



Relativism about "X" means that "X" or our knowledge of "X" is different for (i.e., relative to) different people.

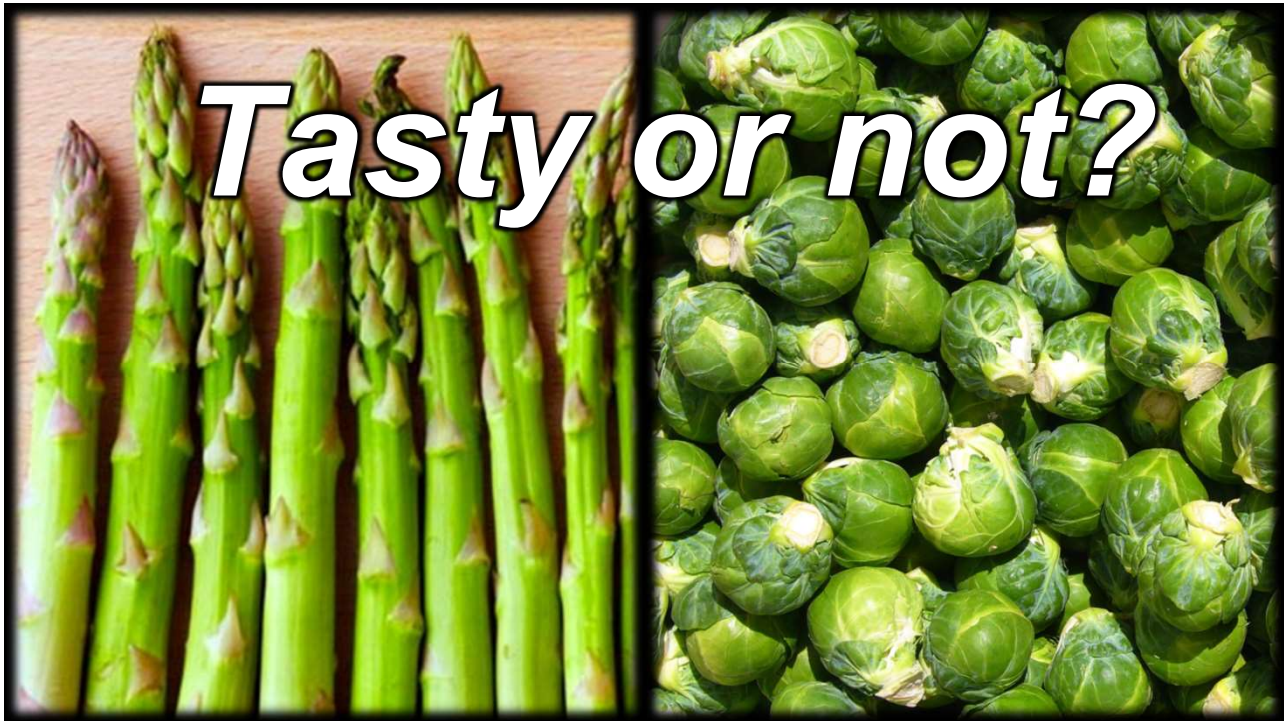
Another word for 'relative' or 'relativism' one might hear is 'subjective' or 'subjectivism'.

