

Every Thought Captive

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DEDICATION

To my Lord God, Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ,
who is The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

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To the Reader

"2 Corinthians 10:5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Publication often begin with a brief description the project's purpose, design, and sometimes descriptions of motive, purpose, and intended audience. They may include a statement of the problem, if in fact there is one, or a prolegomenon that introduces the work as well as the means or methodology applied and to what end.

One method many publishers use is to start with what is not covered and perhaps why related, important topics are omitted. Then after this, a clear statement of what is the subject matter actually is may/should follow.

However, even before this, the reader may wish to know something about the author. The author of this work is not an authority, not a teacher nor preacher,

not a philosopher nor theologian, and makes no claims to biblical expertise.

The Reader will have to judge the value, if any, based on whatever worldview the reader brings to the project.

What then is the book about?

Every Thought Captive is a thought-experiment about epistemology, the theory of knowledge. It rests on this biblical truth: As a person thinks, so is that person. (Proverbs 23:7) The form of a thought-experiment can be similar to a counterfactual conditional: If *something or other is the case*, then what must follow logically? With a thought-experiment thus phrased there is no attempt to prove a theory, doctrine, or position, but to explore the logical consequences that flow from an assumption that, if true, would provide a plausible thesis worth exploring.

Two epistemological presuppositions are examined in the following chapters. Part 1 describes the epistemology of self-reference, labelled Adam-centered Epistemology (ACE). Part 2 is an epistemological description of God-centered epistemology (GCE) Both epistemologies, ACE and GCE, are tested in the final section of the project using criteria developed by philosopher and theologian, Ronald H. Nash, in his excellent volume, "Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy."

The third and final section of this project includes a summary the logical implications of each epistemology, and discusses the biblical method for living in the tension of two laws: the Law of Sin and the Law of Grace.

If any person seeks to live governed by CCE, then three things are required: self-denial; bearing a cross; and following Jesus Christ.

"Luke 9:23. And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (See also, Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34)

Biblical texts and commentaries on these requirements are offered for the Reader.

With this in mind, what is the proposed means and goal or purpose of the work? The method is worldview analysis of each epistemology. The goal is a consideration of the Christian's life of sanctification, a life regulated by two laws, the law of sin and the law of grace.

As such, this project is the author's witness to the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 4:6) The Reader to whom this truth is of value, ultimate value, is the audience.

A Note on Repetition

One of the oddities and, perhaps, obviously noticed by the reader is the repetitious language used in this project not only in the terminology of certain words

and phrases, but in the repeated use of a biblical texts throughout the development of the thought-experiment. The reader should keep the following in mind.

First, biblical passages when repeated are designed to highlight different applications or to support related but different logical implications that make different claims from previous applications, uses, or claims.

Second, the nature of thought-experiment projects calls for establishing conclusions drawn from related but different premises as thought develops a thesis in the construction of a model.

Third, although repetitions are useful to make emphasis of certain key propositions, emphasis alone without consideration of (1) and (2) above should not be overdone. Obviously, once some point or other has been establish, there is no need to re-establish it unless the considerations of (1)and (2) above are necessary.

Thus, the author suggests that the reader consider what other application or different conclusion the author has in mind when the reader encounters the repetition of language in one part and repeated in similar language in another part of this thought-experiment before dismissing language previously used in another part of this project.

One last note. The Reader will discover the use of acronyms throughout the following pages. All make reference to epistemologies according to Adam, man, God, and Christ. ACE; MCE; GCE; CCE, and SSE.

ACE should be read as Adamic, or Adam-centered epistemology.

MCE is the acronym for Man-centered epistemology.

GCE stands for God-centered epistemology, or way of knowing.

CCE is Christ centered epistemology.

SCE is Self-centered way of knowing.

The first two and last acronyms are used synonymously in most cases, depending on the context.

Preface

A Thought Experiment

Epistemology is at the heart of any inquiry as to knowledge and truth. As Gordon Clark wrote, when any person makes a claim, particularly about theological or philosophical ideas, an appropriate question to ask is "How do you know?" Of course, there are other important questions one could ask concerning knowing and learning: definitions, beliefs, doctrines, and much more, but the most important is how one claims to know? How do you know. or How did you learn what you claim to know?

"While the question of how we can know God is fundamental in the philosophy of religion, there lies behind it in general philosophy the ultimate question, How can we know anything at all? ... The answer to this question, technically called the theory of epistemology, controls all subject matter claiming to be intelligible or cognitive." (Clark, Reference 1, p. 1)

In this project, epistemology's How do you know? is the starting point for the task of taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. It is within the

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framework of epistemological inquiry that the author seeks to establish not only what can be known about reality, but how one comes to know what is claimed. Philosophy, however, is neither the starting point nor the foundation for this thought project. Rather the Scriptures are key, for they introduce readers to the reality of epistemology's beginning, in the book of Genesis.

As the Introduction will make clear, every thought project begins, that is to say, has a starting point or an axiom. The axiom in this work is the Scripture: The Bible alone is the Word of God without error, true in all it teaches, proclaims, affirms, or implies. This axiom means not only that God has spoken, but that God is Truth. As such, truth is eternal, and true knowledge of God and reality are found in the revelation of God, the Scriptures. It is within these conceptual boundaries that the author proposes to take thought about God and reality and subject it to the test of God's Revelation. The name for this is *Scripturalism*.

The Introduction also appeals to worldviews. Worldviews are assumed, not proven. A worldview is a set of assumptions taken as self-evident or assumed to be true propositions. Worldviews constitute a frame of reference with which the person thinks, communicates, interacts with others, and comes to an understanding of what is ultimate reality. Worldview questions vary in categories and number, but most ask: What is man? What is the basis for morality (right or wrong)? What

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is the significance of history or where is history going? and What is the significance of death, or life for that matter? Worldview epistemology seeks answers to life's ultimate questions like these. Everyone, at some time or another, is likely to experience the occasion for asking these and similar ultimate questions. What is the meaning of life? Is there an ultimate purpose to life on earth? Or, as nihilism assumes, is all life for both the individual and entire universe meaningless? Is the universe *all that is, all that was, and all that will ever be*, as one prominent scientist never tired of repeating. If so, how should one live?

Bertrand Russell spoke of living a life of "unyielding despair." He wrote:

"... that all of the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruin – all these things, if not quite beyond dispute are yet so certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built." (Reference 2, p. 67)

The thoughtful reader could well ask: How does a profound thinker, a noted philosopher, logician, and scholar come to the conclusion that all is meaninglessness, that nihilism is the only worldview, and that the

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individual must take his stand (unyielding despair) in the face of a universe destined for extinction in the death of entropy? How does he know?

While this project does not engage either naturalism or naturalism's logical ending, nihilism, a plausible explanation may be had based on Scripture, not on science or philosophy of science. Such is the importance of recognizing and analyzing what is known about God and Man by examining the source and effects of two conflicting versions of epistemology's disjunction: An Adamic-centered epistemology (ACE) or a Christ-centered epistemology (CCE).

A concluding section summarizes the deduced conclusions from biblical premises of these two biblical epistemologies. The biblical solution of the conflict generated by what many believe are two incompatible epistemologies is then set forth. The claim here is that the Adamic-centered epistemology gives birth to the human predicament of unyielding dissonance within the individual, for its answers to life's ultimate questions are not practical or livable as a worldview. To the extent that it is experienced, it calls for suppressing it in unrighteousness. The suppression of cognitive dissonance, pretending that it does not exist, often seeks an acceptable hedonistic therapy to silence or pacify the dissonance within. The biblical view not only negates nihilism's conclusions, and resolves the conflict, but is the reasonable, premier, and sole alternative to a life of unyielding dissonance and despair. The inner

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tension of these epistemologies continues in the believer, but now in a life of sanctification, blessed with the assurance of His final victory and the glorification for all who are justified.

If the reader seeks or expects from this project a template for how to live a happy, carefree life of self-fulfillment, then the Reader should think again. Such templates are for fairy tales, utopias, or fantasies. Sin and sinning are ugly, corrupt, depraved, filthy facts of life for which no proof is required. How to live in an increasingly pagan, godless, decaying world, headed for extinction is a matter for serious thought and choices.

Obviously, epistemological inquiry will not show all there is to know on how to live in a universe headed for extinction. Epistemology shows what can be known and, at the same time, what is "past finding out." (Job 9:10; Romans 11:33) It is with this in mind that the author proposes to take all thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

As to the eventual outcome, only a doctrinal knowledge of Christianity and affirmation of its truths offer hope, a hope that is pregnant with truth and life.

"If man can know nothing truly, man can truly know nothing. Unless knowledge is possible, Christianity is nonsensical, for it claims to be knowledge. If knowledge is not possible to man, it is worse than silly to argue points of doctrine – it is insane."
(Reference 3, p. 1)

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"Genesis 2:7. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. 8. And LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

The knowledge of good and evil is not a philosophical invention. It was introduced at the creation of Adam and the world. There in the garden, Adam's residence, the reality of the epistemological endowment was anchored in the creation of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. These epistemological realities are not explained, proven, or defended as theories, models, or so called scientific facts. They are revealed truths disclosed as such by the God of Truth, the LORD God who created the universe and all within it. Moreover, not only is the origin of epistemology established, but also introduced is God's holy

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law governing the tree's purpose and sanctions. Its purpose was obedience to the triune God's law. The sanctions for any other epistemology were clear and understood, for Adam was not created *tabula rasa*. Adam was created with all that is required to communicate, evaluate, judge, reason, and obey all that God his Creator required: to obey God's holy law, and to enjoy God forever.

This original state is appropriately labelled by Augustine as the state of both *non posse peccare* and *posse peccare* existence. Adam was created sinless, enjoying a righteousness which enabled him to experience intimate fellowship with the triune God, his creator and sustainer. All that Adam, and later his spouse Eve, knew in union with one another and in the bliss of intimate, ongoing fellowship and communication with their God and Creator was based and flowed from their God centered epistemology of knowledge and obedience to His Law. Adam and Eve knew that God created them, that God was the source and sustainer of their very life, and the sovereign Ruler over all that is good as well as all that is opposed to good. God alone determines all that transpires in His Creation, according to His will and power.

"Genesis 2:15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. 16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the

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day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Did our first parents know and understand all that God provided and all that God commanded? Of course they did. They likewise had a grasp of God's power in creation and His authority over it. All of it. There was no wiggle room for epistemologically misunderstood propositions. The meaning of both the purpose and the sanction governing both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were clearly understood, but apparently not believed. Thus, the opportunity for Satan's temptation seeking to undermine the authority of a God-Centered epistemology.

"Genesis 3:1. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the tress of the garden: 3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. 5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

With this false claim to know God's mind, Satan's deception to know as gods know provided the framework for an empirically based epistemological test that appeared both reasonable and doable.

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That empirical considerations played a crucial role is not guesswork or speculation.

"The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6.)

Thus, the epistemological center for knowledge of reality was switched: from a God centered epistemology to a man-centered epistemology. The Fall and all that followed ensued. Man (male and female) now governed as slaves of a self-centered frame of reference for all knowledge, truth, and value, producing the curse of Augustine's *non posse non peccare* state not only for themselves but for all their progeny to the very present.

Worldview

James Sire addresses this question in his book, *The Universe Next Door*. According to Sire it consists of a number of presuppositions that every person holds, either consciously or subconsciously, about the basic makeup of reality. Everyone has a worldview, or is in process of forming one, whether aware of it or not. A worldview is innate equipment, mental scaffolding for thought, perception, judgment, meaning, knowledge, truth, choices, duties, values, or decisions. Most worldviews are not well-formed, that is, they are often incomplete and in some cases include inconsistent propositions. In other cases, a person's worldview may include assumptions borrowed from a worldview that

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stands in opposition to the person's operating worldview assumptions. A person's awareness of the inconsistency may call for a major reassessment or adjustment, for worldviews are subject to change. (Sire, Reference 1, p. 16ff)

Ronald Nash thinks of worldview presuppositions as a set of beliefs about important issues in life and reality. For Nash, your beliefs form a system, or a conceptual interpretive scheme, about reality. Again, every person has one and operates with one. (Nash, Reference 2, p. 16ff)

In short, worldview presuppositions, operating as axioms of a system, control thought and behavior. (Sire, Reference 1, p. 16ff) A person's worldview constitutes the interpretive, conceptual scheme by which the person interacts, perceives, values, judges, makes choices or decisions about life and reality in space-time.

Worldview assumptions or presuppositions are starting points. As such, these propositions operate as axioms, assumed to be true. The axioms of any system operate as premises for the deduction of theorems. The system includes the logical implications deduced from both axioms and theorems. The axioms are not subject to proof, although axioms taken as premises can be challenged. Nevertheless, worldview presuppositions operating as axioms require no justification or warrant as they themselves collectively provide warrant for those inferences that are logically deduced.

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Another way to think about worldviews is to treat them as frames of reference by which one not only interprets reality, but also organizes one's understanding of the world and life. A well-formed worldview makes explicit the questions and answers of epistemological inquiry about God, self, others, and reality.

