the fleshly sarx carnal nature. Purification is the removal of the fleshly veil.

If we're going to obey 1 Peter 3:15, we must "*purify the Lord God in our hearts.*" Purification is a progressive process. God tells us about purification in 1 Peter 1:7:

so that the authenticity of your faith--more precious than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation [apokalupsis, which means the removal of the veil] of Jesus Christ.

And since God's will goes against our sinful nature, it's like fire refining the gold--some refinements and purifications requiring more heat than others. Gold is symbolic of deity. It's Christ in us. This refining fire removes the veil that hides the Gold of Christ in us. The veil is symbolic of the flesh.

We can look into this purification and this clarity of vision using an analogy. If we fill a clear water glass with dirt, we can't see through the glass. But if we start adding clear water, the water begins to wash the dirt out of the glass, and soon, instead of pure dirt, we have muddy water. However, we still can't see through the muddy water. Though some light indeed comes through, we have no clarity of vision. We can eventually remove all the mud by adding water. On the

other hand, if we add mud instead of water, we make progress backward away from clarity.

So the command is this: “Sanctify the Lord God in your heart.” “Purify the Lord God in your innermost mind.” Since this sanctification is the first step to following the command of 1 Peter 3:15, we can’t truly fulfill this command without purifying the Lord God in our innermost minds to some extent. And since purification is a progressive process, we can expect to find ever-greater clarity as we continue to submit ourselves to the flowing water of the Holy Spirit.

Moving on, according to 1 Peter 3:15, God tells us to give “an *answer* to every person who asks us for a *reason* of the hope in us.” And we already know the word translated as “*answer*” is the Greek word “*apologia*,” which means “a reasoned response” or “a verbal defense.” But what is equally important is the word translated as “*reason*” from the Greek word “*logos*.” Since we looked at “*logos*” earlier, we remember that “*logos*” literally means “utterance,” but “*logos*” is also used to refer to Christ. “In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God.” (John 1:1)

Therefore, this word is referring to Christ, Christ in us, the hope of glory. He’s the One we’re purifying in our hearts. *Logos* is also the Greek word from which we get the word “logic.” So when we speak, God asks us to speak the Living Word, the *Logos*. Only when Christ speaks through us can we give a reasoned response with sound logic. God commands us to speak as His oracles, but this speaking requires submission to the Holy Spirit. We submit to every God-set authority in humility and deep respect. And we need this submission if we’re going to sanctify the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts. As we yield, the Holy Spirit progressively removes the impure fleshly veil that hides Christ in our innermost minds. When we allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us, He removes this veil, and He reveals Christ to some extent.

So, God asks us always to be ready to give a rational response to every person who asks for the *Logos* Who lives within us. He asks us to be ready to give a rational response to anyone who asks us a *Logos* of the *hope* in us. But what about this hope? Contrary to popular opinion, God’s hope doesn’t have the same meaning as ungodly “hope.” Instead, God’s hope is real hope. God’s hope doesn’t say, “I hope so.”

Instead, real hope is a vision from God of the coming reality. This vision comes from Christ in us, the hope of glory. And since God's hope has a vision, and that vision is certain, we see God's vision by hope.

By hope, we see the vision of our unique identities in Christ, and we see the vision of how our identities fit into the body of Christ. We identify with the Christ, the Spiritual Man within us rather than identifying with our fleshly selves. He is the ministry within each of us, and we see Him as if looking into a mirror. We see how we'll fulfill this vision if we're faithful as we individually fit into the body of Christ as particular members. We discern the gifts, ministries, offices, and orders of the body of Christ by this vision, so the hope in us is Christ formed in us, in our innermost minds. And we never forget we're all going through this transformation together as one body of Christ. Each member discerns Christ in the others, and we assemble ourselves into God's order for the body. He'll form His body according to the pattern of Scripture. And He'll form His body by the Holy Spirit working through the individual members as they assemble themselves in unity and order.

Therefore, God's hope is solid reality. It has substance. However, we might think hope is just a concept or fabrication. If we think "hope" is something we make-up, we commit an anti-concreteness fallacy. Anti-concreteness treats reality as if it were made-up stuff. Christ isn't a concept. Rather, He's the Reality, and He's the Truth. In the same way, God's hope isn't a concept either. Rather, it's Reality and Truth.

When compared, God's utterance in 1 Peter 3:15 confirms and elaborates on what God says through 1 Corinthians 1:17-25. In these cases, He commands us to have a reasonable response, but not human reasoning without divine revelation since we've already discovered that human reason without divine revelation can't be rational. It can't be sound because if we reason without divine revelation, we'll be irrational.

We already know why. It's because we need a true premise to reason rationally, and we can only have a true premise by revelation. If we try to reason without revelation, we root our reasoning in made-up stuff. Basing statements on made-up stuff isn't rational. Therefore, if we let

God guide our thoughts and communications, He'll make our reasoning sane, but without God, there's no sanity.

When we purify the Lord God in our hearts, people notice the holiness. People notice when we're keeping pace with the Holy Spirit. They sense the presence of the Holy One of Israel living in our beings. And since the Almighty Creator God lives in us, we can sense His presence and hear His voice. Even ungodly thinkers can sense a difference in us. They sense this difference even if they don't understand what the difference is. The difference is Christ in us. The difference is Christ leading us and saying His words through us as we yield ourselves to Him. The difference is Christ doing His works through us as we submit to His righteousness and allow Him to do it.