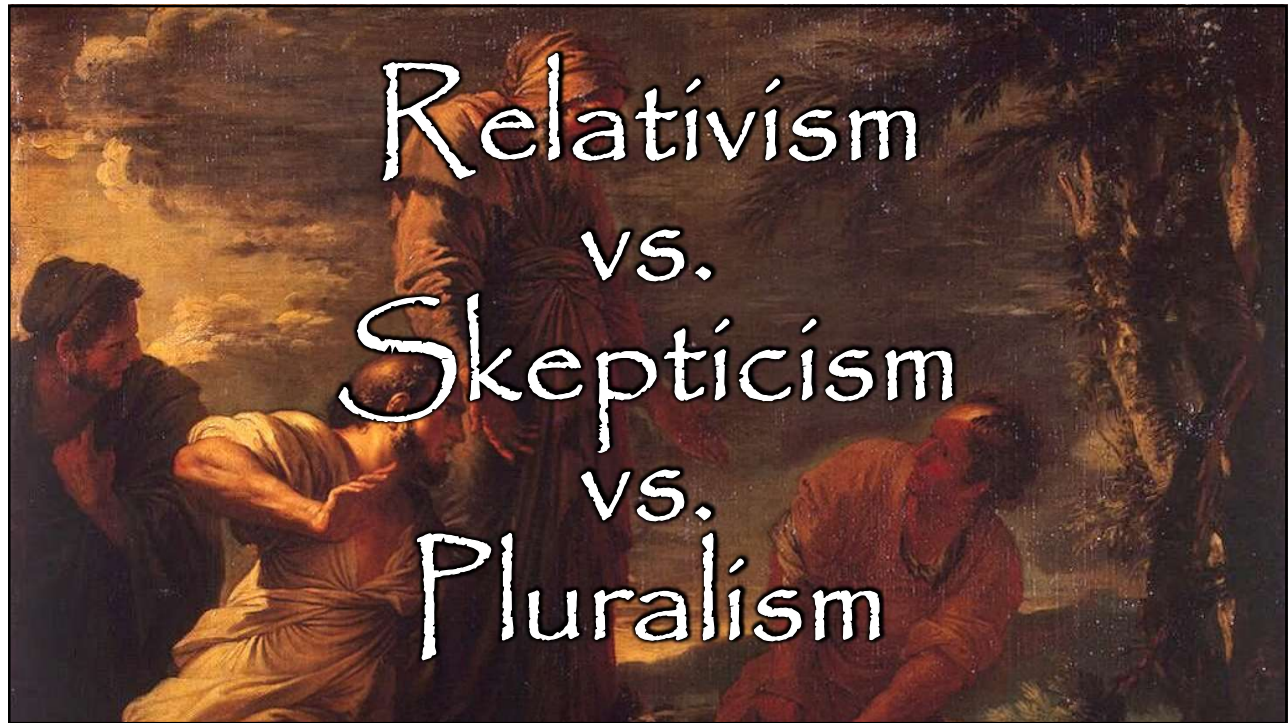
The opposite of subjective is objective.

For something to be objective means that it is the same for everyone.

***Not all relativism or
subjectivism is bad. Some
relativism is completely
normal.***







∞ Skepticism ∞

