

Christian Apologetic Systems

❧ 03: Classical Apologetics ❧

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Provost

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Defining the Classical Apologetics Model



Different Uses of the Term 'Classical'



Classical Apologetics

Classical Apologetics is an apologetic methodology distinguished from other apologetic methods such as Presuppositionalism, Evidentialism, and Reformed Epistemology.

It is characterized by an emphasis on natural theology and the primacy of theism in establishing the truth of the Christian faith.

Classical Philosophy

Classical Philosophy generally refers to a tradition of philosophy that finds its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, primarily the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

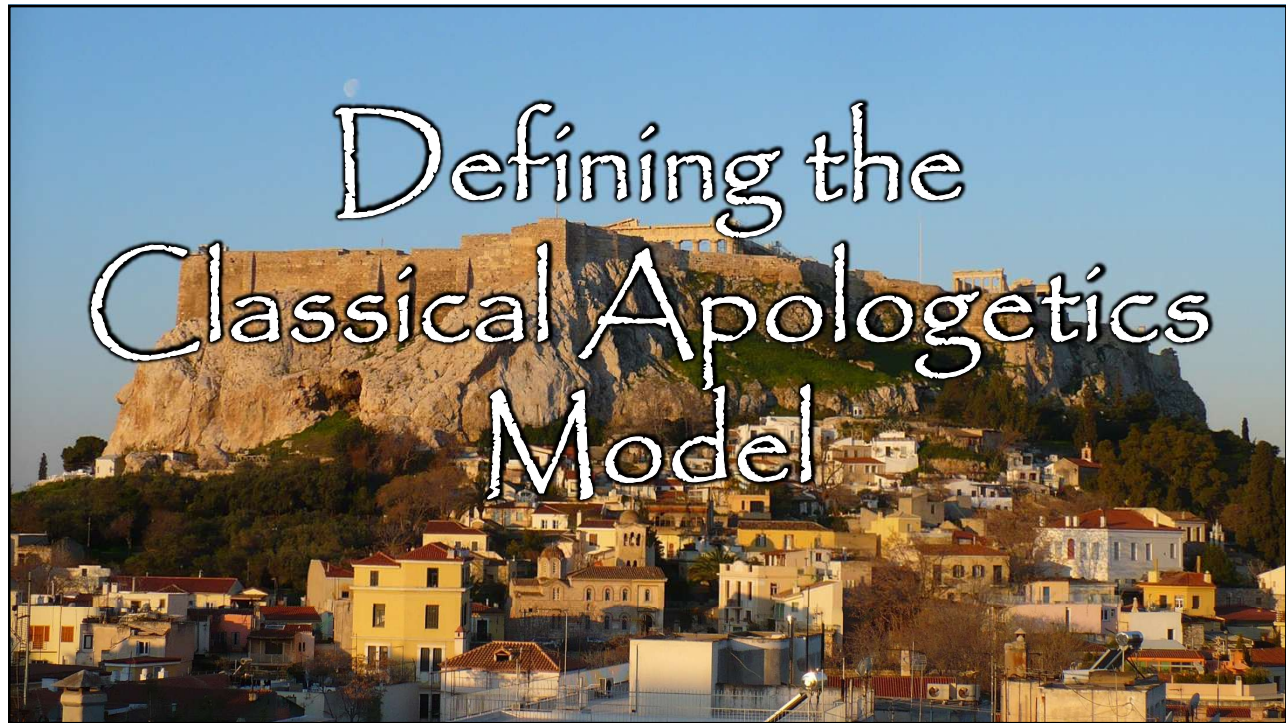
The phrase can sometimes include the Scholastic tradition of Thomas Aquinas whose thinking is build upon much of Aristotle's albeit with significant qualifications and augmentations.

Classical Empiricism

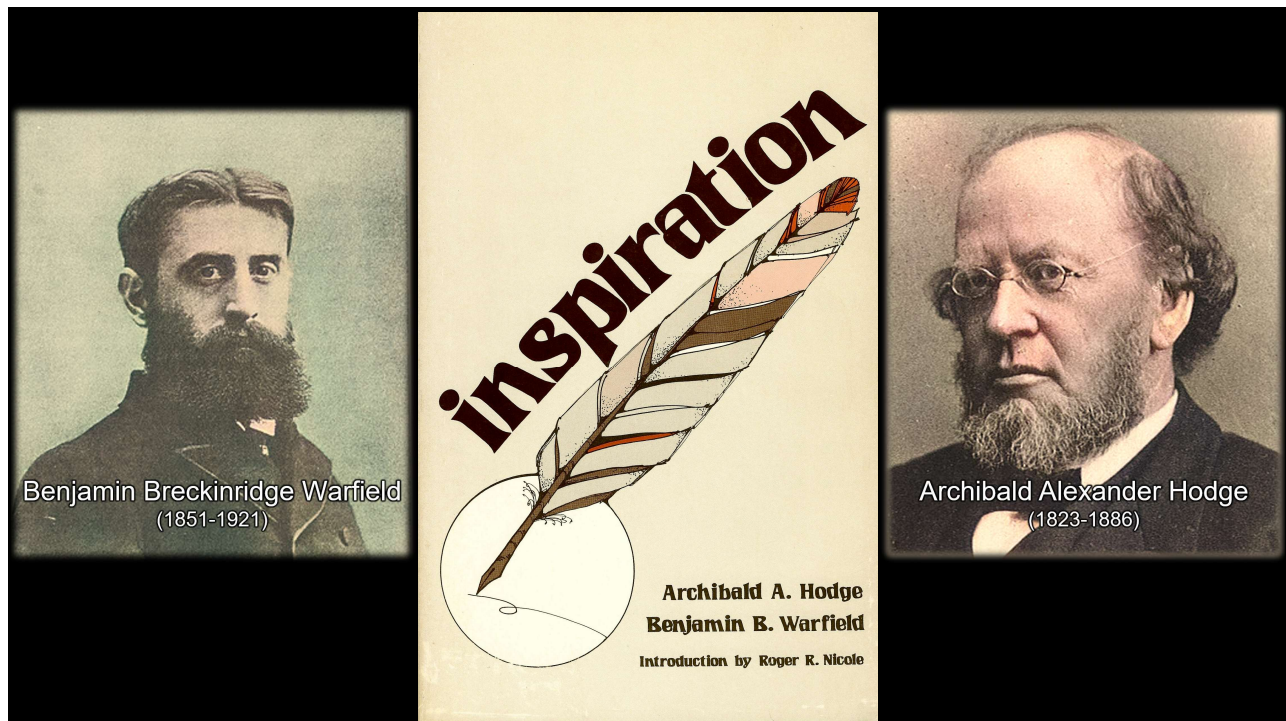
Classical empiricism is to be contrasted with modern and contemporary empiricism. Classical empiricism regards all knowledge as beginning in sensory experience, but is completed in the intellect.

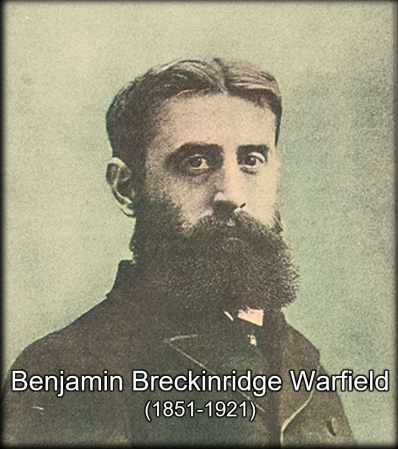
As such, classical empiricism can give rise to knowledge of non-physical truths such as logic, metaphysics, ethics, and theology while modern empiricism (and some contemporary empiricism) expressly cannot.

Classical Realism



For some time, the Classical model has been known as the "two step" method.

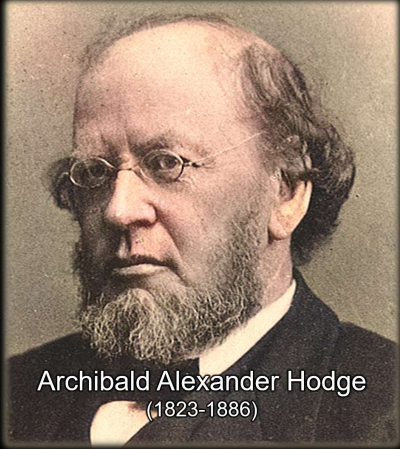




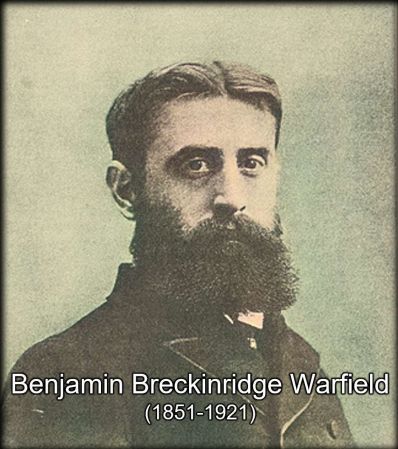
Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield
(1851-1921)

"In dealing with skeptics it is not proper to begin with the evidence which immediately establishes inspiration, but **we should first establish theism**, then the historical credibility of the Scriptures, and then the divine origin of Christianity."

[Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979, published from the Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.c., 1881), 8]



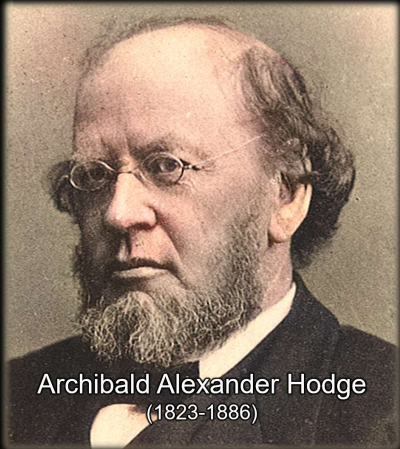
Archibald Alexander Hodge
(1823-1886)



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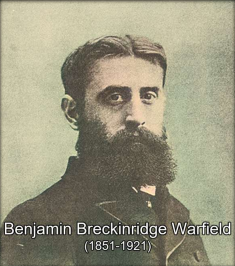


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[Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), published from the Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d., 1881], 8]




These two moves were generally counted as the one step of demonstrating the truth of Christianity.

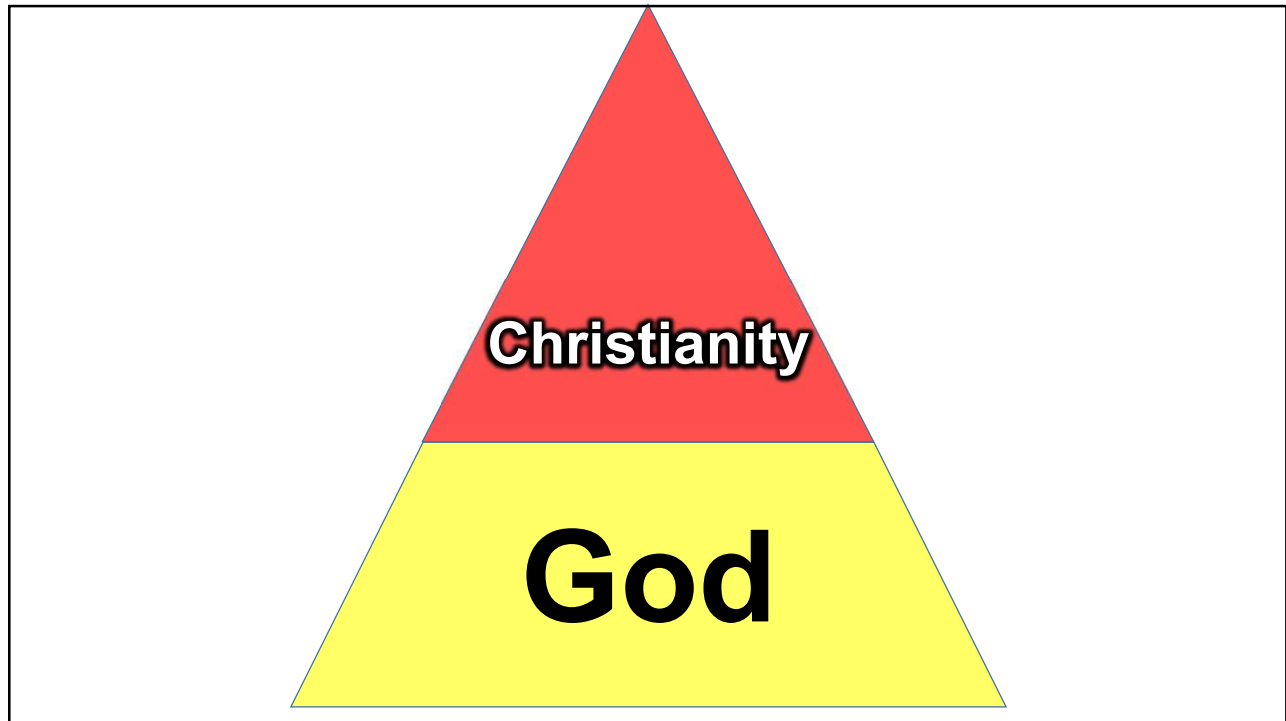


*"In dealing with skeptics it is not proper to begin with the evidence which immediately establishes inspiration, but **we should first establish theism**, then the **historical credibility of the Scriptures**, and then the **divine origin of Christianity**."*

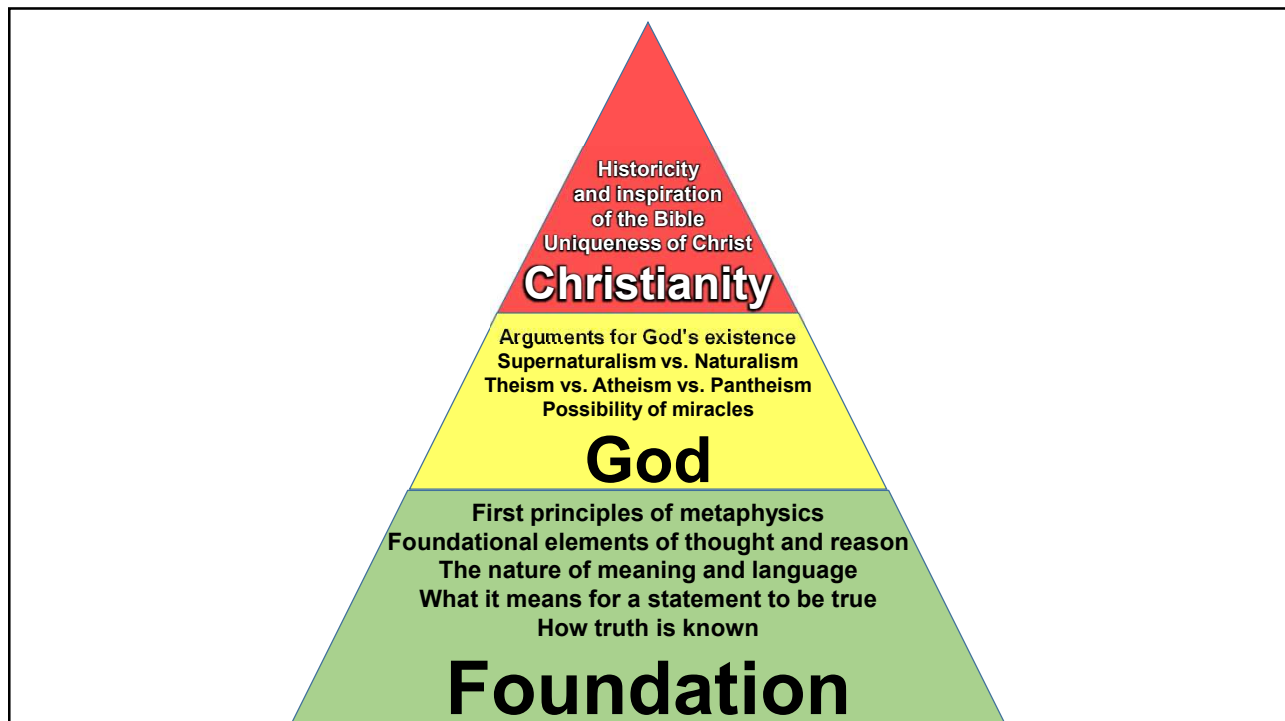
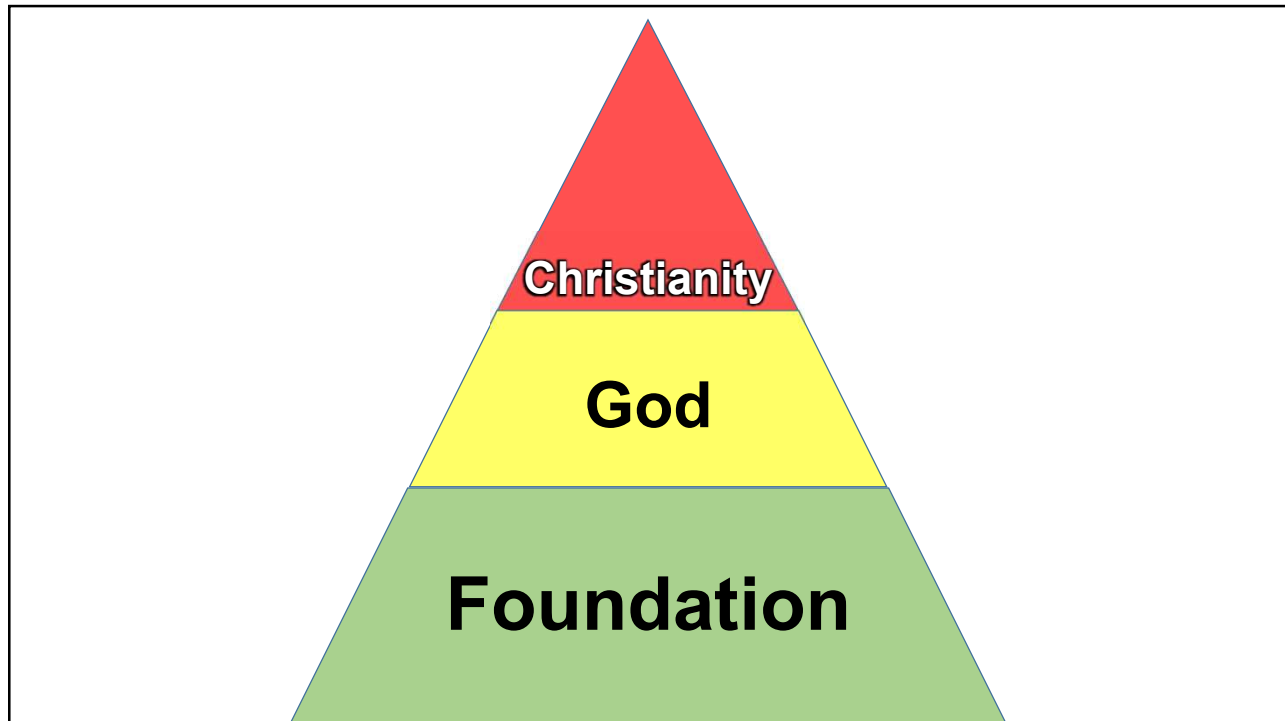
[Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), published from the Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d., 1881], 8]



Thus, Warfield and Hodge are affirming the "two-step" method of Classical Apologetics.

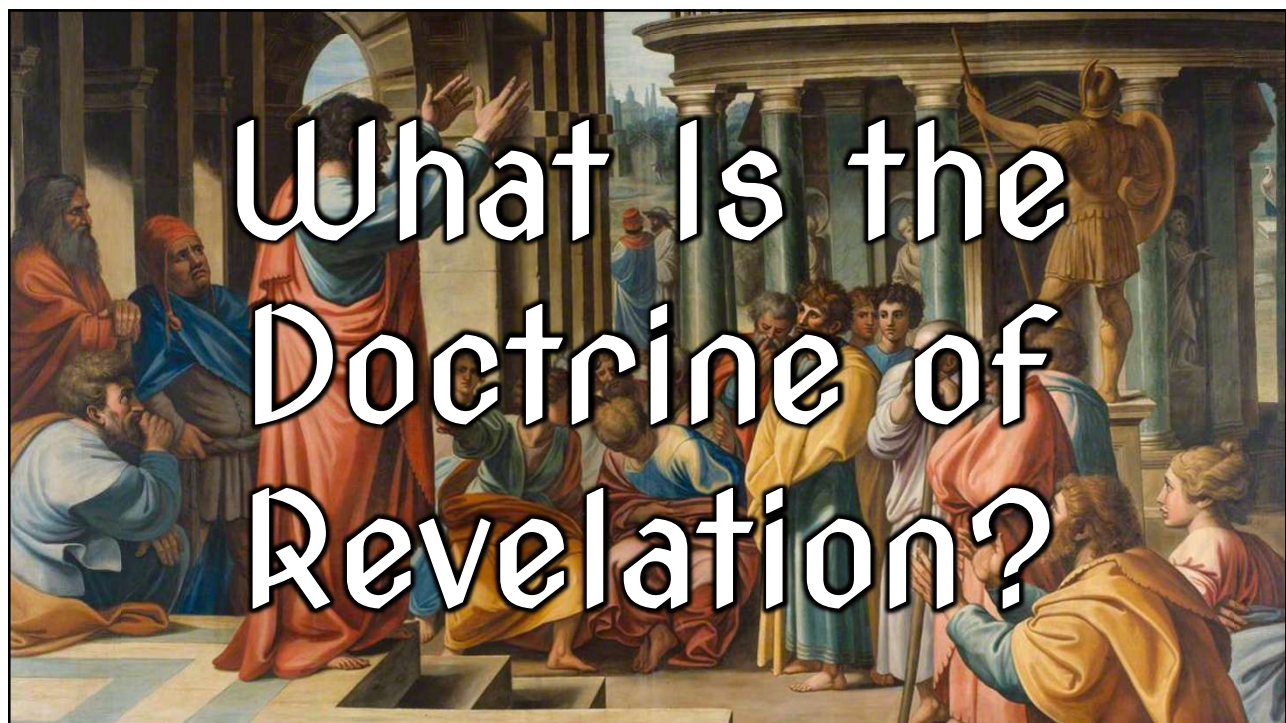
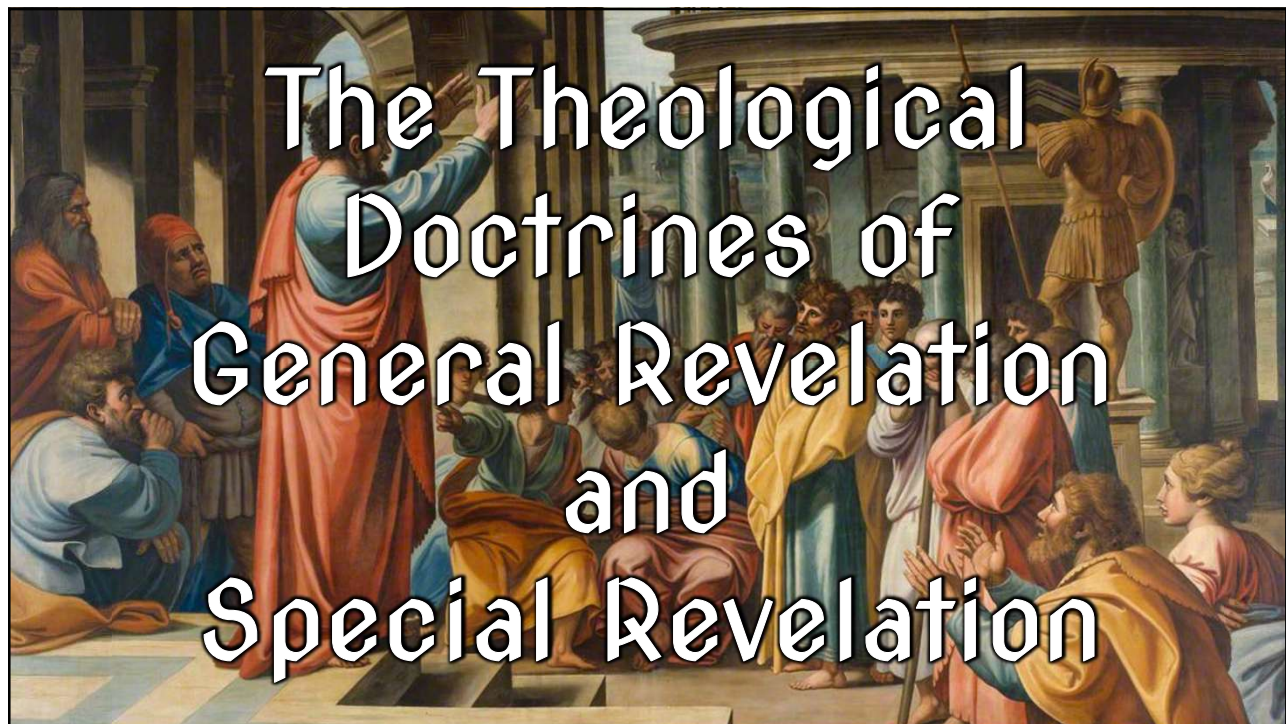


With the increasing influence of bad philosophy, it has become necessary to add an additional step at the beginning.



The broadest definition of Classical Apologetics is that system of Christian apologetics that appeals to natural theology.

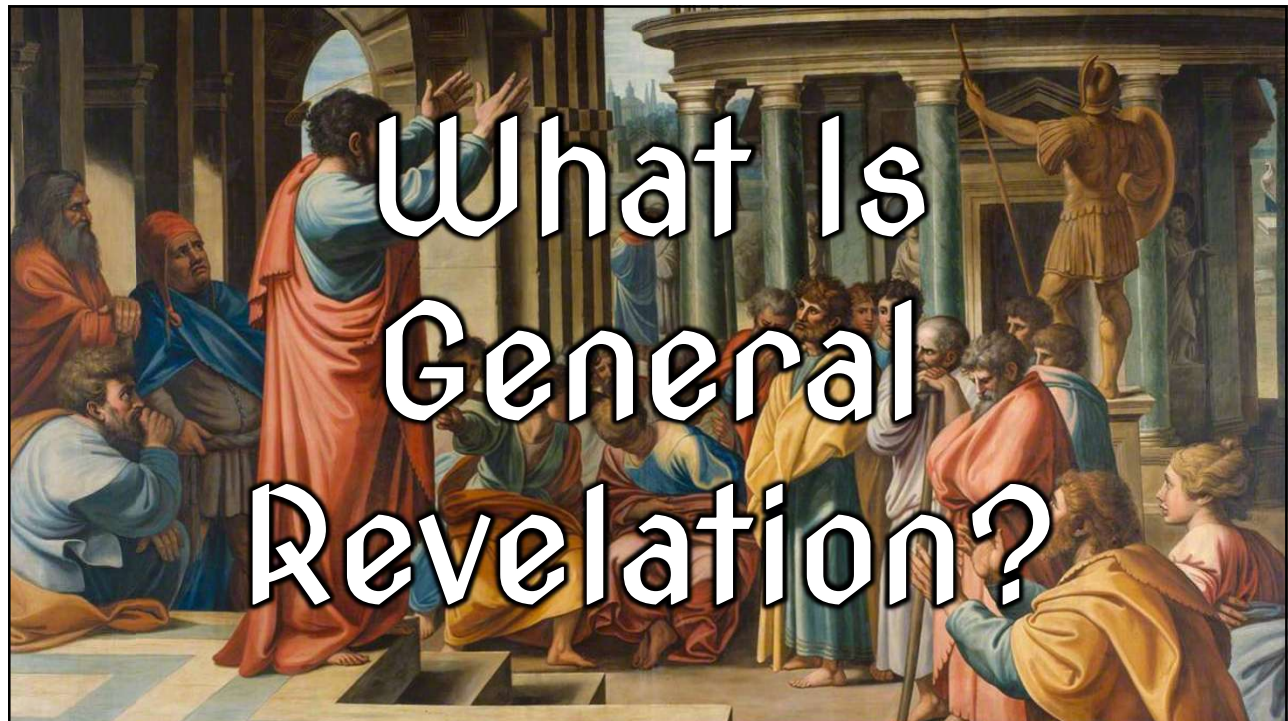
*The doctrine of Natural Theology arises out of the theological doctrines of the **General Revelation** and **Special Revelation**.*

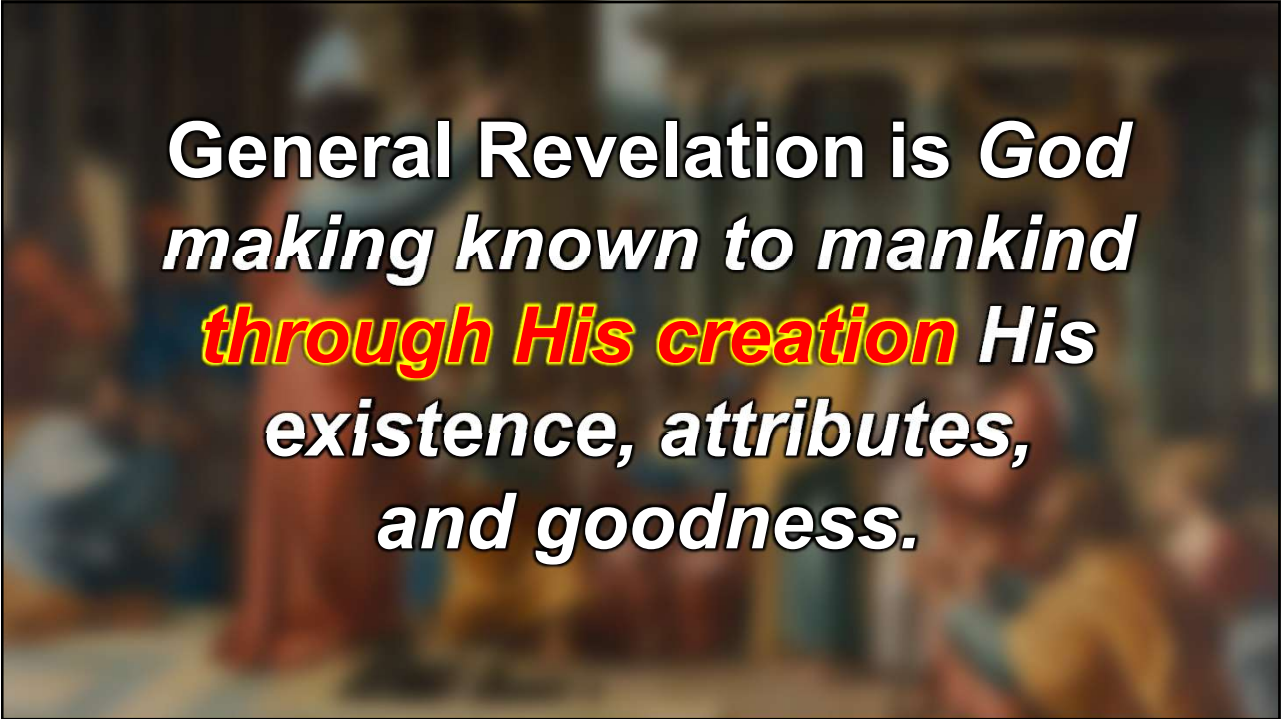


Revelation is God making known to mankind His divine person and divine truths that would otherwise be unknown. It means "to unveil."