Of course, those who know Christ also sense His presence in us as they discern the body of Christ. When someone asks us about the Christ in us, we respond to the question with a proclamation from God's throne. In other words, we respond to the question with an utterance from God, and this reasoned response comes out of the Lord God in our innermost minds (hearts). This reasoned response is an utterance from God. This utterance is the essence of Christ. It has the same authority and power that created the universe. But now He speaks to reveal the Word of Life to another soul.

to every man who asks you a reason

Since Christ dwells in us, if we allow Jesus to be visible, someone is more likely to ask about Him. But some Christians are afraid to identify with Christ. Perhaps they fear peer pressure, ostracism, or lost prestige. Perhaps they grew weary of the veiled threats of termination, veiled threats of denied tenure, and shabby treatment. Maybe they want the money and prestige that comes to those who go with the flow, or it's possible they just want to fit into the world as everyone else does. Though we can dream up many potential reasons, Christ doesn't approve if we deny Him or fail to give Him all the glory and praise.

if we endure, we will also reign together with Him; if we
will deny Him, He also will deny us; ~ 2 Timothy 2:12
Berean Literal Bible

And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him. ~ Romans 8:17 Berean Literal Bible

Indeed, all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ~ 2 Timothy 3:12 Berean Study Bible

In summary, while witness to unbelievers and believers can degenerate into a battle of worldviews, true witness is the testimony of Jesus Christ. True witness is a prophetic proclamation that makes Jesus Christ visible because true witness consists of God speaking through us and imparting something of Himself through us. The testimony of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of prophecy. However, all the prophets suffered persecution.

Louie Giglio suggests we can stay out of the he-said-she-said arguments when we witness to others. He says we can do this by telling people about how Jesus is changing our lives. We can tell about the struggles we have had. We can tell them how God has been there comforting us. We can tell them about how God helped us through the situation. We can tell about how His life and light is coming into our lives. (Louie Giglio, *How can I know this is real?*)

The testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy. You can't say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Spirit of God. When you merely speak about what God is doing in your life right now, you speak by the Spirit of the living God.

Family Witness

Next, let's take a brief walk around some parts of God's pattern for family and how to teach, encourage, and build up children. We're responsible for teaching, encouraging, and building up our own families first. Parents are responsible for teaching, encouraging, and building up their own children before witnessing to anyone else. Parents may focus on teaching doctrine, morals, ethics, forms, rituals, or other less important truths. When children are too young to understand, parents put children under a law. However, that's a temporary measure to keep the children safe. The goal isn't a law or God's Law, and learning speculative theories or theologies isn't vital

to the children's walk with God either. Nor do they need to learn loyalty to an organization.

Instead, children need to learn to know Jesus. They need to learn how to go to Jesus in every moment and listen to Him, and as part of this, they need the moment-by-moment training and instruction of the Lord.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training [Greek: *paideia*] and instruction [Greek: *nouthesia*] of the Lord. ~ Ephesians 6:4 New International Version

Note the two Greek words in square brackets. These are important words.

Nouthesia and *Paideia* : Admonition, Admonish [Noun] *nouthesia* lit., “a putting in mind” (nous, “mind,” tithemi, “to put”), is used in 1 Cor 10:11, of the purpose of the Scriptures; in Eph 6:4, of that which is ministered by the Lord; and in Titus 3:10, of that which is to be administered for the correction of one who creates trouble in the church. *Nouthesia* is “the training by word,” whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance. In contrast to this, the synonymous word *paideia* stresses training by act, though both words are used in each respect. ~ *Vines Greek New Testament Dictionary*

Children need to learn the peace and joy of hearing the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to them through Scripture. They need to experience the Holy Spirit applying Scripture to their current problems and situations in a relevant way. Every day, parents can teach their children how to walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh. They can teach children how to listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to them through Scripture. Parents can show children how Christ speaks to them, through Scripture, about right and wrong. Parents can tell their children how the Holy Spirit will bring Scripture to their remembrance when their fleshly nature is trying to draw them into doing something wrong. Through Scripture, parents can teach their children how to detect a false prophet or a false teacher. They can

teach them to pray for discernment to find God's interpretation of Scripture amid all the various voices who claim to have the correct interpretation.

Parents are the most powerful influence on their children. The words parents say are second only to the acts parents do. Children naturally copy parents. If parents love to sing to the Lord, children will connect to God that way. If parents love to praise God right out loud, children will connect to God that way. If parents encourage each other in their ministries, children will find God there. If parents neglect, children will neglect. If parents find God boring, children will find God boring. If parents talk negatively about other members of the church or church leadership, don't act surprised when your children tell you they are now atheist. You did it.

Parents can read Scripture to their children and teach them to listen to Christ through every means mentioned in Scripture. Read *First Corinthians* twelve, *First Corinthians* fourteen, *Romans* one, and the entire Bible. Daily Scripture reading is extremely important to children, so take the opportunity to read to them until they can read to you.

From the standpoint of outcomes, parents would find their role easier if God's love was shed abroad in the children's hearts by the Holy Ghost, wouldn't they? And parents would find their role easier if the children were walking in the Spirit, wouldn't they? So why not teach them how to know Jesus? If they're taught to seek Jesus Christ at the youngest age, they're much more likely to follow Christ as teenagers and as adults. If they don't follow Christ at a young age, parents will find it difficult to get their interest when they enter their teen years.

Ephesians 6:4 speaks of two forms of training. One is *nouthesia*, which is "putting in mind." What does God want the children to have in their minds? God wants them to acknowledge Him, and He'll be there to guide if they're willing to acknowledge Him. They just need to hold Him in their knowledge. The second form of training is *paideia*, which is action. To understand this *paideia* action, we must remember that works come by grace through faith, so children need to learn how to acknowledge God's leading and how to respond in submission. They need to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit, so God does His works through them.