grants that there may be objective truth about "X," but we cannot know what that truth is.

∞ Pluralism ∞

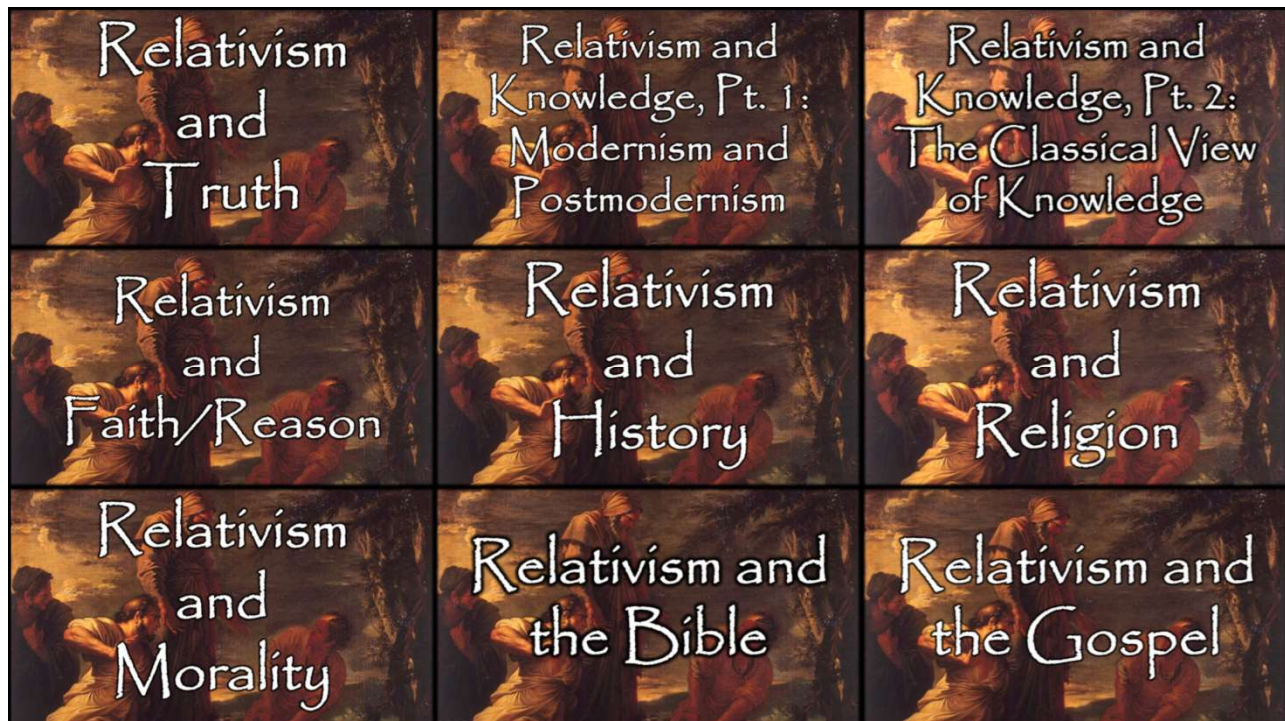
usually with reference to religions; the recognition of religious diversity with the tacit if not explicit claim that all religions are valid experiences