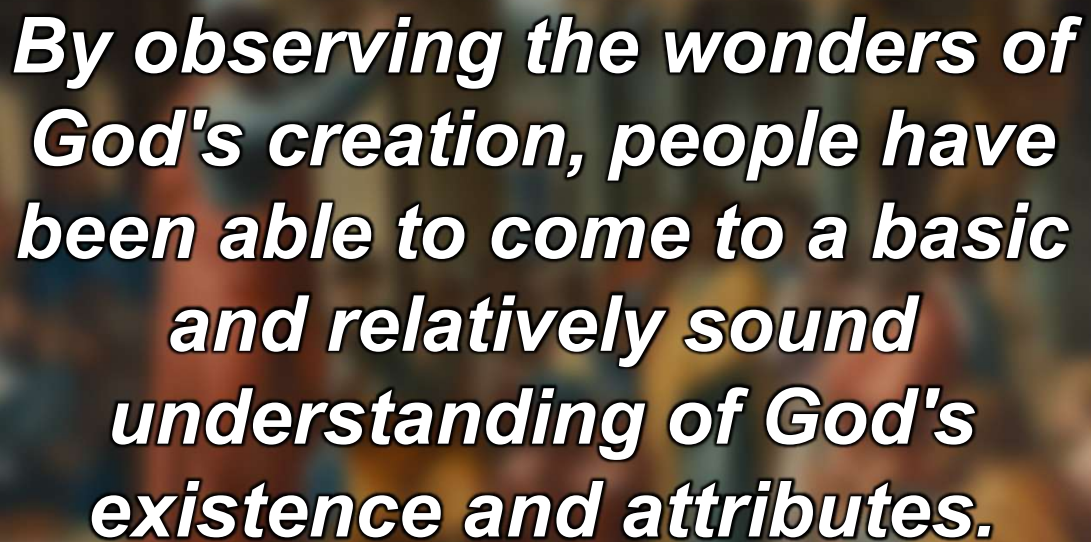


Revelation	Inspiration
<i>God making known to mankind His divine Person and divine truths that would otherwise be unknown</i>	<i>God transferring to mankind His divine Person and divine truths through human agency into written language form for mankind to understand</i>
<i>Giving of the truth</i>	<i>Recording of the truth</i>



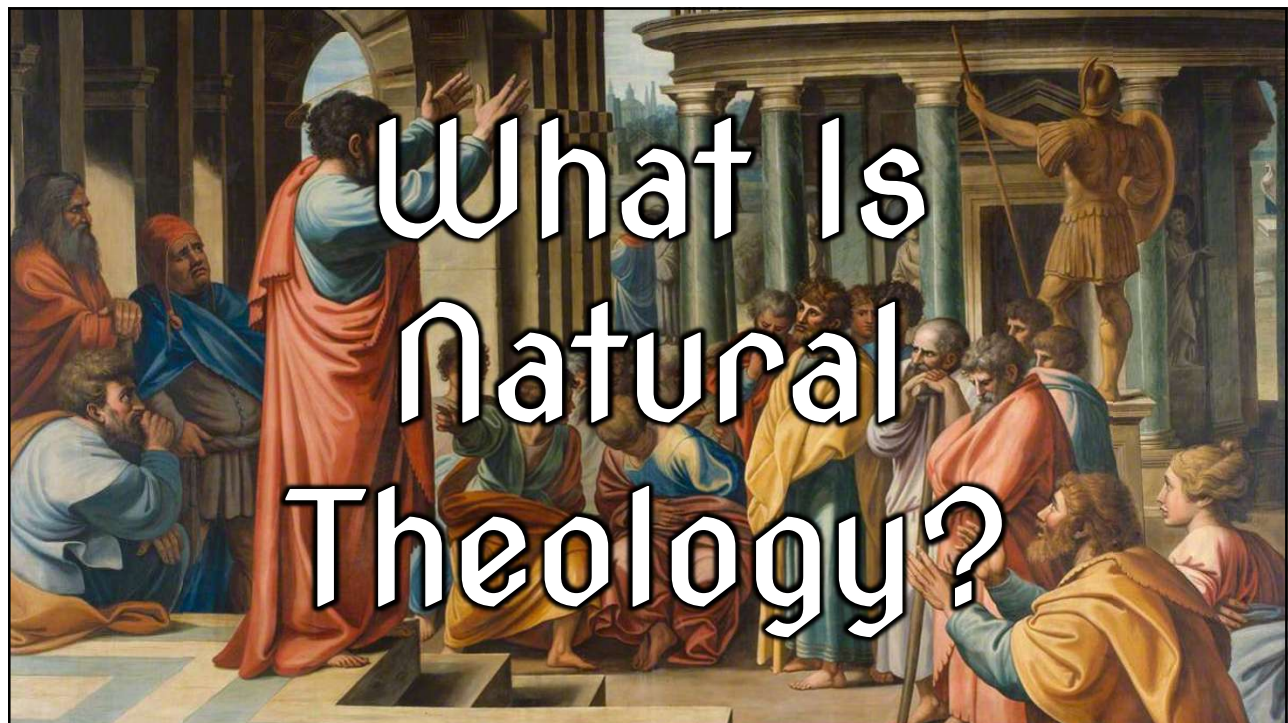


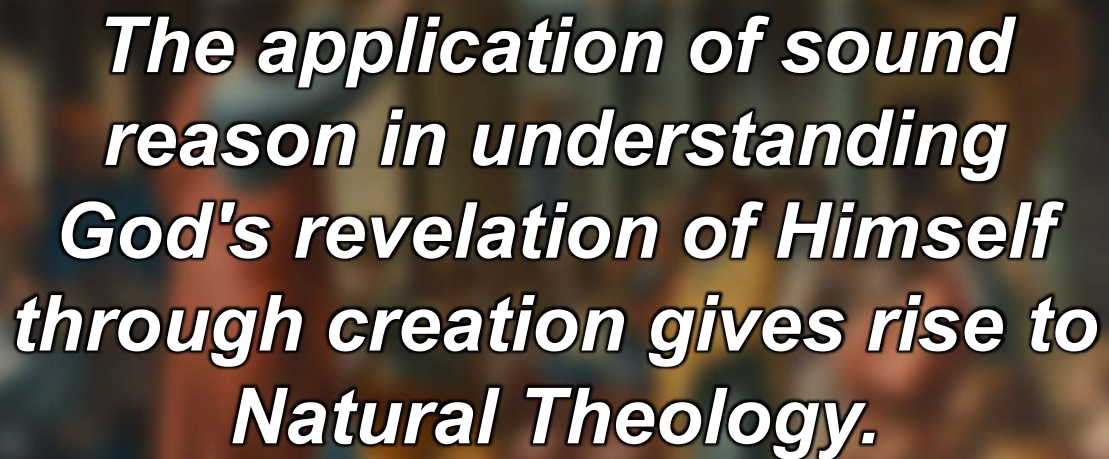
**General Revelation is God
making known to mankind
through His creation His
existence, attributes,
and goodness.**



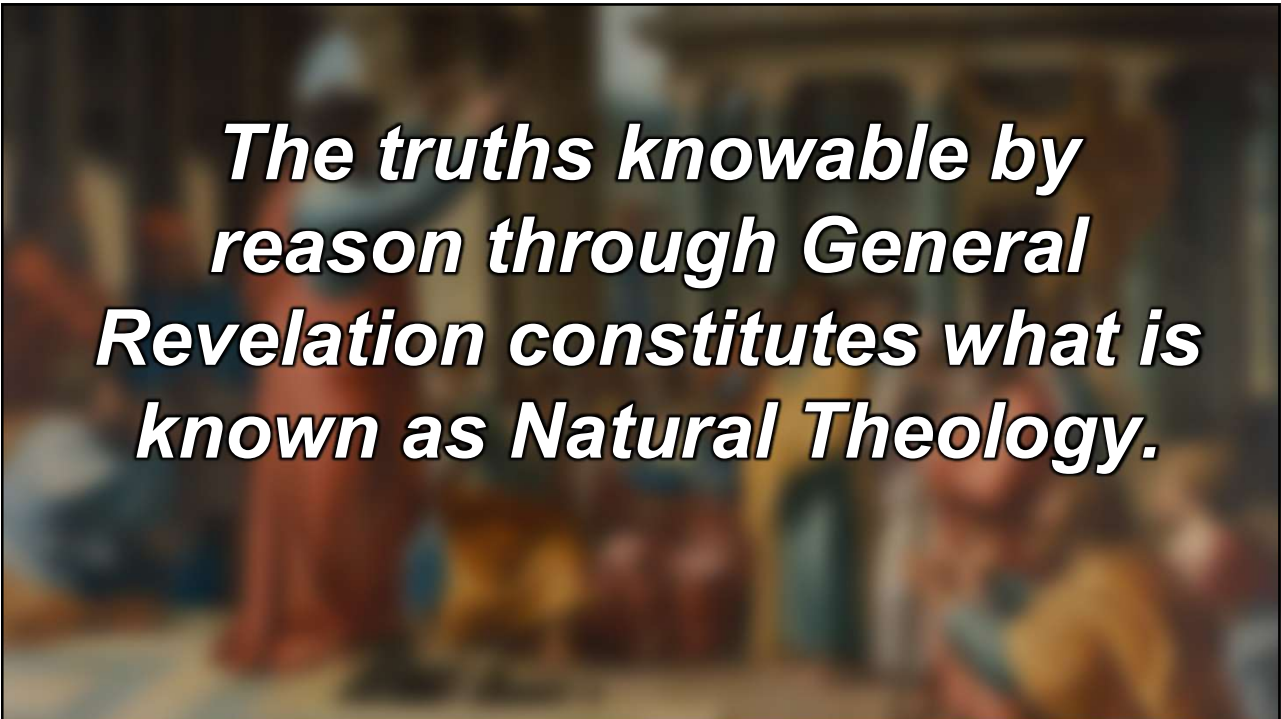
***By observing the wonders of
God's creation, people have
been able to come to a basic
and relatively sound
understanding of God's
existence and attributes.***

The application of sound reason in understanding God's revelation of Himself through creation gives rise to Natural Theology.

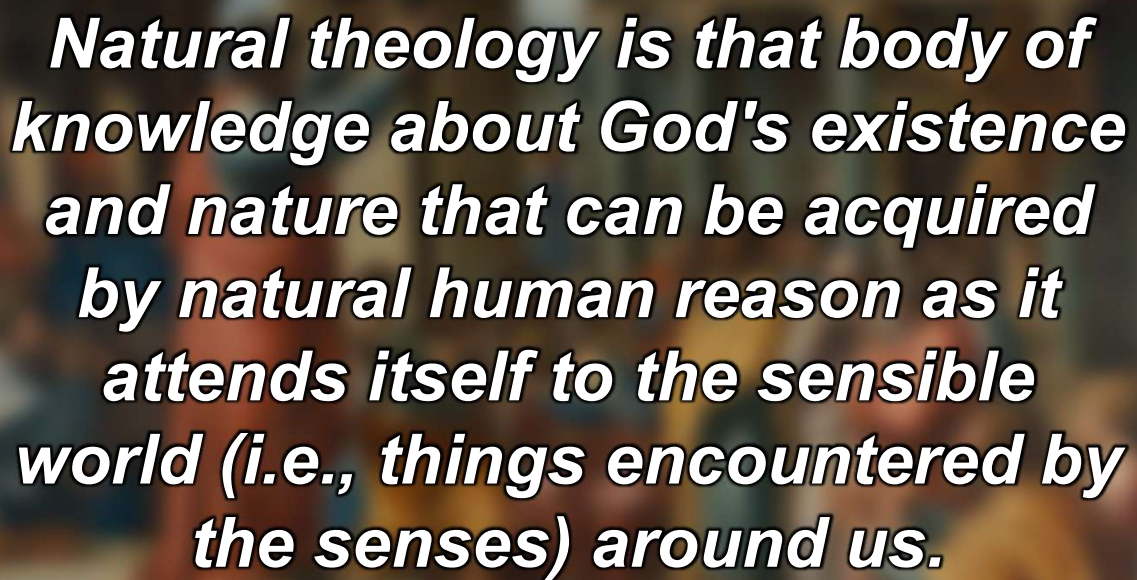




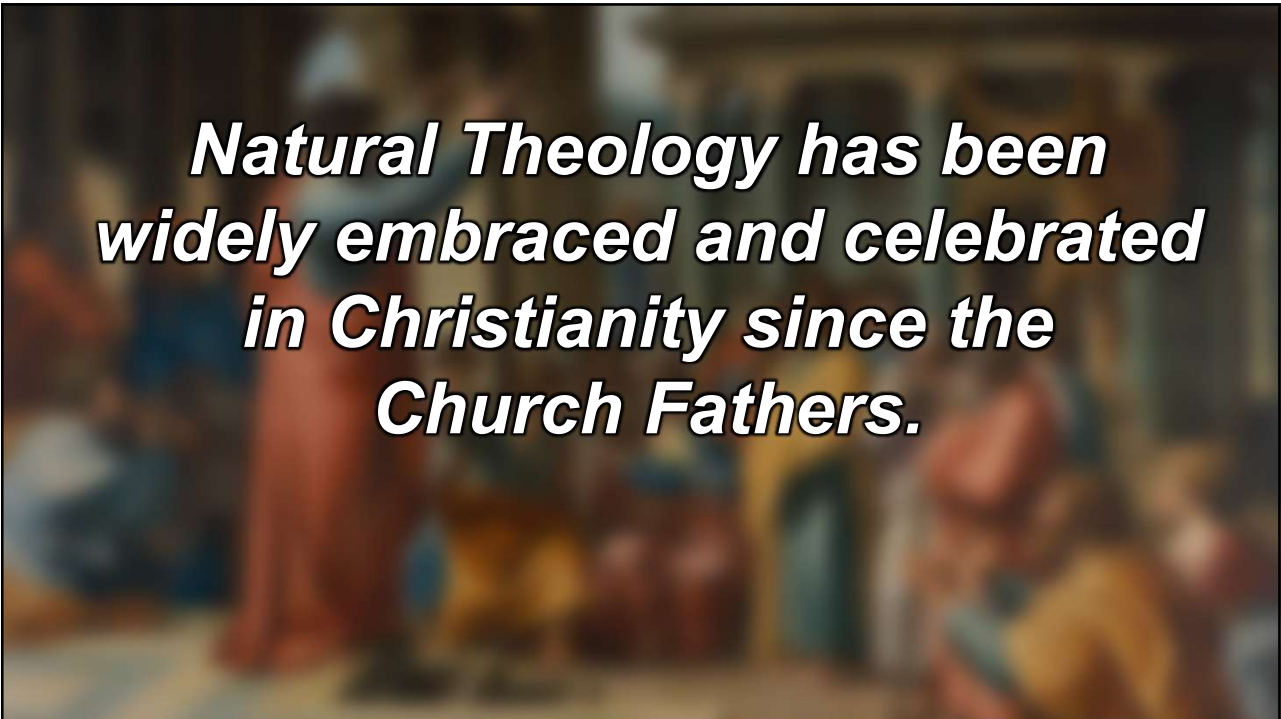
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The truths knowable by reason through General Revelation constitutes what is known as Natural Theology.



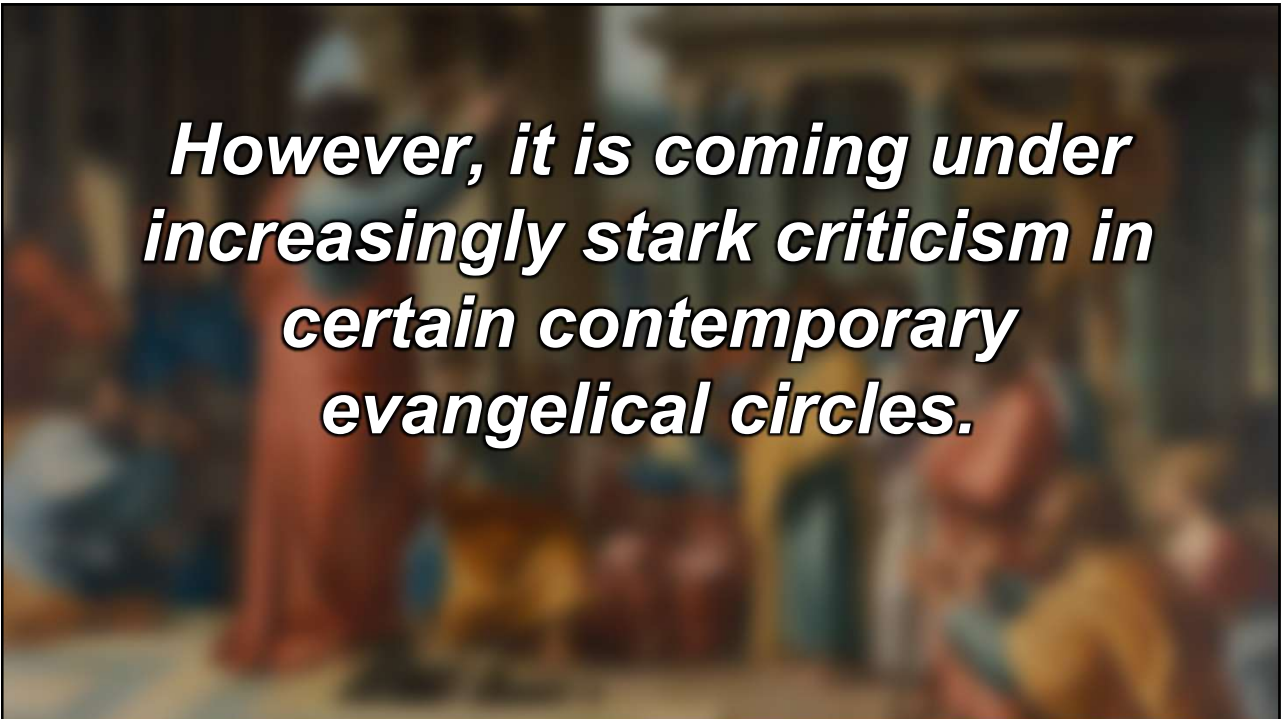
Natural theology is that body of knowledge about God's existence and nature that can be acquired by natural human reason as it attends itself to the sensible world (i.e., things encountered by the senses) around us.



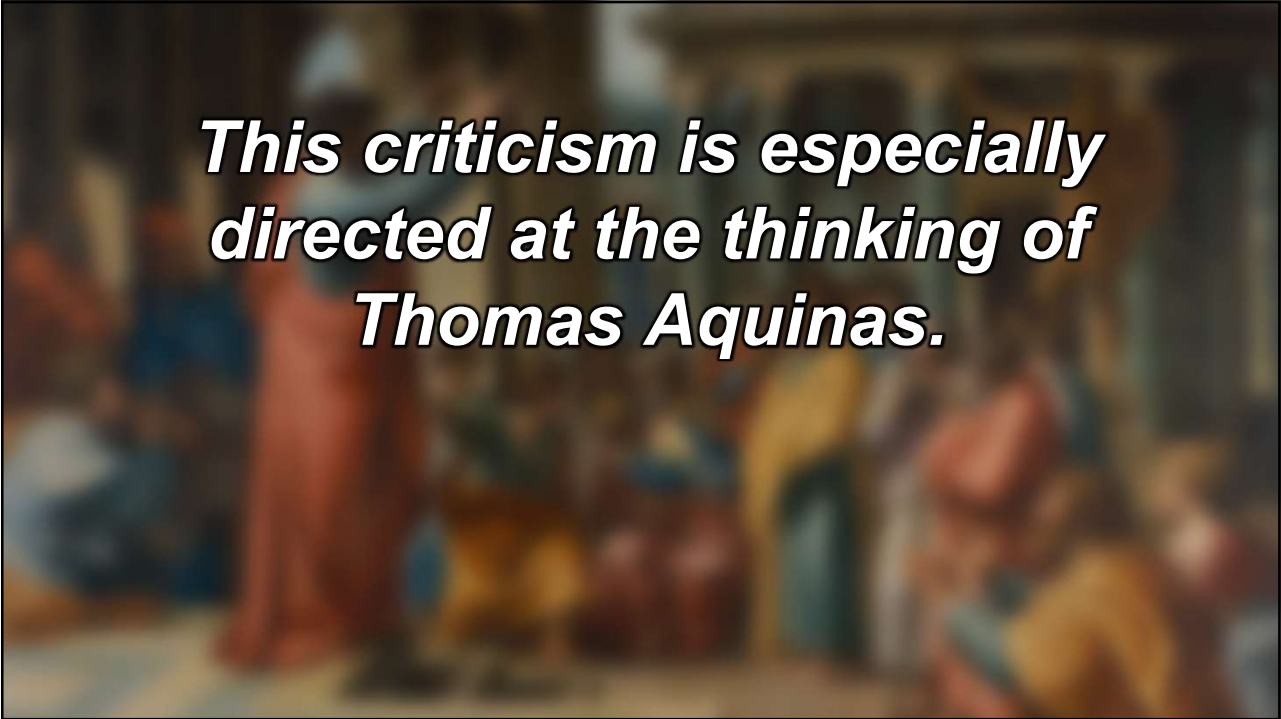
Natural Theology has been widely embraced and celebrated in Christianity since the Church Fathers.



***This celebration has continued
in both Catholicism and
Protestantism until today.***



***However, it is coming under
increasingly stark criticism in
certain contemporary
evangelical circles.***



This criticism is especially directed at the thinking of Thomas Aquinas.



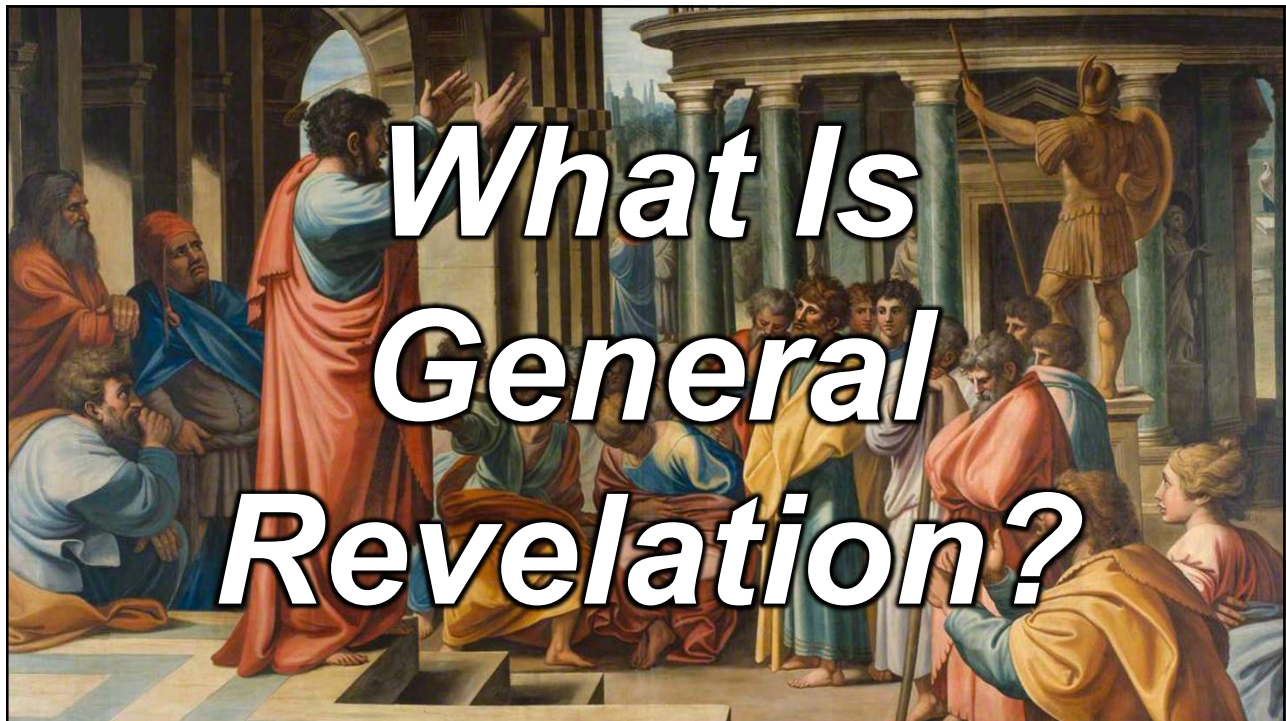
What Is Special Revelation?

***Special Revelation is God making known
to mankind through His prophets,
apostles, and His Son (the Lord Jesus)
His nature and will that could not
necessarily be known through
General Revelation.***

***Special Revelation is what we now know
as the Bible.***

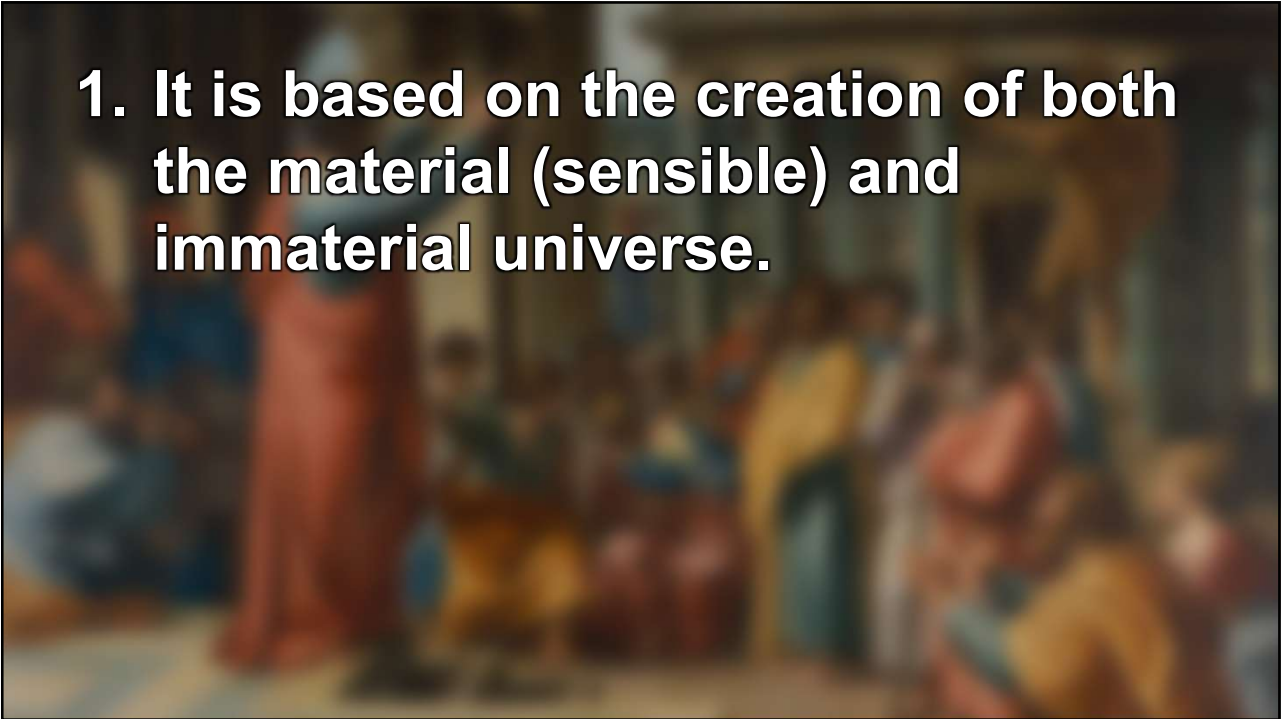


- *Whereas General Revelation rests on creation, Special Revelation rests on re-creation.*
- *Whereas General Revelation is sourced in the created universe, Special Revelation is sourced in the Lord Jesus Christ (the living Word) and the Bible (the written Word).*





The Nature of General Revelation

- 
- 1. It is based on the creation of both the material (sensible) and immaterial universe.**

2. It is addressed to human beings as intelligent creatures.

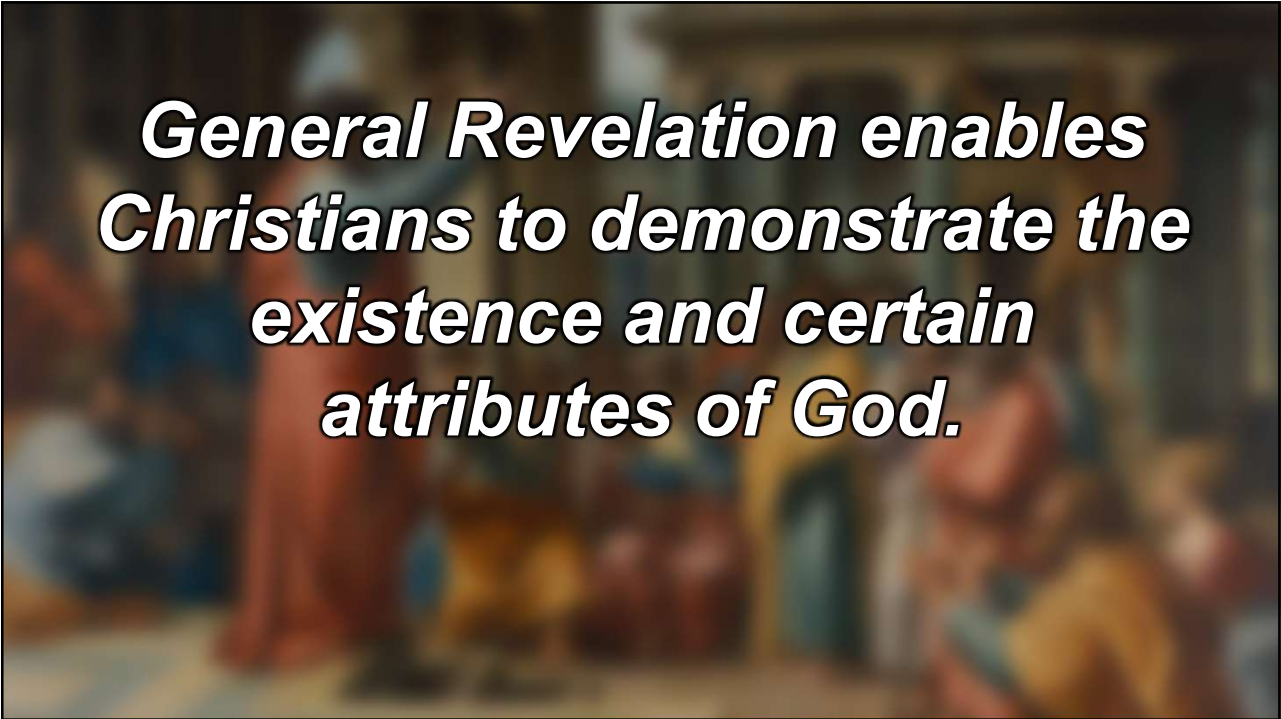
- ❖ *not necessarily addressed to human beings as regenerate*
- ❖ *in light of the ability of humans to have knowledge (which begins in senses and is completed in the intellect) of the creation*

3. It is accessible to all men.

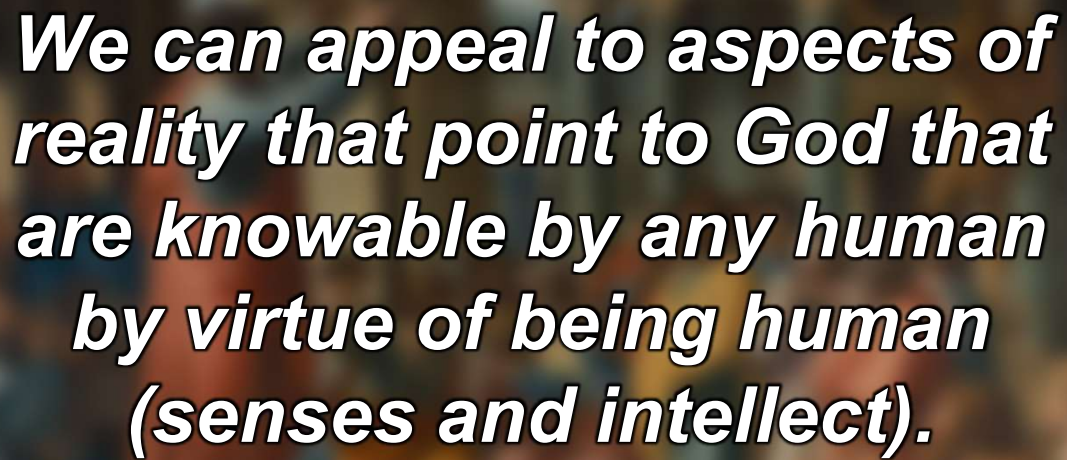
- ❖ *No person has a more privileged access to the creation because of his geography (where he is).*
- ❖ *No person has a more privileged access to the creation because of his chronology (when he is).*



The Apologetic Value of General Revelation



***General Revelation enables
Christians to demonstrate the
existence and certain
attributes of God.***

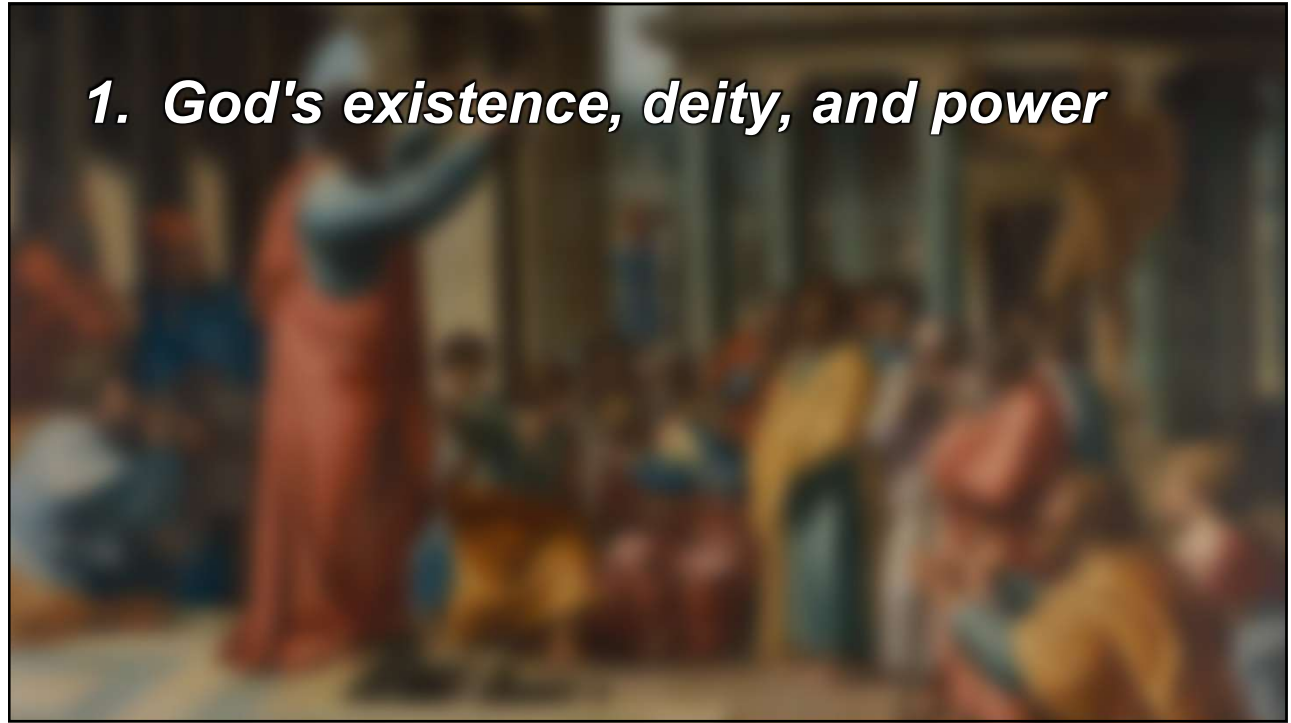


We can appeal to aspects of reality that point to God that are knowable by any human by virtue of being human (senses and intellect).