Unfortunately, some parents never get around to teaching their children to know Christ. And this lack of teaching means many children never learn to abide in His leading, teaching, correction, and progressive purification. In other words, many children never learn to walk in the Spirit. Perhaps the children never learn because many parents never walk in the Spirit and never keep step with the Spirit themselves.

It's true that many anti-God thinkers claim they grew up as Christians. However, most of them deny having any experience of knowing Christ or Christ leading them, so how could they ever have the experience of knowing He exists because they know Him. They even deny such an experience is possible. Could someone deeply and meaningfully experience the living Christ in this way and then deny His existence? Some claim they did know Him but now deny Him. That's difficult to believe. More likely, they learned manners, theologies, and emotions, but they never learned to hear God's voice and to respond in submission to the Holy Spirit.

There's a common trait of those who don't conform to the pressures of the culture but stay in the Church. They have parents who continually declared the Gospel to them, and in the process, those young people were born again into God's kingdom. It doesn't take much to be born again, but the Gospel is necessary. As a side note, being born again isn't a changed life but rather an exchanged life. We must continually cultivate this exchanged life by following the Holy Spirit, or our walk will end in dead religiosity or even willing sinfulness.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, the new has come into being. ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17 Berean Literal Bible

Christ now lives within, but the flesh is there too. We need to tell young people this war is going on within them. They need to identify with the Christ Who lives in them and realize the fleshly nature is dead to them. They need to stop listening to the fleshly nature and listen only to Christ. So parents either teach children to know Christ, or they risk losing their children to the evils of the culture. We must tell the children our stories. We all have stories. We all experience the leading of Christ. We all experience how God takes care of us and

leads us into righteousness or keeps us from danger. Children love to hear these stories. If children think they can fit into the culture and avoid making themselves God's enemies, they'll conform to the pressures of the culture because those pressures are extremely powerful, deceptive, and coercive.

And we do see parents trying to build a worldview in their children. We also see others trying to build a different worldview. For example, the secular school system builds an ungodly worldview in the students, while, on the other hand, Christian education builds a godly worldview. However, we're not concerned about a worldview because we're not concerned about building a fake reality, but rather, we're concerned about real reality and children coming to commune with Christ.

What's the best way to teach children to know Jesus Christ, hear His voice, and yield to His righteousness? Let's look at three possible ways. One is to teach the concept. God does this through the Bible, and it's a good way. Another is by teaching how. This is what how-to videos are all about. And God does a lot of how-to teaching through the Bible, so it's also a good way. However, true stories are by far more powerful for instilling virtue. These true stories, told with the Anointing of the Holy Spirit, are testimonies. As testimonies, they are the spirit of Prophecy. These are the experiences of the parents, grandparents, and great grandparents.

Everyone who walks in the Spirit has many experiences of God's leading. God speaks to us all. We hear His voice. We can't always define exactly what happened as He speaks to us, but we can describe what we experienced, how we felt, what words came to us, or what vision God gave. We never have to expand beyond what really happened. We simply tell what happened. We tell how God led us and how that blessed us. We might tell about how God healed us or delivered us from danger. Children love to hear these things, and they remember. We don't have to stick to our own testimonies either. When we hear the testimonies of others, we can remember those and testify of them, always being certain to be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our words.

Of course, testimony goes much deeper than words. Words without action are meaningless. Your testimony is your entire manner of life.

Children are watching, and so is everyone else. They see how you treat your spouse. They hear your off-hand remarks about people you with whom you work, do business, or otherwise associate. They watch many of your interactions. They watch the way you deal with conflict, frustration, irritation, failure, success, tragedy, and everything else. They don't miss much. They can spot a hypocrite quickly. They can also recognize someone who sincerely and continually seeks the power of the Holy Spirit to resist the fleshly nature. Sometimes, you can include children in your prayers of repentance, and they can watch your testimony of transformation.

We won't go deeply into how this principle applies to the relationship between a husband and wife. We'll just notice, in God's order, a wife continually builds up her husband in Christ. And her husband does the same for his wife, each according to the orders and precepts God reveals through Scripture.

Repentance

While it's natural for an ungodly thinker to claim to be righteous, the claim can't be true. Such a thinker is likely to claim to be better than many Christians are. For instance, an ungodly thinker may redefine "righteousness" so he or she can claim to be righteous, but it's mere self-righteousness, deception, and evil.

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? ~ Proverbs 20:6 King James Version

Self-righteousness is denialism and willing ignorance since all people know right and wrong exist, and they know what's right and wrong. Each person also knows he or she has fallen short of God's glory. Every person knows because God reveals this fact to every person, and they know this fact as surely as they know God exists.

The Holy Spirit may lead us to proclaim all this truth to them even though they already know this truth, and they know the proclamation is true even if they deny it. While God proclaims this truth to them through various methods, He's now proclaiming this same truth to them through us as one of the ways He draws them to Himself.

However, they must confess their sin since they won't come to Christ unless they confess. People resist a cure for a disease they refuse to admit they have. God reveals they must come into conviction, and so the Law brings conviction to fill this need. Though they already know they fall short, they must admit their need and stop rationalizing, which means they must repent and take God at His word. When Christ speaks through us, they hear God's voice even if they don't acknowledge Him, yet if they acknowledge Him, His faith comes to them, and Jesus is the Author and Finisher of their faith.

If a thinker doesn't want to submit to God, this thinker gets lost in darkness, unable to see or to tell make-believe from reality. And God confirms this truth when He says, "when they knew God, they didn't glorify Him as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:21) If they're going to see, they must come into the light. However, they remain in darkness if they refuse to give God glory or refuse to thank Him since unthankfulness darkens the innermost mind. To resist His leading is darkness.

Let's pray.