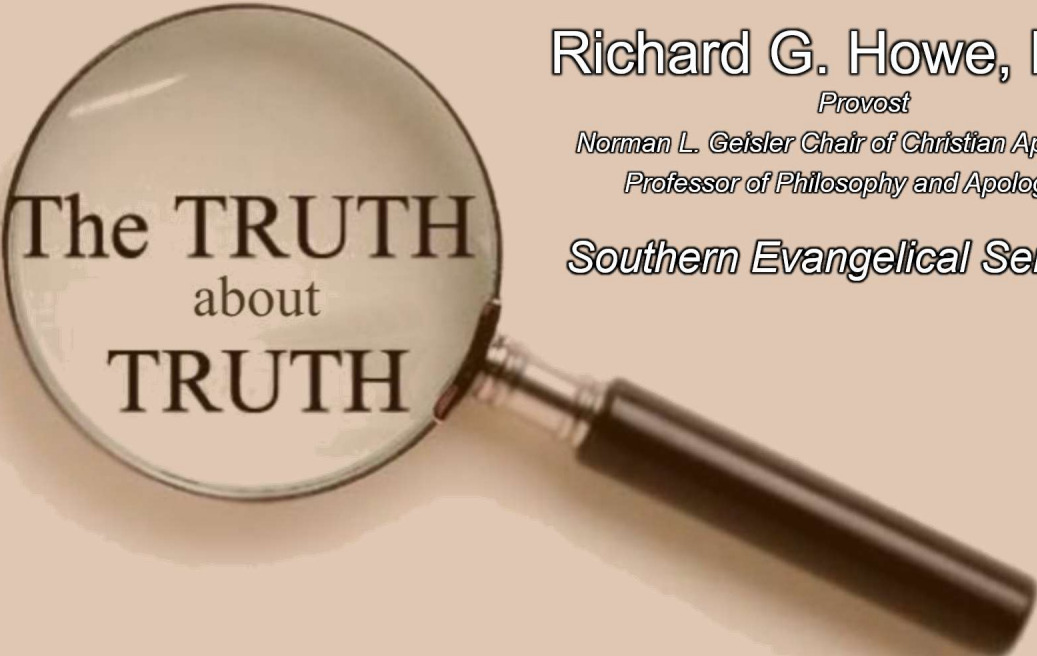
∞ Relativism ∞

The relativism about which we are concerned illicitly regards an objective "X" as if it were merely a relative "X."

Objective NOT Relative!

- ✓ ***Does God exist?***
- ✓ ***Is the Bible the Word of God?***
- ✓ ***Are there right and wrong actions?***
- ✓ ***Did Jesus die for our sins?***
- ✓ ***Is there a heaven and hell?***