***The Content of General Revelation:
Natural Theology***

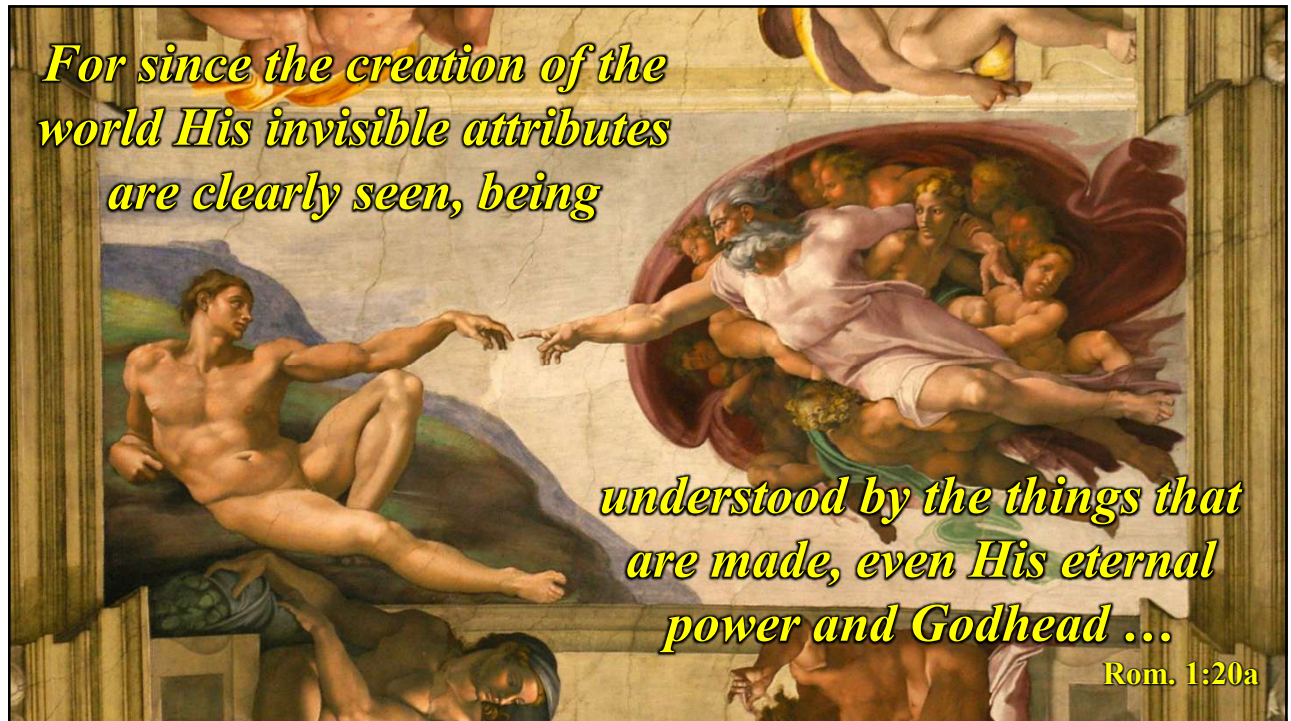
1. God's existence, deity, and power

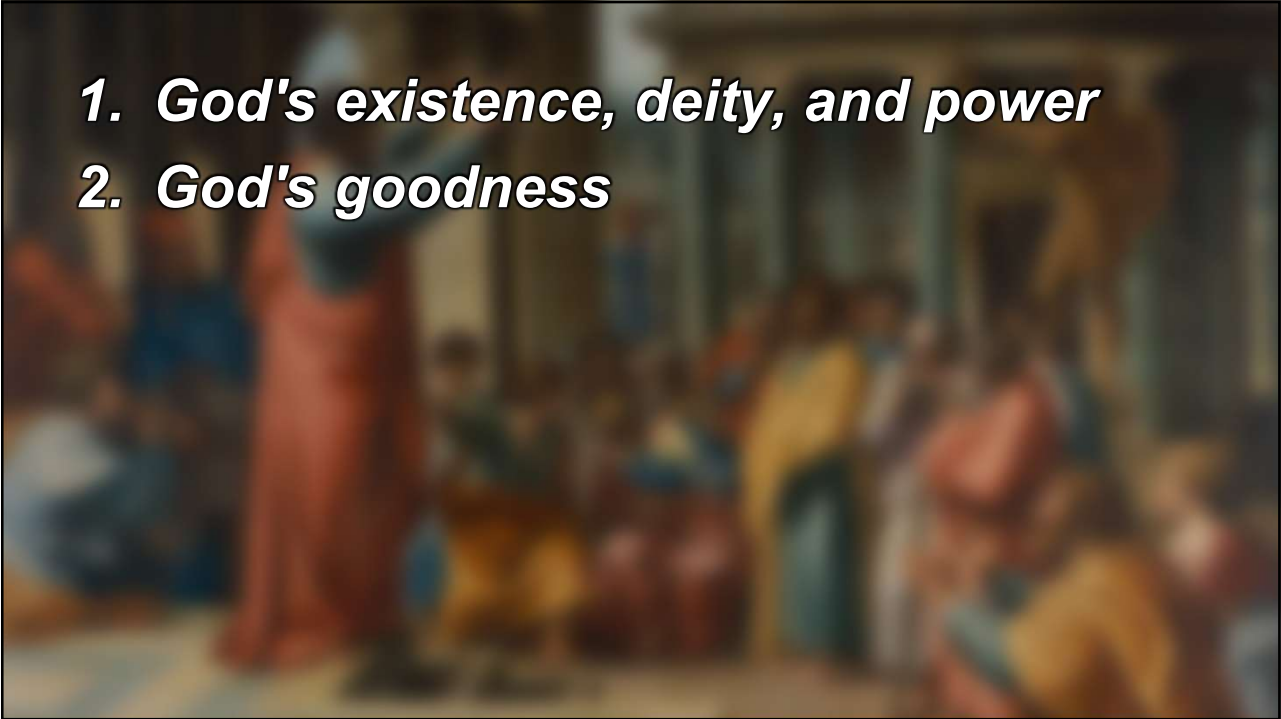


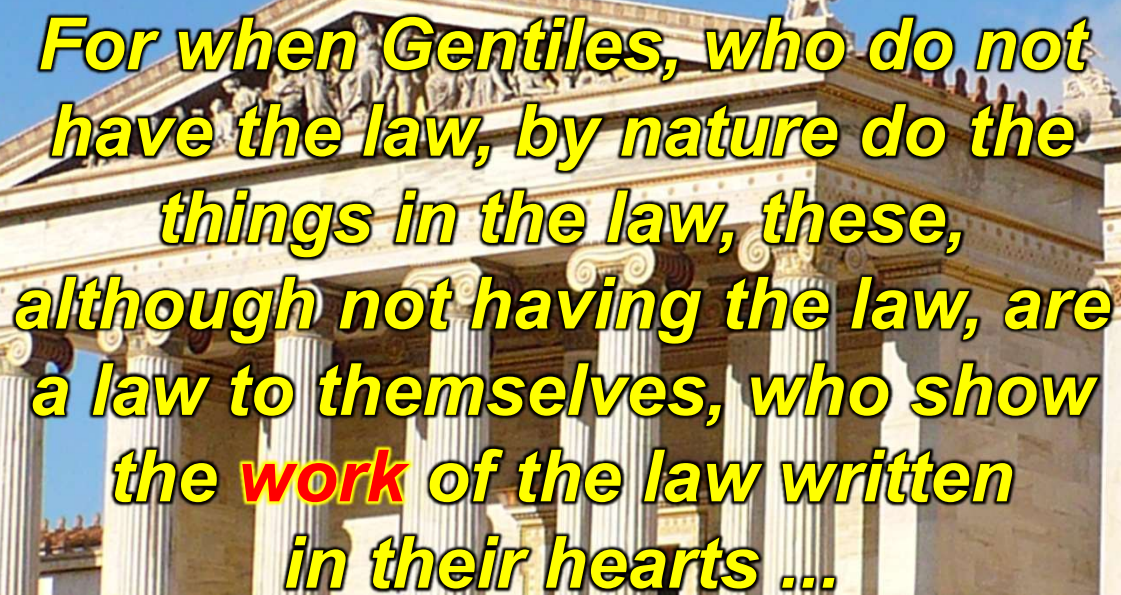
For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being

understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ...

Rom. 1:20a

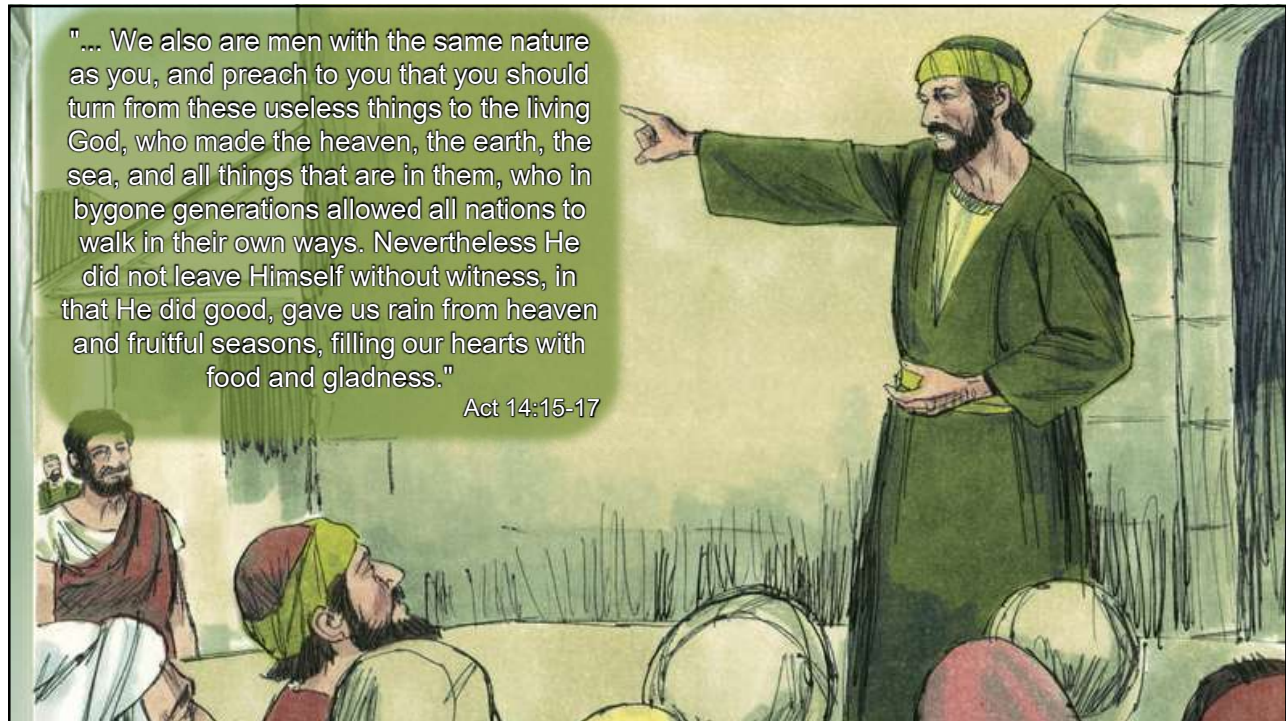


- 
1. *God's existence, deity, and power*
 2. *God's goodness*

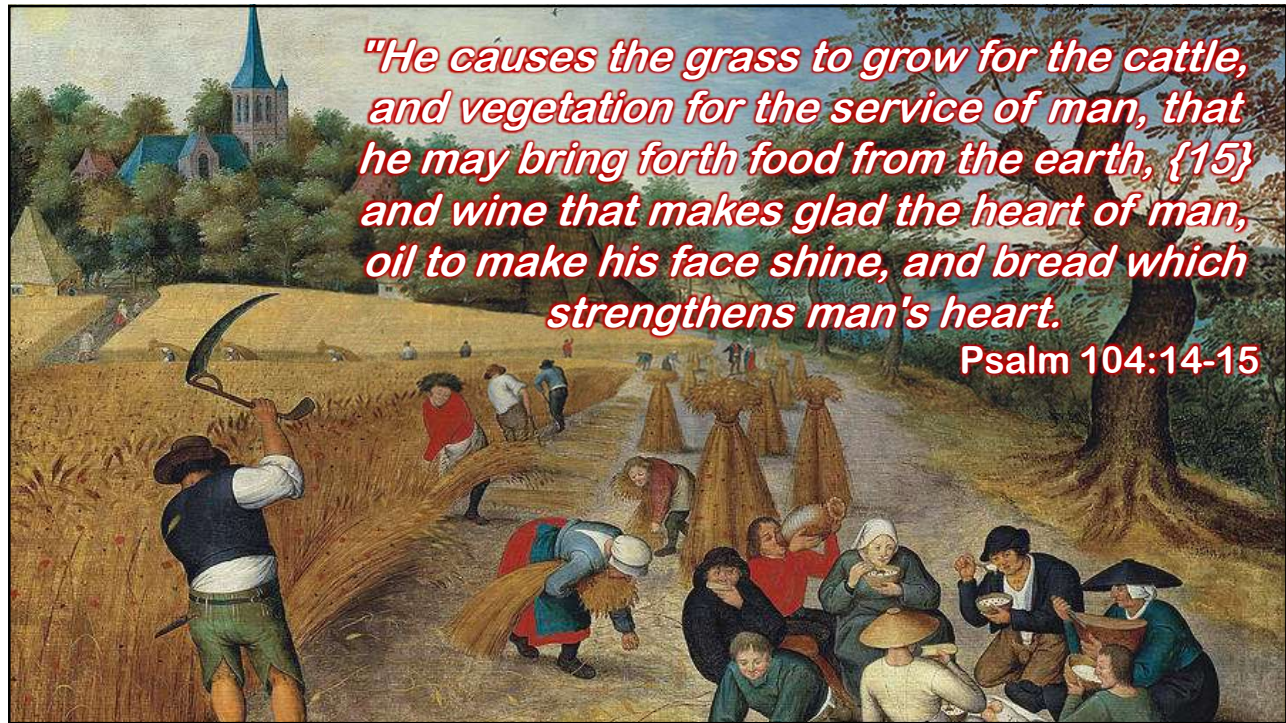


*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the **work** of the law written in their hearts ...*

Rom. 2:14-15a



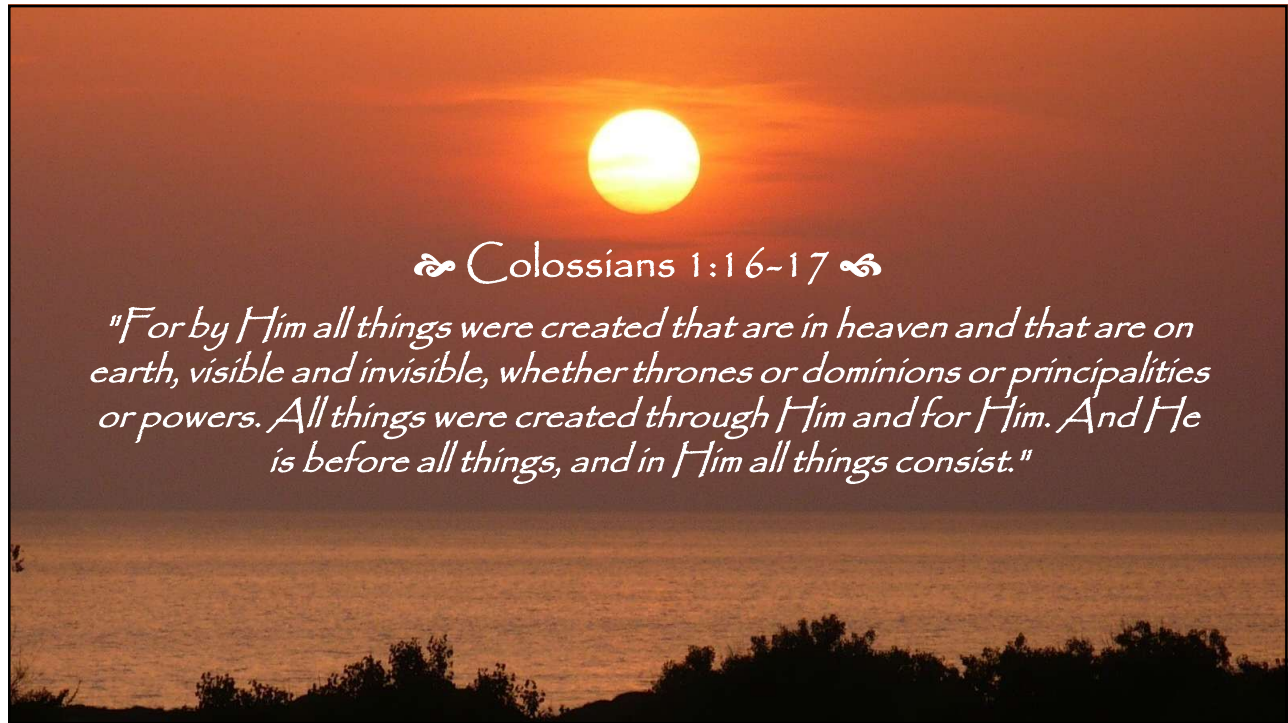
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power***
- 2. God's goodness***
- 3. God's providence***



*"He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
and vegetation for the service of man, that
he may bring forth food from the earth, {15}
and wine that makes glad the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine, and bread which
strengthens man's heart.*

Psalm 104:14-15

- 1. God's existence, deity, and power**
- 2. God's goodness**
- 3. God's providence**
- 4. God's sustaining power**



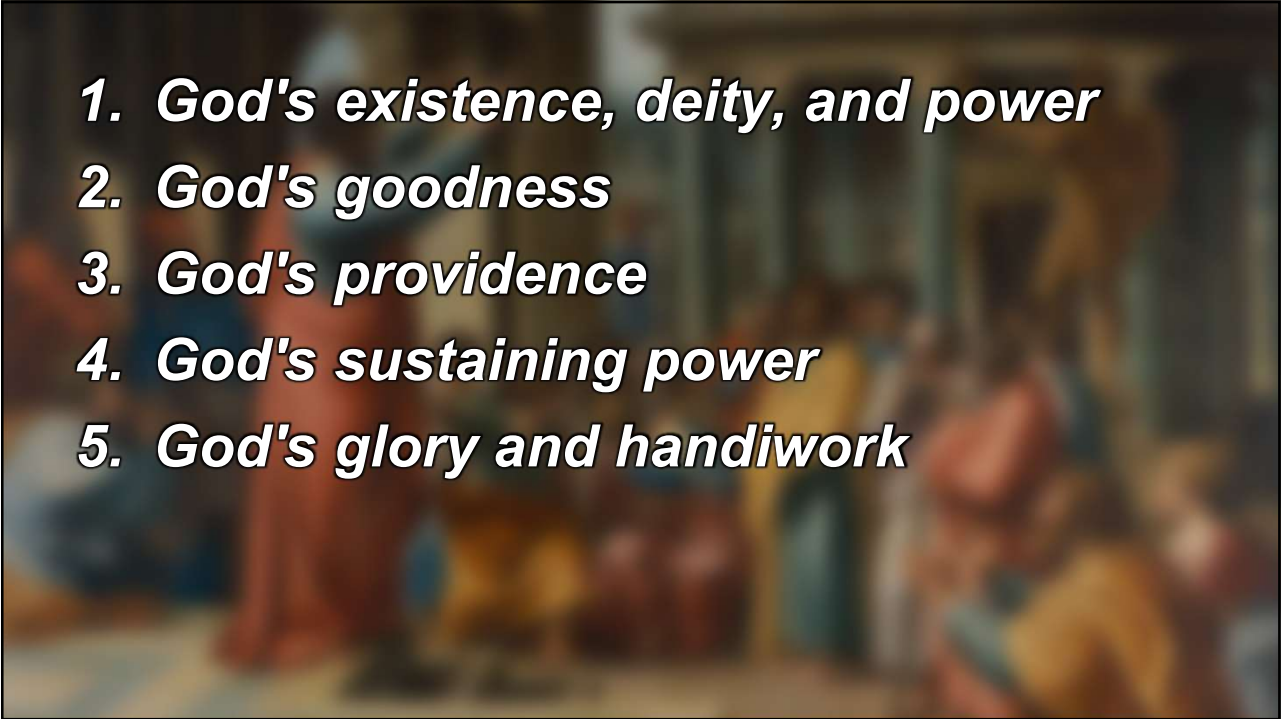
❧ Colossians 1:16-17 ❧

"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."



❧ Nehemiah 9:6 ❧

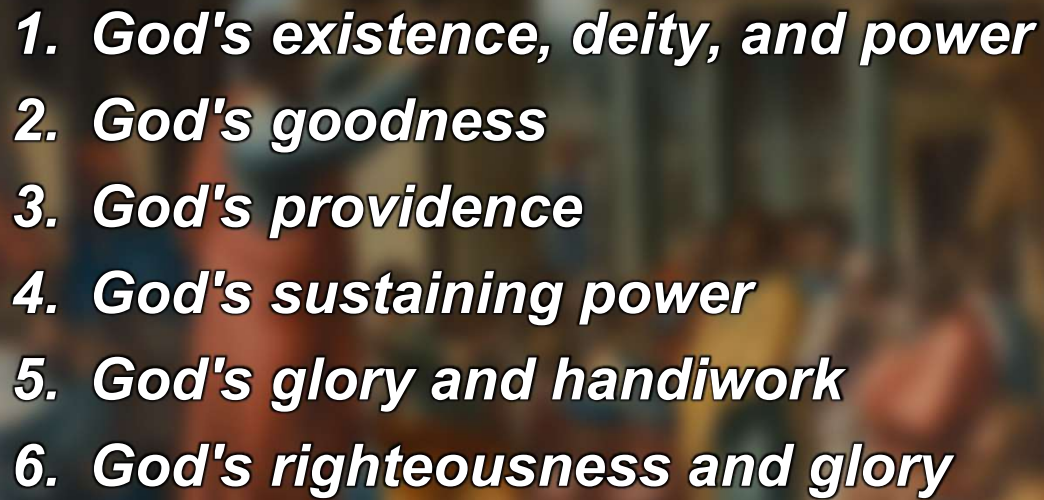
You alone *are* the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.

- 
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power***
 - 2. God's goodness***
 - 3. God's providence***
 - 4. God's sustaining power***
 - 5. God's glory and handiwork***



***The heavens declare
the glory of God; and
the firmament shows
His handiwork.***

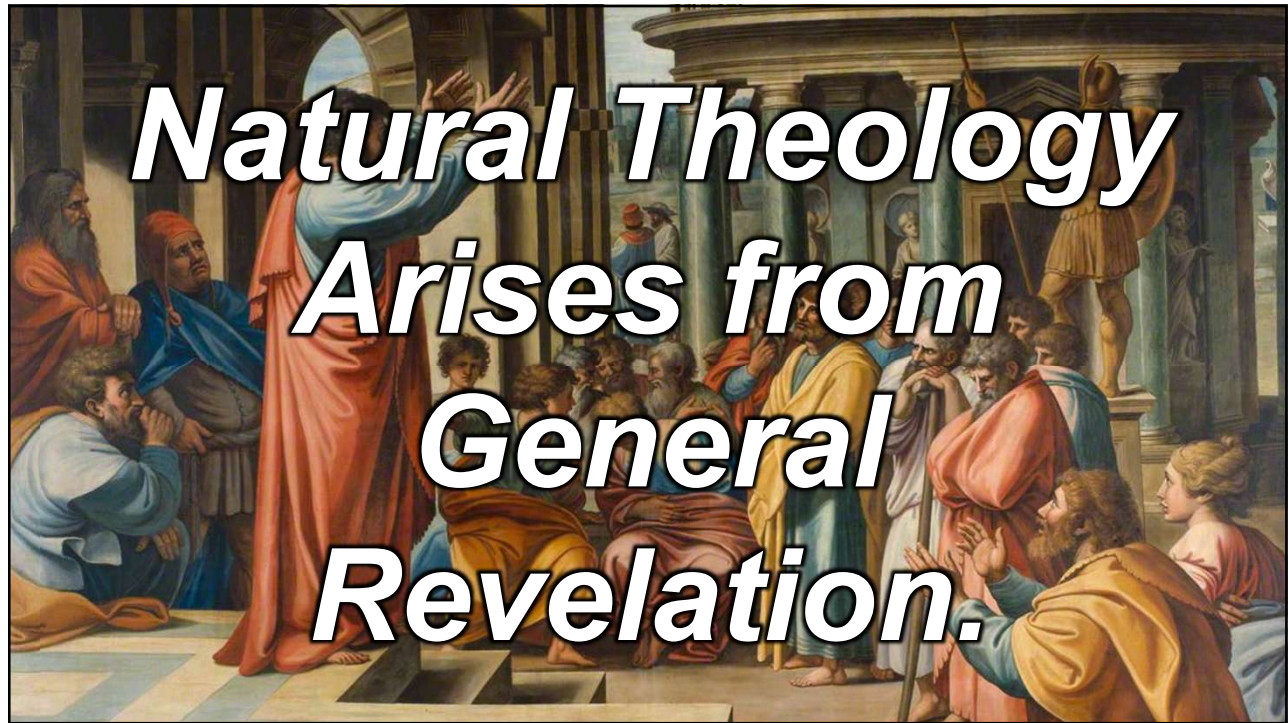
Psalm 19:1

- 
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power***
 - 2. God's goodness***
 - 3. God's providence***
 - 4. God's sustaining power***
 - 5. God's glory and handiwork***
 - 6. God's righteousness and glory***



***The heavens declare
His righteousness,
and all the peoples
see His glory.***

Psalm 97:6



***By observing the wonders of
God's creation, people have
been able to come to a basic
and relatively sound
understanding of God's
existence and attributes.***

But as toxic philosophical voices have fogged the conversation throughout history, the need arises at times to reason from deeper issues in philosophy to demonstrate God's existence and certain attributes since they are understood "by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20).

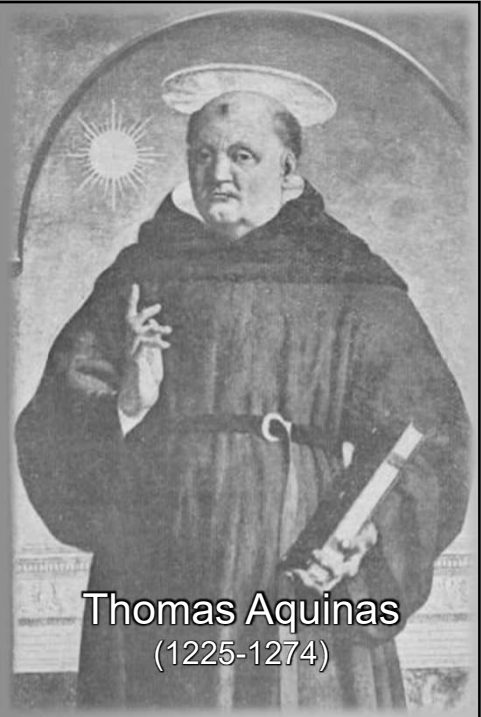
"Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."