Worldview thinking, or any intellectual activity, requires meaning, that is, propositions. A proposition is the meaning of a declarative sentence. A declarative sentence consists of a quality, property, or feature of some sort in the form of a predicate attributed to a subject via a verb. For example, in the sentence: *All men are mortal*, the predicate, mortal, is attributed to the subject, men. The proposition is the meaning of this declarative sentence. Some sentences do not communicate meaning in this sense. For example, the question: *Are you mortal?* is not a proposition as such. Neither is the question, *what is the meaning of mortal?* These questions or any rhetorical question can be converted to propositions by changing them into declarative sentences.

To repeat. A proposition is the meaning of a declarative sentence. Any sentence that is propositional is either true or false. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that worldview presuppositions, axioms, beliefs, or meanings are assumed to be true and therefore require no proof. The axioms of a system are the basic beliefs for which there are no other supporting beliefs.

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They stand as starting points on which a worldview is grounded.

In sum, what is a worldview? A worldview is a frame of reference, a heuristic, conceptual system of propositions assumed to be true, by means of which one understands the meaning of life and reality. Thus, a worldview is the scaffold of the mind, a structure of presuppositions whereby a person thinks about God, creation and other persons. In other words, one's worldview controls thought. Minds operate (think) within a frame of reference.

These basic beliefs or presuppositions form the structure of a worldview which is made plain by means of worldview ultimate questions about life and reality. What does one believe about God? Ultimate Reality? Humanity? Morality? History? Death? Destiny? The answers one provides to these ultimate questions are the elements of one's worldview.

Illustration

Perhaps an example will serve to illustrate the significance of worldview presuppositions. Consider naturalism's claim that the scientific method is the sole gateway to the whole region of knowledge.

"Science, in the broadest sense of the word, is the sole gateway to a knowledge which can harmonize with our past as well as with our possible future experience." (Pearson, Reference 3, pp. 44-45)

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This dictum is a worldview presupposition taught in science classes. Students are not encouraged to ask, how do you know? If the question arises, the answer is that the presupposition is self-evidentially true. Similarly, students are not encouraged to ask, what scientific experiment proved that the scientific method is the sole gateway to knowledge? Naturalism's scientific method or frame of reference rules out any appeal to the supernatural. Naturalism's worldview presuppositions thus determine a materialist frame of reference. Its presuppositions of empiricism reduce ultimate questions to only those that qualify according to its closed system criteria: matter in motion plus chance in space-time.

If all operate with a frame of reference (worldview), an important question to ask is who (or what) is the ultimate reference point. Revelation reveals that Adam's folly was to frame thought and life with reference to himself as the ultimate reference determinant. With self-referenced presuppositions as worldview axioms, the creature's attempt to displace the Creator as the epistemological starting point began, and continues to this day. Who is the ultimate, absolute, source of reference for all knowledge, belief, and truth about reality, God or man? The question answers itself for man is not omniscient.

If every worldview operates with the innate equipment of logic, meaning, and truth, what more is neces-

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sary to draw one to serious reflection about one's presuppositions. A self-centered mindset pushes out objective truth, logic, and thought about a transcendent God to whom all will give account. It is a lie that the creature determines what is ultimately meaningful. To think that what is true or false based on what works and therefore must be morally right is false. Believing a lie, even a "noble lie" in the face of meaningless existence and destiny only adds to the inner conflict leading to Russell's "unyielding despair" as a way of life. A life of self-deception is hardly the path to knowledge and truth.

Worldview Tests

Ronald Nash offers three tests for the evaluation of worldviews: the test of reason, the test of experience, and the test of practice.

The test of experience is of two types: the test of inner experience and the test of outer experience. Reason, experience, and practice frame the epistemological inquiry for an evaluation of a person's worldview. These tests work as a package of integrated applications or rules for the evaluation of any worldview. (Nash, Reference 4, pp. 25-32)

The Test of Reason

The test of reason is logic with special attention to the law of noncontradiction. The law of noncontradiction states that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same

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respect. Not both *a and not-a*; symbolized as (aa)'.

In other words, A cannot be both B and non-B at the same time in the same sense. (not both B & non-B). A contradiction is always false. Any system that contains contradiction is logically incoherent. Inconsistency is a sign of error and almost always fatal. This test of logical consistency is a negative test. The presence of contradiction indicates error. The absence of contradiction, however, does not guarantee truth. Additional tests are required.

The Test of Experience

The test of experience has two parts, according to Nash: the test of the inner world and the test of the outer world, our experience of the world outside of us. "It is proper for people to object when a worldview claim conflicts with what we know to be true of the physical universe." (Nash, Reference 4, p. 26)

Likewise, a worldview needs to harmonize with our consciousness of our inner world.

"Worldviews that cannot do justice to an internalized moral obligation or to the guilt we sense when we disobey such duties or to the human encounter with genuine love are clearly defective when compared with the biblical worldview." (Nash, Reference 4, pp. 27-28)

The Test of Practice

A third test is the test of practice. Can you live in harmony with the professed worldview free from intra-

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personal conflict or cognitive dissonance? Or, does the person's worldview support an indifference to the principle that the unexamined life is not worth living? If a person chooses to ignore the test of practice and suppresses the exhortations of conscience and the obligations of the moral law within, the consequence is a life of inner conflict and confusion.

For Scripturalism, there is another test, the test of the Scriptures.

1. Do the worldview's presuppositions or deductions contradict the Scriptures? (The Law of Noncontradiction)
2. Does the professed worldview harmonize with biblical principles, beliefs, laws, truths, or doctrines? (Systematic Consistency)

A Christian's worldview must be systematically consistent and reflect a life that is the fruit of sanctification by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Scripturalism

Is Scripturalism a worldview?

"2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17. That the man of God may be

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perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Scripturalism can be thought of as that system of truth which is deduced from Scriptures alone. In other words, its axiom is, 'The Bible is the word of God' from which one deduces the biblical worldview or frame of reference. Gordon H. Clark in the Trinity Review "How Does Man Know God?" states that the first principle for the Christian worldview is *Sola Scriptura*.^{*} "Let the Christian axiom be the truth of the Scriptures." (Clark, Reference 5, p. 3)

"Axiom: The Bible is the word of God without error, true in all it teaches, affirms, or implies."

Application of this definition, demonstrates how Scripturalism passes the tests of reason, the test of skepticism, the test of explanatory power, and the test for hard common sense. (Reference 6, pp. 19-61) These worldview tests incorporate Ronald Nash's tests of reason, outer experience, inner experience, and practice. (Reference 7, pp. 26-28)

Adam's Folly

Adam's folly was to frame thought and life with reference to himself as the ultimate reference determinant. With his self-referenced presuppositions as axioms, the creature's attempt to displace the Creator as the epistemological starting point began, and continues to this day. Thus, two major worldview reference sources divide humanity: God's, as the ultimate reality, and the creature's self.

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The creature born in Adam is a prisoner of his folly. Adam's progeny remain in darkness of thought and unbelief, thereby suppressing the innate truth of God and creation, consciously or subconsciously, and thus on the broad road to destruction. Moreover, any attempt to eliminate the self as ultimate reference asserts self, necessarily. If one's conscience rebukes, creating cognitive dissonance, the self is proficient at failing every attempt to transcend itself. Self cannot delete self for the self is required to delete itself. The mind must silence, ignore, or suppress any thought opposed to itself as the epistemological center.

Cogito

Each of us operates with the innate equipment of logic, meaning, and truth necessary for serious reflection about one's presuppositions. For the believer, self-examination must in every case be guided by Scripture and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Any other authority as ultimate is destined for failure.

John Robbins defined Scripturalism, the Christian Worldview, as follows:

"Scripturalism is the logically consistent application of Christian -- that is, Scriptural -- ideas to all fields of thought." Sola Scriptura means 'an uncompromising devotion to Scripture alone. All our thoughts -- there are no exceptions -- are to be brought into conformity with Scripture, for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are contained in Scripture'." (Robbins, Reference 8, Pt. I, p. 2, & Crampton, Reference 9, pp. 52, 72f, 91)

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Scripturalism as the epistemological frame of reference is what the entire Bible teaches about God who is the prime reality of creation and before creation. Scripturalism does not combine secular and Christian notions. It divides philosophically into four categories:

1. Epistemology: Propositional Revelation (The Bible is to be believed because it is God's divine, inerrant revelation to man.)
2. Soteriology: Faith Alone (Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.)
3. Metaphysics: Theism (In Him we live, move and have our being.)
4. Ethics: Divine Law (We ought to obey God rather than men.)

Epistemology is study of the theory of knowledge. It is the key component of Scripturalism. Gordon Clark asked:

"How can we know anything? The answer to this question, technically called the theory of epistemology, controls all subject matter claiming to be intelligible or cognitive." (Clark, Reference 5, p. 1)

The Scripture reveals knowledge of God and His creation in true propositions. In Scripture alone God reveals His plan of redemption, the way of salvation leading to ultimate glorification. The Bible sets forth the ultimate basis for moral obligations and duty to God, others, and society. Christ Jesus, the logos of

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God, is the Light that shines in every mind. Christ is meaning itself. Man is not born tabula rasa as some allege. The logos is the logic or wisdom of God that lights every mind as innate equipment.

Only the Christian worldview reveals the truth of our hopeless state and the way of escape. It declares that we come into this world according to a purpose and design of Almighty God. No creature is born by accident or a product of chance. Birth and death are fixed times. Each individual's life history is a predetermined journey that includes agent choices governed by a worldview. Because man possesses innate knowledge of God and creation as givens but suppresses it, man is accountable to the Judge of all creation.

1. What then is Prime Reality according to Scripturalism? God and the Word of God alone are the absolute, ultimate reference for thought and life. God is a Spirit, infinite and eternal. He is immutable in his being, goodness, holiness, justice, power, wisdom, and truth. "God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24) He is the Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnitemporal, and Sovereign Creator over all creatures and creation. The works of creation are made out of nothing by the power of God, and sustained by his power and providential care. (Catechism, Reference 10)

2. What is Scripturalism's response to the question: What is man? "So God created man in His own image;

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in the Image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27) Man created in the Image of God enjoys spiritual graces of life, meaning, knowledge, value, purpose, and a host of other talents as part of his endowment in the Image of God as Man. Sire's analysis is worth noting:

"We can summarize this conception of man in God's image by saying that, like God, man has personality, self-transcendence, intelligence (the capacity for reason and knowledge), morality, (the capacity for recognizing and understanding good and evil), gregariousness or social capacity (man's fundamental desire and need for human companionship – community – especially represented by "male" and "female" aspect) and creativity (the ability to imagine new things or to endow old things with human significance)." (Sire, Reference 11, p. 31)

3. According to Scripturalism, what happens at death? Ezekiel 18.4c: "The soul that sins will die." In addition, Job declares, "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." (Job 30:23) What happens to man at death? Man does not disappear; he continues in transformed existence to one of two destinies, either heaven or hell.

"Either they enter an existence with God and his people – a glorified existence – or they enter an existence forever separated from God, holding their uniqueness in awful loneliness apart from precisely that which would fulfill them." (Sire, Reference 11, p. 38)

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4. Scripturalism holds that moral values and duties for man reflect God's nature. As part of the endowment of the Image of God, man has the innate capacity for recognizing and knowing right and wrong, good and evil. God is the absolute standard for all moral judgments for He is good, holy, just, and morally perfect. Man is equipped with innate knowledge of God and His commands. He bears full responsibility and will render an account to God at the last judgment. (Romans 14:12)

5. In Scripturalism's worldview, God reveals Himself in History. History displays the purposes of God's involvement and care for his creatures and creation. History is linear, teleological, and therefore a meaningful sequence of events determined by Sovereign God. History is not cyclical, not repeatable, and not reversible. It has a beginning and a known end. Its catalog consists of at least four volumes: creation, fall, and for the believer redemption, and glorification. History has meaning because the *Logos*, meaning itself, underscores it -- upholding creation by the word of His power and working for the good of all those called according to His purpose. (Hebrews 1:3; Romans 8:28)

Either/Or

Human destiny is either hell or heaven. This is the biblically true outcome of man's destiny. The world's wisdom may offer a variety of worldviews; however, all

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except Scripturalism lead to death. The biblical disjunction is life in heaven or living death in hell. The options are mutually exclusive. The Christian worldview, expounded in Scripture, declares redemption to be the gracious provision from a gracious God who, through Christ's Atonement, secured eternal life to those who believe the Gospel.

Christians live in this world but are not of the world. Their view of men and things is that which is revealed in Scripture, is that which is declared by the Creator of the universe in true propositions.

When we are born from above, we receive a renewed frame of reference of true presuppositions about creation and the creature's past, present, and future. Moreover, the Christian worldview, its source being the Scripture alone, not only reveals truth about space-time creation, but true knowledge throughout eternity. Truth is eternal.