Our Lord, we pray that You demolish the strongholds in our minds. Help us to depend on Your mighty weapons of warfare for this battle against our own fallen minds. Keep us from depending on natural weapons or our own faulty reasoning for this work. Set us free, and make us free indeed. Amen.

Pressing On

We've barely scratched the surface, but the battle is now for the mind. Every Christ-follower is involved in an intense war of all wars with eternal consequences. And yet, what God has revealed on this leg of the faith and reason journey is enough to put us on the road to His promises. We can begin to experience a life that goes from glory to glory and from faith to ever-greater faith. Doubts disappear as we abide in the presence of Christ and listen to His voice while yielding to His will and His grace. We can begin to experience peace of mind and inner confidence beyond what we had previously thought possible. We can begin to understand and receive the blessings and promises of the Bible. The wisdom, understanding, knowledge, love, righteousness, holiness, and freedom of Christ will flow through us in an ever-increasing stream as we submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

On our journey so far, we've gone on nine trips. We've covered a lot of ground and made many discoveries. Before going on, we'll summarize the main points of interest.

We've established that it's worth the effort to seek the truth. Without truth, we're living in a world of make-believe, which is an insane place. Sound reasoning requires truth. We need true premises. Sound logic or reasoning must be based on truth rather than made-up stuff. Basing reasoning on made-up stuff is a form of insanity. However, the human mind has no path by which to reason to a true premise without divine revelation. Without Christ, human reasoning ends in an infinite regression of unproved so-called "proofs." Once we allow even a single assumption, make-believe can go anywhere. All fallacies can be grouped into two categories: making up stuff and making the made-up stuff seem real. Making up stuff is axiomatic thinking like

lying or making bare claims. We give the illusion the made-up stuff is real by using smokescreen fallacies. Hundreds of smokescreens exist. Smokescreens include circular reasoning, infinite regression, appeal to ridicule, appeal to anger, and additional axiomatic-thinking fallacies.

We found out Jesus Christ is real and knowable. Everyone who sincerely seeks Christ finds Christ. Everyone who sincerely seeks truth finds Christ. Christ leads, teaches, and corrects everyone who follows Him. We're learning to discern Christ's voice from all other voices. If God required us to discern between truth and error by our own human ability, we would be lost. Thankfully, God gives discernment to those who sincerely seek Him. He won't deceive us. Christ knows how to communicate. God knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those who honor Him.

Our journey is one of spiritual growth, which is by grace, and grace is through faith, and faith comes by hearing the utterance or word from God. However, we must submit to it. God won't force us. When we yield, God says His words through us and does His acts through us by His grace, which is through His faith. We're changed in the process. We grow spiritually. This growth consists of two things: dying to the fleshly nature and having Christ built up within. God continually reveals reality to each person who is born again. He shows us who we are in the body of Christ, how we fit into the body of Christ, what is and isn't part of the body of Christ, and what we are to do at each moment. As we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we're giving Him permission to allow the light of His Person into our being. In this process, the flesh dies a little bit each time we yield. We keep walking from glory to glory as we're transfigured into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord. The biblical structure of the church is a vital part of this transformation process. God is restoring the pattern of Scripture.

We discovered the human mind is deceitful and desperately wicked. We all make mistakes sometimes. We're deceived when we want what we want. Our own desires deceive us. If we sincerely persist in seeking the mind of God, God will correct us.

When ungodly thinkers claim God doesn't reveal reality to His people, they base their claim on made-up stuff. All arguments against Jesus Christ or the Bible are based on made-up stuff.

We saw that Christ is the light, and He lights every person who comes into the world. The light of Christ allows even unbelievers to know the difference between good and evil. And yet, they have a problem. They can't tell the difference between divine revelation and their own made-up stuff since they make no distinction between the voice of God and what they dream up or what other people dream up. They think it's normal to make up stuff, and they often are unaware of their assumptions. Unbelievers are stuck with a pragmatic existence. However, whenever they try to reason about things beyond their senses, they're irrational.

We exposed a sad reality, When a person persistently refuses to acknowledge, thank, and glorify God, God will withdraw the light of Christ from that person. God will send that person into greater darkness. Even a believer who refuses to acknowledge, thank, and glorify God begins a downward spiral into darkness. That darkness can become so dark that darkness seems like light to the person. As a person descends into darkness, that person becomes numb to God and deaf to God's voice. Since sound logic requires that we know the One Who is the Truth, a person without the light of Christ can't reason rationally. Without the light of Christ, they can't handle truth. They can't be certain of anything. They can find out what seems to work. They can't reason beyond what they can sense and test. They can see, hear, taste, smell, and feel. Without divine revelation, they can observe and test and find out what works, but they can't reason rationally beyond that. Without the light of Christ, they can't reason about truth, history, right, wrong, or anything else beyond what they can observe and test. A person without Christ's light can't tell the difference between good and evil or truth and error.

Our journey showed us everyone has a worldview. The worldview filters all our perceptions like a lens. Our worldviews are fake realities that seem more real to us than real reality. Confirmation bias is a circular reasoning process that makes the worldview even more deceptive. Whatever is in our worldviews seems obvious to us. God's utterance is able to tear down the strongholds in our minds if we continue to listen to His voice and yield in willing obedience.

We came to realize real faith isn't making believe. It's not making ourselves believe. Real faith comes by hearing the utterance of God.

God speaks through the Bible and every means of divine revelation mentioned in the Bible. Divine revelation isn't an axiom, assumption, or presupposition. Christ is real. He speaks. Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. God reveals Himself to every person, so no person has any excuse. Real faith is substance. Substance is reality rather than concept. Real faith is evidence. Evidence is absolutely certain proof of what we haven't observed. Without real faith, there can be no sound reasoning.