["Learning in War-Time" in *The Weight of Glory: A Collection of Lewis's Most Moving Addresses* (London: Harper Collins, 2013), 59]

C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)

"But seeing that a teacher of sacred Scripture must at times oppose the philosophers, it is necessary for him to make use of philosophy."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, Q. 2, art. 3.6, published as *Faith, Reason and Theology: Questions I-IV of His Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987), p. 48]

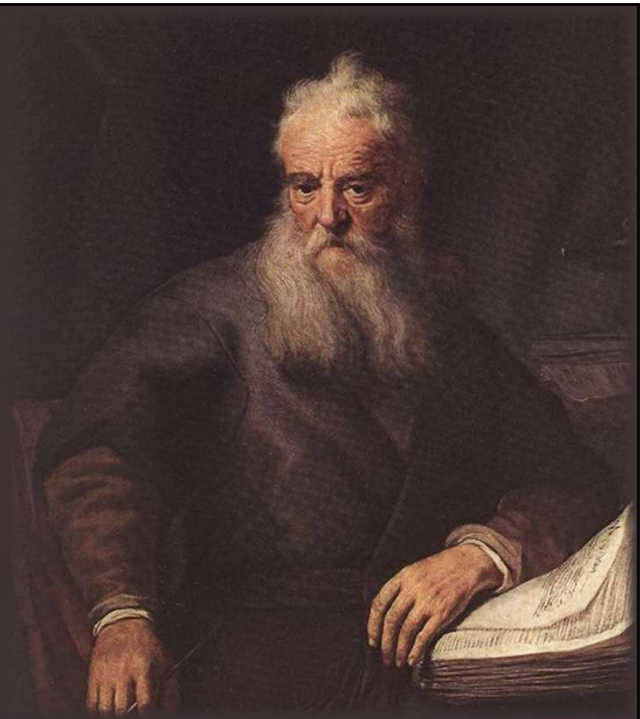


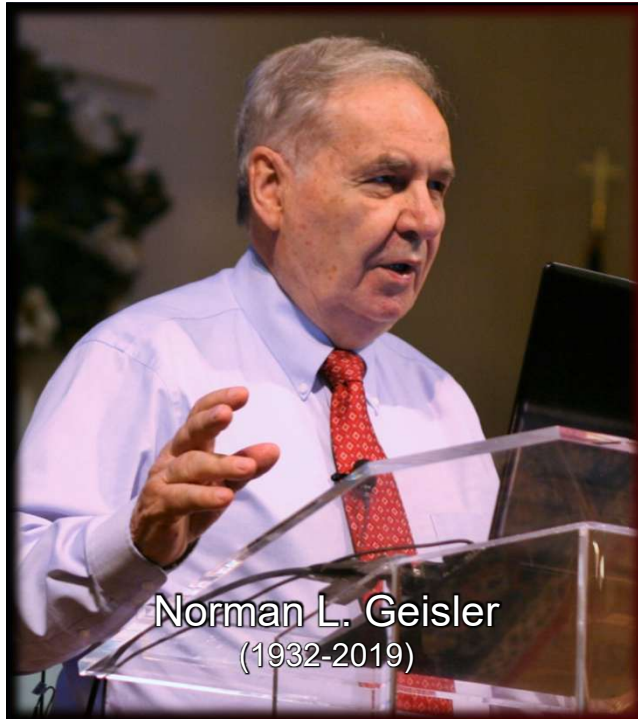
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

✧ **Colossians 2:8** ✧

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

The Apostle Paul

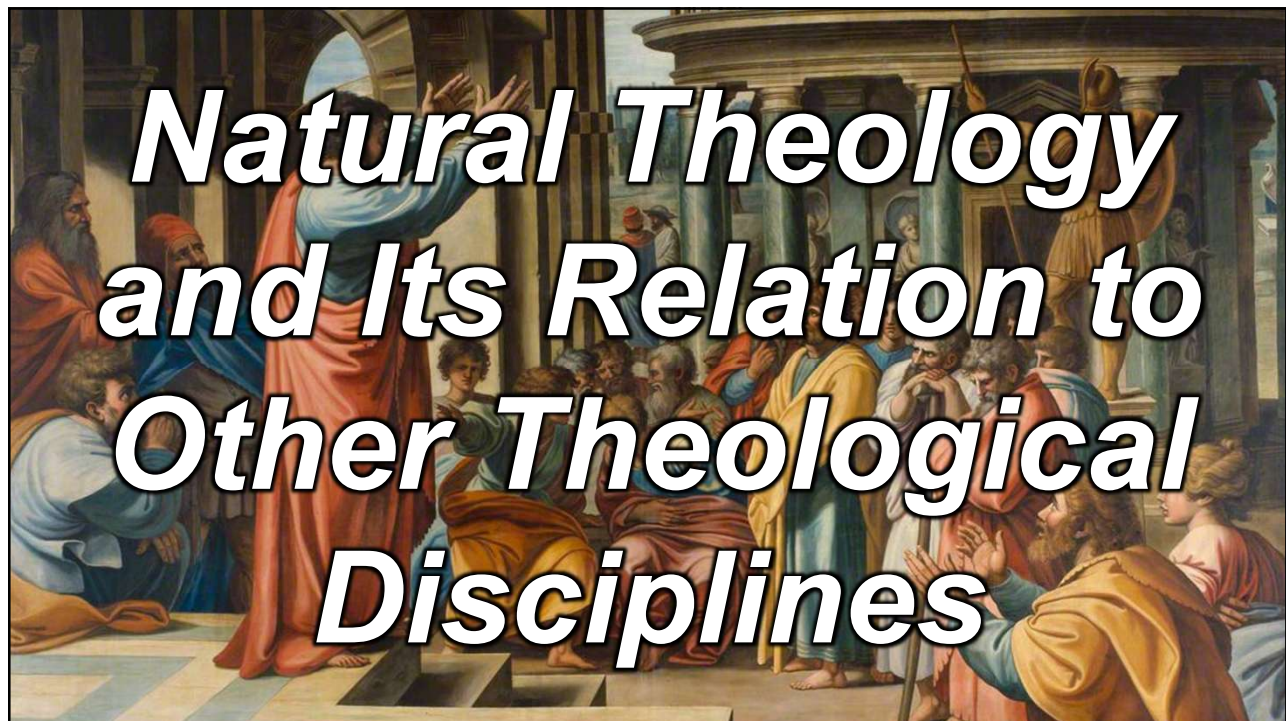


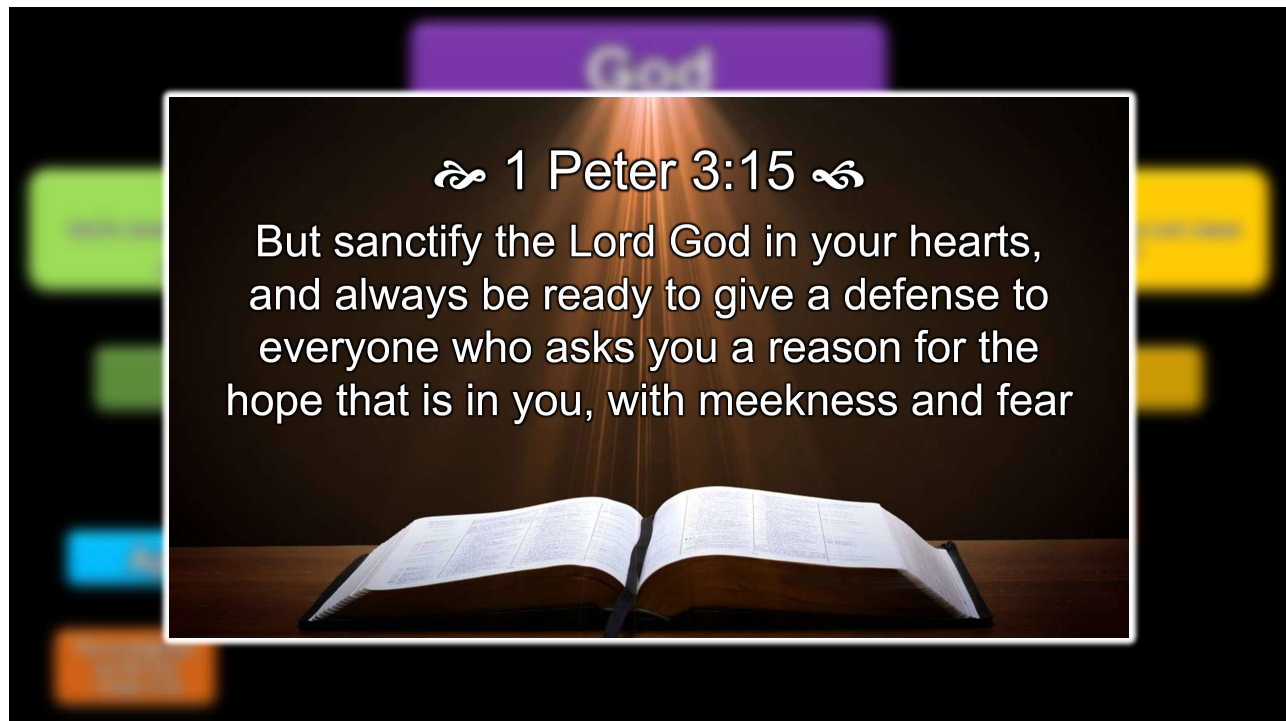
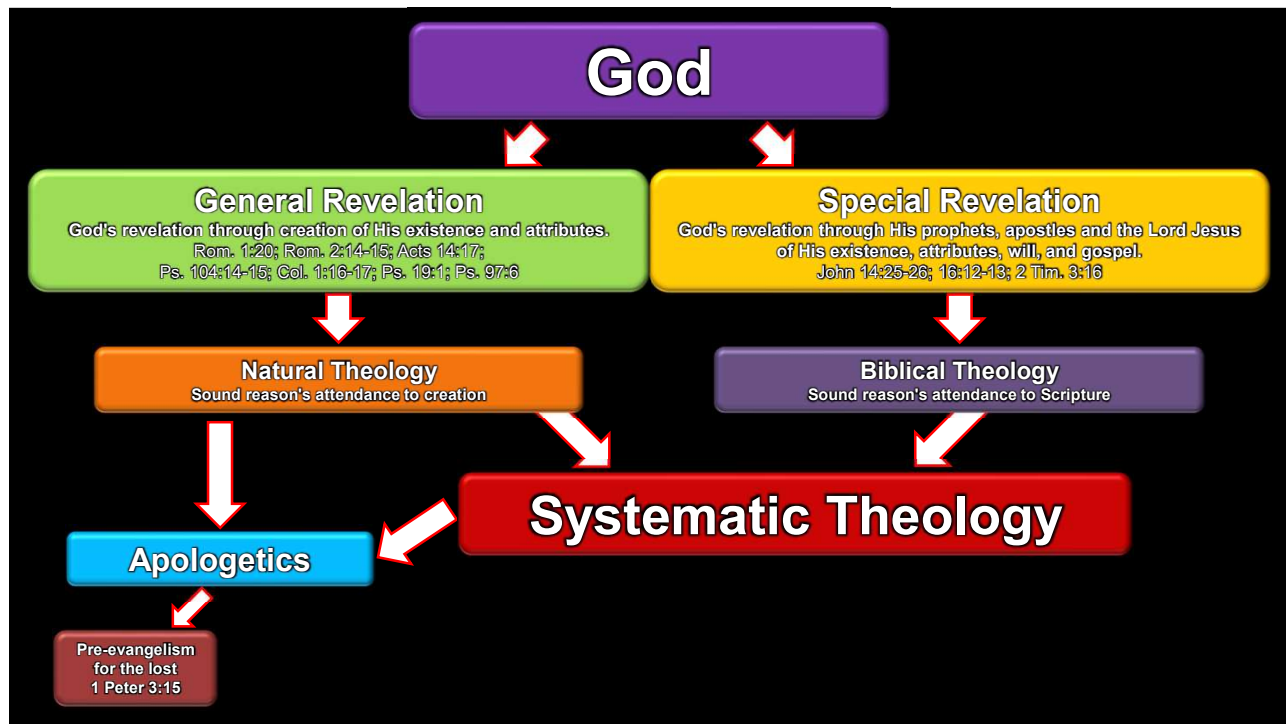
A photograph of Norman L. Geisler, a man with grey hair wearing a light blue shirt and a red patterned tie, speaking at a clear acrylic podium. He is gesturing with his right hand.

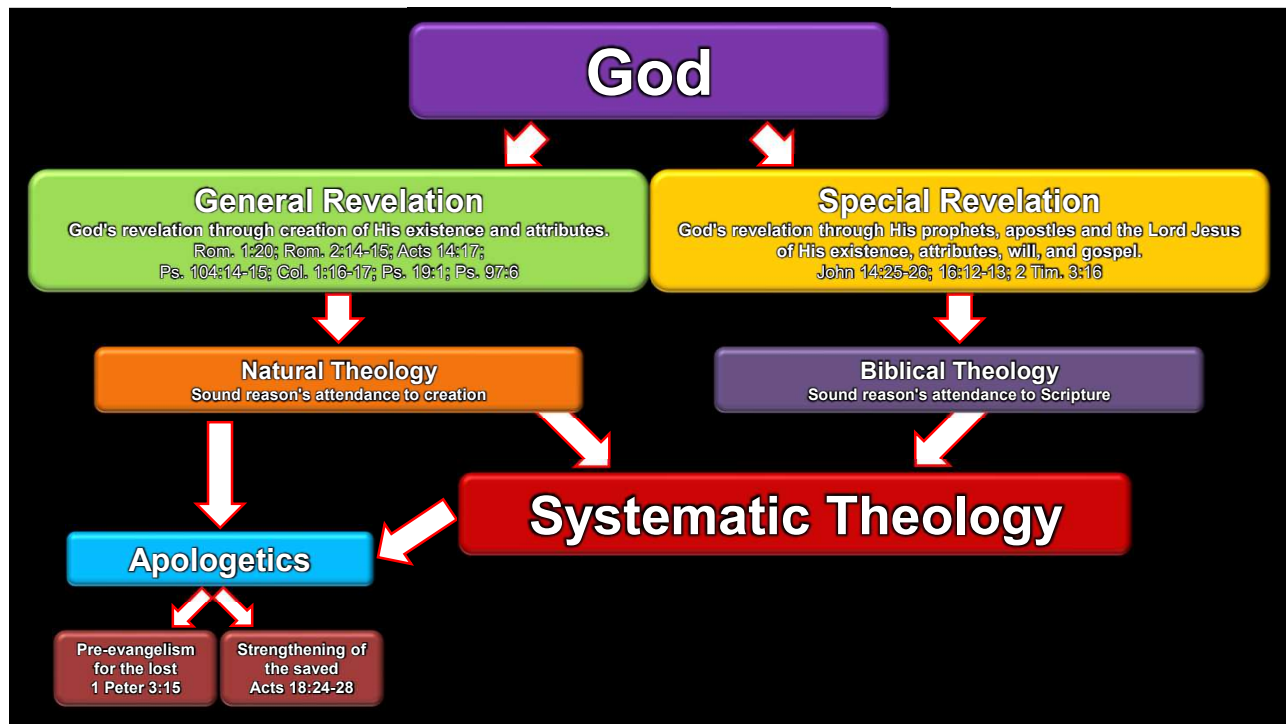
"We cannot properly **beware of philosophy unless we **be aware** of philosophy."**

Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)

[Norman L. Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42/1 (March 1999): 3-19 (18)]







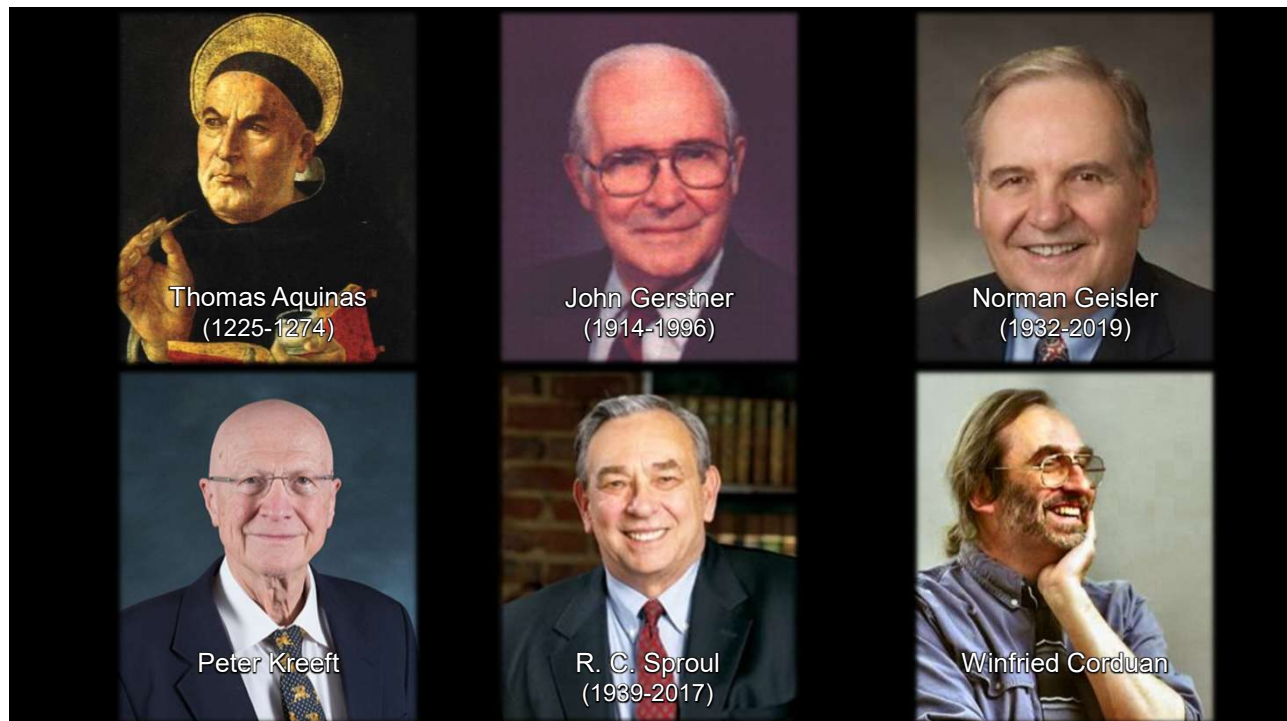
Acts 18:24, 27-28

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ... {27} And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; {28} for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

General Revelation	Special Revelation
<i>Given through creation (known through simple apprehension of the sensible world)</i>	<i>Given through Prophets and Apostles (read by their writings, a.k.a., the Scriptures)</i>
<i>Reveals God's existence and attributes</i>	<i>Reveals God's gospel and will</i>
<i>Given TO all people</i>	<i>Given FOR all people</i>
<i>All people have it</i>	<i>Not all people have it</i>
<i>Some accept, some reject</i>	<i>Some accept, some reject</i>
<i>Sufficient to condemn if rejected</i>	<i>Sufficient to save if accepted</i>
<i>Acceptance is necessary but not sufficient for eternal life</i>	<i>Acceptance is necessary and sufficient for eternal life</i>

Apologists who recognize the viability of natural theology span a wide spectrum of philosophical and theological perspectives.

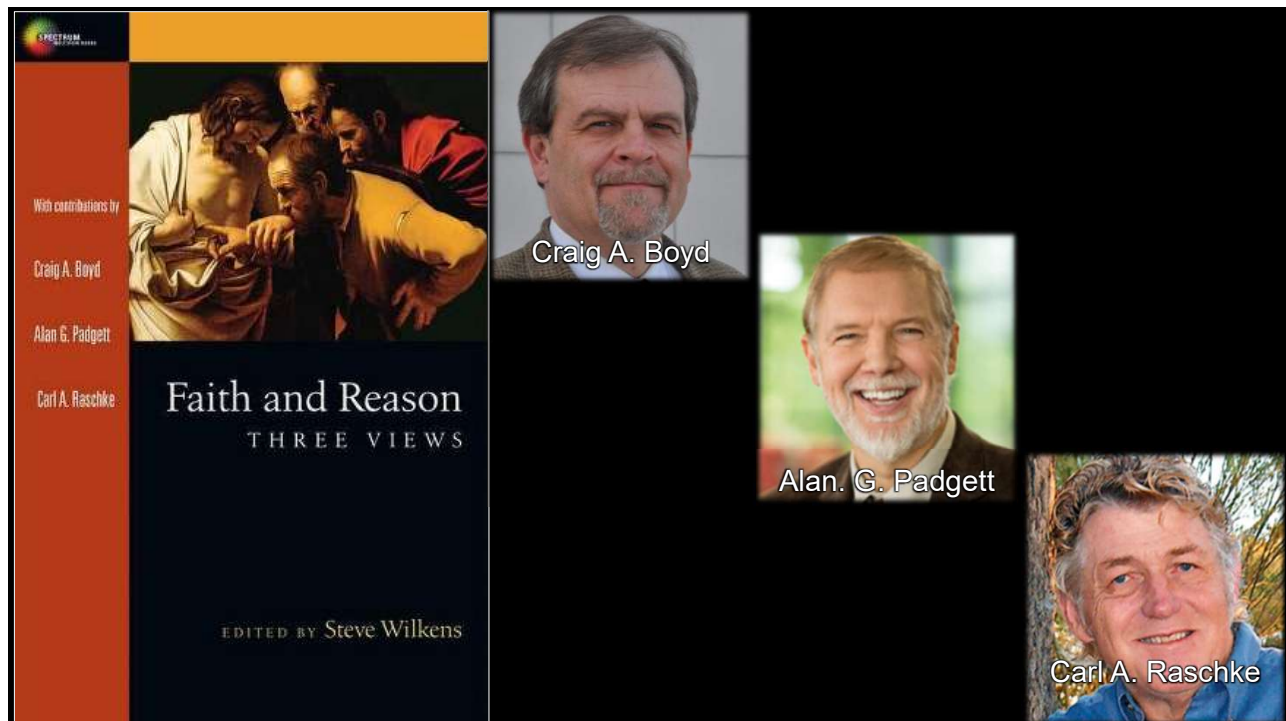
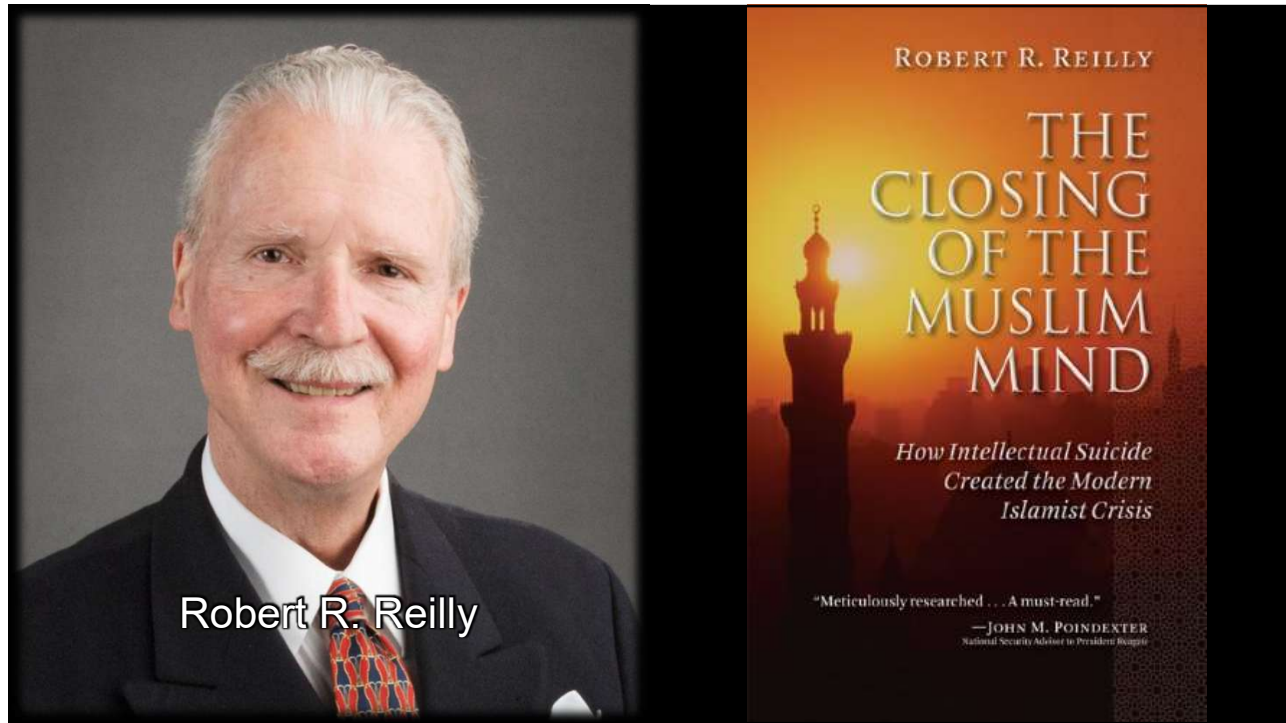
In this presentation, I will defend a more narrow version of Classical apologetics exemplified by those thinkers who employ the philosophical perspective of Thomas Aquinas such as ...

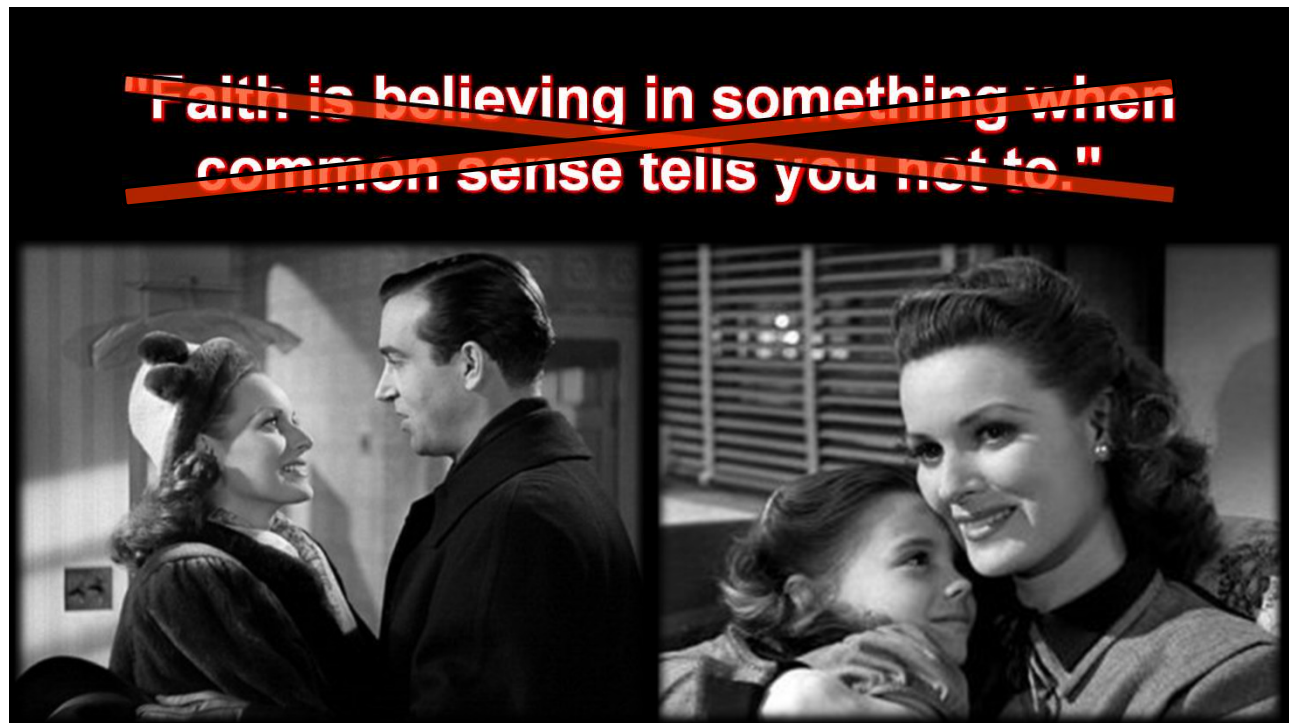
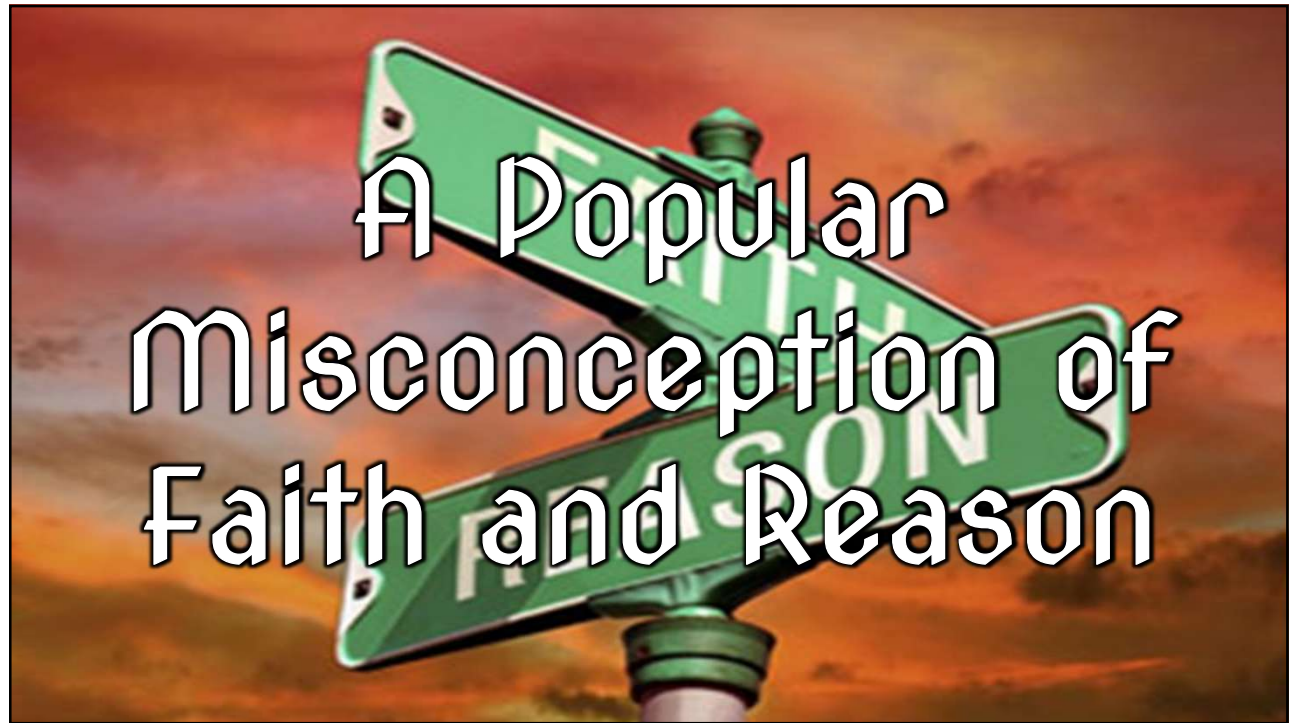




∞ Uses of the Term 'Faith' ∞

- COMMON: synonymous with the term 'religion', e.g., the Christian faith
- THEOLOGICAL: theological virtue, "... for by grace are you saved through faith ..." (Eph. 2:8)
- EPISTEMOLOGICAL: relevant to how we come to know reality and hold certain beliefs



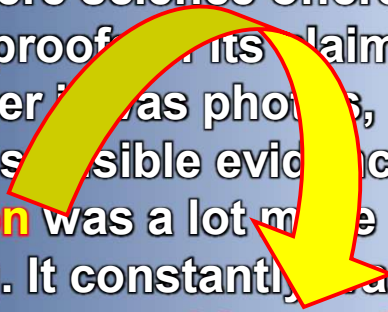


"I really wasn't sure where to turn. Where science offered exciting proofs of its claims, whether it was photos, equations, visible evidence, **religion** was a lot more demanding. It constantly wanted me to **accept everything on faith**. As I'm sure you're aware, faith takes a fair amount of effort."



Dan Brown

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Do we as Christians maintain that Christianity (as a religion) wants one to "accept everything on faith"?