Robbins provides this summary of Scripturalism:

"Scripturalism – Christianity – is a whole view of things thought out together. It engages non-Christian philosophies on every field of intellectual endeavor. It furnishes a coherent theory of knowledge, an infallible salvation, a refutation of science, a theory of the world, a coherent and practical system of ethics, and the principles required for political liberty and justice. No other philosophy does." (Robbins, Reference 8, Pt. 2, p. 4; Crampton, References 9, p. 91)

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God

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will stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

*Sola Scriptura: 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalms 119:160; Proverbs 30:52; Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 6:18; Peter 1:20-21.

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Part 1: Adam Centered Epistemology

"Genesis 1:26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
"Genesis 2:16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Good and Evil

Adam was created morally perfect, upright with every virtue of a sinless being who understood what God, his Creator, said, commanded, and proclaimed. God's propositions were expressed in language that communicated accurately and fully His meanings concerning the garden of Eden, its

plants and trees, its beauty and care, and the duty to tend it using the means God provided. All of this and much more, Adam understood. Absent from this account is any report of Q & A session, or any need for "additional research," or any request for clarification. Adam, and later, his Eve had no cause to plead ignorance, or appeal to a linguistic misinterpretation of the required obligations concerning the garden and its upkeep, as well as the significance of two very special trees: the tree of life and the tree of death.

"Genesis 2:8. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ... 15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

The question that has puzzled many is one that wonders how a morally perfect creature, upright, sinless, created without defect, and in daily fellowship with God his Creator, would and did deliberately, willfully, with knowledge of the consequences take the path of death?

The question most often asked by others is how can God draw good out of an evil thing? But here the questions is how can evil come forth of something created good?

The attempt here will be to construct and consider an epistemological model based on selected biblical passages showing how sin made its creation-debut through morally upright Adam and Eve, created in the image and likeness of God. This model is labelled: Adamic-centered epistemology (ACE), and it consists of three elements:

1. The Agents: Adam and Eve, Satan, the serpent.
2. The Means or Satan's strategy.
3. The End or Consequences for the humanity.

Before these elements are described in some detail, it should be noted that epistemology, the theory of knowledge is a given, that is, a starting point introduced by God Himself in His commandment to Adam, and later resorted to by Satan in his communication with Eve. The name of the tree of forbidden fruit is the tree of knowledge of good and evil: to know good and to know evil.

Did not our parents "know good" before the commandment? Of course, they were made good, they possessed an inclination for good, the garden was good, the fruit of every tree was good, their marriage was good; their fellowship with God was good, indeed, supremely good. All about creation was created good and for their good. Imagine a reality wherein nothing but good is evident and all that is evil is absent. One tree, only one, was the tree of knowledge of good and

evil, and even this tree was good for it was the emblem, the sign for them to remain good.

Arthur Pink in his Biblical Studies makes reference to these facts and more. He places great emphasis on the truth that Adam, being created in the image of God, was in full possession of moral uprightness, for God is all-good, holy, and righteous. His works, including the creation of Adam, were declared good. At the end of the sixth day of His Creation:

"Genesis 1:31. And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."

Moreover, God declared to both Adam and Eve that on the day they partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would come to know evil, the evil of death and all the corruption leading to it as well as the consequences following it. Nothing was withheld from our ancestors; their knowledge was true knowledge from the God of Truth.

On Origin

Arthur Pink in "The Doctrine of Total Depravity" declares concerning the origin of Adam's fall:

"Though Adam had been made in the image of God, taken into communion with Him, fitted to rejoice in all the manifestations of His wisdom and goodness which surrounded him in Eden, nevertheless he was capable of falling. Since it is a point which has sorely puzzled many of the Lord's people, how it was possible for a holy person, devoid of any corruption, to sin, we will endeavor to explain." (Reference 1, p. 18 ff.)

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1. Adam was created. Adam's liability to fall lay in the fact that he was but a creature. As such he was entirely dependent upon Him "which holdeth our soul in life." (Psalm 66:9)

2. Adam was finite with limited powers and obviously not omniscient.

"... he was finite, and therefore possessed of no invincible power with which to repel opposition. Nor was he endowed with omniscience, so that he had been incapable of being deceived or mistaking an evil for an apparent good. Thus, though man's original condition was one of high moral excellence, with no evil tendency in any part of his nature, yea, with nothing in him which in the least deviated from the moral law, yet, being but a creature, he was capable of falling." (Reference 1, p. 18)

3. Adam was created mutable, subject to change.

"God alone is 'with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning' (James 1:18) Therefore, it is that 'He cannot be tempted with evil' (James 1:13) i.e., induced to sin: a statement which clearly implies that the creature as such has a capacity to be so tempted – not only a depraved creature, but even an unfallen one. Immutability and impeccability (non-ability to sin) are qualities which essentially distinguish the Creator from the creature. ... God alone acts from His own power, whereas the creature acts by a power given to him which is distinct from himself. ... But man neither acts immediately by his own power nor is himself the legitimate end of his acting, but rather God. Thus, with all his faculties, man may falter when using them." (Reference 1, pp. 18-19)

4. Adam as a rational, moral, responsible creature, possessed freedom of the will in a state of perfection.

"With Adam and Eve, the freedom of the will consisted in a power of choosing or embracing what appeared agreeable to the dictates of their understandings, to be good, or in refusing and avoiding what was evil; and that without any constraint or force laid upon them to act contrary to the dictate thereof. Such freedom also supposed power to act pursuant to what the will chooses, otherwise it could not obtain the good desired or avoid the evil detested, and in such cases its 'liberty' would be little more than a name. Freedom of action is opposed to that which is involuntary or compelled and the will is both self-inclining and self-determining in the acting, both internally and externally; for then only can it, strictly speaking, be said to be free." (Reference 1, p. 19)

Thus, according to Pink our ancestors, Adam and Eve, had free wills or the power to retain their integrity, i. e., "they were under an indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience unto God and liable to deserved punishment for the least defect thereof."

"It pleased God to leave our first parents without any immediate help 'ab extra', to the freedom and mutability of their own will. But that neither made Him the author of their sin nor brought them under any natural necessity of falling." (Reference 1, p. 19)

Agents

The fall of Adam and Eve, by some writers called the *apostasy* of the original pair, consisted of a cast of

three, or four, if God be considered the Agent: Satan, Eve, Adam, and Holy God. The location is the Garden in Eden. The setting is in the vicinity of two trees bearing two kinds of fruit: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of death.

Eve's Folly

The serpent's conversation with Eve in the Garden of Eden, in the presence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil starts with what seems to be an innocent question seeking information. (Genesis 3:1) Satan puts words in the mouth of God that he knows God did not speak: "Hath God said you shall not eat of every tree?" Obviously, God did not say what Satan asserted. Eve, however, thought that the question called for a correction, and that was her first mistake. (Genesis 3:2-3) Responding to a request as if it were an honest inquiry for truth is always a mistake and points to a neglect of discernment. Eve's attempt to accurately convey what God had said, namely, that she must not eat of the fruit of one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for if she did, she would die, was the occasion for Satan to contradict God's sanction. "You shall not die" contradicts the prohibition's sanction.. That was Eve's second mistake. The conversation should have ended there with "get thee behind me Satan."

Satan then provides his false interpretation that the prohibition was really a denial of godlike status, something to be desired. (vs. 5) Moreover, that desire was framed by three inferences: the fruit was good for food; the fruit was pleasant to the eyes; and the fruit would make one wise. That was Eve's third mistake. A fourth mistake was giving Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (vss. 6-7)

That is how the serpent reasoned and seduced Eve then Adam to a self-centered way of reasoning and knowing.

Serpent's Lie

For whatever reason or set of reasons, Satan selected Eve to entice her with a 'complex question'. In logic a complex question is one that, in considering an adequate, reasonable response, assumes or presupposes other matters as established. Thus, Satan knew what God had said but he denied the sanction with the contradiction, "you shall not surely die" and substituting it with, "you shall be as gods knowing good and evil."

"Genesis 2: 16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Instead of quoting what God had said accurately and in the honor due Him as the sovereign, absolute,

ultimate reference for all thought, knowledge, truth, and value, Eve considered and freely took the option in light of Satan's verdict "you shall be as gods knowing good and evil." She ate and Adam also ate.

Satan's claim smacked of a null hypothesis: "Eating fruit of the forbidden tree (knowledge of good and evil) will not result in death."

As a first testing of the null, the serpent (Satan) may himself possibly have eaten to demonstrate that he did not die. From the absence of precisely what else may have transpired between Satan and Eve in the Genesis account nothing can be inferred. Nevertheless, the temptation to test God's commandment was an empirically attractive opportunity to test God Himself and to enjoy good fruit; the deciding factor was a promise of the acquisition of the wisdom of gods.

The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life synchronized in such manner and in such a moment.

Means

God provided all that was necessary for the tragic drama of the fall: Satan indwelling the serpent; the garden of Eden setting; the two trees, tree of life and tree of death; Adam and Eve whom He created; the law as commandment, *thou shalt not*; the sanction, death; and God's judgment. God spoke plainly and truthfully the message of His Law. Our first parents understood the message. There was no ambiguity or equivocation in

the language of prohibition and consequence. All of the required elements were present for the exchange from a God-theology to a Man-theology, or to remain and be ruled by a God-centered theology that would lead to partaking of the fruit of the tree of life. The complete disjunction was either the God-centered epistemology or an Adamic-centered epistemology, an epistemology wherein Adam-man assumed the role previously thought to be a non-communicable attribute of God alone.

"Thus, Satan sought to bring reproach upon the divine Law by misrepresenting it! It was as though he said, 'Can it be that your Maker has given you appetites and also placed before you the means of gratifying them, only to mock you? You surely must have misunderstood His meaning! ... If, as we believe was the case, he had himself eaten of the forbidden tree in the woman's presence, then his action would lend colour to his falsehood. It was as though he said, You need not hesitate, God is only seeking to frighten you. You can see for yourself the fruit is harmless, for I have partaken of it without suffering any ill effects.'" (Reference 1, p. 33)

Their denial of God-referenced-knowledge and truth brought to pass the proof of the lie.

Consequences

Most likely Eve, on eating of the forbidden fruit, experienced an immediate and definite physical change. Some thinkers believe no change was evident

in our parents until Adam, as the federal head of humanity, ate of the fruit. More likely, I believe, Eve experienced immediately physical nakedness. Her clothing of light and glory vanished. Adam saw Eve's nakedness as did Satan. It is clear from the biblical record, that Adam having been tempted by the prohibition itself: "thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," had experienced what all humanity experiences when something is forbidden. *Why? Why God's "thou shalt not"?*

If Eve's loss of the glory that clothed her was immediately manifest, it did not cause Adam to hesitate in any case. He joined her. Thus while Satan provided Eve with the thought-experiment to test the Law of God, Eve, Adam's flesh and bone, became the trigger for Adam's disobedience. Prohibition was the crucial element that framed the entire episode of the fall from beginning to their final encounter with their Creator.

The results of our federal head violating his Maker are evident, clear, and ubiquitous in every creature, man and beast. No proof is required.

God sought them, called them, and inquired about their state. His judgment was enormous and just.

Nakedness

The significance of the realization that they had lost the covering of glory upon eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil must

have been a most shocking experience. More disturbing was that their nakedness was a preview of things to come. Death. (Genesis 3:10) Both made ready with convenient excuses. Eve blamed the serpent; Adam blamed Eve. (vss.13-14) Nevertheless, their pathetic explanations for disobedience did not merit a meeting of the minds to negotiate a mutually satisfying conclusion that would avoid judgment. God did not hesitate. Judgment followed immediately: first the serpent, then both the serpent and the woman, then the woman, then the woman and the man, and then judgment on Adam and creation. (vss.14-19) God's judgment was awesome in scope and detail for it was the justice of the trice holy God.

The consequences of the exchange from a God-Centered-Epistemology to a Man (Adamic)-centered-epistemology for all knowledge, meaning, truth, and value - for all of reality - was judged and the sentence imposed.

Scripture records the devastating consequences ever since.

Ephesians 4:18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Mark 7:21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed

evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

First Adam

In Adamic or Man-centered epistemology, man sought to become the measure of the things that are and the things that are not. (Protagoras) This was the template for Lucifer's fall and the angelic host over whom he exercised power and dominion, the demons. The Satanic formula was adapted to deceive God's Adam and Eve into the path of destruction leading to corruption and death.

1. Eve Deceived

"Genesis 3:13. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou has done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat."

2. Adam Not Deceived

"Genesis 3:11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

3. God's Judgment

- § The serpent cursed. (vs. 14)
- § The enmity between Satan's seed and the woman's seed. (vs. 15)
- § The woman's sorrow of conception and birth of offspring; the desire for a husband; the woman ruled by the man. (vs. 16)
- § The man in sorrow to eat of the fruit of the earth; the curse of thorns, herbs, in the sweat of face eat bread; return to the dust of the earth; death. (vss. 17-19)

Genesis 3:18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Worldview Assumptions

Thus was born an ungodly worldview to which Adam, Eve, and all of their progeny to the present day subscribe and utilize either consciously or unconsciously to claim what is knowledge and what can be known; what is good and what is evil; what is true and what is false; what is right and what is wrong; what is of value and what is waste. The fall meant that man became the slave of a sin-nature, *non posse non peccare*, in the following 'Adamic' affirmations:

- § Man is the measure of all things. Man is Sovereign.
- § Man is the source and standard of truth. Man

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is autonomous.