On one side trip we discovered that when we speak by the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is speaking through us. The testimony of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of prophecy. No one can sincerely say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit speaks through us in this way, we're proclaiming Christ. Effective ministry declares Christ rather than declaring a message about Christ.

In the next book in the set, *Real Faith & Reason Volume Two*, we'll take only two trips. Trip 10 will unveil and expose the ways we lose touch with reality, the ways the enemy of our minds deceives us. Trip 11 looks into many of the ways we have traditionally tried to find knowledge of truth. It looks into science, intuition, math, theory, and predictability. It considers the body of knowledge, objective thinking, naturalism, interpretation, and explanation as ways of knowing. It explores whether we can get knowledge by presupposition, common sense, abduction, imagination, and revelation. These are proposed ways of "knowing." Some of them work better than others. Some don't work at all. None of them work without the Light of Christ that lights every person who comes into the world.

Real Faith & Reason Volume Three takes us on six additional trips. Trip 12 will explore how God speaks and how we can discern between God's voice and all the other voices. Trip 13 will bring us to many ways of discerning the difference between truth and make-believe. On trip 14, we'll look deeply into the dangers of divine revelation and the ways in which we can be deceived when we're trying to follow Christ. Divine revelation isn't dangerous, but the human mind is dangerous, deceptive, and able to counterfeit divine revelation. The enemy of our minds does the same. Trips 15, 16, and 17 refute the many arguments of the skeptics.

After finishing the three-volume set, the *Real Faith & Reason Library* continues with *Exposing the REAL Creation-Evolution Debate*, *Encyclopedia of Logical Fallacies*, and *The Nuts and Bolts of Being Rational*.

Press toward the mark of your high calling in Christ Jesus. We're traveling where we have never passed before.



What Did You Think of this Book?

Thank you for reading this book. You could have chosen from thousands of other books but you chose this one, and, for that, I'm extremely grateful.

I care about what you think. I sincerely hope this book has been transforming and encouraging for you. I pray that your life is better in specific ways. If so, it would be really nice if you could share this book with your friends and family by posting to Facebook and Twitter. You can also give free copies to your friends by going to <http://RealReality.org/downloads>.

As I started writing the Real Faith & Reason Library (the series of which this book is a part) about seven years ago, I posted to Christian discussion groups, Twitter, and Facebook pages and spent six years being beaten up on the Internet, giving the message as faithfully as I could. The attacks by ungodly thinkers were predictable given the message: Christ is real and knowable. Everyone who seeks Him finds Him. He leads, teaches and corrects every person who follows Him. He provides the discernment. Our part is to listen, yield, and obey.

The human mind has no path to truth. If we don't base our thoughts on truth, they aren't rational. Any logic that doesn't have true premises is unsound. It's insane. Christ is the only Path to Truth. Only He can provide true premises for reasoning. Therefore, rational thought without divine revelation is impossible.

Atheists hate that. Christians who worship human intellect hate that. Godly thinkers loved it. The examples in this book are a small portion of what I learned by enduring six years of being defamed on the Internet. It wasn't easy. I was often sustained by godly thinkers who encouraged me. Having gone through all that, I don't want this book to go unread. I want people to read it.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would share this book with those you care about. If you would like to contact me, you can do that through my Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/PetrosScientiaAuthor>

Petros

Acknowledgments

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spanned several years and was often difficult and demanding.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to those Christian leaders, teachers, and counselors who mentored me and taught me. None of the basic truths in *Real Faith & Reason* are from me. They all came through others who taught me. I met personally with most of these and also listened to their anointed teaching. Some, like Charles S. Price and George Warnock have passed to the other side now, but I learned from their writings and I thank them for their faithfulness to the Truth.

Thank you to the hundreds of people who discussed real faith and reason with me. I thank the Christians who were supportive and the Christians who objected or disagreed. I thank the hundreds of atheists, agnostics, New Agers, witches, and warlocks who gave their best arguments in support of basing reasoning on made-up stuff and in opposition to basing reasoning on divine revelation. I can see how God orchestrated these many conversations to school me and teach me what I needed to know so I could write this book.

I thank my mother who read the first draft of all six books and gave me feedback and literary advice.

About this Book

Real Faith & Reason boldly and tenaciously pulls back the curtain to expose fake faith and fake reasoning. Why is *Real Faith & Reason* unique? Here are a few of the reasons.

- Reveals that knowledge, wisdom, understanding, truth, and righteousness are only available in Christ. God speaks through the Bible and every means of divine revelation mentioned in the Bible. And He never contradicts Himself. That's why we'll never find any error or conflict within Scripture. And we'll never find any conflict between Scripture and what can be observed in science or archeology.
- Reveals the only absolute proof of the Bible and the God of the Bible. This isn't inductive reasoning that claims God very likely exists. This is absolutely certain deductive reasoning that is rock-solid certain.
- Reveals that at the intersection of faith and reason is a place called sanity. Real faith leads to real reason. Real reason is impossible without real faith. If you lose real faith, you lose the basis of sound reasoning and your entire world becomes a confusing and deceptive series of convincing illusions.
- Reveals real faith IS the evidence. Real faith isn't BASED ON evidence. Real faith is absolute by nature. It's substance and absolutely certain proof. It comes by hearing and hearing comes by the rhema, or utterance, of God. Jesus Christ authors real faith. Faith isn't an intellectual exercise

where you make yourself believe since that's just making-believe. Faith isn't an amateur science project in which you interpret the physical evidence based on a worldview and presuppositions you claim to be the correct worldview and presuppositions.