Dan Brown

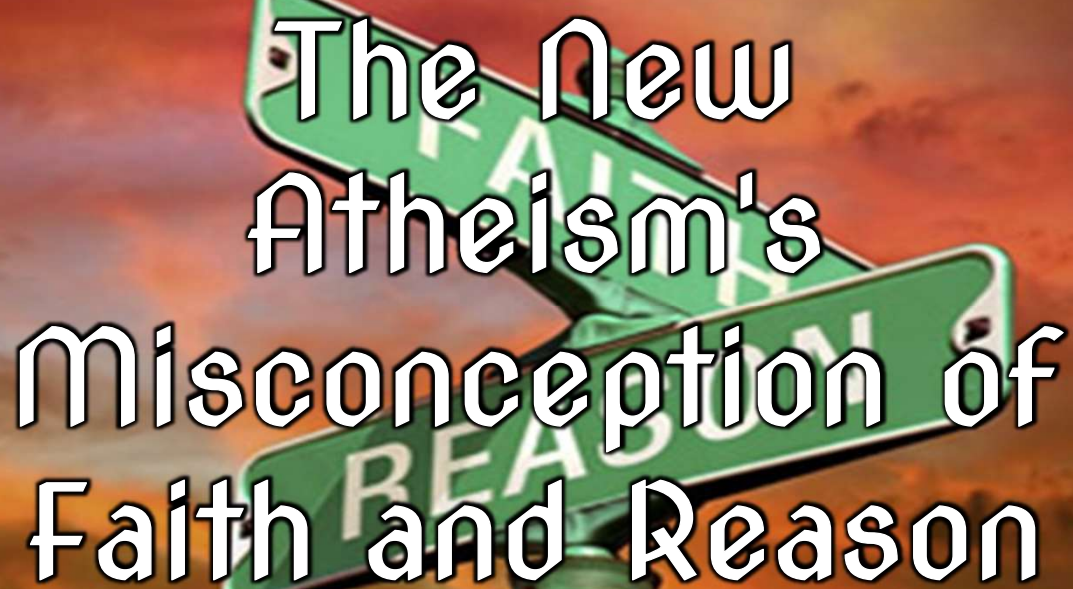
Popular Misconception

Reason

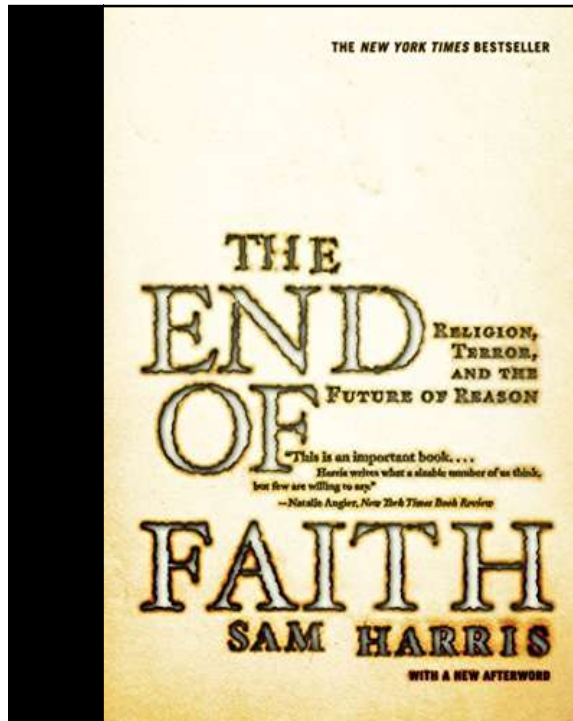
truth
facts
outer
public
rational
thoughts
objective
science
true for all

Faith

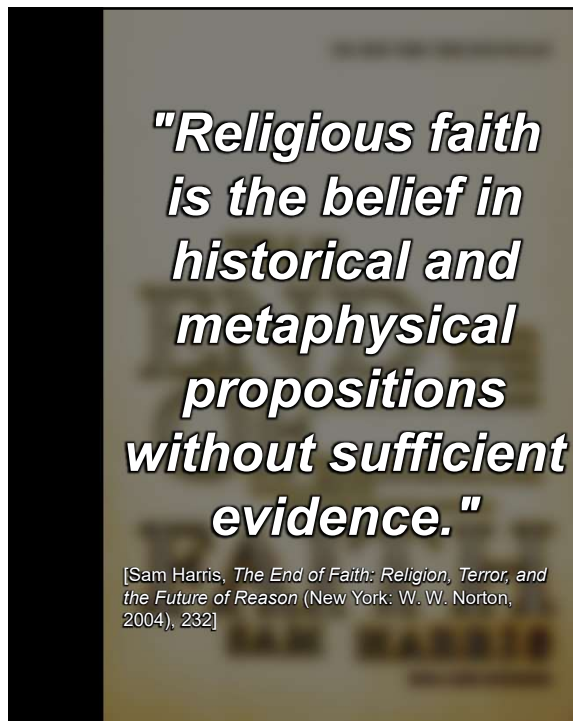
opinion
values
inner
private
emotional
feelings
subjective
religion
true for me



The New
Atheism's
Misconception of
Faith and Reason



Sam Harris



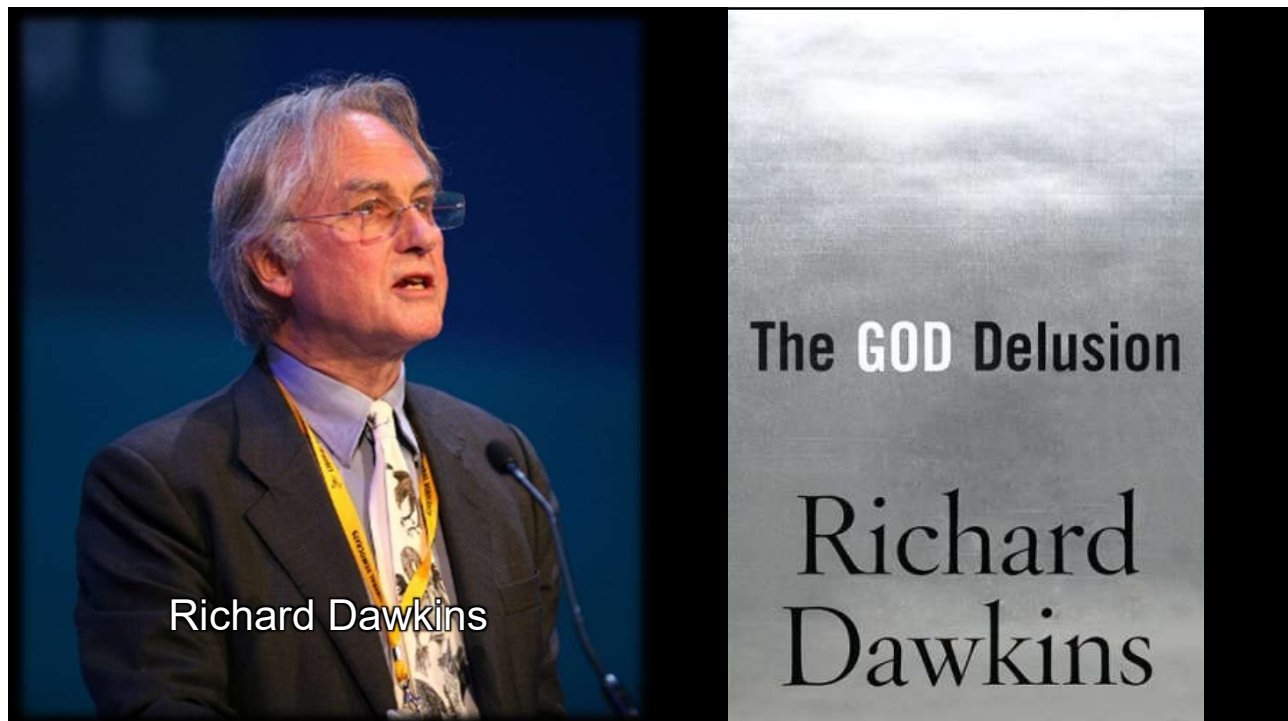
Sam Harris

***"Faith is the mortar
that fills the cracks in
the evidence and the
gaps in the logic, and
thus it is faith that
keeps the whole
terrible edifice of
religious certainty
still looming
dangerously over our
world."***

[Harris, *The End of Faith*, 233]



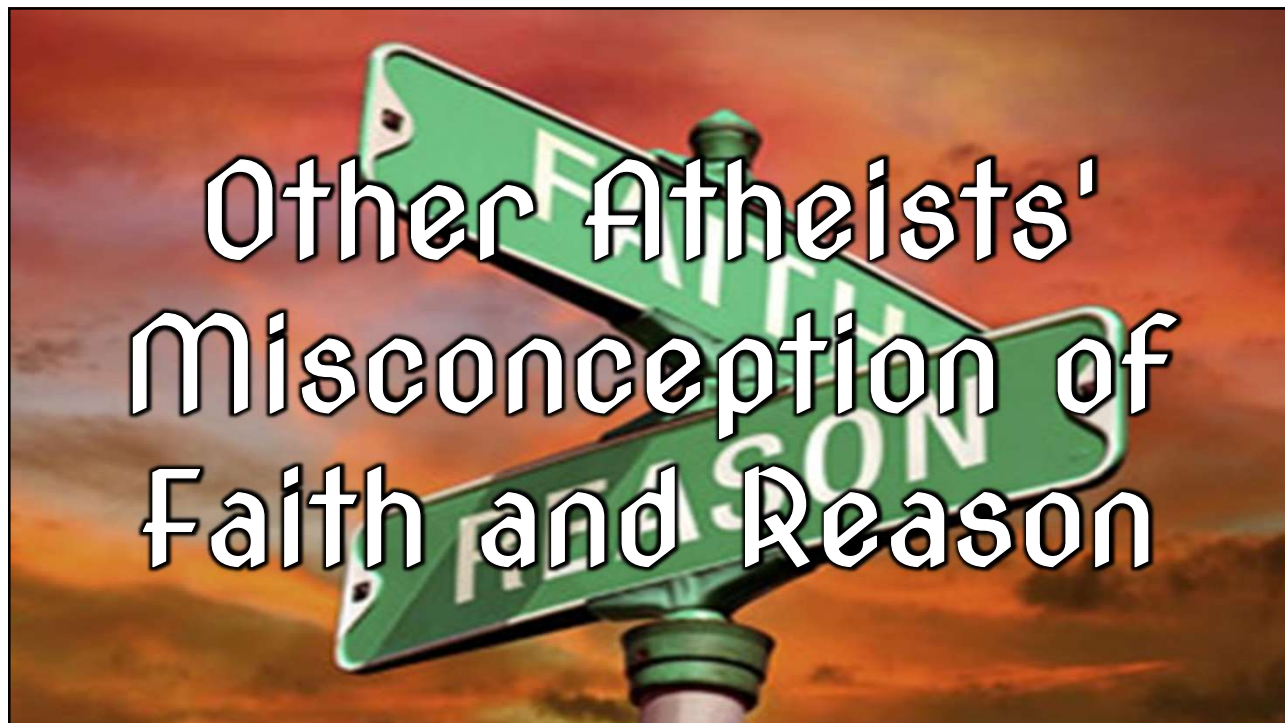
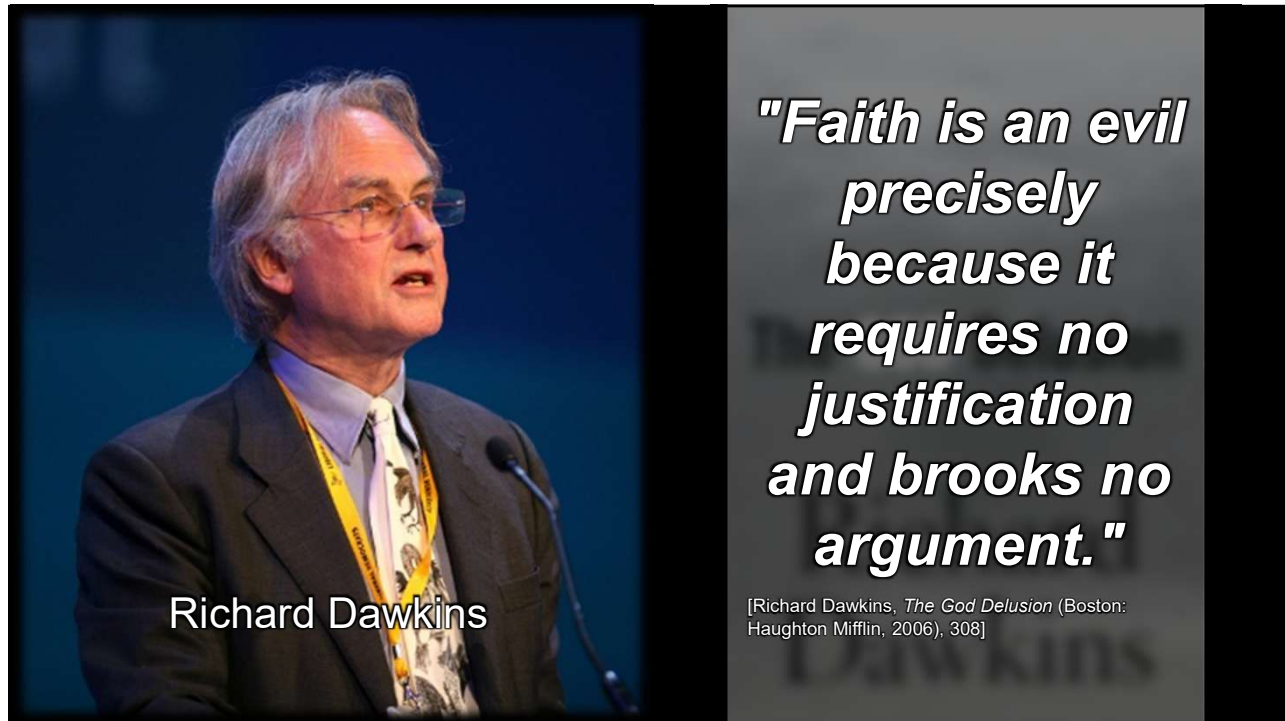
Sam Harris

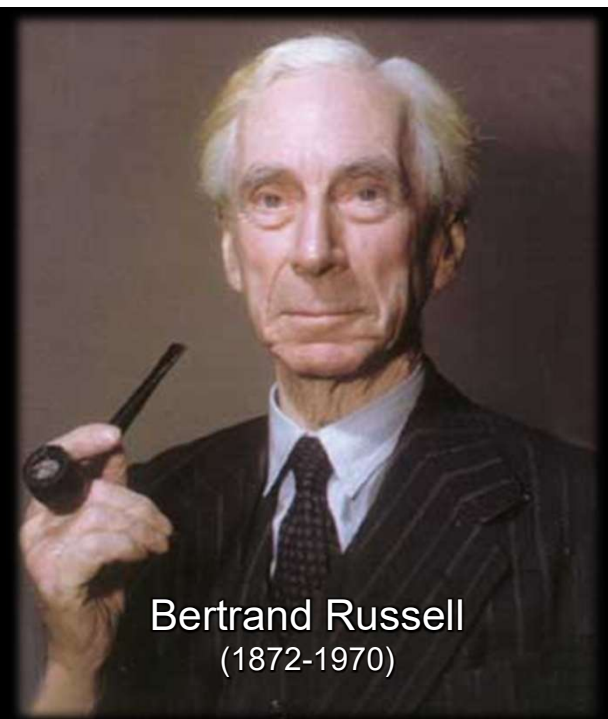
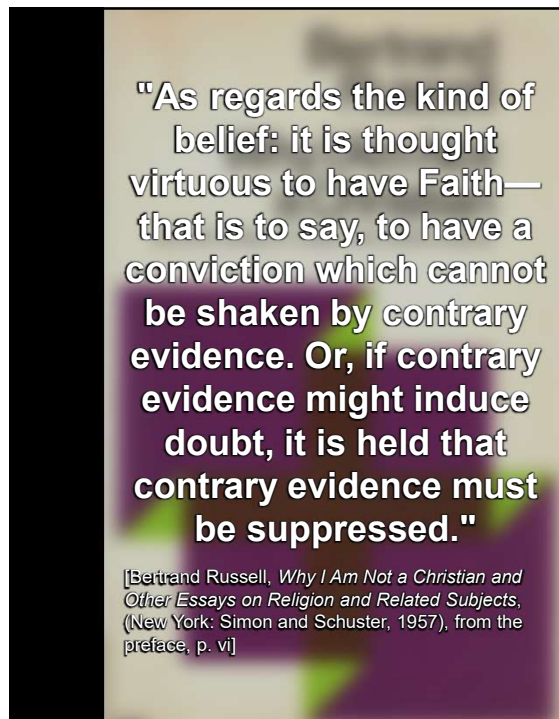
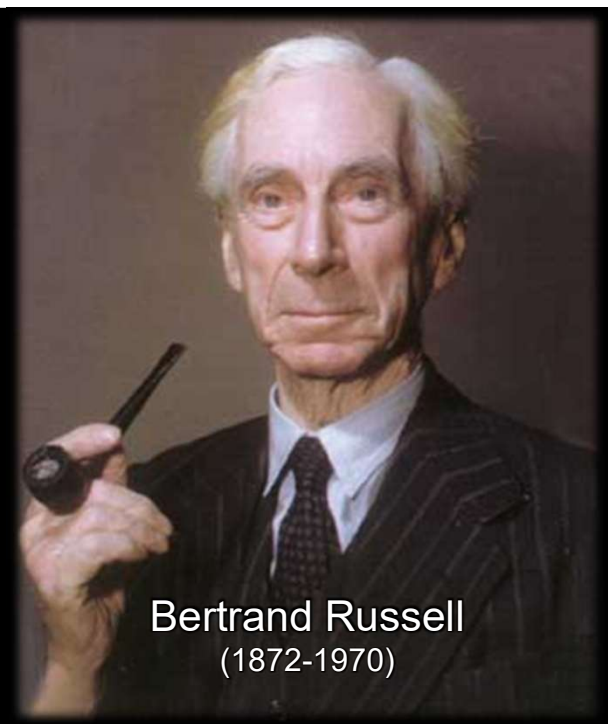
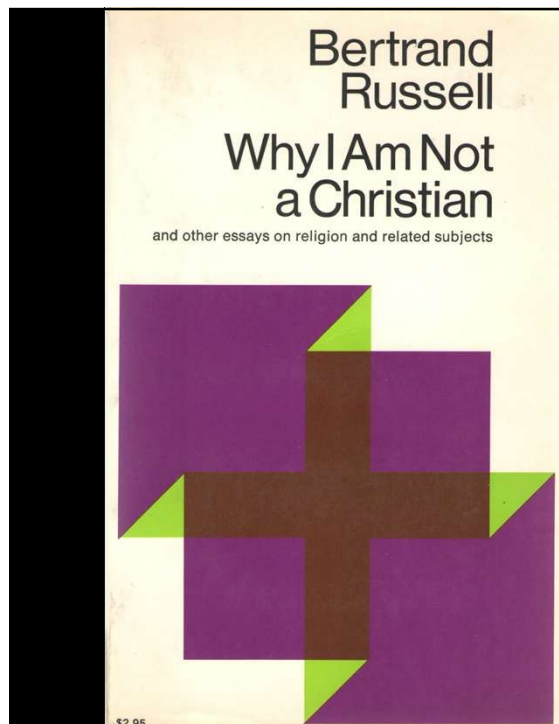


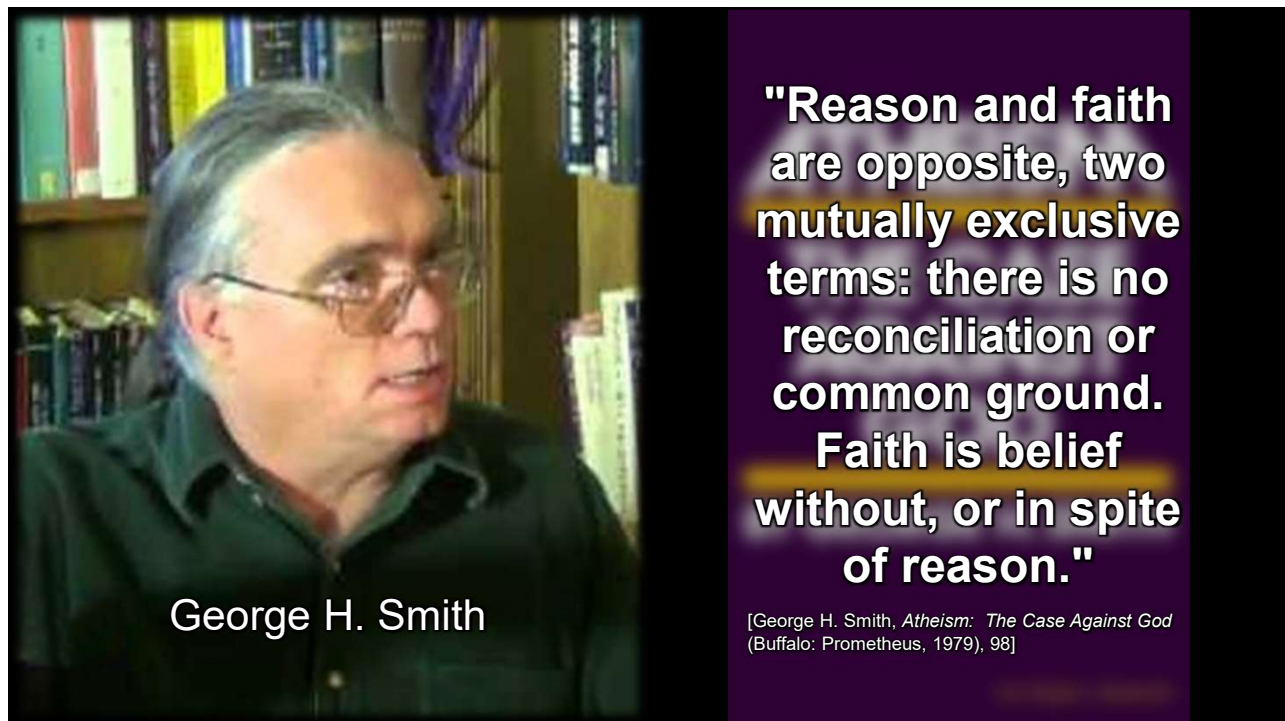
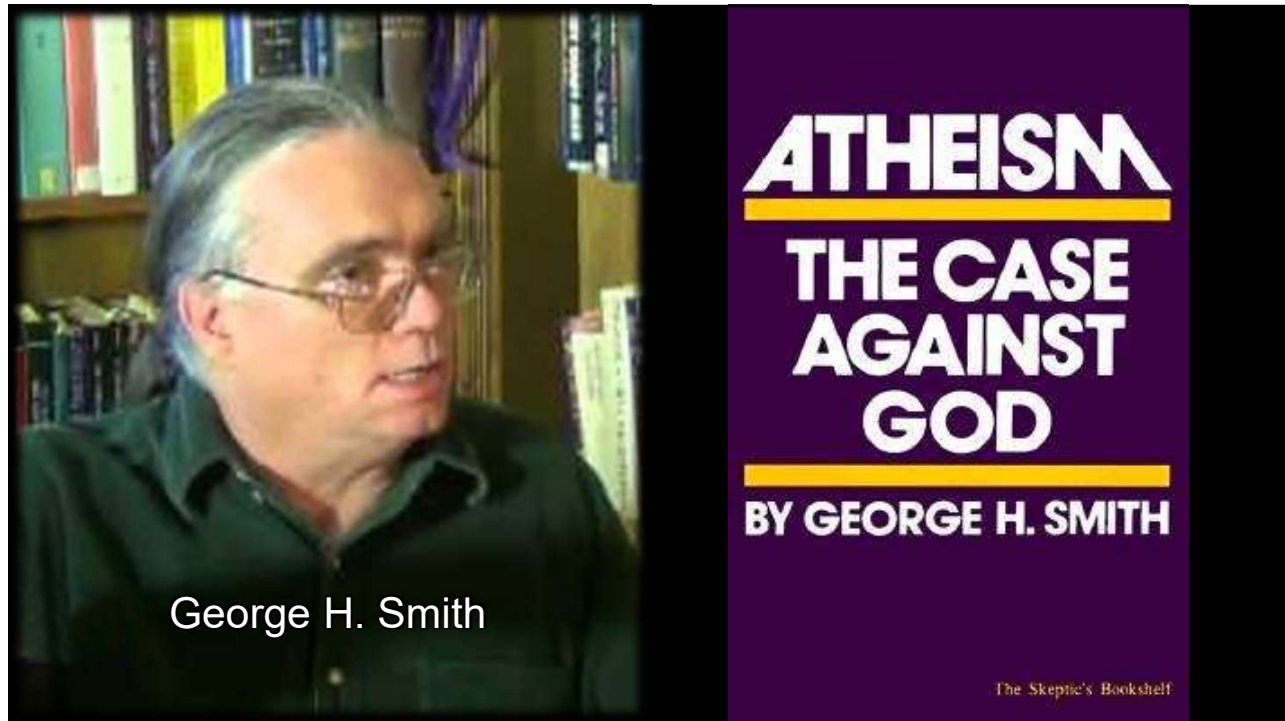
Richard Dawkins

The **GOD** Delusion

Richard
Dawkins

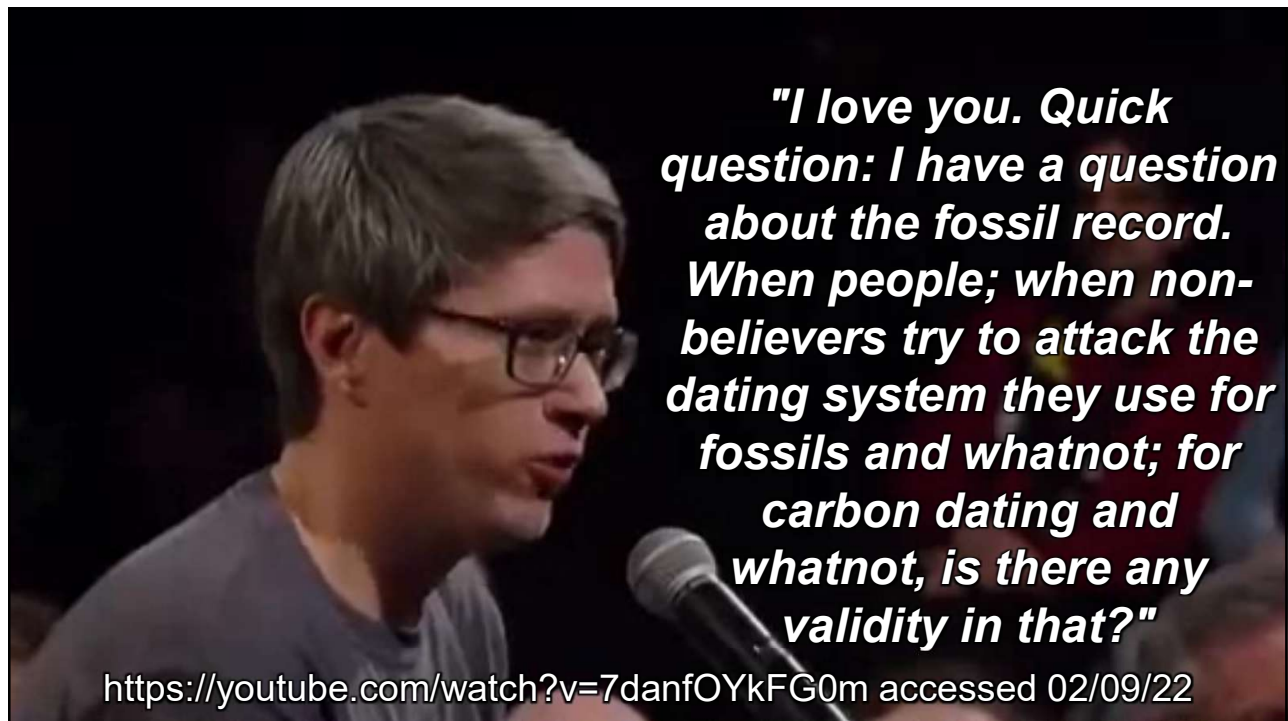


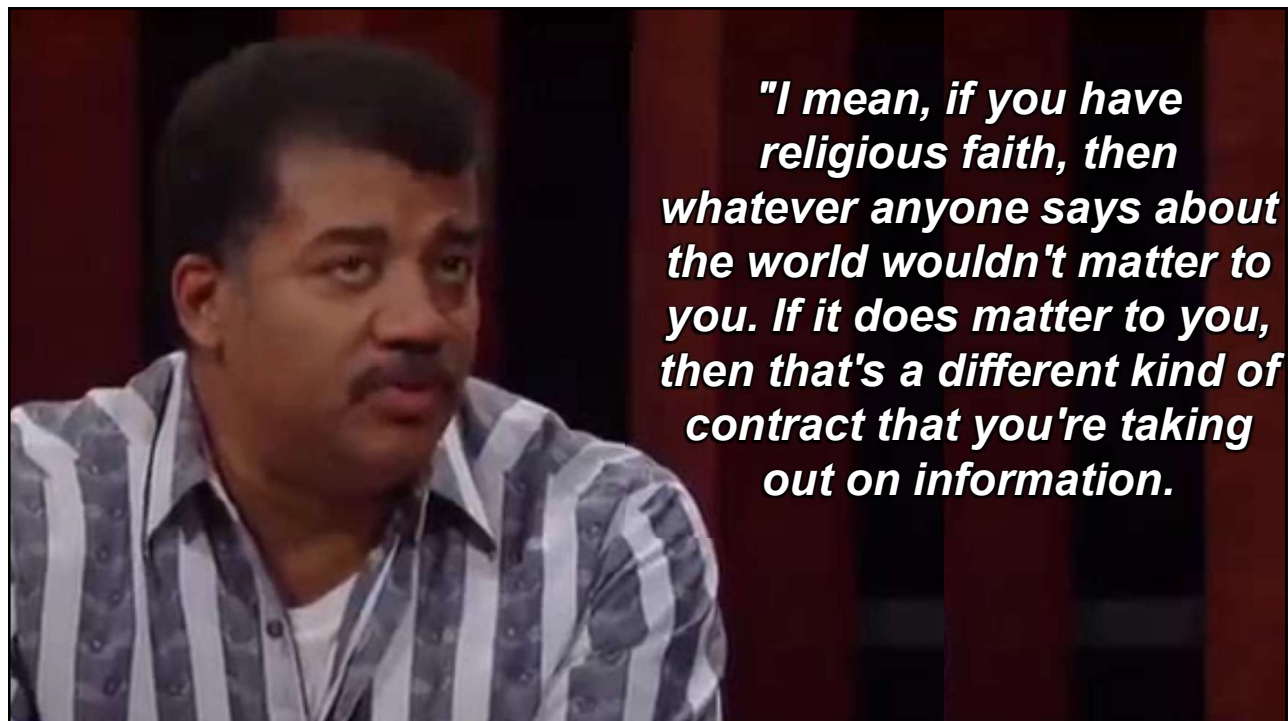
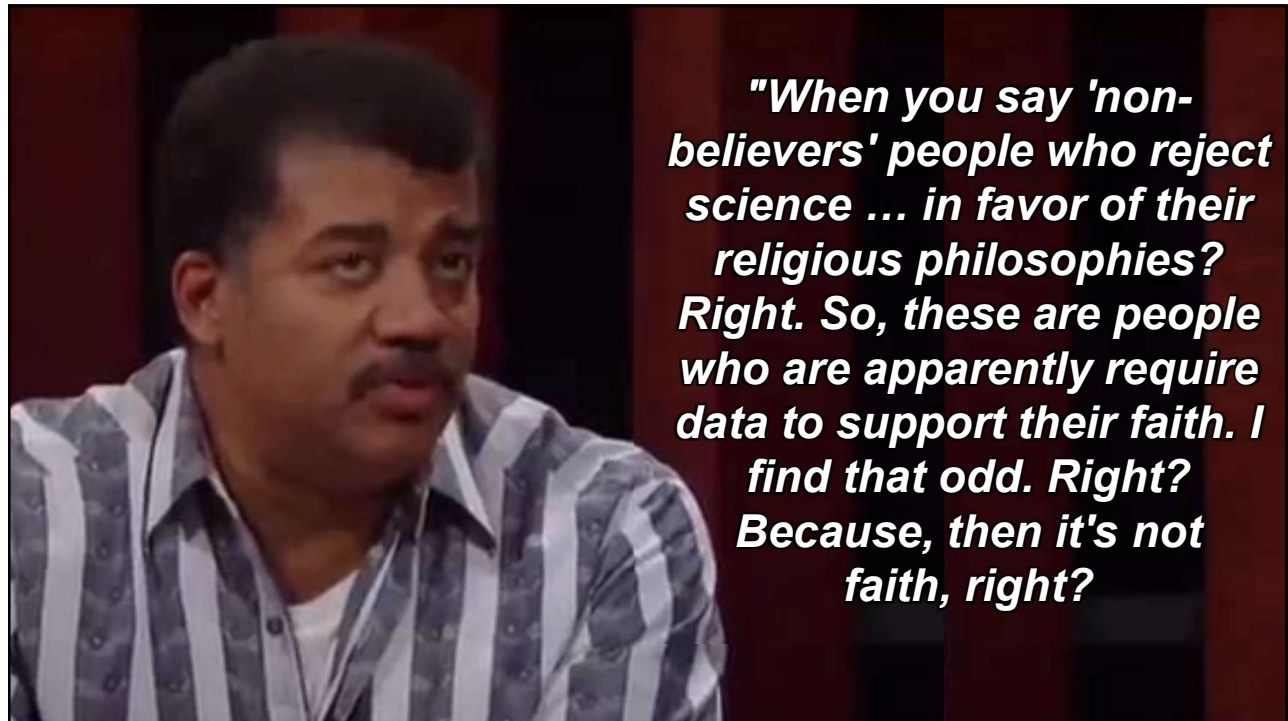