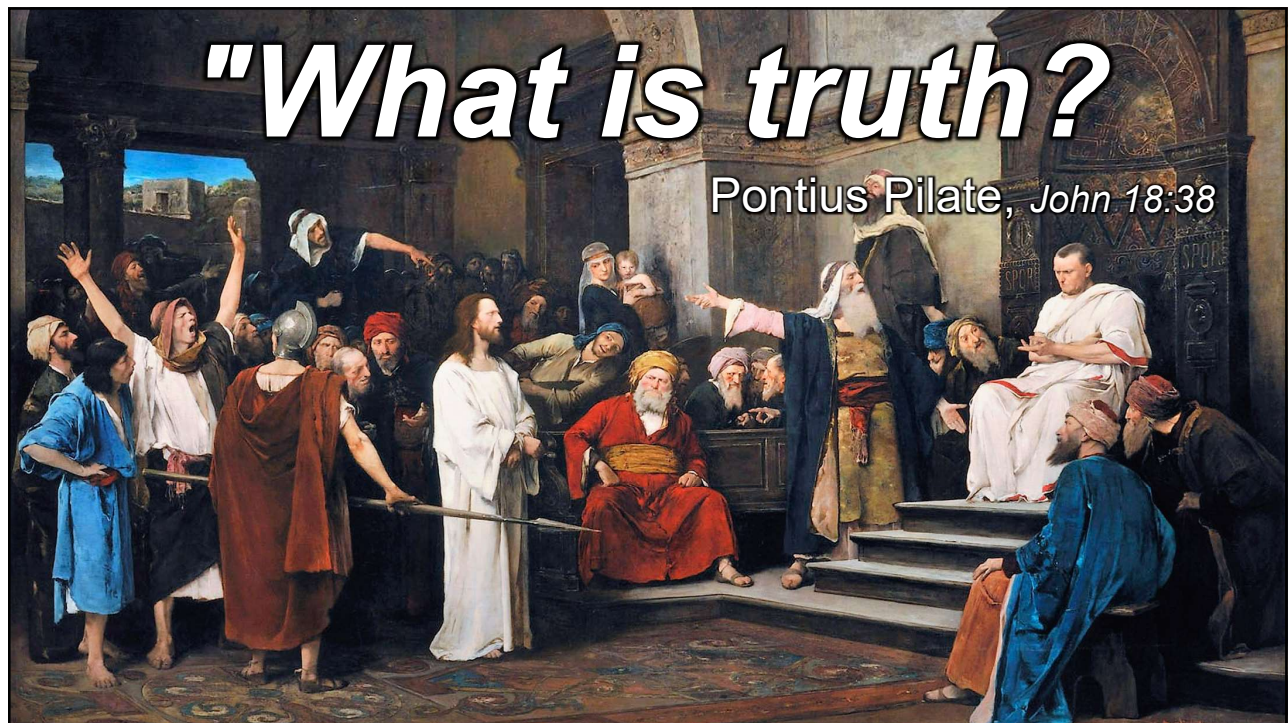
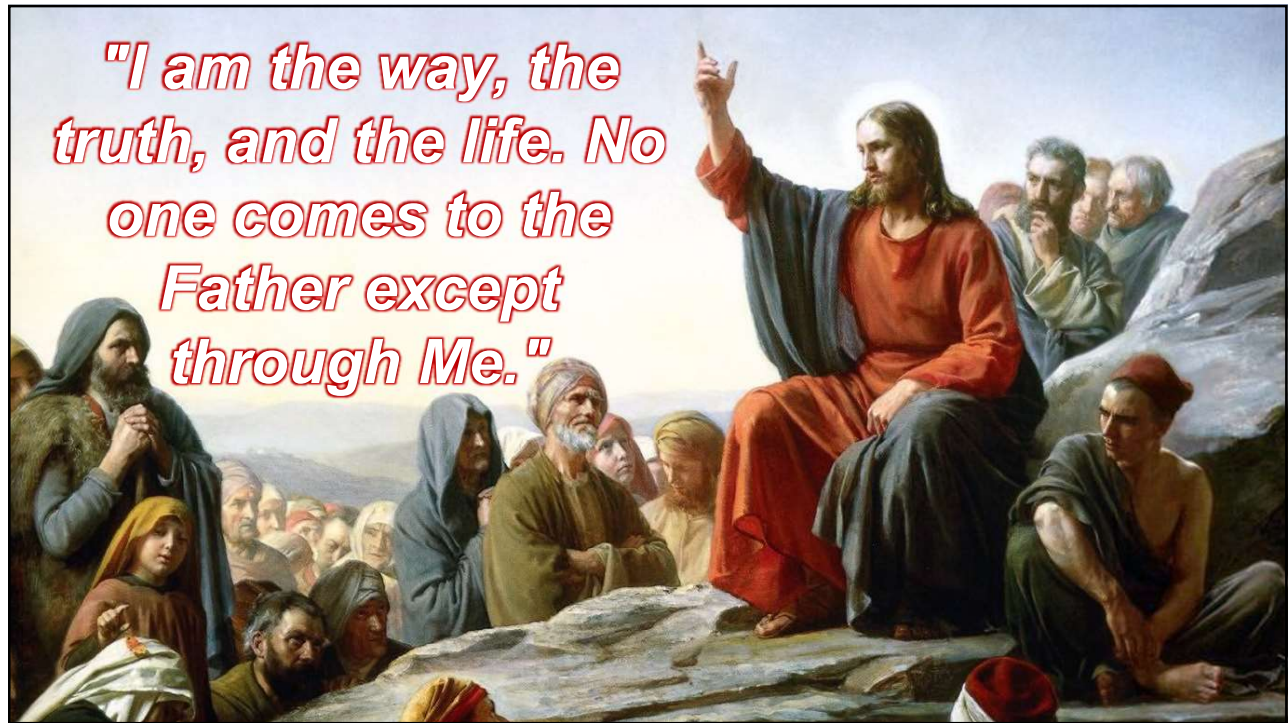