- § Man's emotions are authoritative.
- § Man would determine what is morally good or evil.

Summary

Adam and Eve presumed in their minds to become gods -- sovereign, ultimate, and authoritative, i.e., the source of knowledge, truth, value, and meaning. ACE discarded the Creator who was replaced by self. 'You shall be as gods,' according to Satan, 'knowing good and evil.' The horror of knowing that evil by the disasters that followed including death and, but for God's grace, eternal death for all his posterity has been the shame of mankind from the day onward.

Any honest appraisal of the Adamic, or Man-centered epistemology fails all of Nash's tests for evaluating worldviews. It fails the test of reason, for it contradicts revealed truth at every point. The contradiction is simply this: it is false that man is both created and creator. Man is not the measure of all things; in fact, man fails even in the limited reality of his own senses to create a reality worth living or to discover any solution to ultimate worldview questions. The test of experience, namely, that man determines the significance of reality, not God, is an obvious daily failure. A visit to any cemetery is convincing proof that man begins to die the moment man is born. Death's consummation is the grave. Man is not autonomous, his emotions are

not authoritative in moral or spiritual matters, for man is not only finite but mutable. Only God is omniscient, immutable, eternal, and wise. In a space-time state of *non posse non peccare* man, born in the image of Adam, is on the broad road to destruction and eternal death.(Reference 2, pp. 26 ff.)

AUGUSTINE'S FOUR STAGES			
1 Pre-Fall	2 Post-Fall	3 Reborn	4 Glorified Man
able to sin	able to sin	able to sin	not able to sin unable to sin
able to not sin	unable to not sin	able to not sin	

Men without the God of Scripture are in a futile state. The reprobate mind is the mind of an Adamic-centered epistemology that depends on naturalism's closed system of reality as a worldview. This worldview denies every appeal to the supernatural. Revealed truth is suppressed, ignored, or dismissed as superstition or myth. The tests of experience and practice proves that naturalism terminates in nihilism. Nihilism is a "worldview" that denies all worldviews, for its axiom is that reality is meaningless -- including nihilism. No man can live nihilism's meaningless universe. When man is confronted with the contradiction, he opts for the convenient substitute of nominalism, a view that denies the reality of all absolutes, even God.

This is the consequence of the fall of Adam, Eve, and any who claim them as humanity's original parents. All born in Adam are slaves of sin and corruption leading to the eternality of hell as the ultimate, just, holy, destiny of the lawless, anti-God sinner.

In Part 2 that follows, we consider the counterfactual conditional: What if Adam and Eve had not eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but rather obeyed the commandment of God, and resisted Satan's temptation to disobey the holy word of God even as Jesus Christ, though tempted thrice in the desert by that same Satan of the Garden of Eden, resisted and retained the holy state of *non posse peccare*?

Jesus Christ is the tree of life leading to glory. He himself said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

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Part 2: God Centered Epistemology

"John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. ... 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. "

"Romans 11:33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ... 36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Review

The previous section's thought-experiment traced Genesis' description of the fall of our first parents. The fall was framed as an exchange of epistemologically referenced authority from of God to man. The supreme, wise, sovereign source of all knowledge, truth, and morals was replaced at the very outset of the world we know by our first parents.

Adam and Eve chose to be governed and live according to an Adamic-centered epistemology: man as the measure of all things – a rejection of He to whom they owed all.

The scenario outlined here is supported by the biblical evidence of the incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The implication based on Scripture is simply this: Jesus Christ taught and lived the pattern of life and obedience that Adam failed to carry out.

In the case of Adam, the human race fell into the depravity of sin everywhere and in everything. In short, the depravity of slavery to sin condemned man to the state of *non posse non peccare*, not able not to sin, throughout life and for an innumerable cohort – beyond. Adam's fall was downward; its descent in depravity and corruption continues. Man, having chosen the fruit of the tree of death was incapable of undoing his act of disobedience and reversing course to his former state of moral uprightness.

"Romans 3:12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Jesus Christ, sent by God the Father, and born of a virgin came to accomplish atonement in the midst a humanity justly condemned to eternal hell. Jesus, as the lamb of God, was the necessary means for the redemption of His people. No other substitute could reconcile

fallen man to God, enabling Him to justify sinners and forgive the sins of those elect in Jesus Christ. There was no other way, God alone could provide the satisfaction His holy justice demands, for man, the created finite being, was dead in trespasses and sins. Only infinite God in Christ could provide the satisfaction God's justice and law required.

"Romans 5:6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. ... But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Ungodly

Christianity is personified and unfolds in the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, Christianity is Jesus Christ, the God-man. This is a fact* developed fully in the New Testament. Christianity is a person, a unique person, for Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity, i.e., Jesus is God, the Son of God the Father. As such, Christ is a unique person with a unique message: the Gospel. The Spirit of Truth declares the Gospel message in four simple propositions:

1. Jesus Christ died for our sins;
2. Jesus Christ was buried;
3. Jesus Christ rose from the dead the third day; and
4. Jesus Christ was seen by the apostles and many disciples preceding His ascension.

1 Corinthians 15:3. "For I delivered to you first of all that

which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. and that he was buried, that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

These propositional truths speak of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Jesus and the message of Jesus are inseparable, for the message is what Jesus accomplished and proclaimed during his short life and ministry on earth. He came to earth as God-Man to offer His life a ransom for many, to save sinners from the destiny wrought by their federal head, Adam, -- a destiny of eternal death in hell.

The covenant of redemption provides an explanation concerning God's plan of redemption. God the Father sends God the Son, not to be ministered to, but to minister unto His people, and to offer His life as ransom for those who would believe. (Matthew 20:28) Christ Jesus offered Himself as the lamb of God who takes away the curse of sin. He gave Himself as a ransom, for He alone was the one mediator between God and men. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Redemption Plan

The Apostle Paul exercises the gift of wisdom concerning spiritual realities in spelling out the significance, the aim, and the goal of redemption.

"Romans 11:28. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as to touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. ... 30. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31.

Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

What is Paul saying? According to the London preacher Archibald Brown, Paul is spelling out God's method of redemption.

"Paul sees Israel chosen and blessed, but apostatizing, and then he sees that, through the very apostasy of Israel, a door is thrown open before the Gentile hosts. And then he sees how that, through mercies shown to the Gentile, blessing is come to the Jew; and ultimately the Jew to receive the Messiah, and he is to accept the One from whom the Gentiles apostatize. Then through the Jew the world is to be blessed." (Brown, Reference 1, pp. 236-237)

Truth

Truth exists, is immutable, is eternal, is mental, is superior to the human mind. Truth is God. It is impossible for truth to change. In other words, the immutability of truth implies its eternal state. To deny that truth is eternal is a failure to recognize a contradiction. Truth cannot perish for if it does, then truth remains for it remains true that it perished. Denial of the eternity of truth turns out to be an affirmation of its eternity.

To repeat. Truth is immutable, eternal, and unavoidable for thought, communication, worship, and life. Truth is the self-disclosure of the mind of God, the

Sovereign Creator and Ruler over all. To know Truth is to know something of the mind of God. Moreover, it is a recognition that man was created in the image and likeness of God, the God of Truth.

God determines what is true and what is false. For God is not a liar, He is not a man that could lie, nor the son of man that He changes His mind. In Him, there is no variation neither shadow of turning. (Numbers 23:19; James 1:17)

In knowing God's thoughts, we know something of His nature for God's mind is God. There is a sense in which all knowledge is a knowledge of God. Moreover, as we think God's thoughts after Him, we likewise have a vision of God's nature. Therefore, when humans know truth, they also know something of God's nature. To know Jesus is to know truth and to know truth is to know the Son of God, the Father who sent Him, and the Holy Spirit who reveals/shows Him unto us.

Thus, the knowledge of truth is innate equipment, an essential property of the self-conscious creature created in the image of God. When we lie, we sin against God, the God of truth. Recall, it is impossible for God to lie. Impossible? Why? Because, not only would it be contrary to every one of His attributes, but holy God is the God of Truth, the source of all truth, truths set down in the only supernatural volume in creation: the Bible.

Pilate's Query

According to James Boice,

"Pilate's response was not in the nature of a further pursuit of the matter or even a recognition of the importance of what Jesus said. Rather, it was a cynical response based on what was, to Pilate, the seeming impossibility of ever knowing what truth was. 'What is truth?' he said, and then walked away." (Boice, Reference 2, p. 1)

God sent Jesus, the Word (Logic) of God, with a true message to save sinners:

John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved."

The disciple, follower of Jesus Christ, must always be mindful that Jesus is God. For in Jesus dwells "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9) Grace and truth came by Christ. (John 1:17) If God in Christ is the God of Truth, it follows that Truth exists. Truth resides in minds, the mind of God and the mind of man created in His image.

According to Nash, truth is above human reason and is superior to human minds.

"From this it follows, that there must be a mind higher than the human mind in which truth resides." (Nash, Reference 3, p. 163)

Moreover, truth is propositional. (A proposition is the meaning of a declarative sentence.) God alone is the source of all true propositions; whatever He communicates He declares in true propositions, He being the God of all truth. Truth originates in an eternal, immutable mind, the mind of God. To know Truth is to know something of the mind of God. If a proposition is true, it never changes. If it never changes, it never dies, and human minds can know it for the human mind is created in the image of God.

In sum, truth is an attribute of God. His thoughts are the thoughts of an eternal, immutable, sovereign mind. As such, God's mind thinks according to the laws of logic; God is not insane. He is not the author of confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33) Logic is the structure of God's supreme, infallible thinking and reason. God Almighty is the origin and source of all propositional truth. Truth, logic, and reasoning are mental, and they are gifts of the Creator because we are created in His image and likeness. The Creator God, not man the creature, determines all propositional truth concerning knowledge, meaning, value, history, destiny, creation, life and reality – now, in eternity, and to His Glory.

Paul's Testimony

Paul came to know that the Law of God is good, reveals sin, revives sin, determines life or death, deceives and slays, is holy and just, and works death. Moreover, the Law of God is spiritual, not man-made,

revealing that man born in Adam is carnal, proving that man is sold under sin to a depraved life of sin. The result is that the good which Paul would do, allow, or intend was in vain; what is hated is what was done. The good that one wants to do is rejected for evil instead. He saw the law of sin working in the members of his body warring against the law of a renewed mind to the extent that he groaned: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Thanks be to God who causes the law of the mind in the renewed sinner to obey the law of God; nevertheless, perpetually in conflict with the law of sin that rules the body.

Romans 7:7-25

The Law is good: "7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

The Law reveals sin: "8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead."

The Law revives sin: "9. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

The Command determines life or death: "10. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."

Sin deceives and slays: "11. For sin, taking occasion by

the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."

The Law is holy and just: "12. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Sin works death: "13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

The Law is spiritual: "14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

What is hated, that is done: "15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

Failing to do good implies the law is good: "16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good."

The failure to do good is sin within: "17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

To will good does not produce it: "18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Instead of doing good, evil is done: "19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

The evil done is indwelling sin: "20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that

dwelleth in me."

The law to do good reveals evil within: "21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

The inward renewed man delights in the law of God: "22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

The law of sin wars against the law of mind: "23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Who delivers man from the body of death? "24. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Mind serves the law of God in Jesus Christ; the flesh serves the law of sin: "25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

In short, for regenerated man, the law of sin in the members of our flesh wars against the law of God in the mind or spirit of man. The transformation from life to death in Eden is now reversed from death to life in Jesus Christ. The mind of Christ, the spirit of truth works in man both to will and to do God's good pleasure.

"Philippians 2:12. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do

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his good pleasure."

Summary

Two Adams: First And Last	
Adam	Jesus Christ
Will Of Man	Will Of God
Slave Of Sin	Son Of God
Not Able Not To Sin	Not Able To Sin
Condemnation	Salvation
Hell Destiny	Heaven Destiny

"Isaiah 65:16. That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth"

*A fact is a value with a variable error of zero.

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3. Nash, Ronald H. Faith and Reason. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Portion Publishing House. 1988.

Part 3: Christ Centered Epistemology

"Job 9:1. Then Job answered and said, 2. I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

Job 11:7. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? 8. It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?

Romans 9:21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand."

Review

Previous sections of this work portrayed two epistemological models as they unfolded in the creation of Adam and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, as the last Adam.

These models were framed as epistemological states: Part 1 considered man's state as one in which man is *posse peccare* and *non posse peccare*. The fall actualized the exchange from a God-centered way of

knowing (GCE) to a Man-centered way of knowledge (ACE). Part 2, considered the consequences of the exchange. Man now is in the state of fallen humanity: *non posse non peccare*, a state from which no man initiated recovery is possible, Man became dead in trespasses and sins doomed to a carnal life of sin and corruption leading to death. Only the God-Man, the last Adam, sent by His Father to make atonement, reconciling man to God, would avert the judgment of eternal death. God's plan of redemption called for a transformation that restored the image of God in man and through sanctification achieve the Christ-centered epistemology, a knowledge of and belief in the Gospel, the good news of salvation and restoration of fellowship with God on earth and in heaven to a *non posse peccare* state forever.