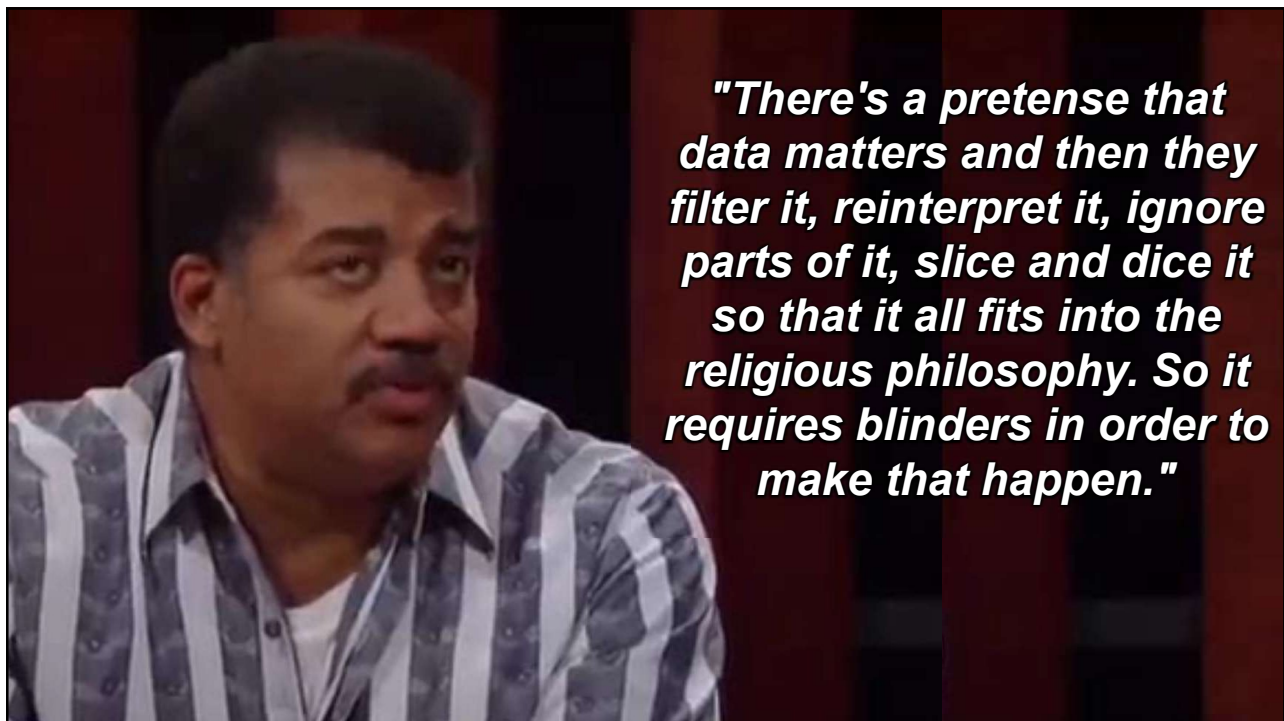
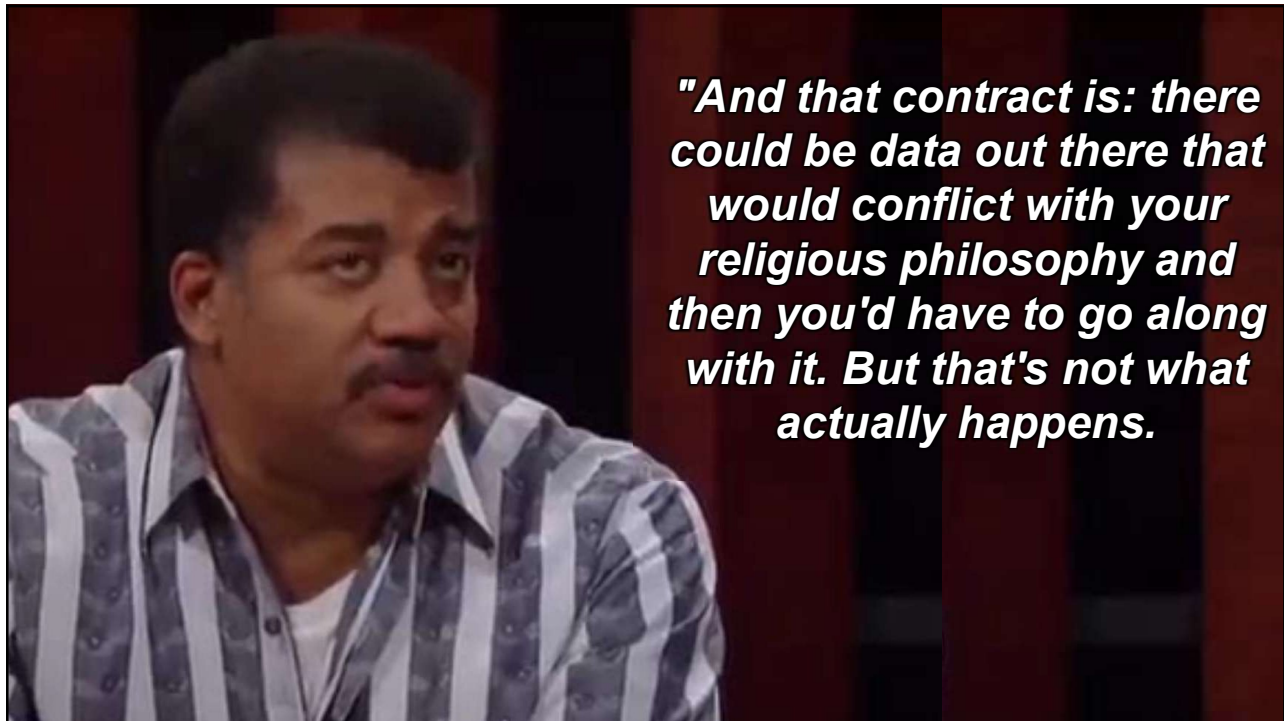




Neil deGrasse Tyson on Religion and Faith



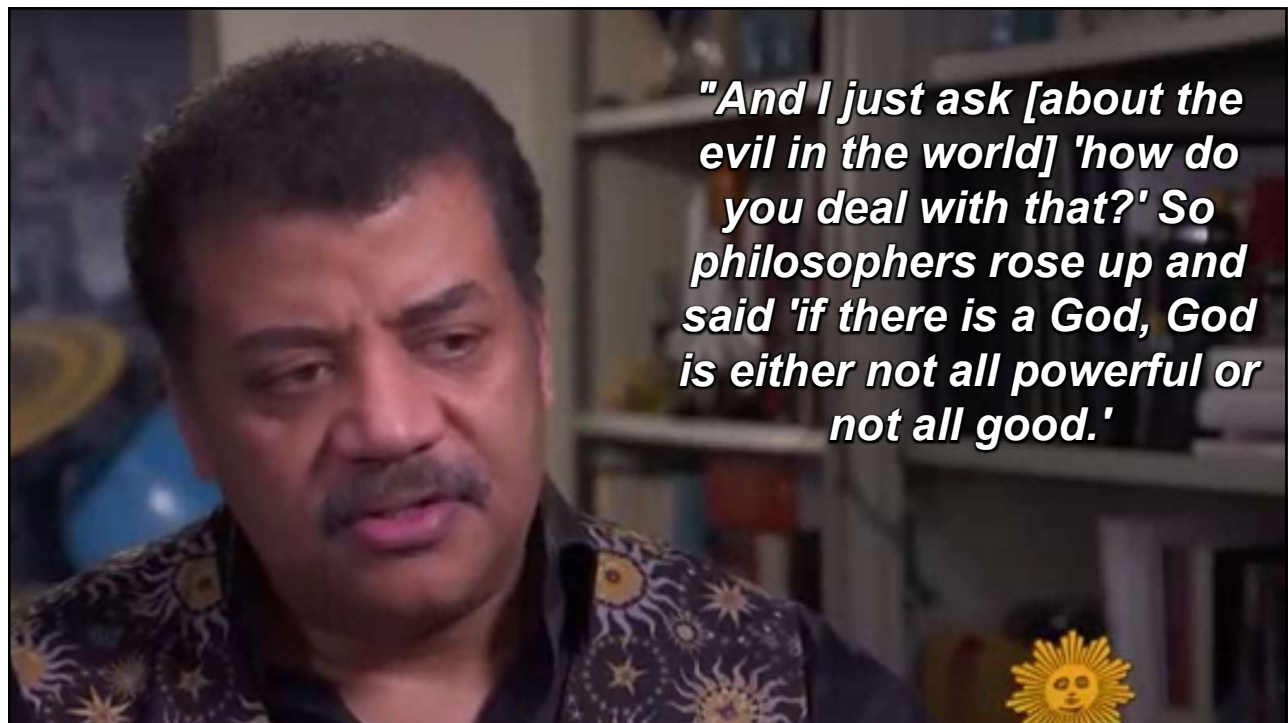
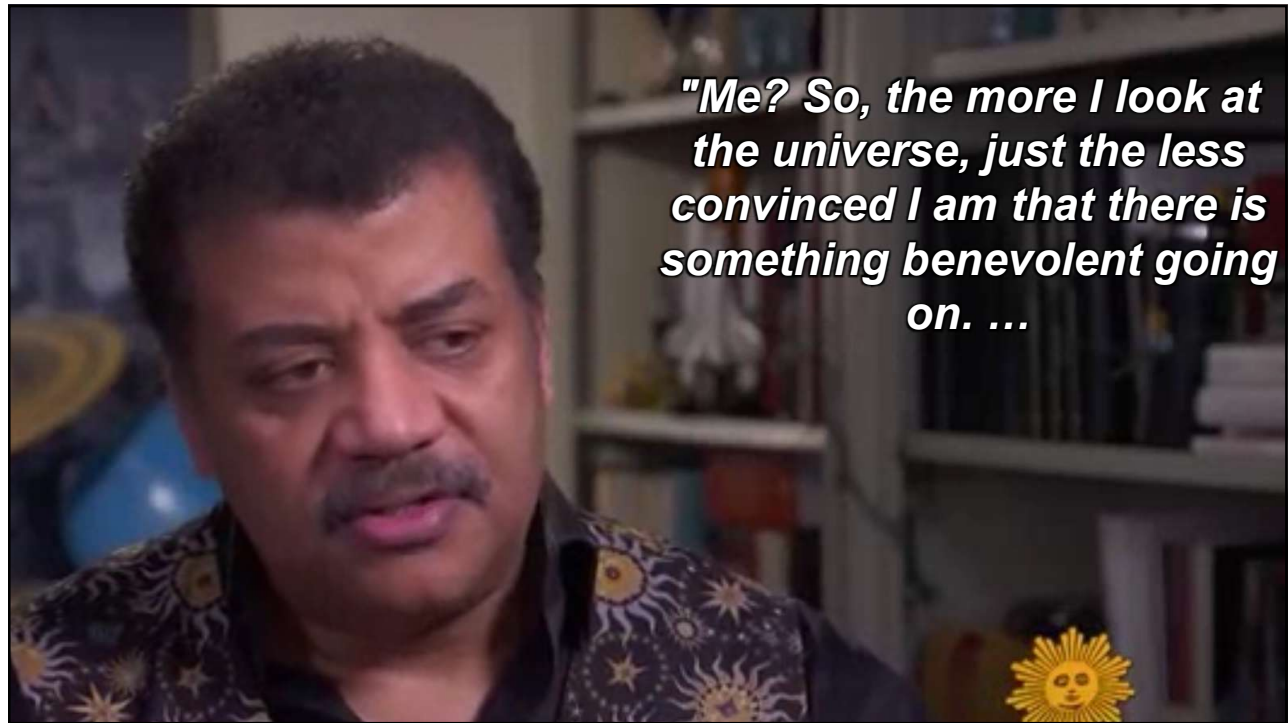


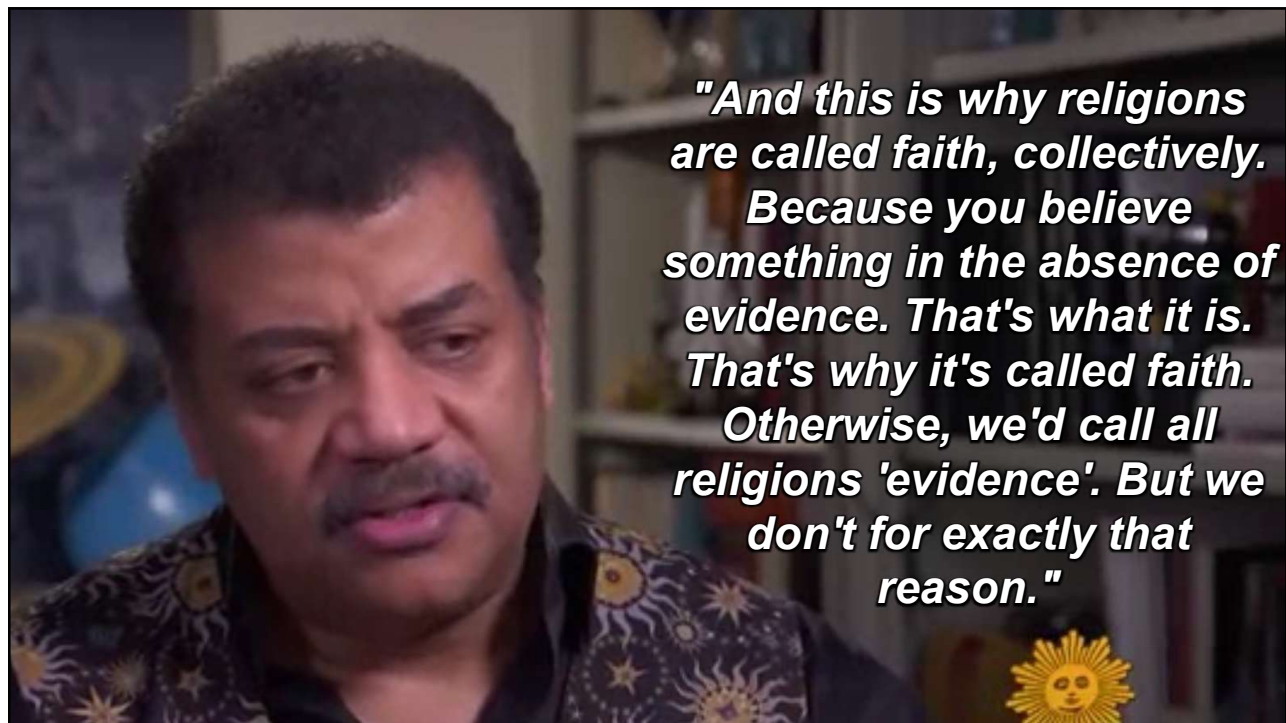
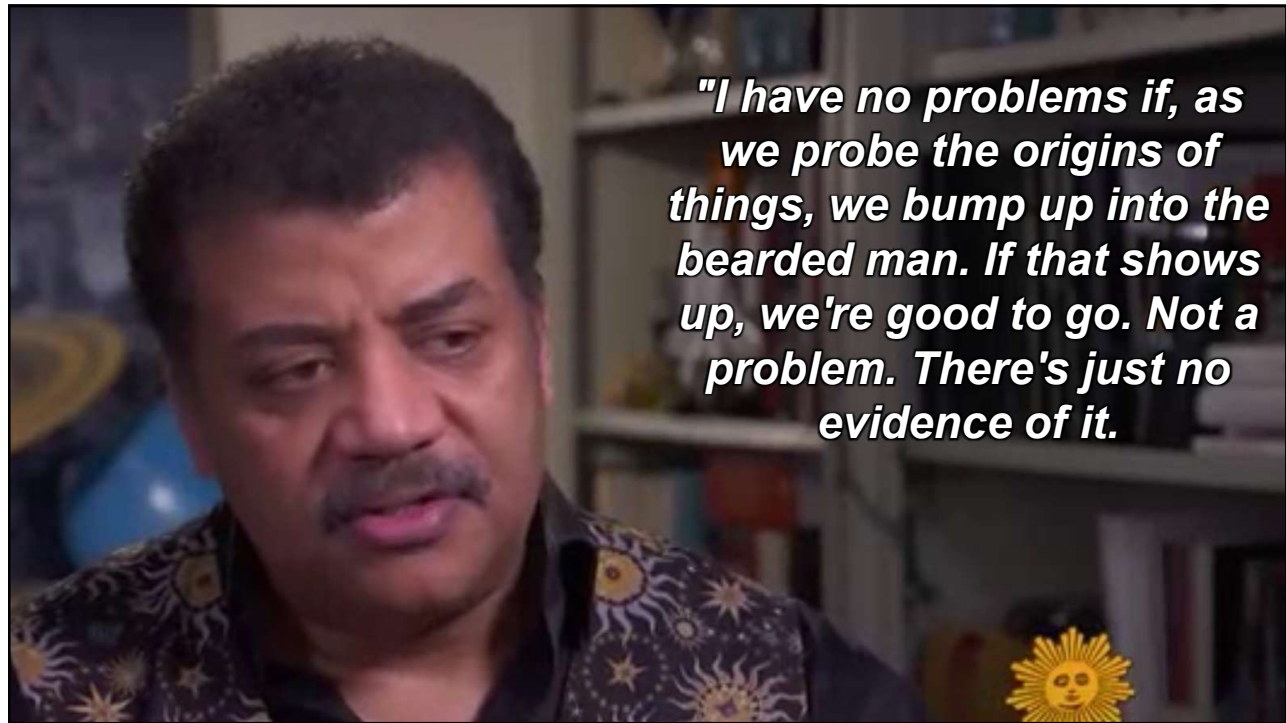


Neil deGrasse Tyson on God

***"Do you
believe in
God;
Creator:?"***

source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0nXG02tpDw&t=13s>,
accessed 02/09/22





Notice the ad hominem / straw man fallacy. The argument Christian apologists are making has nothing to do with the existence of any "bearded man."

Imagine how offended Tyson would be if a Christian tried to refute evolution with the silly argument "if humans evolved from monkeys, why are there still monkeys!?"

Christians no more contend for the existence of a "bearded man" than evolutionists contend that humans evolved from monkeys.

*"I have no problems if, as we probe the origins of things, we bump up into **the bearded man**. If that shows up, we're good to go. Not a problem. There's just no evidence of it."*

Unfortunately Tyson may very well have engaged Christians who have the view that the Christian notion of 'faith' means believing in something in the absence of evidence.

*"And this is why religions are called faith, collectively. Because **you believe something in the absence of evidence**. That's what it is. That's why it's called faith. Otherwise, we'd call all religions 'evidence'. But we don't for exactly that reason."*

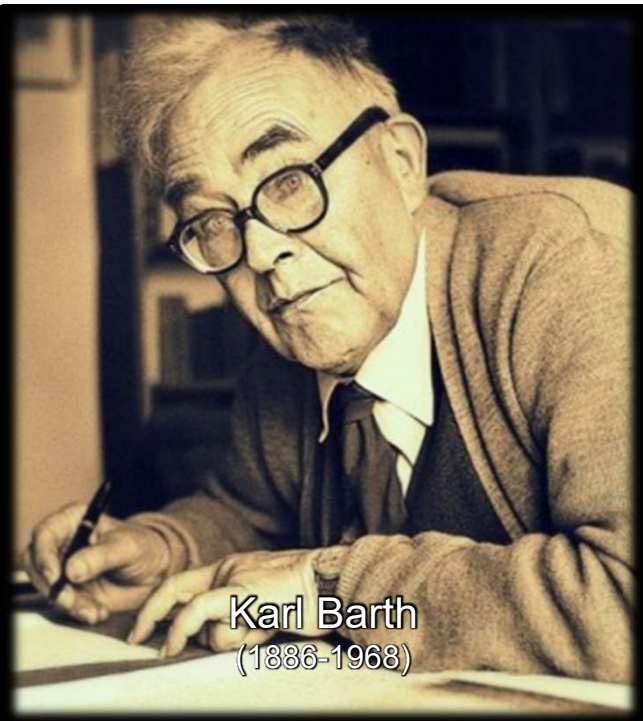
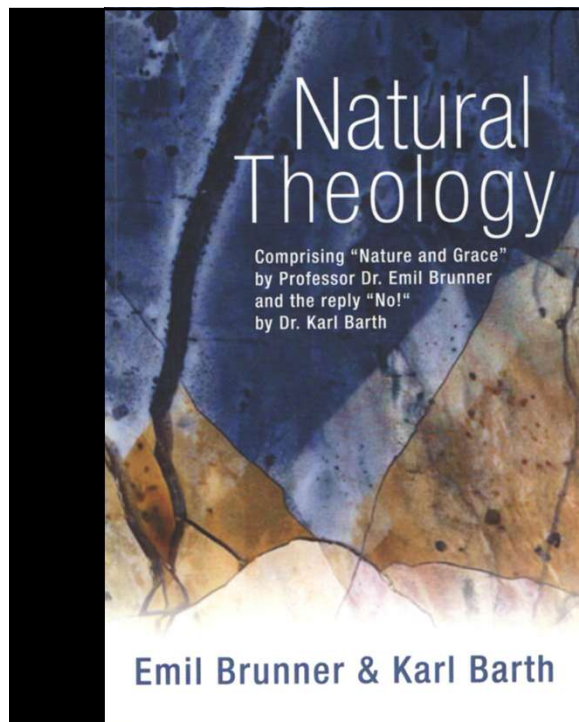
Granted Tyson may very well have engaged Christians who have the view that the Christian notion of 'faith' means believing in something in the absence of evidence.

I hope to show that the classical / traditional view of faith says no such thing.

As a scholar, Tyson should have taken the time to try to understand the best and strongest version of the Christian notion of faith before he tried to give any critique.

*"And this is why religions are called faith, collectively. Because **you believe something in the absence of evidence**. That's what it is. That's why it's called faith. Otherwise, we'd call all religions 'evidence'. But we don't for exactly that reason."*

Neo-Orthodoxy's Misconception of Faith and Reason



Karl Barth
(1886-1968)

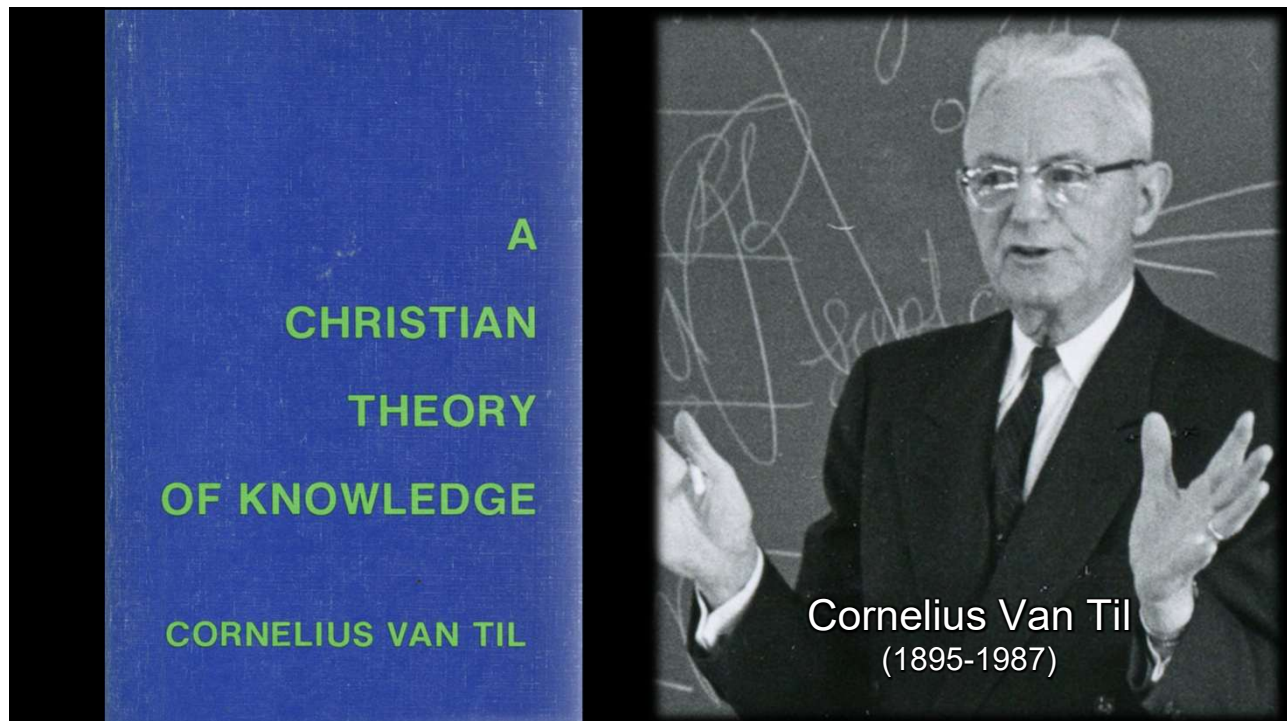
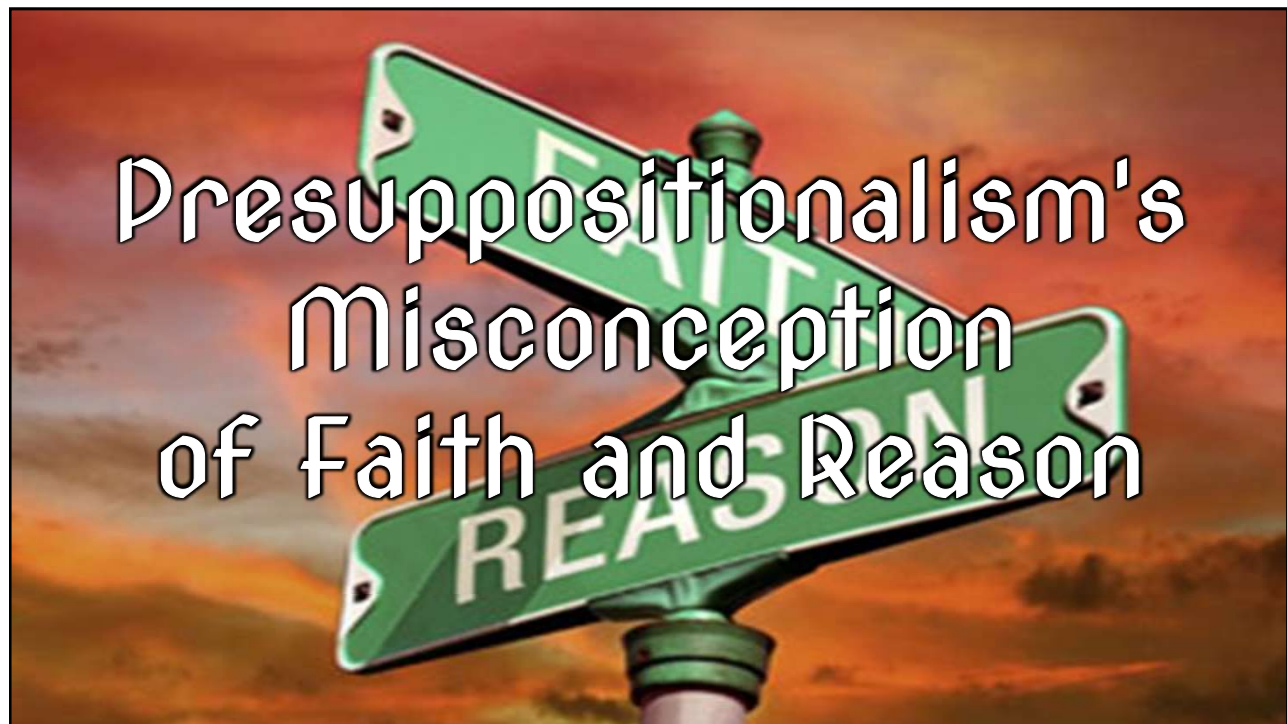
If one occupies oneself with real theology one can pass by so-called **natural theology** only as one would pass by an abyss into which it is inadvisable to step if one does not want to fall. All one can do is to turn one's back upon it as upon the great temptation and source of error, by having nothing to do with it ... "

[Karl Barth, "No!" trans. Peter Fraenkel, in *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock: 2002), 75]

Natural Theology arises from God's General Revelation.

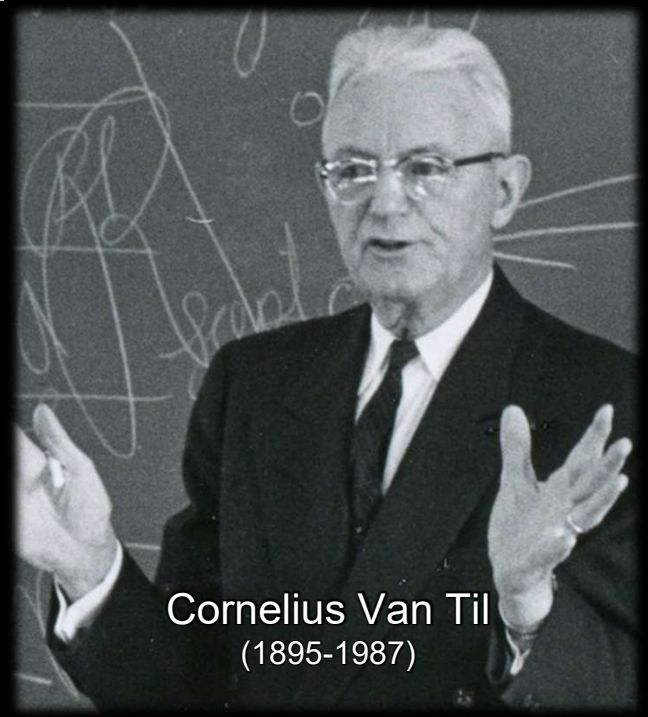
General Revelation: God's revelation of His existence and certain attributes to mankind through His creation.

Special Revelation: God's revelation of Himself through His prophets and apostles and ultimate through His taking on human nature in the Incarnation in Jesus Christ.



**"Reason and fact
cannot be brought
into fruitful union
with one another
except upon the
presupposition of the
existence of God and
his control over the
universe."**

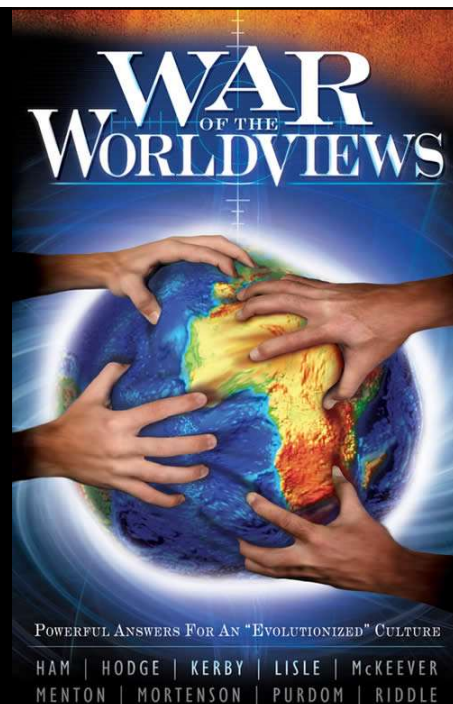
[Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*
(Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing,
1975), 18]



Cornelius Van Til
(1895-1987)



Jason Lisle






Jason Lisle

"We all have the same evidence; but in order to draw conclusions about what the evidence means we use our worldview—our most basic beliefs about the nature of reality. ... Ultimately, biblical creationists accept the recorded history of the Bible as their starting point."

[Jason Lisle, "Can Creationists Be 'Real' Scientists?" in Gary Vaterlaus, ed., *War of the Worldviews: Powerful Answers for an "Evolutionized" Culture* (Hebron: Answers in Genesis, 2005) , 124, 125]



Jason Lisle

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By Dr. Jason Lisle on October 1, 2010; last featured May 19, 2013
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Some Christians have the idea that faith and reason are in conflict, divided by some unbridgeable chasm. They think that one takes over where the other leaves off. In reality, faith and reason work together seamlessly to help us know and love our Maker.

Many Christians perceive a conflict between reason and faith. On the one hand, God tells us to reason (Isaiah 1:18). We are to have a good reason for what we believe, and we are to be always ready to share that reason with other people (1 Peter 3:15). So we attempt to show unbelievers that our belief in the Scriptures is reasonable, justified, and logically defensible. The Bible makes sense.