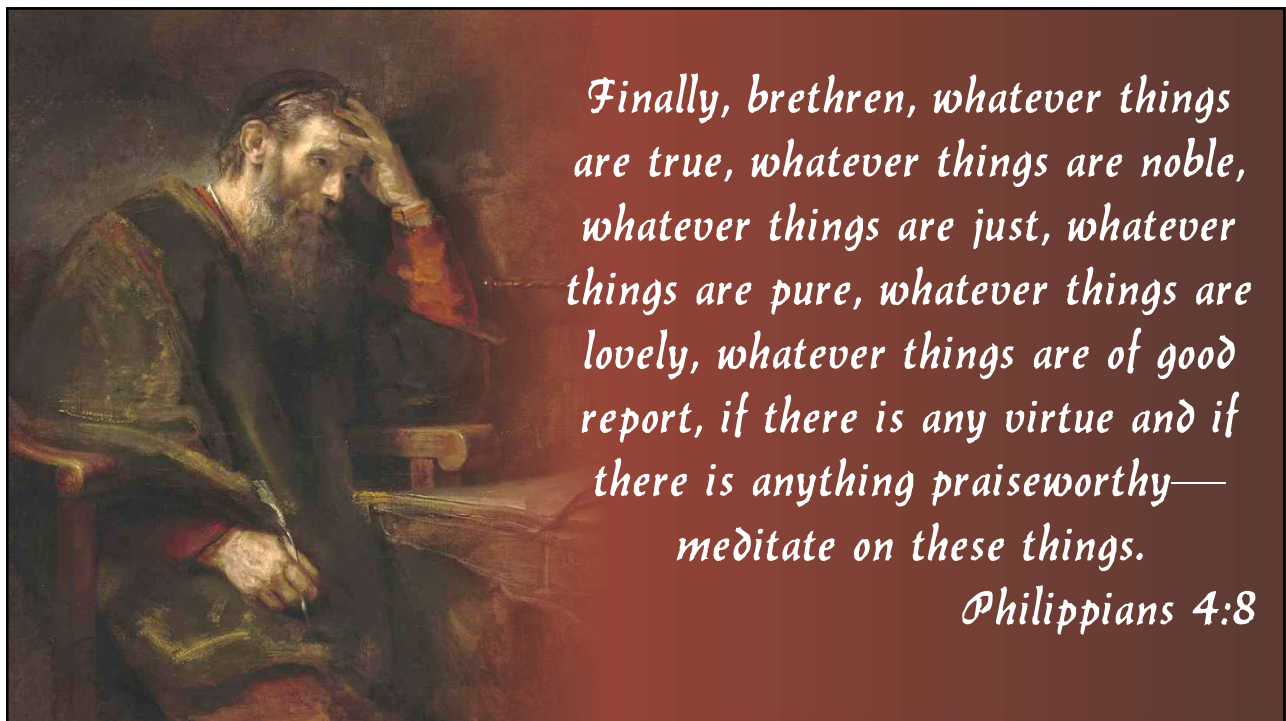
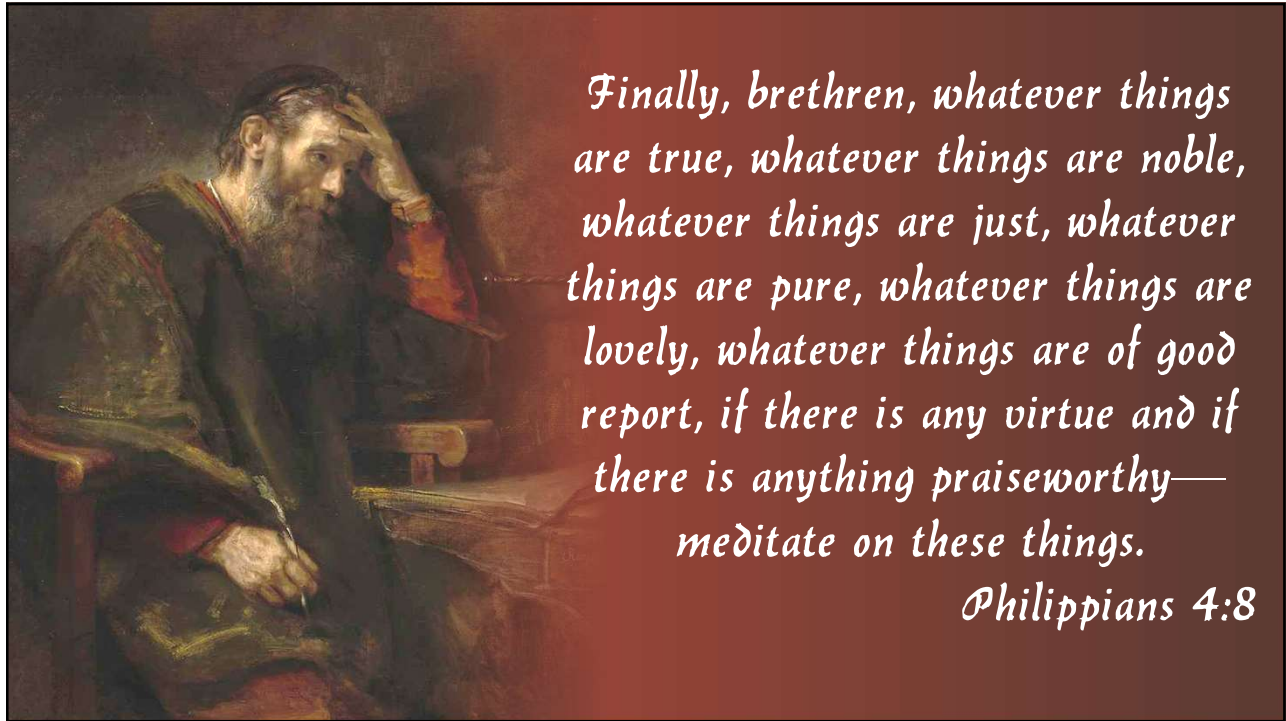