The biblical record reveals the first man to have been created in the image and likeness of *Elohim*, morally upright with all that was needed to comply with and perform all God ordained obligations and to obey His Law. How could a morally upright sinless creature, endowed with properly functioning mental equipment which understood clearly all that God commanded; who enjoyed all the benefits of a garden in Eden, in the companionship of Eve, his helpmeet; and who daily communicated with his Creator in the cool of the evenings disobey God's explicit command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Eve was deceived by Satan with "Hast God really said ...," to test

God's veracity. Adam was not deceived. Adam joined his Eve only to later blame her (and God) for his own disobedience. God's judgment was comprehensive and according to His holy, good, and perfect justice. It included the bare hope of a future restoration, for the sentence of death was not immediately executed. God allowed the pair to live on, although not in the garden of Eden but in a world bearing the curse of Adam's self-centered defiance and disobedience.

Pink and others have pointed out that the biblical account does not record either parent having repented, nor any plea for forgiveness on their part. Although it is unwise to form a conclusion in the absence of a decisive event, it is nevertheless, something to prayerfully ponder.

"We by no means share the popular idea that the LORD saved Adam very soon after his fall, but rather take decided exception thereto. Negatively, we cannot find anything whatever in Holy Writ on which to base such a belief; much to the contrary. First of all, it is clear that his sin was not one of 'infirmity,' but instead a 'presumptuous' one, pertaining to that class of willful sins and open defiance of God for which no sacrifice was provided (Exo 21:14; Num 15:30-31; Deu 17:12; Heb 10:26-29) – and therefore, an unpardonable sin. There is not the slightest sign that he ever repented of his sin, or record of his confessing it to God – on the contrary, when charged with it, he attempted to excuse and extenuate it. Genesis 3 closes with the awful statement: 'So he drove out the man.' Nothing whatever is mentioned to his credit afterwards: no offering of sacrifice, no acts of faith

or obedience! Instead, we are merely told that he knew his wife (Gen 4:1, 25), begat a son in his own likeness, and died (Gen 5:3-5). If the reader can see in those statements any intimations or even indications that Adam was a regenerated man, then he has much better eyes than the writer – or, possibly, a more lively imagination." (Pink, Reference 1, p. 60)

Pink finds it difficult to hold that the man, Adam, as the responsible head of humanity, should be saved, restored to favor while the vast majority of humanity "of those he represented should eternally perish." He notes that no mention is made of Adam in Hebrews 11 that cites those saints of faith: Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., but no mention of Adam. Pink thinks that this omission is significant. The enormity of Adam's transgression cannot be denied. (Pink, Reference 1, p. 61)

"That offense is not to be measured by the external act of eating the fruit, but by the awful affront which was offered against God's majesty. In his sinning, there was a complication of many crimes. There was base ingratitude against the One who had so rightly endowed him, and discontent with the goodly heritage allotted him. There was disbelief of the holy veracity of God, a doubting of His Word, and a believing of the serpent's lie. There was a contempt of God's high authority, a breaking of His covenant, a flying in the face of His solemn threat. The curse of heaven fell upon him because he deliberately and presumptuously defied the Almighty. (Pink, Reference 1, p. 59-60)

Whether Adam and Eve came to the saving knowledge of the truth of God, acknowledging Sovereign God as the ultimate, absolute source and reference for all knowledge, truth, meaning, value and life remained an open question for Pink. He and others have sought and found little or no biblical support in which to be confident of their repentance, pardon, and regeneration of new birth to believe in faith the gospel of the good news -- the coming incarnation of Jesus Christ as the God-Man of redemption and salvation for all those who believe. Truly, only omniscient God knows.

Conditional

If God is omniscient (and He is), then He knew that Adam would freely choose to disobey the command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. While Pink, and others believe that Adam was created morally upright, sinless, with a "free will" to obey or not, it is not the case that God was ignorant of Adam's as well as Eve's fatal choices would be. Yet God's foreknowledge of their transgression did not coerce them into disobedience, for Holy God is not and cannot be the author of sin. Still, if God knew both Adam and Eve would sin, why not provide them with the necessary moral integrity of *non posse peccare*, the attribute of the regenerated, glorified state of redeemed sinners?

God is the cause of all that comes to pass, for He is the Creator. He is not only omniscient, but omnipotent and possessor of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. God is also the Law-Giver. God cannot act or in any case be contrary to His nature, which is that of the only morally perfect, holy, just, good, true, perfect being. God is the Potter, humanity is the clay. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" God is our Father, we are the work of his hand. (Romans 9:28; Isaiah 64:8) As such, the clay has no claim to legislate law or to inquire of the Potter, 'What doest thou? Why have you made me thus?' (Romans 9:20)

"Romans 9:22. What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory."

It is axiomatic that God cannot sin nor cause the creature to sin. Therefore, God is not the author of the fall. Adam and Eve chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil even in the face of the warning of death if they did. We must not forget, the garden of Eden had another tree: the tree of life, a choice they could have made freely even after the fall, for God ejected the pair out of the garden, lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever.

"Genesis 3:22. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

The cause of the fall of our first parents was the probation, the law of God's 'Thou shalt not' The result was that great exchange of epistemologies from a God-centered epistemology of law and grace to an Adamic or Man-centered epistemology of sin and death.

Of course, God, being omniscient, was not in the dark about Adam's fall from a state of original holiness and righteousness, *posse non peccare*, able not to sin, to the state of not being able not to sin. Thus the fall of Adam and Eve was sovereignly decreed, not an accident of an unknown choice of the created free will of our first parents. It isn't the case that God creates anything of which He may choose to remain ignorant until it comes to pass. This is a quality of the creature, not the Creator.

"Isaiah 45.7. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the lord do all these things."

The following chart summarizes the two models of epistemology framed according to the theology of two Adams, the first Adam who fell, the last Adam who obeyed the will (law) of God actively and passively. Actively, Jesus Christ obeyed the law of God fully and

perfectly down to every jot and tittle. Passively, He submitted to the will God even to the suffering and death of the cross providing thereby the basis for God's free grace offer of salvation, redemption, sanctification, glorification, and eternal life to all who believe, repent, and exercise the gift of saving faith.

Two Epistemologies: ACE to CCE	
Man-Centered Knowing	Christ-Centered Knowing
Satan Father of Lies	Jesus Christ Truth of God
Law of Sin	Law of Grace
Body of Death	Spirit of Life
Broad Way to Death	Narrow Way to Life
Non Posse Non Peccare	Non Posse Peccare

Truly, God's ways are past finding out.

Romans 11:33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36. For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever."

When man in his search and reach comes to the limits of human understanding, the boundary of the creature's finiteness and gazes on the reality of an infinite holy God, such is the occasion to bow in worship and awe. For those who ask what is the meaning of "infinite" in "infinite God," the answer Brown suggests is "past finding out!"

Past Finding Out

Archibald Brown wrote that God is past finding out in His being, works, ways, and salvation. (Brown, Reference 3, pp. 238-248)

God's being is past finding out.

"But do you say, 'Who is God? What is God?' ... 'He is past finding out.' ... We find Job saying, in the 11th chapter, at the 7th verse, 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' ... Thou mayest search, but thou canst not discover. There is no data to start from. There is no standard which you may compare; and therefore, God says, 'To who, then, will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.' ... 'No man can see me and live' is the language of deity. Clouds and darkness are round about him, and then, ... he maketh light his garment.' Light can hide as fully and completely as darkness. ... A God that could be comprehended would be smaller than the man who comprehended him; and therefore, let faith be strengthened, and not staggered by the utterance, 'He is past finding out.'" (Brown, Reference 2, pp. 238-239)

God is past finding out in His works. Cited by Brown is Job 9:10 where Job says that God does great

things past finding out. God, Job declares, does wonders without number.

'Gaze for a moment upon this wondrous illustration which Job introduces, namely, that we have only to lift our eyes up and behold nature in order to see that there is something past finding out. ... Earth floats in a limitless ocean of space, But she is not alone, for if, ... you look up, you will see that there is a fleet of a myriad other vessels, and that they are all navigating the same wide sea. ... And as Job marked Arcturus and Orion and the Pleiades, he did what any man who is not blinded by sin will do. He worshipped and he said 'Lord, thy works, like thyself, are past finding out.' " (Brown, Reference 2, p. 240)

God is past finding out in His ways. God's ways, like His being and His works span into infinity in meaning and purpose. What human mind is capable of grasping the content of the mind of infinite God? Brown, for his part, would not worship a God who is less than past finding out.

"You have acquiesced in the truth that his being is past finding out. You are certain that his works are. Then, surely there is no reason to be surprised if his methods are the same. Faith finds her tonic in the very fact that God's ways are so far above our own. ... Does not Jehovah say, 'As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts? ... God has his loving purpose, and he is carrying along everything towards it. ...God's ways are past finding out." (Brown, Reference 2, pp. 242-243)

Finally, the same characteristics regarding his being, works, and ways apply to His salvation. Job asked, how can man be just with God? (Job 9:1) God so loved the world that He gave His Son, the Son of His love, offering Him as the lamb of God to provide for the salvation of all those predestinated to be vessels of honor to display His Grace and Love for His creatures.

"When God provides a Saviour, he provides a Saviour the fulness of whose riches is past finding out. What are those riches that cannot be tracked, -- those riches that never can be fully discovered? Why, riches of merit, riches of grace, riches of love, riches of saving fulness. 'It please the Father that in him, Christ Jesus, should all fulness dwell. 'Why, I wonder that you do not leap up from you seats and sing, Hallelujah, what a Saviour? ...Paul came, and he found that there was enough to spare, and so he speaks of 'unsearchable riches.' We cannot trace them out. They defy all search. ... 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' How far does the pardon go? Oh, it is past finding out. ... His acceptance is past finding out. ... Oh, come and cast yourself down at the feet of the adorable Lord, the high, the holy, the lofty One, the eternal I Am, who in his being and in his works and in his ways is past finding out. Go, see him in Christ. Behold the One who is past finding out hanging in sweat of blood upon the cross. He is there for you. Oh, here is love past finding out. Here is grace past finding out. ... 'Hallelujah, I found the Saviour, and oh! he is past finding out. Hallelujah, I have found a peace and that is past finding out. Glory be to God." (Brown, Reference 2, pp. 243-247)

As Paul so eloquently expressed what he knew to be a fact, for God took him up into the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body, Paul could not say but this he did say: "... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Fallen World Life

A Christian follower of Jesus Christ, governed by the transforming Christ-centered way of knowing is commanded to live according to this ideal: "... bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5) Three tasks are commanded: self-denial, cross bearing, and following Christ.

"Luke 9:23. And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (See also, Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34)

1. The Christian's life of sanctification carried out jointly in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is the denial of self. What does self-denial mean? It means undergoing a transformation from an old nature governed by the man-centered epistemology of fallen Adam to a Christ-centered epistemology of knowledge and truth. The process is gradual and real. It involves the mortification of the members of the body and the struggle to do the will of God even as Jesus did in His life and ministry.

"Colossians 3:5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

2. The Christian is to take up his cross, a daily task, one briefly described by Paul as a war between the old man and the inner man, the old nature living under the law of sin and death, the inner man living under the law of grace. These two laws Paul found alive and active in his life, a struggle that would end in victory upon his death and entry into eternity.

"Romans 7:23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

3. The Christian is to follow Jesus Christ. How? Even as Jesus always did the will of His Father discerning it in prayers, supplications, worship, and scripture – the Word of God abiding in Him and guiding Him. In short, taking every thought captive to the obedience of a God-centered reference for all thought and life.

"John 5:30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "John 14:21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

The following chart contrasts the essential characteristics of two ways of knowing and living – the goal of sanctification life being ever before one: self-denial, bearing one's cross, and following Jesus.

SANCTIFICATION LIFE	
Adam Centered Epistemology	Christ Centered Epistemology
Self-Referenced Knowledge	God-Referenced Knowledge
Law of Sin & Death	Law of Grace & Love
Non Posse Non Peccare	Posse Peccare & Posse Non Peccare
Broad Gate & Way to Destruction	Strait Gate & Narrow Road to Life
Bondage of the Will to Sin & Death	Freedom of the Will to Holiness & Life
Every Thought Captive to Obedience of Human Depravity	Every Thought Captive to Obedience of Jesus Christ
Cognitive Dissonance: Unyielding Despair	Cognitive Peace: Unyielding Faith
Destiny Eternal Hell	Destiny Eternal Heaven

The Christian's life of sanctification is a life regulated by two laws, the law of sin and the law of grace.

(Romans 7:23) The knowledge of the tree of good and evil is a reality for every Christian, a reality consummated, however, in the promise of victory. The promise is life eternal with Jesus Christ, in a glorified resurrection permanently endowed with many graces among which is the grace of *non posse peccare*, not able ever to sin in thought, motive, choice, speech, or life throughout eternity.