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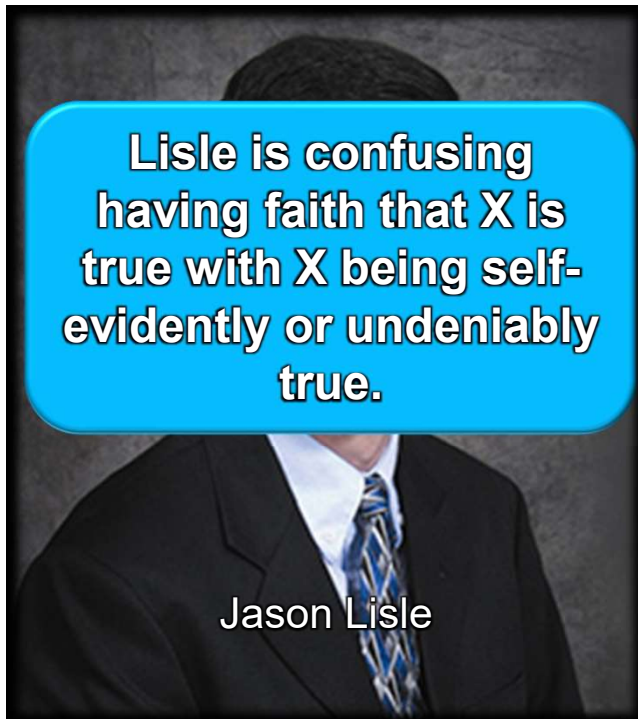
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Jason Lisle

*"Faith is a prerequisite for reason. In order to reason about anything we must have **faith that there are laws of logic** which correctly prescribe the correct chain of reasoning. **Since laws of logic cannot be observed with the senses, our confidence in them is a type of faith.**"*

[Jason Lisle, "Faith and Reason," <https://answersingenesis.org/apologetics/faith-vs-reason/>, accessed 06/13/22]

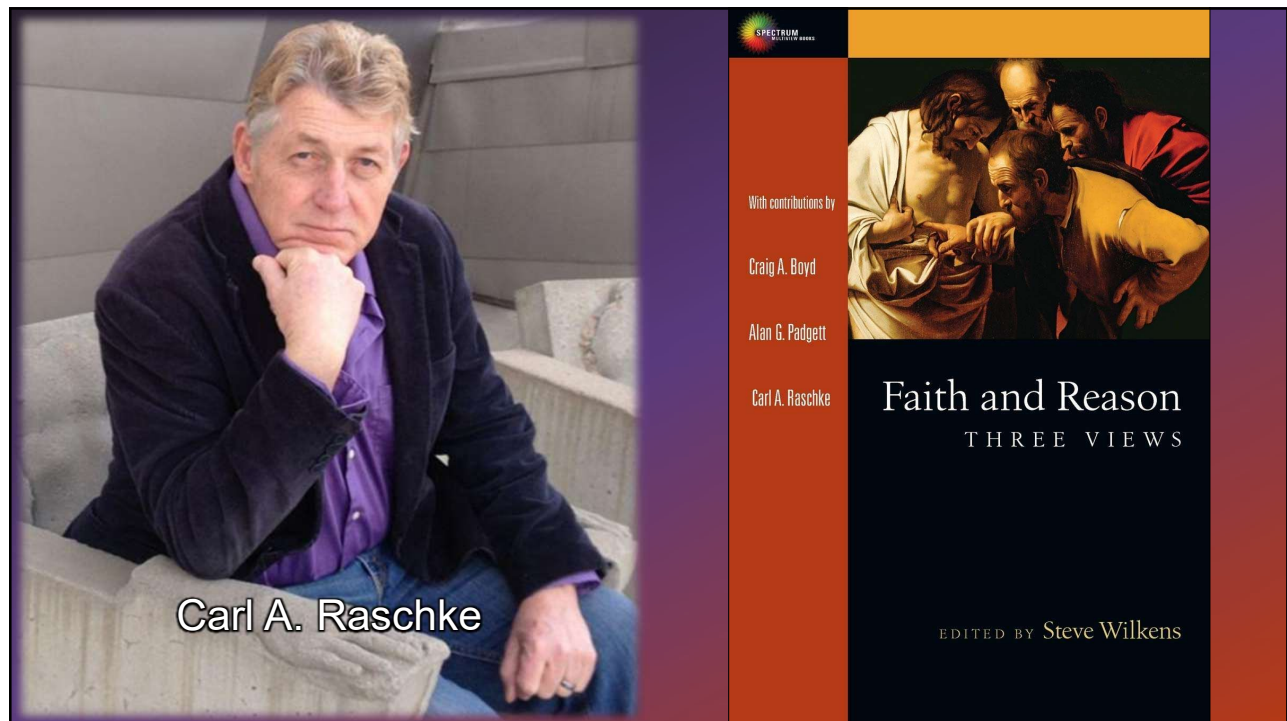
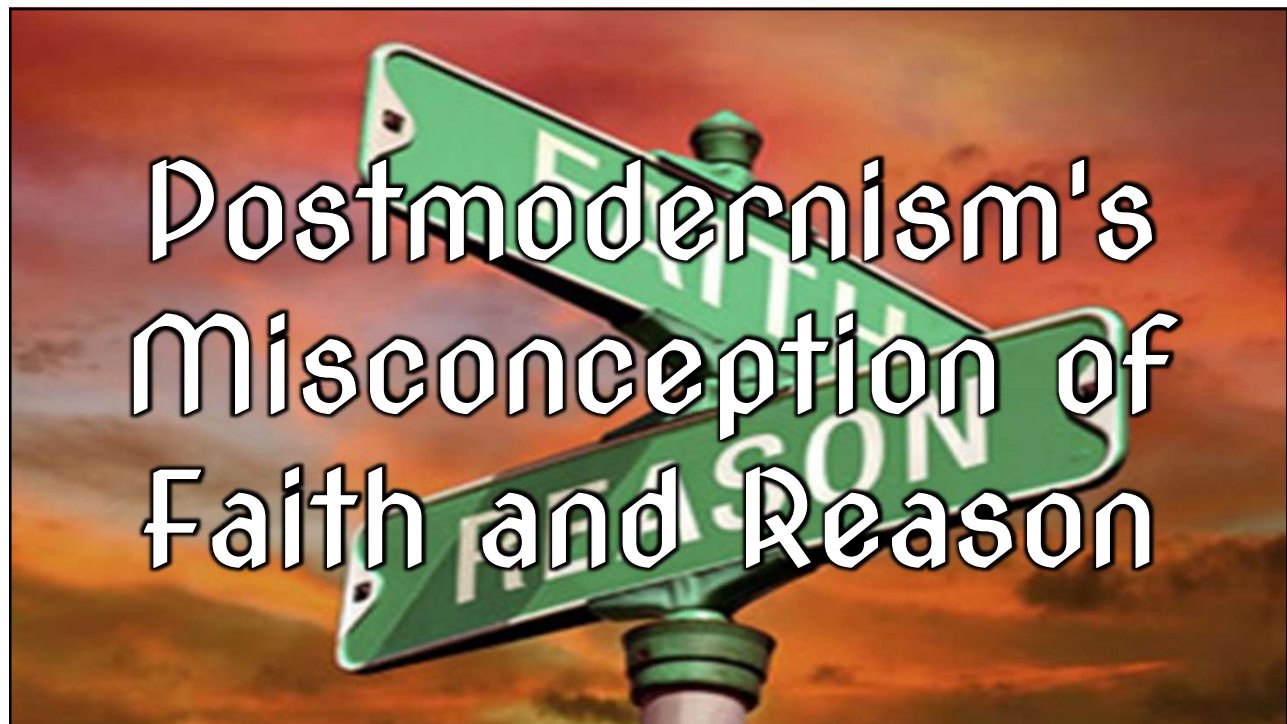



Jason Lisle

Lisle is confusing having faith that X is true with X being self-evidently or undeniably true.

*"Faith is a prerequisite for reason. In order to reason about anything we must have **faith that there are laws of logic** which correctly prescribe the correct chain of reasoning. **Since laws of logic cannot be observed with the senses, our confidence in them is a type of faith.**"*

[Jason Lisle, "Faith and Reason," <https://answersingenesis.org/apologetics/faith-vs-reason/>, accessed 08/13/22]






Carl A. Raschke

"Faith, as well as what we call reason, are not incompatible but belong to separate orders of significance. ... Faith is neither irrational nor suprarational. It has nothing to do with 'reason' per se. ... God does not speak in syllogisms or make philosophical claims that require the fallible human intellect to demonstrate them."


[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 63, emphasis in original]



Carl A. Raschke

"Meaning is ultimately determined by how the intricate structures of communication work together in an overarching manner, and it is up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse in which what was first written or spoken can be fleshed out. The 'truth' of a text can be discerned in its deployability within a particular set of life circumstances."

[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 61, emphasis in original]




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[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 61, emphasis in original]

If "meaning is ultimately determined by now intricate structures of communication work together in an overarching manner" and that "it is up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse," then how are we to take the meaning you were seeking to communicate through your statement here?

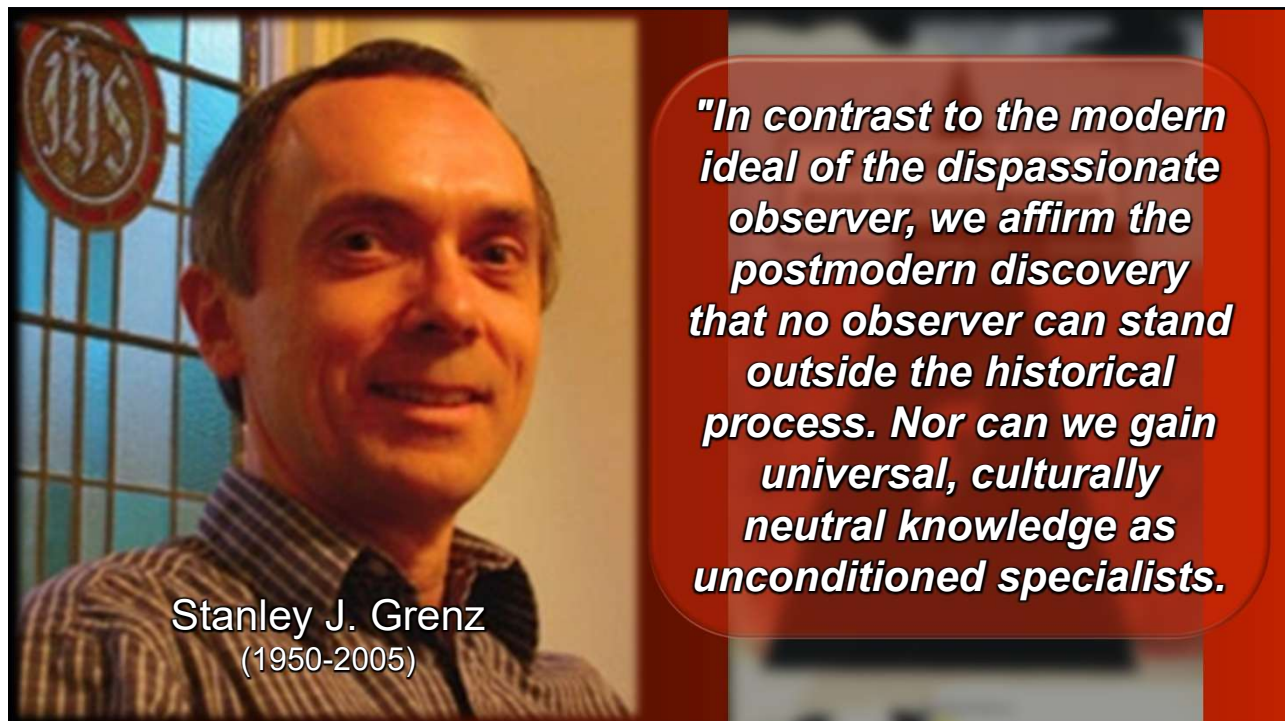
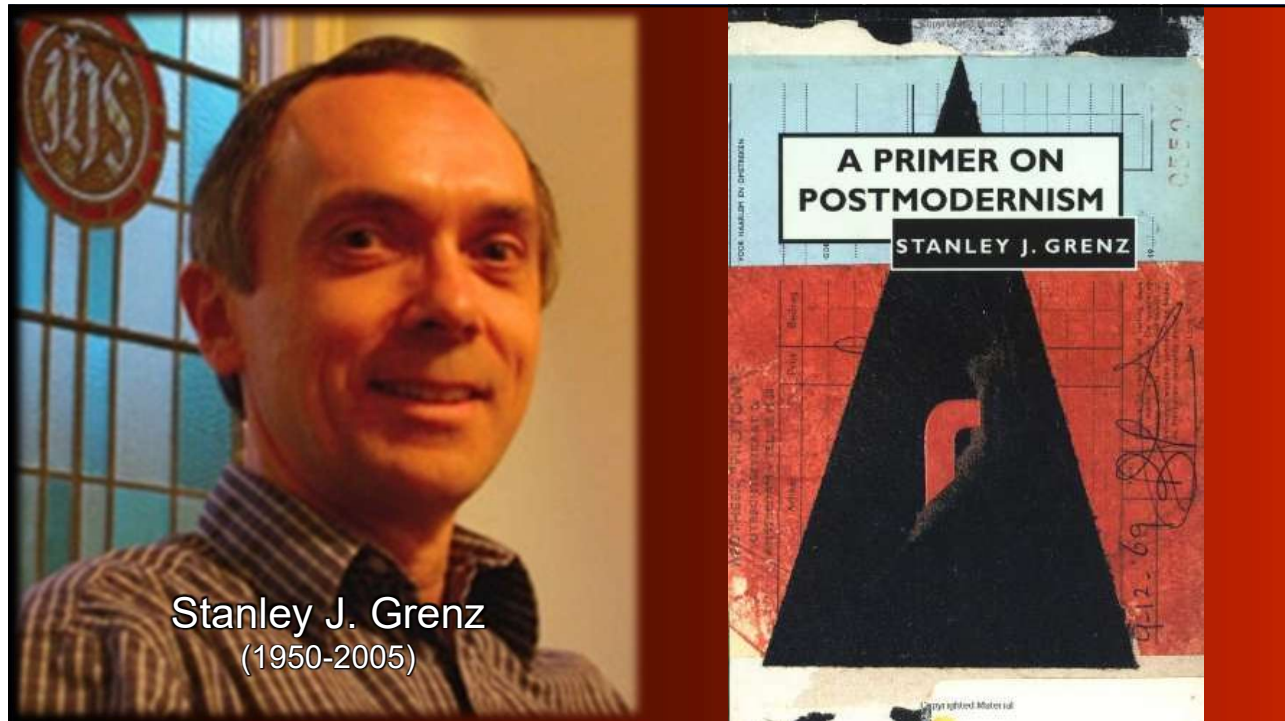
If the interpreter provides a new framework, then why should be take your statement to be objectively true?




Carl A. Raschke

"Propositional logic, whether exercised for the clarification of terms in a formal argument or to prove the validity of some simple assertion, is inadequate to make sense out of the 'revealed' truth of Scripture for one compelling reason: it speaks to the disinterested intellect, whereas God through his Word speaks to the whole person, including the human heart and what in both ancient Greek and later Christian philosophy is known as synderesis, or 'conscience.'"


[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 61, emphasis in original]





Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

"In contrast to the modern ideal of the dispassionate observer, we affirm the postmodern discovery that no observer can stand outside the historical process. Nor can we gain universal, culturally neutral knowledge as unconditioned specialists."



Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

"In contrast to the modern ideal of the dispassionate observer, we affirm the postmodern discovery that no observer can stand outside the historical process. Nor can we gain universal, culturally neutral knowledge as unconditioned specialists."

If what Grenz says is true, then his own statement itself does not come from an observer who stands "outside the historical process" and, thus, the statement is not itself "neutral knowledge" coming from an "unconditioned specialist."


Since this is the case, why should we believe that it is objectively true?



Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

"On the contrary, we are participants in our historical and cultural context, and **all our intellectual endeavors** are unavoidably conditioned by that participation."

[Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 166]



Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

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[Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 166]

If "all our intellectual endeavors" are "unavoidably conditioned" then Grenz's own statement is itself "unavoidably conditioned."

But if his statement is "unavoidably conditioned," then why should we take it as objectively true?



*"Postmodernism stresses the distinction between objectivity of facts, versus objectivity of knowledge or people. It accepts the possible existence of facts outside human context, but argues that **all knowledge is mediated** by an individual and that the experiences, **biases**, beliefs, and identity of that individual **necessarily influence how they mediate any knowledge.**"*

[Dan McGee, "Truth and Postmodernism" downloaded from <https://medium.com/@danmcgee/truth-and-postmodernism-816ea9b3007a>, 05/09/22]

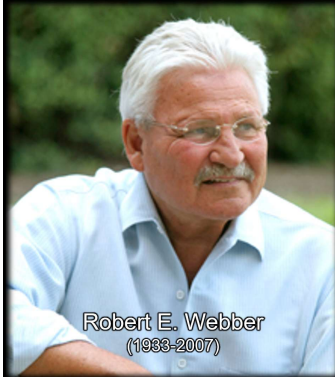


*"Postmodernism stresses the distinction between objectivity of facts, versus objectivity of knowledge or people. It accepts the possible existence of facts outside human context, but argues that **all knowledge is mediated** by an individual and that the experiences, **biases**, beliefs, and identity of that individual **necessarily influence how they mediate any knowledge.**"*

[Dan McGee, "Truth and Postmodernism" downloaded from <https://medium.com/@danmcgee/truth-and-postmodernism-816ea9b3007a>, 05/09/22]

If "all knowledge is mediated" and the individual has "biases" that "necessarily influence how they mediate ANY knowledge" (emphasis added), then this would be true of Dan McGee and the knowledge claim he is making right here.

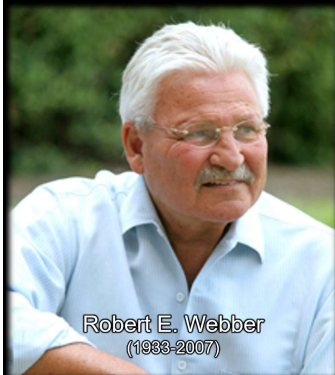
But if this is true of Dan McGee's claim here, why should we take his claim to be objectively true?



Robert E. Webber
(1933-2007)

"This ... points
... to the
postmodern
conclusion that
we deal with
'interpreted
facts.' ...

***Again, if we deal with
"interpreted facts," then
what does that say about
Webber's statement
itself?***

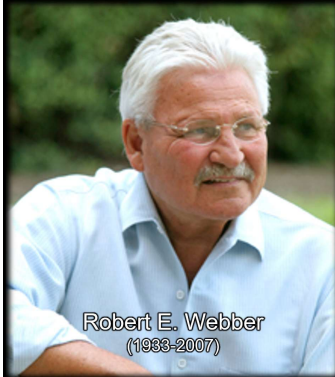


Robert E. Webber
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***Again, if we deal with
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itself?***

***Is his claim here merely
an "interpreted fact?"***



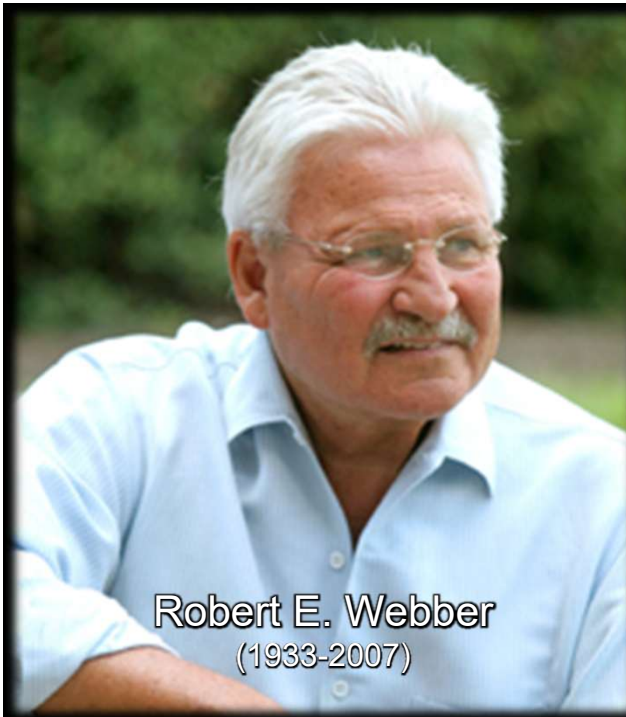
Robert E. Webber
(1933-2007)

"This ... points ... to the postmodern conclusion that we deal with 'interpreted facts.' ..."

Again, if we deal with "interpreted facts," then what does that say about Webber's statement itself?

Is his claim here merely an "interpreted fact?"

If so, then why should we take it as objectively true?



Robert E. Webber
(1933-2007)

"In the postmodern world, both believers and nonbelievers are people of faith."

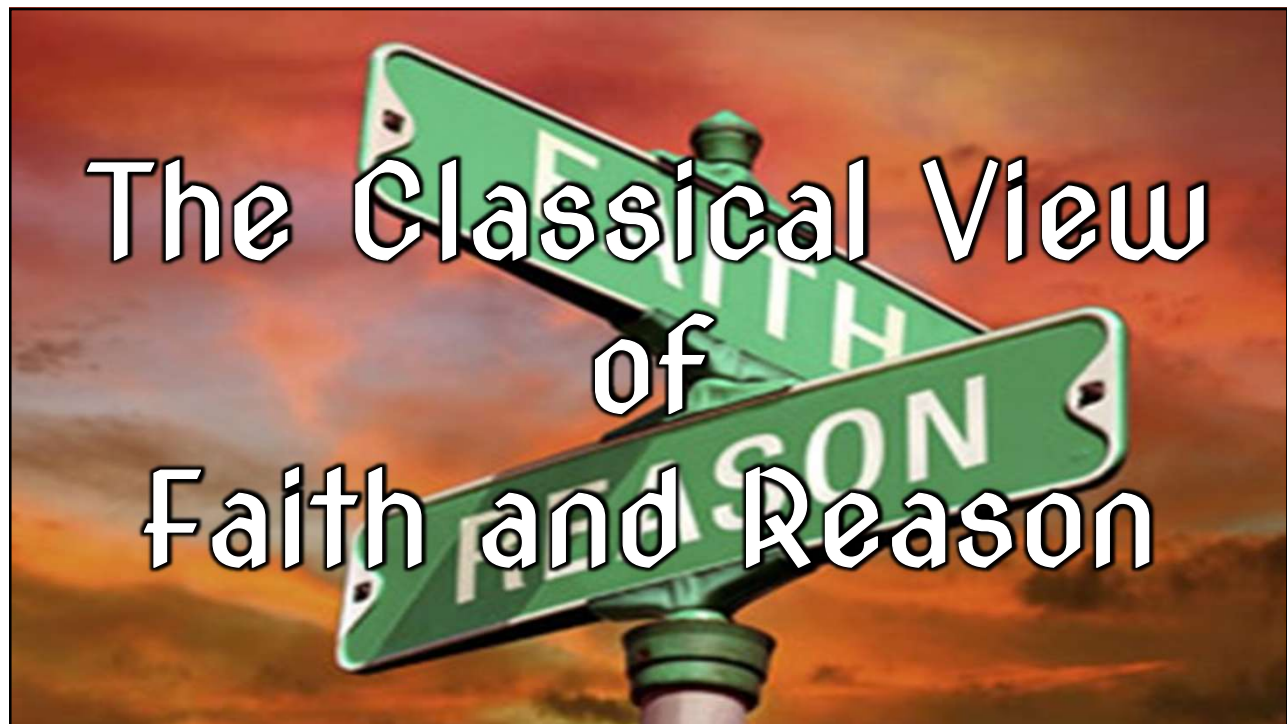
[Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 84]

Homiletics: So then, the Traditional Evangelicals function within a modern worldview that is rationalistic, and propositional.

Webber: "That probably is the most distinguishing feature of the Traditionalists. They've been shaped by the **Enlightenment**. So they work with **modern philosophy**, a modern understanding of science, history, sociology. They're **modernist**, and so they interpret the Christian faith through these **modern categories**."

Webber: "And what's very interesting about Traditional Evangelicals is that the categories through which they interpret the Christian faith are almost regarded as sacred, almost as sacred as the Christian faith itself. So if you say, 'Well, I don't believe in evidential apologetics,' there's something wrong with you."

[<http://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/interviews/webber.asp>, accessed 09/05/20]



Classical View of Faith and Reason

Reason

Believing something on the basis of demonstration.

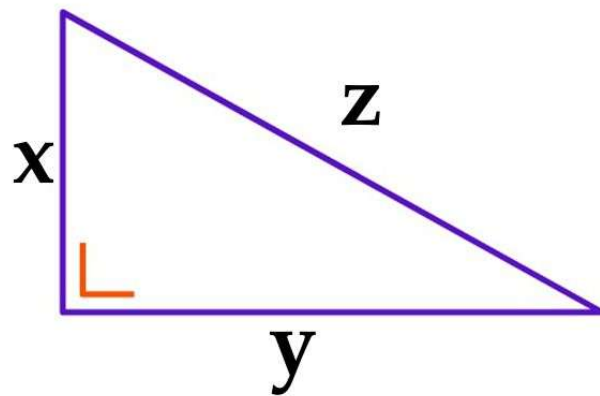
Faith

Believing something on the basis of authority.

***Consider
Fermat's
Last Theorem.***

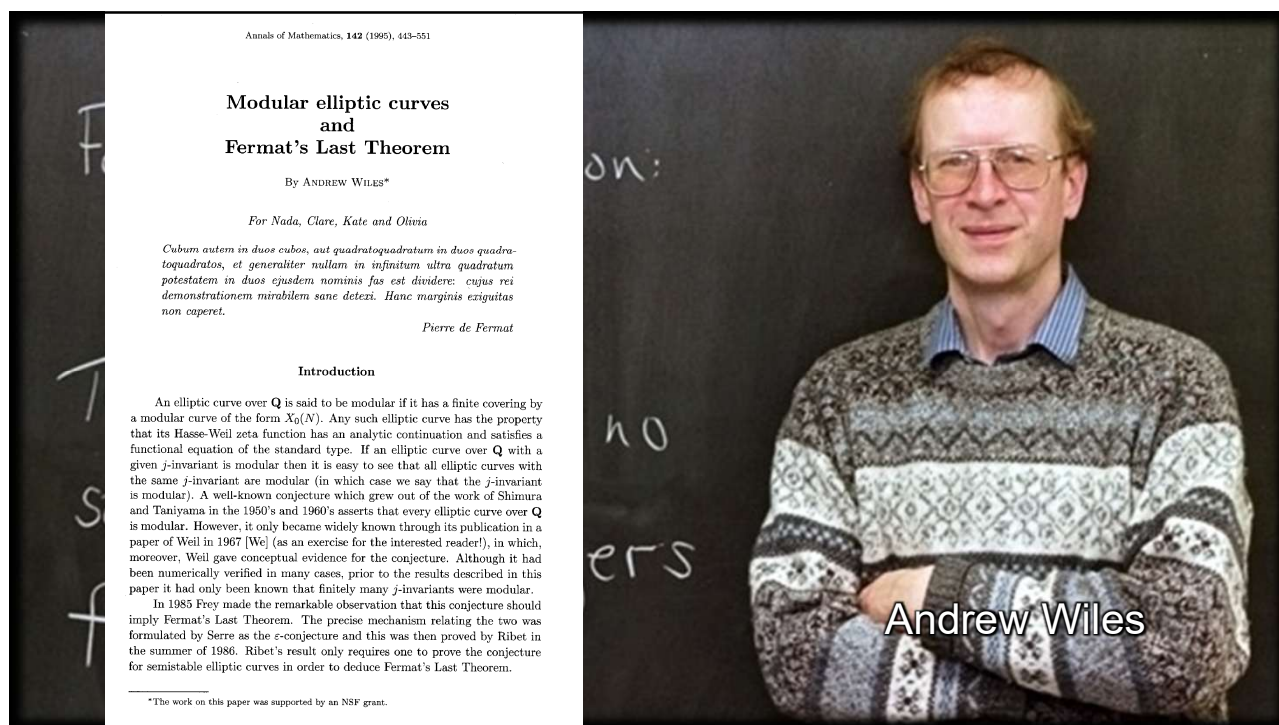
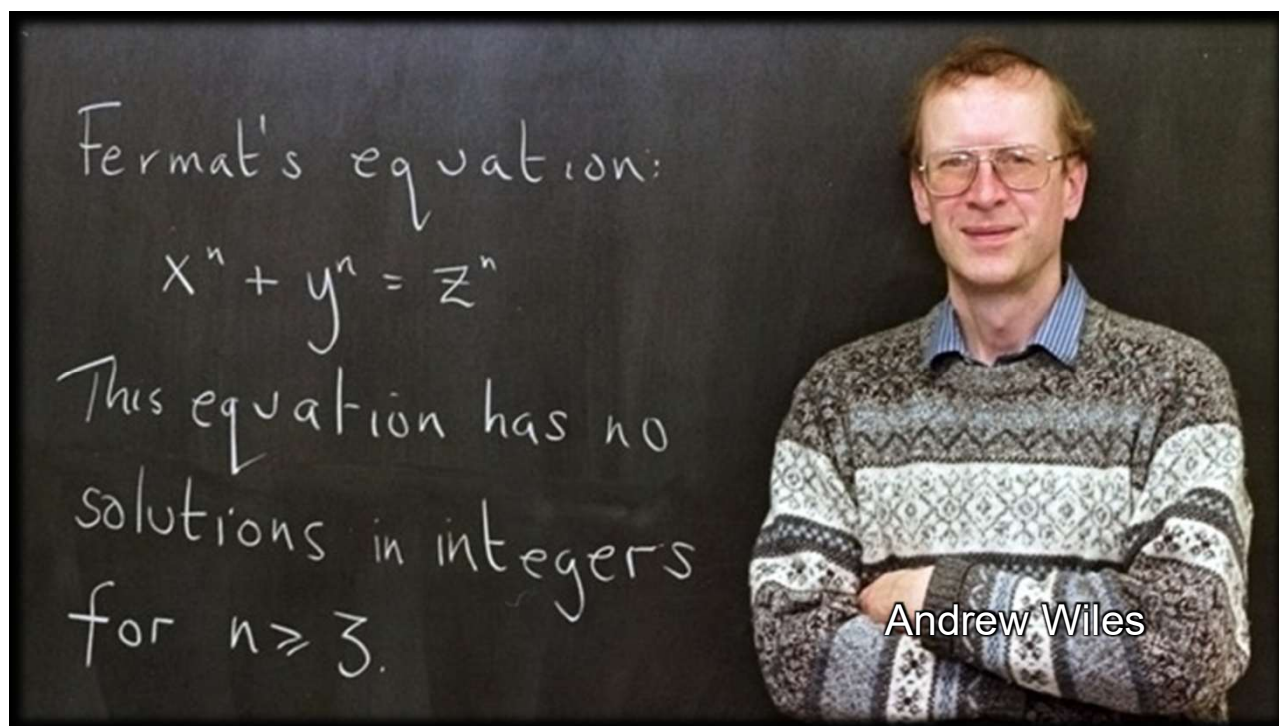


Pierre de Fermat
(1601-1665)



Pythagorean Theorem

$$x^2 + y^2 = z^2$$



Classical View of Faith and Reason

Reason

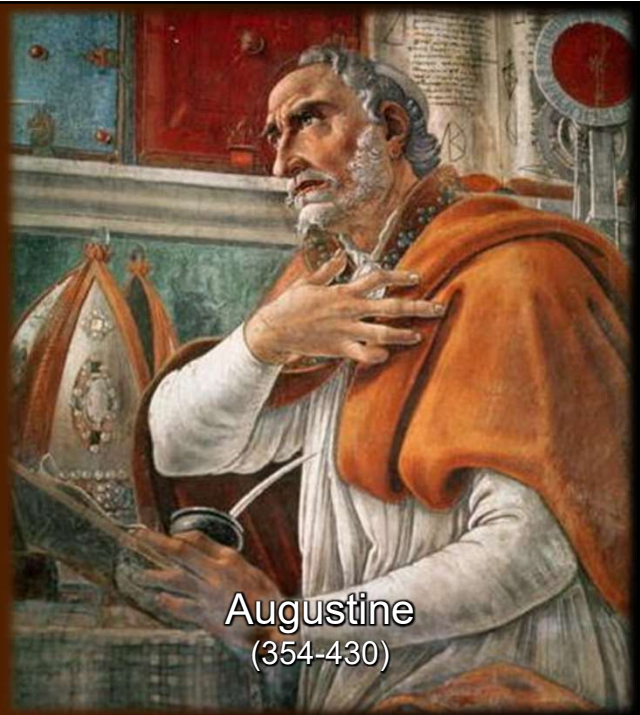
*Believing
something on
the basis of
demonstration.*

Faith

*Believing
something on
the basis of
Divine authority.*

***"For who cannot see
that thinking [reason]
is prior to believing
[faith]? For no one
believes anything
unless he has first
thought that it is to be
believed.***

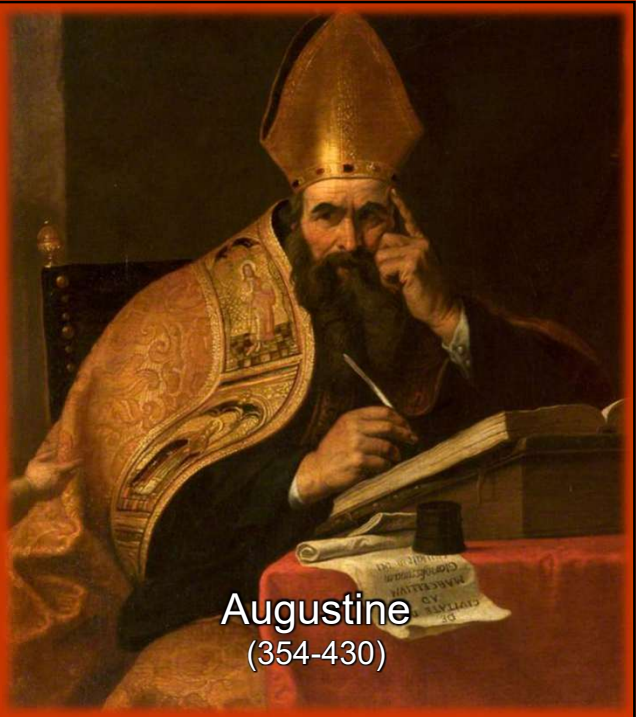
[A Treatise on the Predestination of the Saints, 5: "To Believe is to Think
with Assent" <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105.xxi.ii.v.html>,
accessed 09/30/22]



Augustine
(354-430)

"Heaven forbid, after all, that God should hate in us that by which he made us more excellent than the other animals. Heaven forbid, I say, that we should believe in such a way that we do not accept or seek a rational account, since we could not even believe if we did not have rational souls."