- Reveals we must base real reasoning on truth. Rejects the claim that reason can be based on the “right” axioms, presuppositions, starting principles, assumptions, or other forms of made-up stuff.
- Reveals the ungodly thinking problem: no ungodly thinker has a path to truth. Ungodly thinkers can observe and test and find out what works. However, none of them can reason rationally beyond what they can observe and test without divine revelation. They all fall to the Münchausen trilemma. That means they become irrational as soon as they try to talk about what they can't observe or test. They're lost on topics like good versus evil, truth versus error, the origin of the universe, or the origin of living things.
- Rejects the Christian naturalism that denies the real Christ Who really leads, teaches, and corrects every person who follows Him.
- Rejects the idea that we believe the Bible and believe God exists because of a rationalized, make-believe faith.
- Exposes the foolishness of philosophical, archeological, or scientific arguments against the Bible or Christ. All such objections and arguments are based on made-up stuff and reasoning unsound.
- Answers the questions and objections of those who disagree with these revelations.

All this and more is brought to you in simple, easy-to-understand terms without mysterious terminology or concepts. *Real Faith & Reason* focuses on the simplicity found in Christ. The truth is simple. The gospel is simple. The Bible is simple. It's the lies that give the illusion that everything is hard to understand. *Real Faith & Reason*

goes to the nuts and bolts of faith and reason where both faith and reason are easy to understand.

This book is the first volume of the three-volume *Real Faith & Reason* set, and it's part of the six-book *Real Faith & Reason Library*. This first volume carefully defines the problem and gives a broad overview of the solution.

The world is becoming increasingly crazy. Every source of information has been corrupted. And the lies are becoming more bizarre. No wonder people have become confused. In a world this insane, you need stability, peace, and assurance that make sense. The schools teach a form of reason that has no true premises because they know no truth can exist without God. However, without true premises, no reason or logic can be sound.

You can be a beacon of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding without getting doctorate degrees in philosophy, biology, history, astrophysics, and all the other sciences. Getting these degrees wouldn't really help you to find the absolute truth that will set you free from the madness invading society from all sides.

Fake, make-believe, rationalized faith and reason won't help you. Unfortunately, most of human faith and reasoning is exactly that. It's fake. It's deceptive. It pulls people into a web of doubt, deception, and dissatisfaction. It gives the illusion of insight when it's blind and foolish. That's why you need real faith and real reason, and, once you have it, you will be one of the few who does.

If you would like to know more about the Foundation that supports and verifies the faith, reason, and logic of the entire *Real Faith & Reason Library*, the back of this book contains a section titled *The Foundation of Real Faith & Reason Library*.

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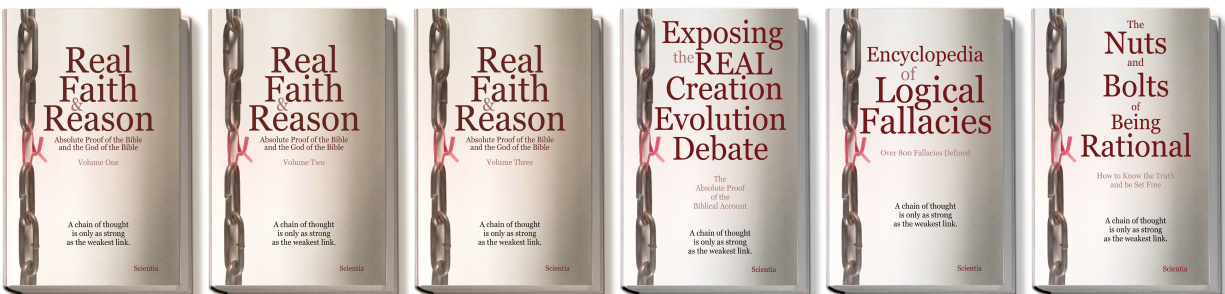
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-
- ***Exposing the REAL Creation-Evolution Debate*** points the way to knowing Christ through the example of a debate between two men over the topic of Creation versus Evolution. (Print version available on Amazon)
 - *Exposing the REAL Creation-Evolution Debate*
- **The *Encyclopedia of Logical Fallacies*** details over 700 fallacies and logic terms with examples.
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Book Club, Small Group Study, or Homeschool Questions

These questions can be used for the entire book, or you can use these same questions for each section or chapter, depending on how you want to run your club, group, or class.

What Did You See?

What new things did you learn in this reading?

What did God seem to be saying directly to you as you read?

What is the most important point in what we read, and why is it important?

Edification, Encouragement, and Comfort

What was most comforting to you in this reading, and why is it comforting?

What did you find most edifying as you read, and why was it edifying?

What part of this reading was most encouraging or strengthening to you, and why did you find it strengthening or encouraging?

Going Forward

How do feel you'll be able to apply this reading in your life going forward?

What do you see as the hardest part of applying this reading to your life?

What do you see as the key to applying this reading to your life?

What questions do you still have? What points are still confusing?

What truth can you add to what was in the book?

Where do you think God is leading you based on what you read?

The Foundation of Real Faith & Reason Library

The six books in this library have a sure Foundation. They aren't based on the author's credentials. They aren't based on research into what other supposed experts say. They aren't based on presuppositions, assumptions, or axiom. They're based on what you can easily check and test on your own.

We can't lay any other foundation than Christ Jesus. Jesus is real and knowable. Everyone who seeks Christ finds Him, so anyone can test the things written in this book. Christ leads, teaches, and corrects everyone who follows Him. Following Christ isn't a meaningless euphemism but a constant practice. Though we may be unfaithful in following Him at times, Christ is always faithful in leading. He's always here with us. He lives in us. In Him, we live and move and have our being. We know He exists because we know Him.