"Romans 6:22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Every thought free from the obedience of Jesus Christ is a thought captive to a *non posse non peccare* state, a not able not to sin life. Every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ is a thought freed to the state of *non posse peccare*, not able to sin life -- eternal.

Two Adams: First And Last	
Adam	Jesus Christ
Will of Man	Will of God
Slave of Sin	Son of God
Not able Not to Sin	Not able to Sin
Condemnation	Salvation

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Hell Destiny	Heaven Destiny
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Jesus: The Way

For anyone who thinks that the Way is a method, or system of religious practices or rituals, or set of rules or laws to achieve entrance into the Kingdom of God, in other words, a "works religion," think again. When Jesus said that He was the Way, He spoke of a life of self-denial. The way of a disciple of Jesus Christ is the way of the mortification of Self (the I or Ego as the ultimate reference for meaning, significance, knowledge, truth, value, and even life) and a turning to Jesus Christ as the ultimate reference for all life -- now and forever.

The regenerated sinner robed in the imputed righteousness of Christ is transformed to His image and likeness by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. This transformation is the work of sanctification and is accomplished by the Holy Spirit as He applies the benefits of Christ's atonement to the redeemed believer's life. Death completes his sanctification. The believer then enjoys eternal life with Jesus, awaiting the resurrection of a glorified body at the Final Judgment.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)

This Judgment precedes dwelling in the Kingdom of God to enjoy eternal fellowship with the One Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The

3 Christ Centered Epistemology

Augustinian *non posse peccare* state is finally realized for life in eternity.

The Way of Jesus is the way of a disciple who denies self, takes up his cross daily, and continues in the Word who is Jesus. (Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:37) The way of God required the incarnation of God in Jesus to initiate the way out of the Adamic disaster of abandoning God-centered epistemology. The narrow way to eternal life in heaven is recorded in the New Testament account of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way" -- the narrow way that leads to eternal life. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Throughout His life, a life in which He obeyed the will of God both actively and passively, the former in obedience to every requirement of the law of God, the latter in obedience, as the lamb of God, to the death of the cross, Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life of *non posse peccare*, and died the spotless lamb of God, the death of a holy sacrifice as our substitute to reconcile man to God.

"John 5:30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

In the wilderness temptations, Jesus resisted Satan. Satan's strategy in this case was not the Adam and Eve deception: "hath God said?", for Satan knew with

whom he spoke. Instead, his strategy posed conditionals intended to tempt Jesus to respond according to Satan's criteria of proof. (Matthew 4 and Luke 4)

1. Satan tempted Jesus to make stones bread to prove he was the son of God. (vs. 4)

2. Satan tempted Jesus to cast himself from the temple pinnacle to prove he was the son of God, this time, citing Scripture to the effect that angels would prevent injury. (vs. 6)

3. Satan tempted Jesus offering the kingdoms of the world if he would worship him. (vs. 9)

Whereas, Adam was tempted once by Satan, Jesus was tempted thrice. At each temptation, Jesus resisted with the word of God, and at the same time exalted God-centered epistemology as authoritative and therefore decisive – something Adam and Eve presumably were capable of doing.

It is a source of genuine astonishment that the created angel Lucifer, would tempt his Creator to worship him. Satan's evil desire for worship drove him to tempt his own Creator, the Word of God.

Jesus: The Truth

Pilate's dismissively uttered, 'What is truth?' implied that there is no such thing as truth. Alternatively, Satan tempts man to assume that truth is whatever man chooses. It is a meaning the self designates or assigns. 'I am in epistemological control of all meaning.' Thus,

truth is not an absolute. What is true for me today may change tomorrow or the next day, month, or year. 'Reality is subject to my perceptions and whatever meaning I assign to them' – so the Man-centered epistemology would have us believe.

1. Jesus said that he was the truth.

"John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

2. Jesus declared that he came to witness to the truth.

"John 18:37. ... Jesus answered, To this end I was born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

3. Jesus said that because he spoke the truth, his enemies sought to murder Him.

"John 8:40. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God"

4. Jesus, the son of God, also declared that the truth would set man free.

"John 8:32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus: The Life

"Philippians 1:21. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The life of a believer is the life of Christ in the believer. The disciple of Jesus enjoys eternal life even

now. This is the record of the true propositions of Scripture. All those who believe Jesus' message of salvation, the Gospel, have eternal life. (John 6:40)

"John 10:28. I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

The promise of Jesus is, "I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:44b)

"1 John 5:20. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 5:11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Five biblical passages will suffice to establish the claim that Jesus is the life.

1. Jesus declared that he and the Father are one.

"John 10:30. I and my Father are one. 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

2. Jesus claimed that like the Father, he had life in Himself.

"John 5:26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."

3. Jesus declared himself the 'I am' before Abraham was.

"John 8:58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

5. Jesus identified himself as life.

*"John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (*More Scripture)*

J. I. Packer wrote that knowing God is the basis for great peace, a peace that surpasses human understanding and provides great contentment in God.

"There is no peace like the peace of those whose minds are possessed with full assurance that they have known God, and God has known them, and that this relationship guarantees God's favor to them in life, through death, and on for ever. This is the peace of which Paul speaks in Romans 5:1 – 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' – and whose substance he analyses in full in Romans 8. ... the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs ... we know that all things work together for good to them that love God ... who he justified, them he also glorified ... if God be for us, who can be against us? ... Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... I am persuaded that neither death, nor life ... no things present, nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord' (verses 1.16 f., 28, 30, 33, 35 ff.)." (Packer, Reference 3, p. 26; ellipses in original.)

Knowing God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the task and privilege of every creature born from

above. There is a life-long struggle consisting of a war between ways of knowing, one of which assumes that man is the measure of all things. The other way of knowing is exemplified by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Satan's desire was to not only be like God, his creator, but he aspired to be above God making himself the ultimate reference. Satan conspired against God in recruiting Adam and Eve to serve his evil designs, and to this day he does still recruit. He, unlike the human creature, is un-savable; there is no provision made for his repentance or salvation. Satan's desire was to procure his self-same condition of depravity and sin in all of humanity, for he hates God with a will governed by the state of *non posse non peccare* forever.

Regenerated man enjoys the promise of being transformed to the image of his redeemer Jesus Christ: free at last, in Christ, by Christ and for Christ.

"1 Corinthians 15:45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

"Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

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Part 4: Self Centered Epistemology

"Isaiah 14:13. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Descartes' familiar slogan, "Cogito, Ergo Sum," if inadequate as a basis for a philosophical system, at least takes note of self-centered epistemology. The emphasis is unmistakable: "I." Of course, this is supposed to be a deduction. As a statement in ontology; there is no mistaking his starting point: the self.

Others have opposed his axiom, citing "dubito, ergo sum" or "sum, ergo cogito, ergo dubito" as examples of the futility of basing knowledge or any theory on the mere fact of doubt as a form of *cogito* or thinking. Such discussions fall beyond the reach of this project and are introduced here only to emphasize the role of self in epistemology.

Once upon a time, the author attended a committee chaired by a government official seeking educational strategies for introducing and teaching self-esteem classes in prisons. The elected servant claimed that prisons were full of persons who had committed various crimes primarily because they lacked self-esteem. He proposed self-esteem training for felons as a form of rehabilitation and to prevent recidivism, for felons are prone to repeat their crimes or worse. The presupposition of an ideology in search of explanations that avoid addressing the question of sin and sinful natures, or any other excuse that will avoid self-blame or responsibility, is a reminder of the fall of Adam and Eve. We sin because we are sinners; we are not sinners because we sin, although we do sin. Indeed we, born in Adam, are unable not to sin. As a result, when we sin, someone or something other than self is to blame and responsible: the lack of self-esteem, the environment, poverty, or even our genes, but never the self, or hardly ever.

Eve blamed the serpent. Adam blamed first his Eve, then his God. No mention, however, of the lack of self-esteem in either case, and Satan blamed no one. In fact he, of all, did not lack self-esteem.

The Self

The "I" in Satan's plan was the "I" of self, the person of Satan. If self refers to "person," a self-centered epistemology should define what is meant by "person."

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Here, we follow Gordon Clark who provided the following definition of *person*, one with which the author agrees.

"Accordingly the proposal is that a man is a congeries, a system, sometimes an agglomeration of miscellany, but at any rate, a collection of thoughts. A man is what he thinks and no two men are precisely the same combination." (Clark, Reference 1, p. 106)

A person, a self is a collection of thoughts, a unique composite set of propositions. These propositions or meanings when anchored as Satan anchored his (I will ...), yield the self-centered epistemology of not only Satan, but Adam and all born in his image. This exchange from a God-centered epistemology to a man-centered way of knowing, to disobedience of God's Law and rebellion against His Rule yielded for Adam and his posterity God's judgment and curse.

Holy Writ makes clear that the fall of our ancestors was the cause for the curse that fell on both creature and creation. The curse of a corrupt self at the core of human existence has been the legacy for all humanity since the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

Horatius Bonar wrote that self is "the master curse of man." In his exposition of the importance and significance of a Christ-centered theology, he declares that it requires the setting aside of self.

"I do not mean the annihilation of self, as some speak. There is no such thing, I speak of giving self its proper place — the

place recognized by our Lord when he said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' ... Lawful self-love is not selfishness; yet we may say that selfishness is diseased self-love; and as such, is the master-sin, the master curse of man. He lives for self; his estimate of everything is its bearing upon self; the color which he casts over everything is one derived from self. Self is the horizon which limits all his views. He is not like a man looking round on a noble landscape, and forgetting himself in the beauty of the wide expanse; he is like a man carrying a mirror with him, into which he is continually looking, that he may see and admire himself; so that every object is seen in connection with self, and is only admired as it helps to set off self." (Bonar, Reference 2, p. 1)

Self as Center

Self-idolatry is another aspect of a self or man-centered epistemology, one in which man is cursed to and in the state of unable not to sin (*non posse non peccare*). Depraved at the core, his self, man cannot overcome his sinful nature, for it requires the self to overcome the self thus at each attempt re-establishing a cursed self-centered way of knowledge and life. Thus,

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Romans 3:12)

There is no one who does good, no not a single self, not a single person. Such is the extent and depth of the curse of sin. How then can man escape the just condemnation?

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According to Bonar, the substitute for sinful self and the curse of self is the Lord Jesus Christ; He comes into the place of self and indwells the spirit of man to begin and continue the work of the Spirit, sanctification.

"In turning from self we do not leave ourselves without an object to live for, or to die for: we get one infinitely more worthy than we possessed before. Instead of self we get the Son of God: the glorious one. He fills us, occupies us, engrosses us henceforth. He is all to us what self was before. He takes the place of self in everything from first to last, great or small. He is the Substitute for self, first of all, in the matter of our standing before God. As the first thing the Holy Spirit does is to set aside self, in the matter of justification and acceptance, so His next is to present to us the Son of God as the true ground of our acceptance. ... Having taken Him in the place of self, we find ourselves at once accepted of the Father, accepted in the beloved, accepted, not because self has been improved, but because self has been set aside and the son of God substituted in its room." (Bonar, Reference 2, pp. 3-4)

No sessions of self-esteem therapy are called for. Indeed, the ideology of idolatry of self-esteem cancels and negates any admission of need for a substitute or any way of escape. But in Jesus Christ, who alone is able to substitute,

"we find an object worth living for, an object that we can carry through everything through every part of life, into every region of life. We make Him our Alpha and Omega, our first and out

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last. ... Thus, in living and in dying, Christ is all. ... You are not your own at any time, nor in any circumstances, but His, His only." (Bonar, Reference 2, p. 4)

The Exchange

The exchange our original parents chose is repaired in the reversal from man-centered life and knowledge, to Christ-centered life and way of knowing. Henceforth, the life of sanctification follows the pattern and way Jesus Christ lived and sets forth His plan for all who follow Him. He said to his disciples:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

Luke also wrote of Jesus' three-fold plan: denial of self; taking up his cross, and following Christ; he added that cross-bearing is daily. The plan cannot be compartmentalized so that one can accomplish, say, self-denial and dismiss the others. No, the plan is a unity of three. Each component is necessary and is accomplish in the sanctification life of the believer.

Fallen to Sanctified Self	
Self	Jesus Christ
Self-Esteem	Self-Denial
Rehabilitation	Obedience
Self-Worship	God Worship

4 Self Centered Epistemology

Death	Life
Hell	Heaven

Law of God

Thus, Jesus Christ testified that the whole Law of God could be summarized in this manner:

"Deuteronomy 6:5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. "Luke 10:27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

Note the universal "all." All thine heart or mind; All thy soul; All thy might or strength; God first and always, then neighbor, and last self. No exceptions.