[Letter 120, in *Letters 100-155* (Vol. II/2), trans. Roland Teske (Hyde Park: New City Press), p. 131]



Augustine
(354-430)

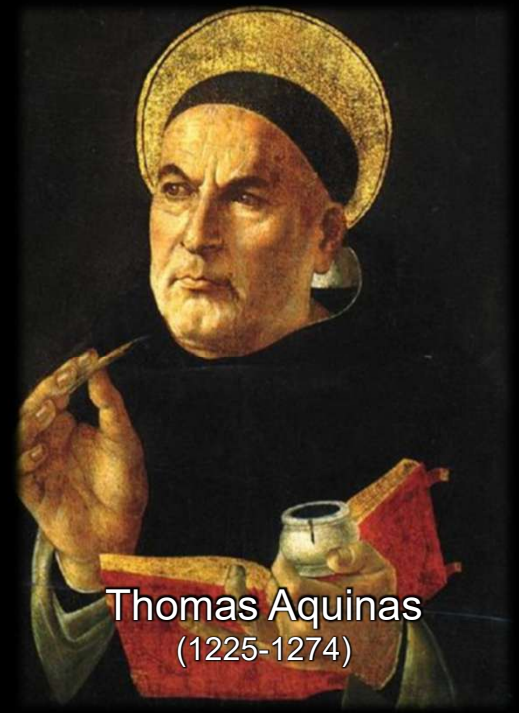
"In certain matters, therefore, pertaining to the teaching of salvation, which we cannot grasp by reason, but which we will be able to at some point, faith precedes reason so that the heart may be purified in order that it may receive and sustain the light of the great reason, which is, of course, a demand of reason!"

[Letter 120, Teske, p. 131]



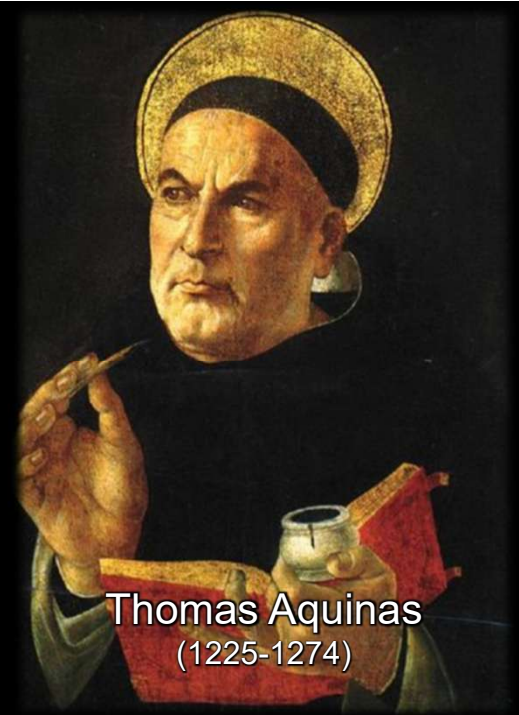
Augustine
(354-430)

"Those things are said to be present to the understanding which do not exceed its capacity so that the gaze of understanding may be fixed on them. For a person gives assent to such things because of the witness of his own understanding and not because of someone else's testimony."



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

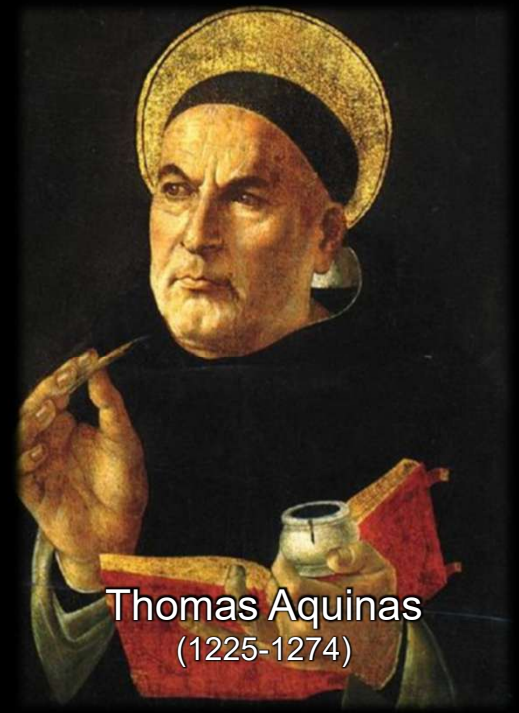
"Those things, however, which are beyond the power of our understanding are said to be absent from the senses of the mind. Hence, our understanding cannot be fixed on them."



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"As a result, we cannot assent to them on our own witness, but on that of someone else. These things are properly called the objects of faith."

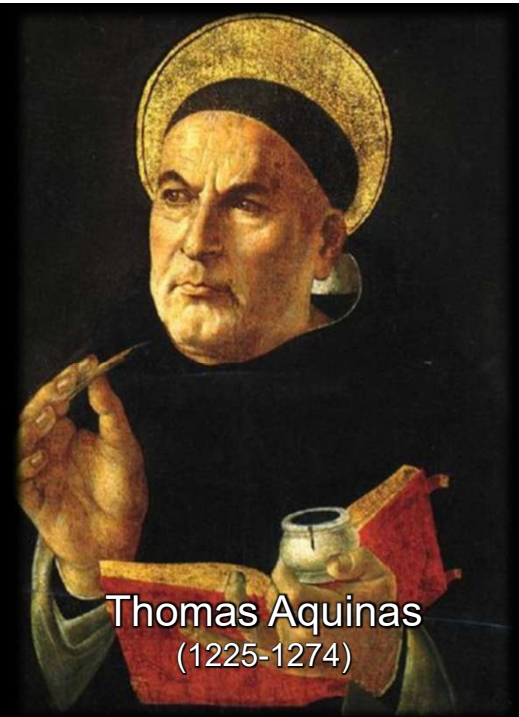
[*Truth*, QXIV, Art. 9, reply, trans. James V. McGlynn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 249-250]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"One who believes [i.e., has faith] gives assent to things that are proposed to him by another person, and which he himself does not see."

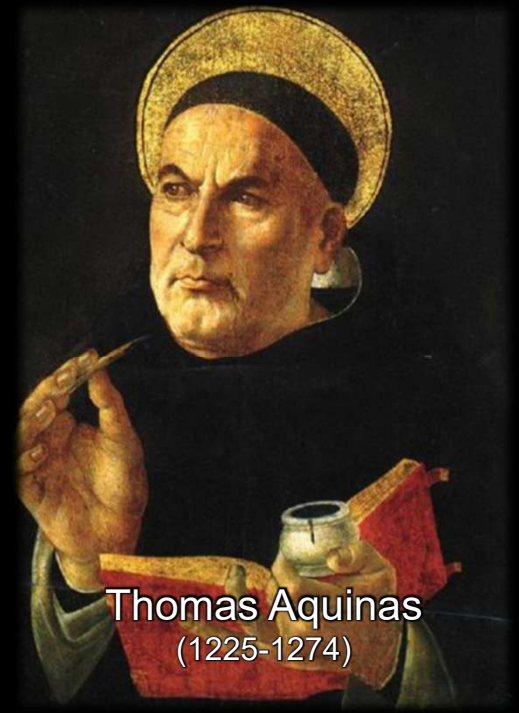
[*Truth*, QXIV, Art. 9, reply, trans. James V. McGlynn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 249-250]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Since man can only know the things that he does not see himself by taking them from another who does see them, and since faith is among the things we do not see, the knowledge of the objects of faith must be handed on by one who sees them himself. Now, this one is God, Who perfectly comprehends Himself, and naturally sees His essence."

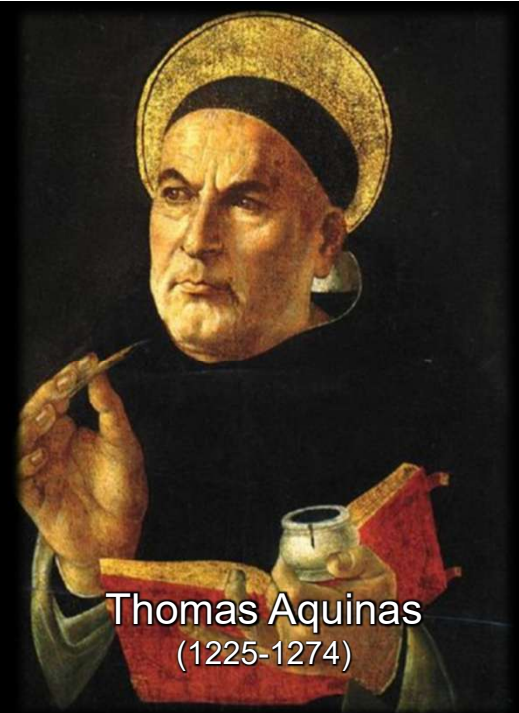
[SCG, 3, 154 [1], trans. Vernon J. Bourke, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press), 239]



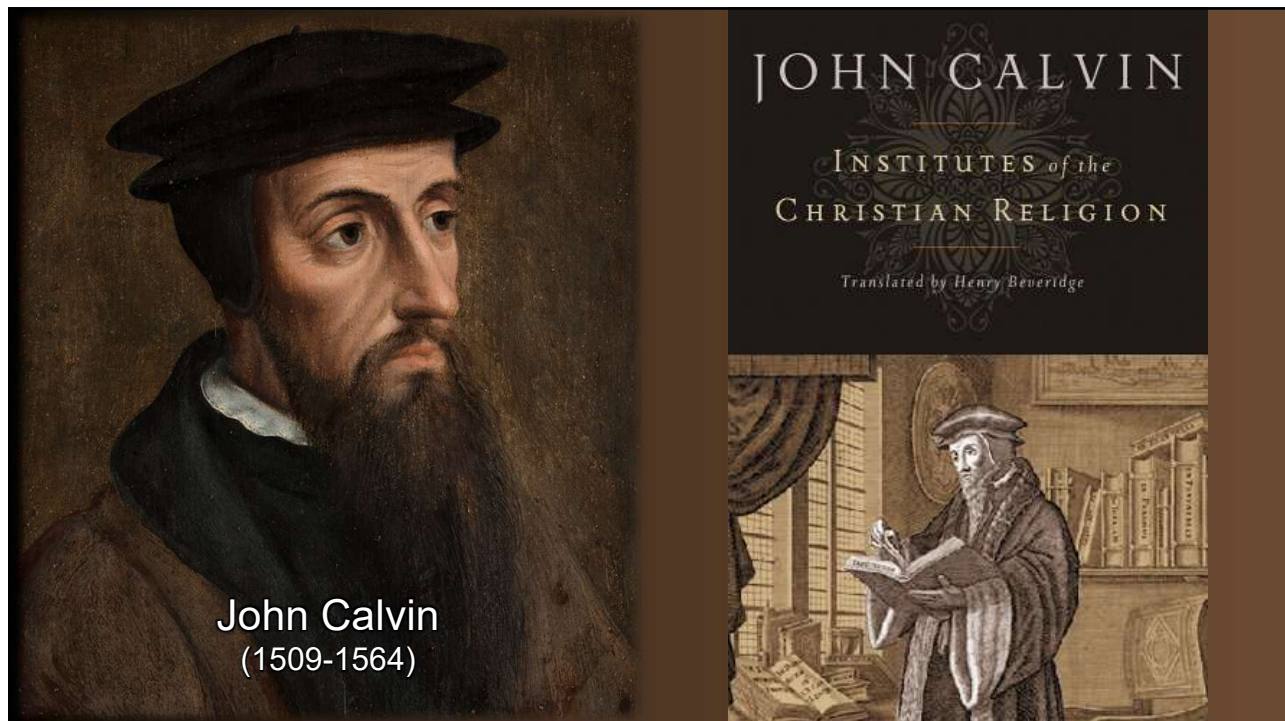
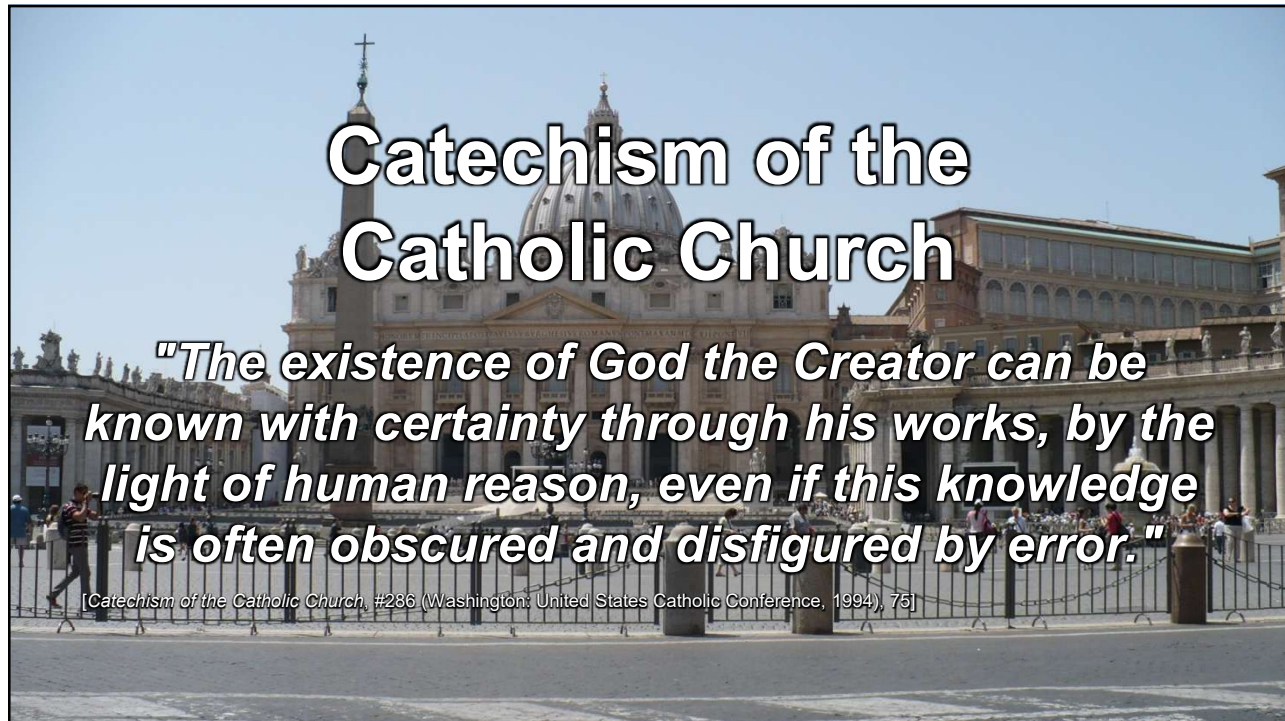
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"There are some intelligible truths to which the efficacy of the agent intellect extends, like the principles we naturally know and the conclusions we deduce from them. In order to know them we do not need a new intellectual light; the light endowed by nature suffices. There are some truths, however, which do not come within the range of these principles, like the truths of faith, which transcend the faculty of reason, also future contingents and other matters of this sort. The human mind cannot know these without being divinely illumined by a new light supplementing the natural light."

[Faith, Reason and Theology: Questions I-IV of His Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987), 17]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

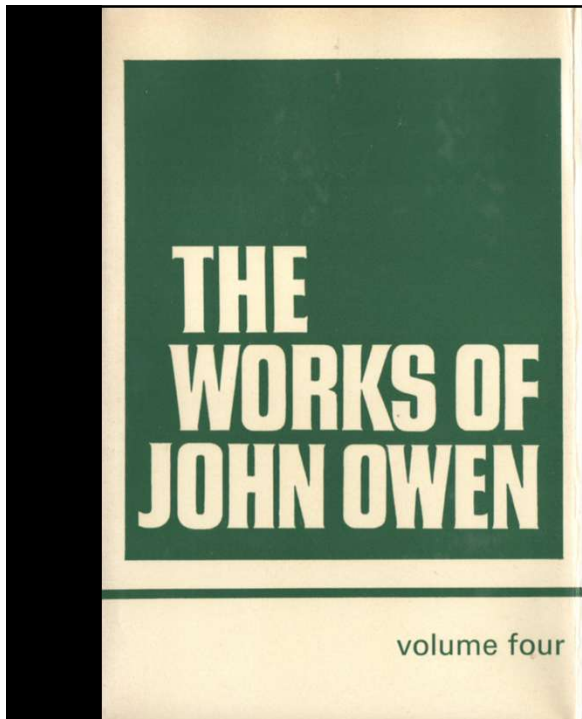




John Calvin
(1509-1564)

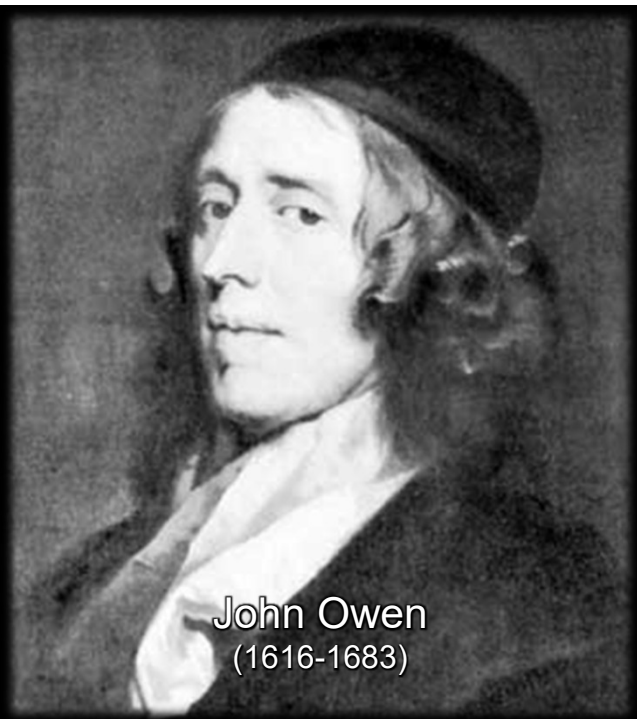
"Therefore in reading the profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator."

[Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2.2.15, trans. Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans), 236]



THE WORKS OF JOHN OWEN

volume four



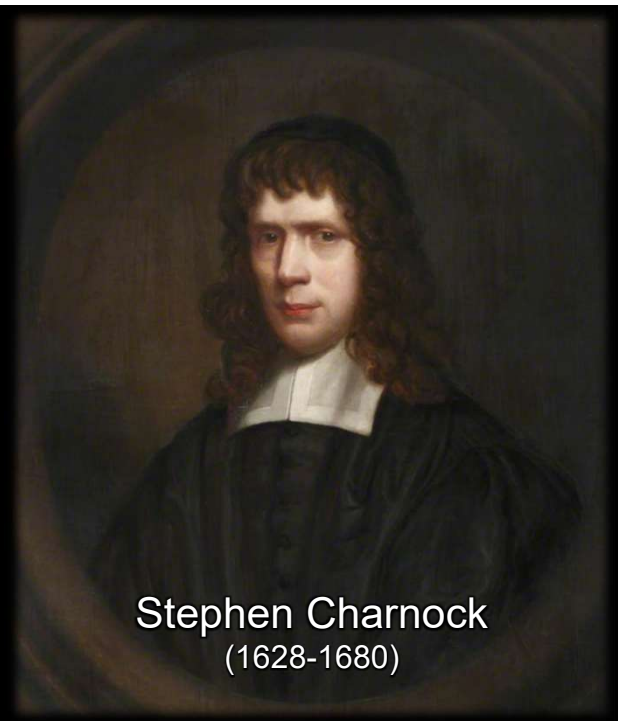
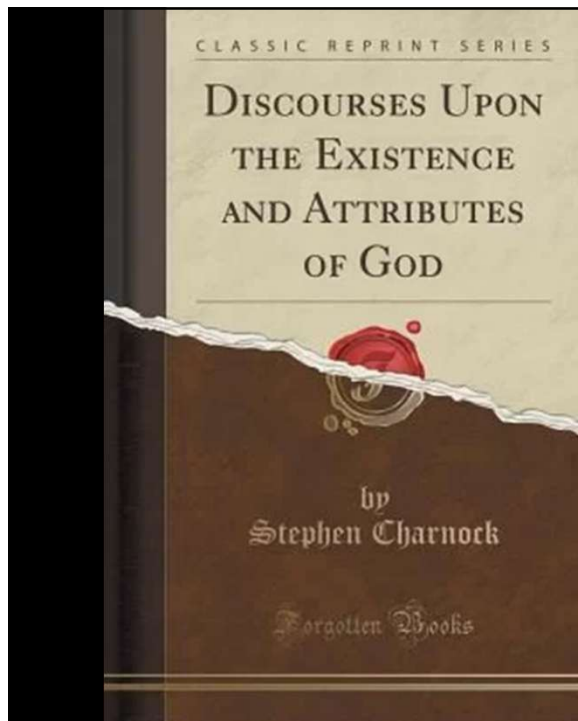
John Owen
(1616-1683)

"There are sundry cogent arguments, which are taken from external considerations of the Scripture, that evince it on rational grounds to be from God. ... and ... are... necessary unto the confirmation of our faith herein against temptations, oppositions, and objections."

[John Owen, "The Reason of Faith," in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 4, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 20]



John Owen
(1616-1683)



Stephen Charnock
(1628-1680)

"Men that will not listen to Scripture ... cannot easily deny natural reason There is a natural as well as a revealed knowledge, and the book of the creatures is legible in declaring the being of a God"

[Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 27.]



Stephen Charnock
(1628-1680)

"God in regard of his existence is not only the discovery of faith, but of reason. God hath revealed not only his being, but some sparks of his eternal power and godhead in his works, as well as in his word. ... It is a discovery of our reason ... and an object of our faith ... it is an article of our faith and an article of our reason."

[Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 27.]



Stephen Charnock
(1628-1680)

I Am Put Here for the Defense of the Gospel

Dr. Norman L. Geisler: A Festschrift in His Honor

edited by
Terry L. Miethe

CHAPTER 12

Defending the Handmaid

How Theology Needs Philosophy

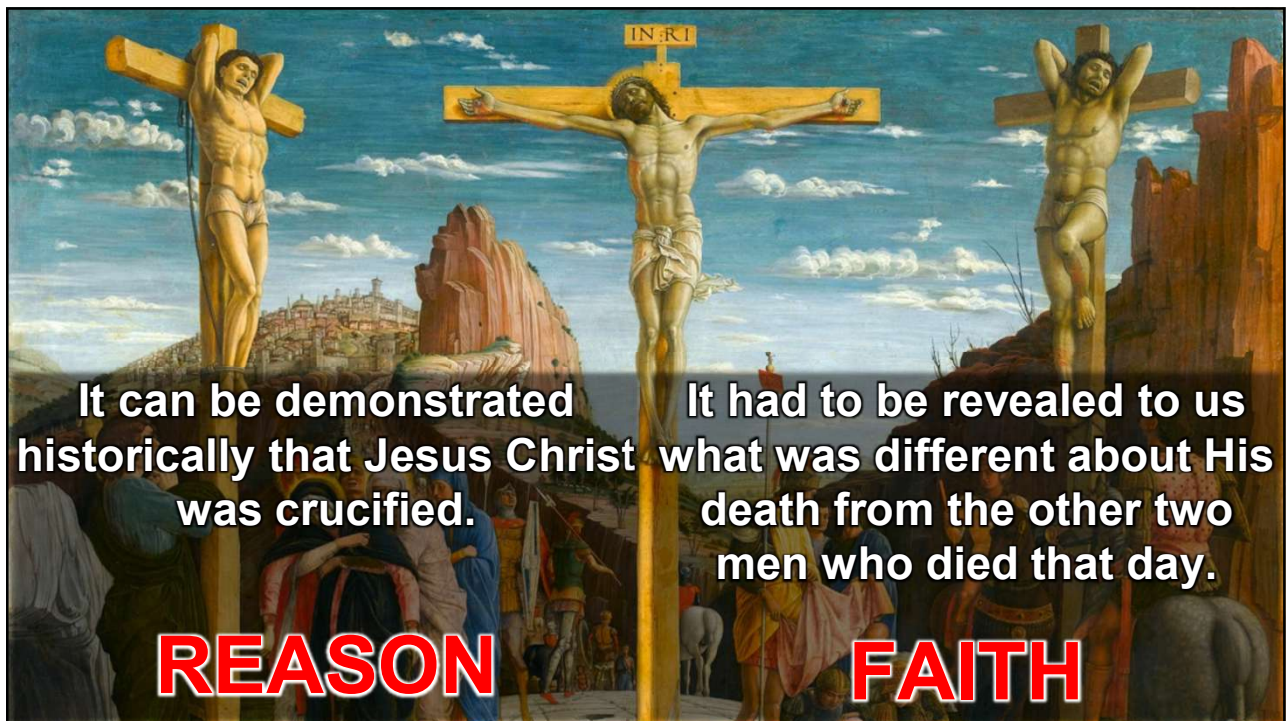
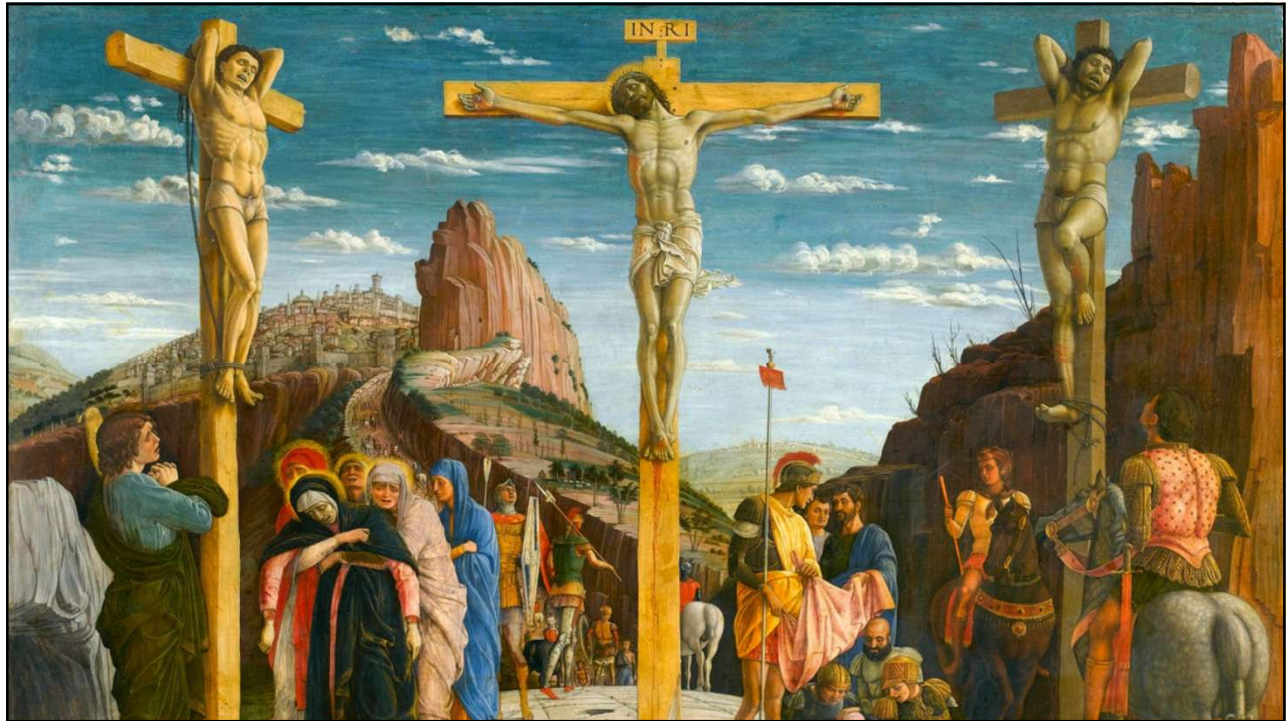
by Richard G. Howe

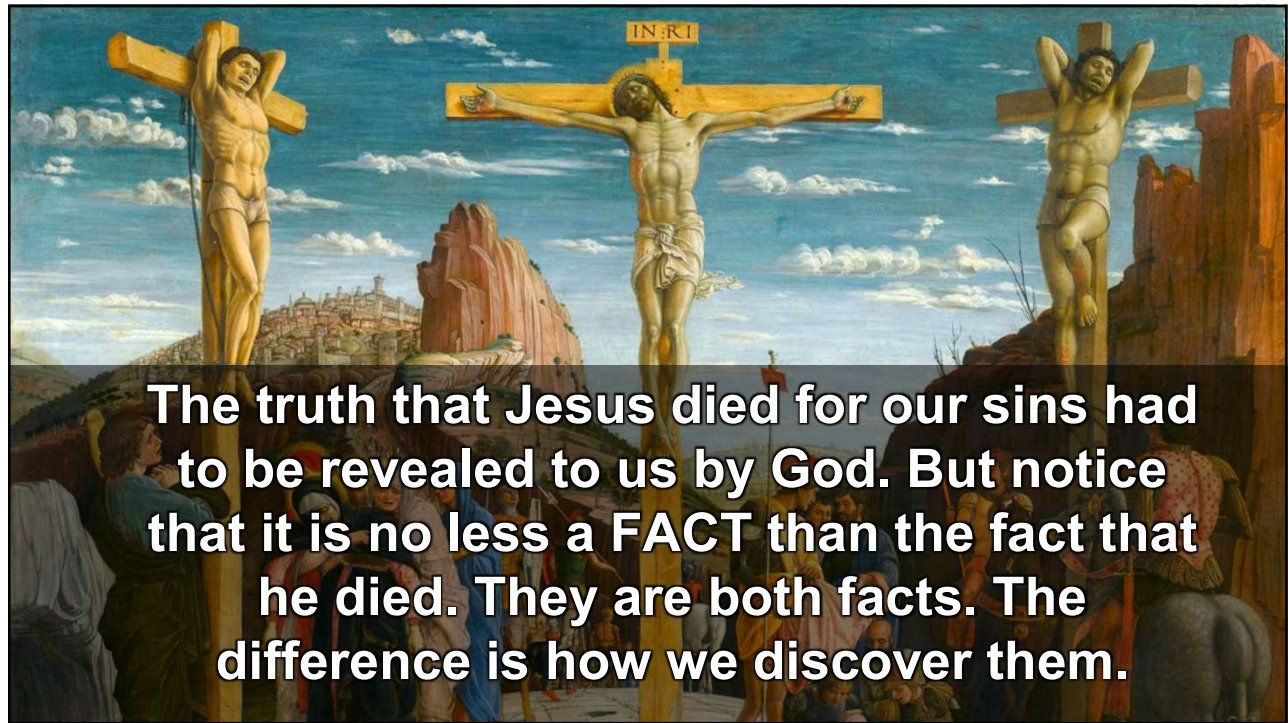
Prolegomena

How Norman Geisler Helped Me in the Direction of My Life

I WAS LED TO Christ in high school by Christian friends of mine. I grew spiritually about as much as one might expect a teenager to grow, becoming involved with my youth group at church and pursuing my interesting in drumming. After graduation, I headed to the community college to study music. I tell people that I learned enough music to annoy everyone around me. When it came time to consider senior college, Christian friends of mine told me that one could go to college and study the Bible. This sounded like a tremendous prospect to me, so off I went. I attended my denomination's flagship Christian college in my state. It was my first encounter with theological liberalism. My church had not prepared me to wrestle with issues like Higher Criticism. As a result, I intellectually lost my faith in college. Looking back on that experience, I saw a range of responses among my friends who were confronted with the same intellectual challenges. Some of my friends with whom I had prayed in high school mockingly "asked Jesus to come out of their hearts" and repudiated their Christianity altogether. Others embraced the skepticism of the critical methods and settled for a more mainstream liberal Christianity. Neither of these options seemed possible for me. I was not capable of completely abandoning my faith, as shipwrecked as it was. But neither was I comfortable with any sort of liberal theology. Others of my friends tried to amputate their intellect from their faith and reject any attempt to come to terms with the challenges and questions posed by critical thinking. That, too, was not appealing to me. I knew that I could not embrace a faith that would not stand up to reason. With this, I lived in dissonance for over a year.

The short version of the story has me being intellectually rescued by a handful of apologists. Through their books and lectures, God brought into my life people like Josh McDowell, R. C. Sproul, and Norman Geisler. To this mix were added the insights and maturity of older brothers who had since come to the Lord. Being back on track, I began to consider the continued direction of my education. A short stint at a local





The truth that Jesus died for our sins had to be revealed to us by God. But notice that it is no less a FACT than the fact that he died. They are both facts. The difference is how we discover them.