We're all well aware those who oppose Christ, those who hate the Light, will deny Christ leads, teaches, or corrects anyone. These don't want a close relationship with Christ. They don't want Christ directly guiding their lives. However, their denials don't affect reality. They always base their denials on made-up stuff, although those who deny Christ always have ways of making their made-up stuff appear to be factual or even Scriptural. Think about it. Based on made-up stuff, they're claiming millions of people who know Jesus Christ aren't

experiencing what they're experiencing. We'll deal with various forms of denials in the book *Real Faith & Reason Volume Three*.

These six books are for born-again people. Everyone who is born again has come to Christ believing. The Father drew them to Christ, and they came to hear the voice of Christ. Faith came by hearing the voice of Christ through Scripture or a means of revelation mentioned in Scripture. We who follow Christ are on a journey to explore the wonders of the way God works with us and all who follow Christ.

What follows are some basic truths. We know these truths by divine revelation. We didn't have to assume anything. They aren't self-evident. They are revealed truths. When God speaks to us, He fixes the truth within us by His utterance. What He says is the truth. He knows all truth and cannot lie.

God is a loving God Who wants all people to be saved. And yet, humans have free will. We can each resist God's leading. We can each refuse to respond to His voice. He reveals Himself to every person without exception through what He created. Some people deny this, but they have chosen their pathway. If any follower of Christ has ever witnessed to an unbeliever, that unbeliever has heard the voice of Christ through the follower of Christ. No follower of Christ can say "Jesus Is Lord" except by the power of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. When an unbeliever rejects the testimony of the follower of Christ, that unbeliever is rejecting Christ directly. By rejecting Christ, the unbeliever is rejecting the Father God directly. We are on a journey to explore the wonders of the authority of Christ within each one who follows Christ.

God created a perfect world. No pain, suffering, death, unhappiness, sin, or any such problems existed in the original creation. At the beginning of creation, God created Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. Satan came in the form of a serpent and lied to Adam and Eve, the first people God created. Adam and Eve decided to believe Satan rather than God. They decided to obey Satan rather than God. A spiritual law (reality) exists that whoever you yield yourself as a slave to obey is the one whose slave you are. Adam and Eve became slaves of Satan. All their children became slaves as well. Since God had set Adam as ruler over all creation, the entire creation came under the power of Satan. That's how pain, misery, suffering, and death started.

Only God could reverse the situation. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

While God is merciful, He is also just. He'll Judge everything. He's the only one who can judge rightly. Hitler will meet his righteous judgment. However, every person has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Whatever isn't of faith is sin, and faith comes by hearing God's voice. Who hasn't had thoughts or said words that came from a source other than God's leading? No one is innocent. Righteous judgment means the person who sins will die. The person who sins will die a physical death and a spiritual death. God has revealed that hell is real. Even a moment in this spiritual fire would be beyond description. No earthly suffering could compare. No one goes to hell prepared for what hell is like.

God is love. He loves us. He didn't want that terrible end for us. From the start, God promised a Savior. Over time, God revealed He would have to pay the price of our sin. God was the only one who could pay that price.

To keep us from hell and restore us to Himself and His love, He took on the form of a human being as Jesus Christ. He never obeyed Satan once but only spoke the words of the Father and only did the acts of the Father. He reversed the sinful deeds of every person from Adam to the end of time. He was obedient to the point of suffering and dying on the cross while bearing the weight of the sin of every person who ever lived. The Father is Holy and had to turn away from His Son on that cross. In this, every part of the Godhead suffered on that cross. God suffered for your sin and mine. Christ overcame death. He rose from the dead and ministered to many after His resurrection. Then, He ascended into heaven. Later, He sent the Holy Spirit to lead and teach all those who follow Him. He ordained spiritual gifts, ministries, offices, and orders for the Church.

Christ doesn't force Himself on anyone. He gives everyone a chance. Everyone will have a chance to accept Him or reject Him. Those who reject Him are choosing hell. They don't want to serve God. God's nature is such that He doesn't force anyone into submission. Submission must be voluntary. God can't force submission or it isn't submission. Love must be voluntary. And yet, God tells us every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to the glory of God.

Therefore, we seek to persuade people to come to Christ. We extend an invitation for them to know Jesus Christ personally. Since God doesn't coerce anyone to come to Him, neither do we. We let people know about the good news. God reveals those who reject Christ do so because their deeds are evil. They love darkness rather than light. God's judgment will be absolutely just and fair, but He has paid the price. Jesus paid it all. All who will may come. All who come are born again. They can grow up into the fullness of Christ.

When we're born again, we're born as babies in Christ. After we're born again, God is looking for maturity. Our focus turns to growing. We want to grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And yet, many Christians remain as babies in Christ. They never experience spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth takes place by listening to the voice of Christ and yielding to Him. It's not by following a set of laws. It's not by learning some doctrines or theologies. It's by yielding to Christ. It's in allowing God to flow through us in love by the Holy Spirit. It's in discerning the body of Christ and walking in submission to the Holy Spirit. This growth is by grace, and the grace is through faith. On the other hand, failure to listen to God's voice causes spiritual immaturity. Speculations that go beyond what God revealed cause divisions in the church. Divisions in the body of Christ are a sign of spiritual immaturity.