This is the biblical order of love: God, neighbor, and then, self. But what of self? Is one to love self, sinful-self but only last, in the proper order of God, neighbor, and only then, self? Yes, self is last, and one is at that point to deny self for in this one loves oneself. Jesus replaces the self at every point when the believer takes every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5) His obedience was to always do and serve the will of God His Father – always both actively in obedience to the all of the Law of God, and passively in His death on the cross atonement. (John 5:30)

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Only then is it possible to bear one's cross daily, and follow Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. Such is the way of a Christ-centered epistemology -- to know Him and to live and die as unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. (Galatians 2:20)

"Romans 14:7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

For to me, as the Apostle Paul preached and taught, " ... to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)

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Part 5: Gospel Epistemology

"Romans 1:16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' "

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John Robbins wrote that there are more than two thousand organizations in the United States (1988) professing to be Christian. He noted that the differences that separate many of them are irreconcilable. (Robbins, Reference 1)

Confusion among professing Christians is evident in their many slogans, their language used to create special effects. Rhetoric does not convey the intellectual content of the Gospel or any doctrine that requires clear understanding for logical assent to true proposi-

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tions. Emotional appeals, moving stories, and illustrations intended to engender belief in the Gospel are soon forgotten.

Before a reaffirming what the Scripture declares the essentials of the Good News and why it can be nothing but Good News for sinners dead in trespasses and sins, it may be worthwhile to list what the Gospel is not.

Not the Gospel

Robbins' attempt to make clear what the Gospel is began with a list of some of those slogans in order to show what the Gospel is not.

The Gospel is not:

You must repent.

You must be born again.

You can perform miracles.

You must decide for Christ.

You must expect a miracle.

You must trust Jesus Christ.

You must speak in tongues.

You must let go, and let God.

You must draw nigh unto God.

You must let Jesus into your heart,

You must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

You must be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

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You must make Jesus the Lord of your life.

You must put Jesus on the throne of your heart.

You must have a personal relationship with Christ

There are many more like these, all rhetorical (sloganeering) for easy recall and convenient use by lay persons and ministers from pulpits on radio and television. However, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not something a person does, performs, executes, experiences, surrenders to, captures, or buys. It never was an ideology; it never was ideas in the interest of a group of religious zealots. The Gospel is not a product for sale or a promotion for success, or a free trial offer with a money back guarantee, if it does not work for you. The Gospel of God is not a *quid pro quo* offer for happiness or prosperity. Some preachers develop ministries that earn millions. Financially successful religious empires do not prove that the Gospel, if believed, is a good investment. Large membership rosters of professing believers are no guarantee of authentic Christianity. Remember, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

The next verses of Matthew 7 present a devastating indictment at the last judgment for those who preached or taught a false gospel:

Matthew 7:22. "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your

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name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23. And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' "

For the Apostle Paul, the Gospel is something God purposed and accomplished in Christ from start to finish.

1 Corinthians 15:1. "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you which you received, in which you stand, 2. and by which you are saved, if you hold fast the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4. that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

Good News

What is the Gospel? The biblical answer is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. After His resurrection, many saw Him, and then He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19) Because of widespread religious confusion about the Gospel, Robbins then discussed several important aspects of the Gospel as taught by Paul. The Gospel, he wrote, concerns:

History, not legend or myth;

The past, not the present nor the future;

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What Christ did for His people; and

What God accomplished in Christ, Redemption.

Robbins' analysis is to be commended:

"The Gospel concerns the past, neither the present nor the future. It is history. The Gospel does not describe any present or future action that God or man might take. The Gospel is news about actions God in Christ took 2,000 years ago to save his people, actions that are wholly outside of our experience. Just as all men are condemned by Adam's sin, which was wholly outside of us, so are all of God's chosen people saved by Christ's obedience unto death, which is wholly outside of their experience. Just as the Gospel is history, not legend; and just as the Gospel concerns the past, not the present nor the future; so the Gospel is about something that God did, not something that we must do or can do. Christ is both the author and the finisher of our salvation. We do not complete what he began; Christ said, It is finished." (Robbins, Reference 10, p. 2)

In other words, Jesus Christ is an historical person: Jesus is not a voice from the past. Jesus is not a dream. Jesus is not a legend. Jesus is not fable, and Jesus is not a myth.

He was born, lived some thirty years, taught, witnessed to the Truth, and healed the sick. He raised the dead, comforted the weak, and had compassion on the poor. He was condemned to die on a cross, though innocent; He gave his life a ransom for many. He was buried; He rose from the dead; He ascended to heaven;

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and He reigns on the throne at the right hand of God. (Ephesians 1:20; Robbins, Reference 10.1, p. 2)

History

All of these events took place in space-time, in our world's history. The biblical record is the history of what God did just over two thousand years ago to save His people, not the whole world, but his elect in Christ unto salvation. It is not about what I can do, or what anyone must do now or in the future. The Gospel is about something God did, in Christ. Christ is the author and finisher of our salvation. To repeat. Christ declared on the cross: "It is finished."

Christ died for the sins of His people alone, not the sins of everyone. He did not die for the sins of Pilate, or the sins of Judas, or the sins of atheists, Satan worshippers, or fallen Angels. Scripture records that lost sinners are punished in hell. Christ did not die for anyone in hell or bound for hell. God in Christ accomplished redemption for His people and this, according to the Scripture. This authoritative, true, objective, and historical message is set forth in the Scriptures in precise, clear language for all to read, study, and understand.

Propositions

Not only does Scripture deliver true, clear propositions about the Gospel as the work of God in Christ,

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but those biblical propositions lead to logical implications as necessary consequences of and supported by Scripture, as Robbins makes clear.

"The Gospel, according to Paul, is embedded in something much larger. It is embedded in all the Scriptures. Not only are the Scriptures the only reliable source of information we have about life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but the Scriptures alone explain those events. The Gospel is not merely that Christ rose again. So did Lazarus. The Gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The Gospel is in accord with and explained by the Scriptures, all sixty-six books of them. When Christ explained his resurrection to the disciples, he did so by explaining the Scriptures.: (Robbins, Reference 1, p. 3)

The Emmaus couple testified that Christ opened the Scriptures to their understanding beginning with Moses and all the Prophets. Christ used the Scriptures as he taught and witnessed to the Truth. This is why Paul uses the phrase "according to the Scriptures." In fact, Christ always referred to the Scriptures as he taught, rebuked, and witnessed to the Truth. He did not come, He said, to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.

Matthew 5:17. "Do not think I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law, until all is accomplished."

One last passage from Robbins' essay is worthy of careful reflection. It provides a summary of his answer to the question, What is the Gospel?

"The Gospel is neither accounts of our personal experiences nor commands that we are to obey. The Gospel is the good news of what Christ did for his people 2000 years ago. It is not about the new birth, nor the Second Coming, nor the activities of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Gospel is propositions about historical events that happened wholly outside of us. It has consequences and implications for us today, to be sure, but these consequences are effects of the Gospel, and must not be confused with the Gospel itself." (Robbins, Reference 1, p. 4)

For Emphasis

The answer to any honest inquiry about the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be expressed by stating a fact,* "Christianity is Jesus Christ." To which someone may respond with some incredulity, "What? Christianity is a person?" "Yes, a person, a unique person, for Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity**; that is, Jesus is God, the Son of God the Father: a unique person with a unique message, the Gospel of Jesus Christ." The Gospel message, the Spirit of Truth declares in four propositions:

1. Jesus Christ died for our sins;
2. Jesus Christ was buried;
3. Jesus Christ rose from the dead the third day; and

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4. Jesus Christ was seen by the apostles and many disciples.

1 Corinthians 15:3. For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. 5. And that he was seen by Cephas ... 6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ... 7. After that, he was seen of James, then all the apostles. 8. And last of all he was seen of me also.

These propositional truths speak of the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These two, the person of Jesus and the message of Jesus are inseparable, for the message is what Jesus accomplished and proclaimed during his short life and ministry on earth. He came to earth as God-Man to offer His life a ransom for many, to save sinners from the destiny of Adam's disobedience and rebellion leading to eternal death in hell.

Matthew 20:28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. 1 Timothy 2:5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Image of God

In John 14, the Apostle John quotes Jesus as declaring that He was not only the way, but the truth, and the life for those who seek eternal life with Him in Glory. (vs. 6) This biblical truth is true of Jesus alone. Only

Jesus lived a sinless life, a life of perfect obedience to the will of the Father. (Hebrews 4:15) There is no other one like Him. He is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Jesus' life was the way of service, compassion, healing, ministering, teaching, and dying as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:43-45) He was the lamb of God who gave His life to save His people from the just condemnation of death and hell. (John 1:29) Thus, the way of a follower of Jesus Christ is the way of self-denial, bearing one's cross daily, and following Him even as He lived life according to the will of God without fault and in gratitude for all that God provided. (Luke 9:23)

Jesus' way is the way of truth. His promise is that if the believer continues "in my word, then are ye my disciples and you shall know the truth," a truth that will make one free indeed. (John 8:31) Thus, the way of truth is the way of eternal life and freedom in Christ. (1 John 5:20; 5:11)

Jesus' way is the way of life. This is the truth that Jesus gives eternal life to all those who hear his voice. His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. No one is able to "pluck them out of my hand." The Father who gave these followers to Him promises eternal security for those in Christ. (John 19:27-29)

The life of a believer is the life of Christ in the believer after the pattern of Him who lived and died for

his people. Jesus is the last Adam, according to Scripture, "made a quickening spirit." (1 Corinthians 15:45) The life that a believer now lives in the flesh is by the faith of Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. (Galatians 2:20)

In sum, truth is an attribute of God. His thoughts are the thoughts of an eternal, immutable, sovereign mind. As such, God's mind thinks according to the laws of logic; God is not insane. He is not the author of confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33) Logic is the structure of God's supreme, infallible thinking and reason. God Almighty is the origin and source of all propositional truth. Truth, logic, and reasoning are mental, and they are gifts of the Creator because we are created in His image and likeness. The Creator God, not man the creature, determines all propositional truth concerning knowledge, meaning, value, history, destiny, creation, life and reality, both now and in eternity to His Glory.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who understand and believe on Jesus Christ and on Him who sent Him according to the Scriptures. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ will return to judge the quick and the dead at the final judgment:

He will come again to earth a second time. (Hebrews 9:28)

He will come personally. (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians

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4:16)

He will come bodily. (Acts 1:11; Colossians 2:9)

He will return visibly. (Matthew 26:64; Revelation 1:7)

Jesus Christ will come to consummate His salvation and judgment as numerous passages in Scripture declare. (1 Timothy 6:14-15; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 John 2:28, 3:2.)

Even so, come Lord Jesus Christ.

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*A fact is a value with a variable error of zero, according to Gordon H. Clark.

**If the Trinity is a false doctrine, as some claim, then Jesus is not God. Jesus said, I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. (John 17:7-11; 1 John 5:7) Therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity is not false, and Jesus is God. (John 14:8-11.)

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Part 6: Epilogue

Every Thought Captive

"Acts 17: 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him though he be not far from every one of us: 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being."

This final section of this thought-experiment considers Christ-centered epistemology (CCE) as a worldview. How does CCE fare when tested against Nash's three tests for evaluating any worldview: the test of reason, the test of experience, and the test of practice. (Nash, Reference 1, pp. 25-32)

The reader should bear in remembrance two underlying presuppositions:

Every thought free from the obedience of Christ, a Man-centered epistemology (MCE) is a thought captive to a *non posse non peccare* state.

Every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, the Christ-centered epistemology (CCE) is a thought freed to a *non posse peccare* state.

Review

Nash, as previously noted, cites three important tests for evaluation of worldviews: tests of reason, of experience, and of practice.

He reports that in his experience most people are not aware that their worldview presuppositions are often borrowed from other worldviews which may result in an inconsistent set of assumptions. Thus, the first test is the test for consistency. Is the worldview free from contradictions? This is the test of reason.

The law of noncontradiction states that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect. A proposition is either true or false; it cannot be both. The presence of contradiction in a worldview is not merely an inconsistency, but indicates error and therefore signals the need for re-assessment of worldview beliefs. Keep in mind, however, that as previously noted, the absence of contradictions does not guarantee truth.

The test of experience consists of the test of inner experience and the test of outer experience of the world. The test of inner experience seeks to know whether our worldview assumptions are in conflict with our consciousness, and thereby causing a state of cognitive dissonance. The test of outer experience asks whether ones' worldview beliefs are in conflict with what we know to be true of creation? For example, the nihilist claims that all is meaningless yet without the

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presence of meaning the nihilist could not say that all is meaningless. The statement that all is meaningless proves to be false because the statement that all is meaningless has meaning. And, if the statement is true, then it too is meaningless.

The test of experience applied to outer experience is one that asks whether there is a smooth empirical fit with the things of the world as we experience them in daily life. If a proposition, for example, 'all politicians are liars' is held to be true, then one discovers that some politicians are not liars, the former proposition is no longer tenable.

The test of practice asks the simple question, 'Can I live my worldview?' Do I practice what I preach? If the answer is negative, then the professed worldview beliefs fail the test of practice.

Application

1. Christ-centered epistemology does not fail the test of reason. This model does not promote contradictions, paradoxes, or antinomies. God is the God of truth; He is not the God of confusion. The truths about the Father are made known by God through the Son of God, Jesus Christ who said 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Search for inconsistencies as one might, none are to be found. There are of course many things that are beyond our understanding, for the being, works, and ways of God are past finding out. Nev-

ertheless, what God reveals about Himself, His Creation, and His Plan for the redemption of a people is free from inconsistencies or contradictions. The structure of God's mind is logic. Thus all that God thinks is free from any and all incoherence.

2. Christ-centered epistemology passes the test of experience, both inner and outer. A Christ-centered way of knowing fills the vacuum of restless minds. It produces a peace that is beyond human understanding for it is the peace of God for all those who take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. Jesus proclaimed truthfully that He always did the will of His Father. As a consequence, in Him God the Father was well pleased – always. That inner peace yields the fruit of love for God and neighbor, as oneself. (John 14:27)

3. Christ-Centered-Epistemology is the most rewarding way of living for it reconciles the regenerated sinner and the God of creation once and for all time. It is true that in the world, the believer will experience tribulations. But the believer knows and believes that all things work for the good of those who love God. Thus, the God-centered way of knowing not only assures the believer of a future in heaven, but proves to be what Jesus Himself taught and preached when He said He was the way, the truth and the life. (Romans 8:28)

6 Epilogue

Two Epistemologies	
Man-centered-knowing	Christ-centered-knowing
Will of Man	Will of God
Satan-Father of Lies	Jesus Christ-Truth of God
Law of Sin	Law of Grace
Slave of Sin	Son of God
Broad Way to Death	Narrow Way to Life
Non Posse Non Peccare	Non Posse Peccare

Ultimate Questions

A well-formed worldview includes at a minimum five assumptions identified by the following ultimate questions and answers.

1. What is prime reality?

With a Christ-centered way of knowing, God in Christ is the reality in which the creature lives, moves, and has his being. The believer lives a life whose goal is to take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. As the believer lives out sanctification by the indwelling Spirit who takes the things of Christ and shows them to him, his renewed image of God is being transformed to the image of Christ. Sanctification life is not a life of ease or indifference. Rather, it is one of self-denial and mortification of the members of the

body. It is a life in which the law of sin indwelling the body wars against the law of the mind of the inner man. There is no doubt of the outcome for the Word of God declares that all things work to the good of those who love God. Jesus Christ declared "It is finished." He won the victory over Satan and death; His resurrection confirmed the victory.

2. Who is man?

Man is the clay, God is the Potter who created man in His image and likeness. Man was created morally upright, sinless and in possession of all that was required to live a life of obedience to the Law of God as man exercised dominion over God's creation.

3. What happens at death?

Death, physical death, is the separation of the soul from the body. The body returns to dust from whence God formed it. The soul, bodiless or unclothed, exits space-time into the intermediate state. There, the redeemed saint waits in expectation of the resurrection of a glorified habitation to enjoy fellowship with God, the saints, and holy angels in a *non posse peccare* state of holiness.

4. What is the basis for morality?

The Law of God, His will, His precepts are the basis of morality. As it was in the beginning, God is the Law-Giver. God alone determines what is good, what is righteous and what is not. The believer in heaven will

enjoy the morally upright state of the holy angels, free from all sin, corruption, temptation, or disobedience forever and ever to the glory of God.

5. What is the meaning of history?

History is the record of God's plan of redemption to restore a people to their original state of uprightness -- only now enjoying forever the state of *not being able to sin*. The eternal state of life with Jesus Christ, no imagination can picture or discover; a life of *non posse peccare* is past finding out while living in space-time.

These are the axioms of a worldview that is governed by Christ-centered epistemology or way of knowledge and truth. This worldview meets and surpasses all tests for evaluating worldview. Moreover, nothing in Scripture opposes its presuppositions. Rather the Word of God declares that in Christ all of the fullness of God dwells, and we in Him, and Christ in the Father.

For Scripturalism, there is another test, the test of the Scriptures. As the Introduction makes clear, the law of noncontradiction and systematic consistency are to be applied in response to the following questions.

1. Do any worldview presuppositions or deductions contradict the Scriptures? A careful examination answers this question with a "no!"

2. Does the professed worldview harmonize with biblical principles, beliefs, laws, truths, or doctrines? Again, this worldview is a picture of biblical truths.

3. A Christian's worldview must be systematically consistent and reflect a life that is the fruit of sanctification by the indwelling Holy Spirit. This worldview, when tested and examined using the Scripture as a final test is consistent with Scripture and is supported by it.

"Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Mind Renewal

In sum, for the renewed Adam, the law of sin in the members of our flesh wars against the law of God in our mind and spirit. The transformation from life to death in Eden is now reversed from death to life in Jesus Christ. The mind of Christ, the spirit of truth works in the believer both to will and to do God's good pleasure. (1 Corinthians 15:45; read Appendix B.)

Christ was made a curse for the believer. He, who knew no sin (in other words, sinless or without sin for He, being the God-Man, was unable to sin) was made sin by God for us.

"He was 'without sin,' He 'knew no sin,' not the shadow of evil was to be found in him; He was the 'righteous one,' the 'holy one,'

the 'Lamb without blemish, and without spot;' all ;together perfect, yet partaker of our very flesh, our true humanity; very man, of the substance of the virgin, partaker of the dust of earth, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, still sinless in the entirest sense of that word; loving righteousness and hating iniquity, this sinless One was made sin, made sin by God: 'He hath made Him sin.' (Bonar, Reference 2, pp. 1-2)

This son of God, Jesus Christ, at the cross took upon his sinless soul all our sins and transgressions. "The name of our substitute is 'Jehovah our Righteousness;' and, the justifying righteousness is called by an apostle, 'the righteousness of ... God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.'" (2 Peter 1:1, and Bonar, Reference 2, p 4)

"In Jesus, the sinner's substitute, we have 'the perfect One.' God sees perfection in Him. But his perfection, while it detects and condemns our imperfection, provides also for its forgiveness. It is the means of this perfection that God is enabled to deal in love with our imperfection, however great and manifold it may be. The good swallows up the evil, and yet is not tainted thereby. The sinner hands over his sins to the perfect One; and the perfect One hands over perfection to the sinner. Thus by reason of this blessed transference or exchange, the imperfect one becomes as the perfect One in the sight of God, and is dealt with as such in regard to all favor and blessing." (Bonar, Reference 2, pp. 5-6)

The believer stands complete in his perfect substitute, now accepted in the beloved forever. The believer is not only restored to man's pre-fall state, but elevated to a new state earned by the atonement of Jesus Christ

Elihu Carranza

-- a free offer of salvation and sanctification made to all who will receive it.

"Philippians 2:12. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."

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Glossary

ACE: Adamic or Adam-centered way of knowing.

SCE: Self-centered way of knowing.

MSE: Man-centered way of knowing.

GCE: God-centered way of knowing.

CCE: Christ-centered epistemology or way of knowing.

Autonomous: Self-governing, directed, reliant, independent, sovereign source of all meaning, truth, and value.

Axiom: First principle or premise such that it need not and cannot be demonstrated; the basis for all argument and demonstration.

Closed System: A worldview that rejects any description, explanation, or appeal to the supernatural; reality studied, interpreted, and evaluated on the basis of the axioms and methods of naturalism; the rejection of the spiritual dimension of thought and life.

Confusion: A mental condition consisting of un-clear,

disorderly thought and behavior; disorderly combination of elements with loss of identities and distinctions; the disorder of a reprobate mind.

Contradiction: Refers to the opposition between two propositions which cannot both be false together and cannot both be true together.

Destiny: An ultimate event or end, the predestined eternal state as decreed by the Sovereign God.

Doctrine: Teaching imparted by an authoritative source; instruction in righteousness; profitable for reproof, for correction, to help one understand the will of God for one's life.

Epistemology: The study of how we know what is claimed to be known, theory of knowledge.

Gospel: The good news; revealed truth that Christ died for sins of the elect according to the Scriptures; He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; propositions about these historical events with consequences and implication for all creatures and creation.

Grace. Unmerited, unearned mercy or favor; divine favor toward man.

Image of God: Innate logic, truth, knowledge, meaning, understanding, and reason from God, with God as the absolute, ultimate, sole frame of reference for all thought and life; apriori or innate equipment for learning.

Implication: The relation between two propositions

in virtue of which one is logically deducible from the other.

Inference: Forming of conclusion from premises by inductive or deductive methods; the conclusion it-self.

Law of Grace: The law of the Spirit is the Gospel; the good news declares "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2)

Law of Identity: States: if any proposition is true, then it is true; symbolized: $a < a$.

Law of Noncontradiction: States that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect: symbolized: *not both a and not-a*; or $(aa)'$.

Law of Sin: The Law of Sin and Death is the Law of God, God's holy law that man does not obey and cannot keep resulting in sin and death for those under the law.

Law: A rule of being or of conduct, established by an authority able to enforce its will.

Laws of Logic: The laws of identity; excluded middle; and noncontradiction.

Life: God breathed existence; the spiritual gift of contingent being from the origin, source, and sustainer of all life: God.

Logic: the science of necessary inference; the structure of God's Mind and the mind of Man created in

the image of God.

Man: A knowing, thinking, judging creature in the image of God; a mind (*nous*).

Meaning: The message that is intended, expressed, or signified; the idea intended in the denotation or connotation of a term, phrase, or sentence; a proposition.

Meaninglessness: A pseudo-message that conveys no meaning; nonsense, gibberish.

Mind: The gift of the spiritual dimension of life consisting of intellectual life of thought and reason originally meant to guide the will and control the emotion of a person created in the image of God.

Naturalism: The doctrine or system of beliefs that the cosmos can be understood only in scientific terms, using empirical methods of observation without recourse to supernatural explanations or appeals to the spiritual dimension of existence.

Nihilism: The belief that there is no value, no meaning in the universe; no value in being itself.

Nominalism: The doctrine, philosophy, or worldview that nothing is general but names; common nouns such as man, horse, etc., represent in their generality nothing real, have no independent existence but exist only as names necessary for human thought.

Non posse non peccare: Latin for "not able not to sin" describing the lost sinner's condition.

Non posse peccare: Latin for "not able to sin" the

heavenly, immutable, glorified state of redeemed believers in Eternity.

Person: Following Clark: A person is a congeries, a system, a collection, a complex of thoughts or propositions, for a man is what he thinks. (The Trinity, p. 106; Incarnation, pp. 54, 64). A unique, composite set of propositions.

Posse peccare: Latin for "able to sin" describes the original state of our ancestors, a state that includes "able not to sin" existence.

Posse non peccare: Latin for "able not to sin" describing the state of Adam and Eve prior to their disobedience of God's command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in Eden.

Proposition: The meaning expressed by a declarative sentence; a form of words in which the predicate is affirmed or denied of the subject; either true or false meanings.

Reason: The ability to grasp necessary inference of logical argument.

Reference Point: (or point of reference): An indicator that orients the relation between the spoken and written word or phrase and its denotation or connotation by which denotative (objects) and connotative (properties) meanings are defined.

Regeneration: An instantaneous and immediate enabling of belief (faith) of the truth of God's gift of the

Good News.

Reprobate: A mind void of what is right, proper, and good; a mind unfit because of unrighteousness and idolatry of self; morally worthless, assuming self to be the ultimate reference for all thought and life.

Sanctification: The Holy Spirit's work of restoration, renewal, and transformation of the life of a regenerated believer to new life after the image of Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life.

Scripturalism: The logically consistent application of Christian (Scriptural) ideas to all fields of thought. The Biblical Worldview.

Sin: Any want of conformity unto or transgression of the Law of God; lawlessness.

Sovereign: Greatest in status, in authority, in power, and in knowledge; ultimate; supreme; superior; and autonomous for all thought and life.

System: An organized set of doctrines or principles forming a unified coherent whole.

Thought-Experiment: A project undertaken in order to discover some unknown principle or effect, or to test, establish or illustrate some belief or known truth.

Truth: All that Sovereign God declares, reveals, commands, decrees, and wills according to His good pleasure in the propositions of His Holy Word to the Glory

of God including all valid deductions from these biblical propositions. That which God Himself is.

Ultimate: Basic, fundamental, final, definitive, supreme, underlying all reality.

Worldview: A set of presuppositions or assumptions (axioms) persons hold consciously or unconsciously about the basic makeup of reality.

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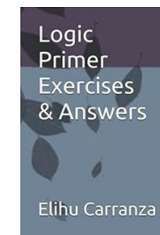
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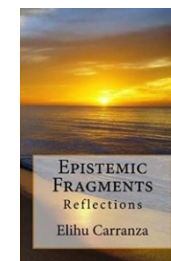
Logic Primer



Logic Primer Workbook

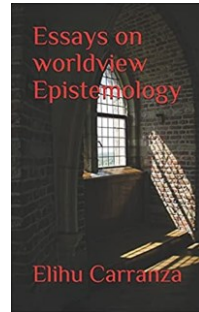


Epistemic Fragments



Elihu Carranza

Worldview Epistemology



Pathway to Apostasy?



Buck Calhoun novellas by Tweedy Flynn:

One Murder One
One Murder Two
On Murder Three
Murder By Template
Murder In Therapy
Murder Trilogy

Author

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