God has a process for spiritual growth, and He reveals that process through Scripture. It all begins when He speaks to us. He speaks through Scripture or one of the means of divine revelation mentioned in Scripture. ^(John 10:27) Jesus is the good Shepherd, and He's always leading, teaching, and correcting those who follow Him and listen to His voice. ^(John 18:37) That Word that God speaks is the living Word, the Christ. ^(John 1:1) When God speaks, faith comes. ^(Romans 10:17) And faith gives us access into His grace. ^(Romans 5:2) Grace then does His works through us. ^(1 Corinthians 15:10) However, He won't force Himself on us, but we must yield the members of our bodies to Him. ^(Romans 6:13) God gives us the gift of righteousness. ^(Romans 5:17) The love of God flows through our hearts by the Holy Ghost. ^(Romans 5:5) He won't force us, but we must willingly submit to Him to the point of obedience as

He plants the living Word into our hearts. (Matthew 13:3) His goal is to fully form Jesus Christ in us. (Romans 6:13) Our fleshly nature dies a bit with each time we respond in submission and obedience to the righteousness of Christ. (Mark 8:34-35) In this way, we are purifying the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts. (1 Peter 3:15) The Holy Spirit is transfiguring us into Christ's image from glory to glory. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

As followers of Christ, we're all fully aware Satan will produce counterfeits of everything real in Christ. It's always been true. Through the biblical account, God shows us Satan brings false pastors, apostles, prophets, Bible teachers, signs, and wonders. We've seen false writings, "revelations," healings, and miracles. We're learning how to discern Christ's voice from all others. Our minds can deceive us. The fleshly natures of other people try to control us. Spiritual deceivers in places of authority oppose us. We're also learning to yield ourselves to Christ in willing submission and obedience. He's revealing who we are in Christ and how we fit into the body of Christ. As He purifies us, He's building a people of power and authority. God says we'll the church will unite. The church will have the same faith and knowledge. It will grow to full maturity in Christ. (Ephesians 4:10-13) We'll walk in total submission and obedience to Christ. The church will follow the orders of Scripture. Love will be complete.

Everyone who sincerely seeks Christ finds Christ. Although He forces Himself on no one, He rejects no one. Rather, He freely pardons and sets us free from the sinful nature, peer pressure, and the deceitful power of the devil as we yield ourselves to His grace and righteousness. And Christ reveals Himself to every person. He reveals Himself through creation. He reveals Himself through those who walk in the Spirit. Christ leads, teaches, and corrects every person who follows Him. He interprets our observations and experiences and shows us the way. He's the Source of every good thing including knowledge, understanding, wisdom, righteousness, and faith. What He says is the truth. We can't have knowledge, understanding, wisdom, righteousness, or faith without Christ. We can't have truth or love without Christ.

God is light. In Him is no darkness at all. The Logos, or Utterance, is the Light that lights every person who comes into the world. Christ is the Light of the world. When we listen to Christ's voice, faith comes. Faith gives us access to His grace. When we yield to His grace so He says His words and does His works through us, we are also the light of the world. It's not us. Christ in us is the Light of the world.

Every person benefits from the Light of Christ. Without that Light, we would all be in the dark. Without that Light, the human mind has no rational way to reason. Without the Light of Christ, people can react to what's around them but not in a rational way. Without the Light of God, people can make up stuff, but they can never base reasoning on true premises. The Light gives them a way to know what's right and what's true. The Light of Christ shows the difference between reality, preconceptions, and imagination. Even those who haven't yet accepted Christ as Savior and Lord benefit from the Light of Christ.

Those who hate the Light and love darkness turn from the Light. When the children of Light begin to shine, those who love darkness turn even further from the Light. They try to suppress the Light. When any person fails to acknowledge Christ or yield to His Light, that person turns toward darkness. At a certain point, God lets that person go. God withdraws Himself and His Light from them. This generally happens by degrees, but it can happen quite suddenly. They then enter darkness in which they increasingly can't tell the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and lie, or reality and make-believe. We're seeing the children of Light and the children of darkness coming to maturity on a massive scale throughout society now. The war is between Christ and the spirit of antichrist.

The children of Light are learning to hear the voice of Christ and to yield to His righteousness in willing submission and obedience. They're learning to discern the body of Christ, and the love of God is being shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.

The children of darkness are trying to smother the children of Light. They hate the Light. They seek power and control. They don't want the word of the Lord. They seek to distort and twist the utterance of God. They ridicule. They oppress. They threaten. They love to listen to ungodly counselors and false teachers in the news media, the universities, the entertainment venues, and even in some churches.

They willingly allow themselves to be drawn into a downward spiral of slavery to alcohol, drugs, sexual compromises, perversions, witchcraft, disorder, and other sins. They gladly enter into the idolatry of focusing on things other than Christ and His righteousness. Some of them even think they can destroy the body of Christ.

God will prevail. Though many followers of Christ are suffering from persecution and some have even given their lives, Christ will be victorious. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. God uses our suffering as part of His process to transform us. Refining gold always requires heat, and the dross must be removed. In the end, every scar will become a badge of honor.

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About the Author

Petros B. Scientia is the pen name of a man who pastored a local church for thirty-three years and who has chosen to keep his writing work separate from his work of shepherding a flock. Petros has also been blogging for two decades, encouraging unbelievers and believers alike to know Jesus Christ. Petros also analyzed and documented systems professionally for twenty years. These systems included business, mechanical, electrical, and software systems. He did this while pastoring a local church.

God shows Petros how things work at the most basic level. What seems complex and hard to understand becomes simple. God does this with both Scriptural truth and material facts.

When God began putting it on Petros' heart to write this book, Petros didn't feel qualified. He still doesn't feel qualified. And yet, God continued to urge him to write it. Petros tried to find someone else more qualified to write the book. He wasn't able to. Petros previously wrote ten- or twenty-page descriptions at most. To write a book seemed insurmountable. The book became six books under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Petros is concerned that some of his own ideas may have made it into these books. If any human ideas did get in, Petros prays the reader will discern and discard whatever isn't from the Holy Spirit.