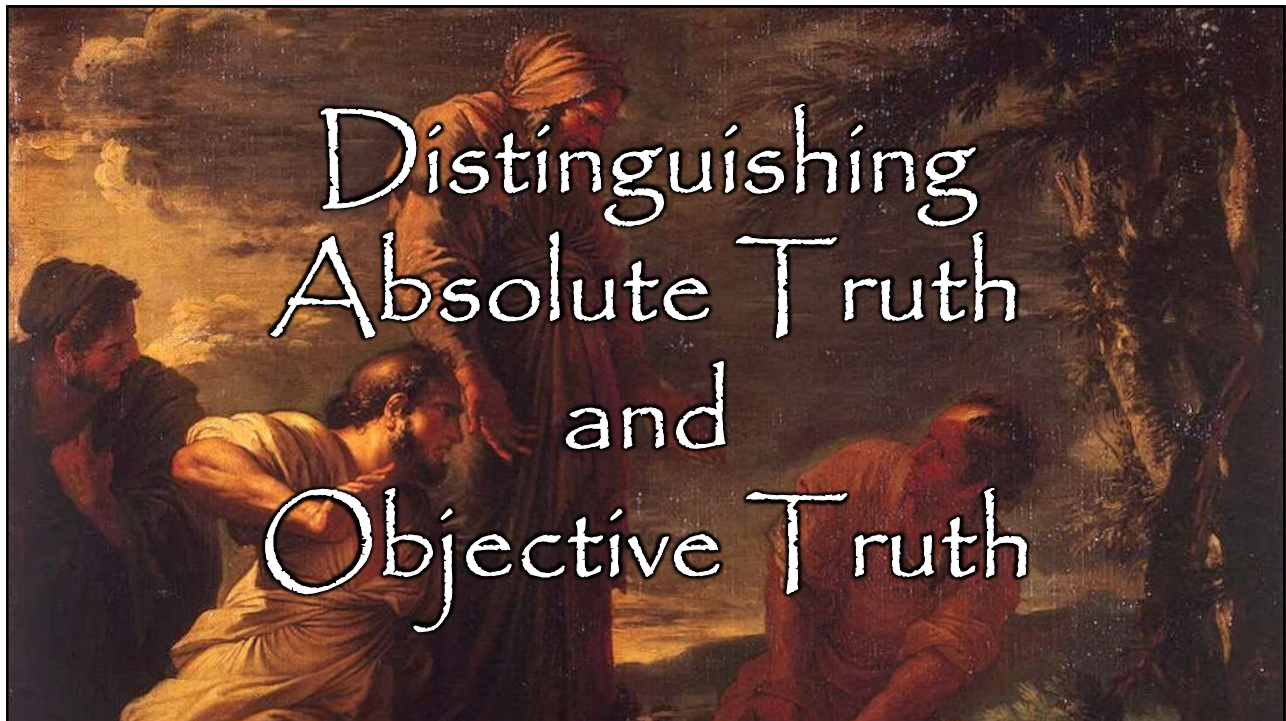
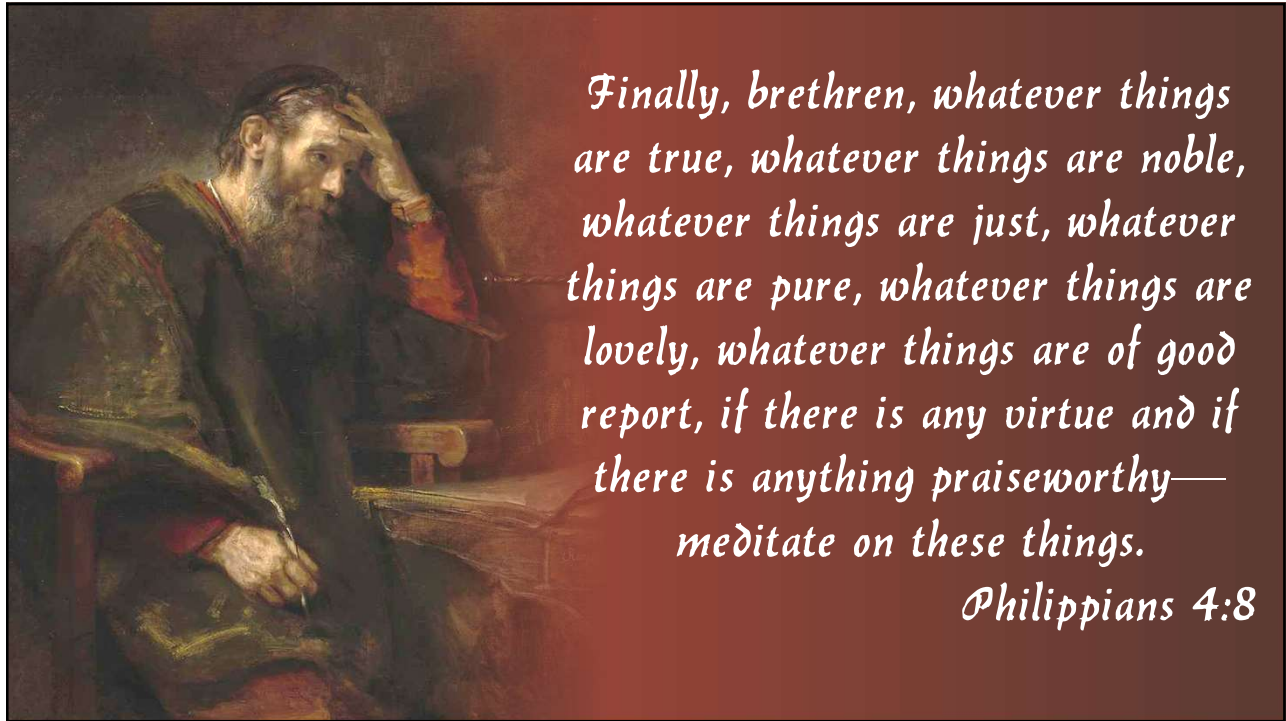
The TRUTH
about
TRUTH

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
Provost
Norman L. Geisler Chair of Christian Apologetics
Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics
Southern Evangelical Seminary

A magnifying glass with a black handle is positioned over the text "The TRUTH about TRUTH". The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on the word "TRUTH" at the bottom, making it appear larger and more prominent. The background is a light beige color.



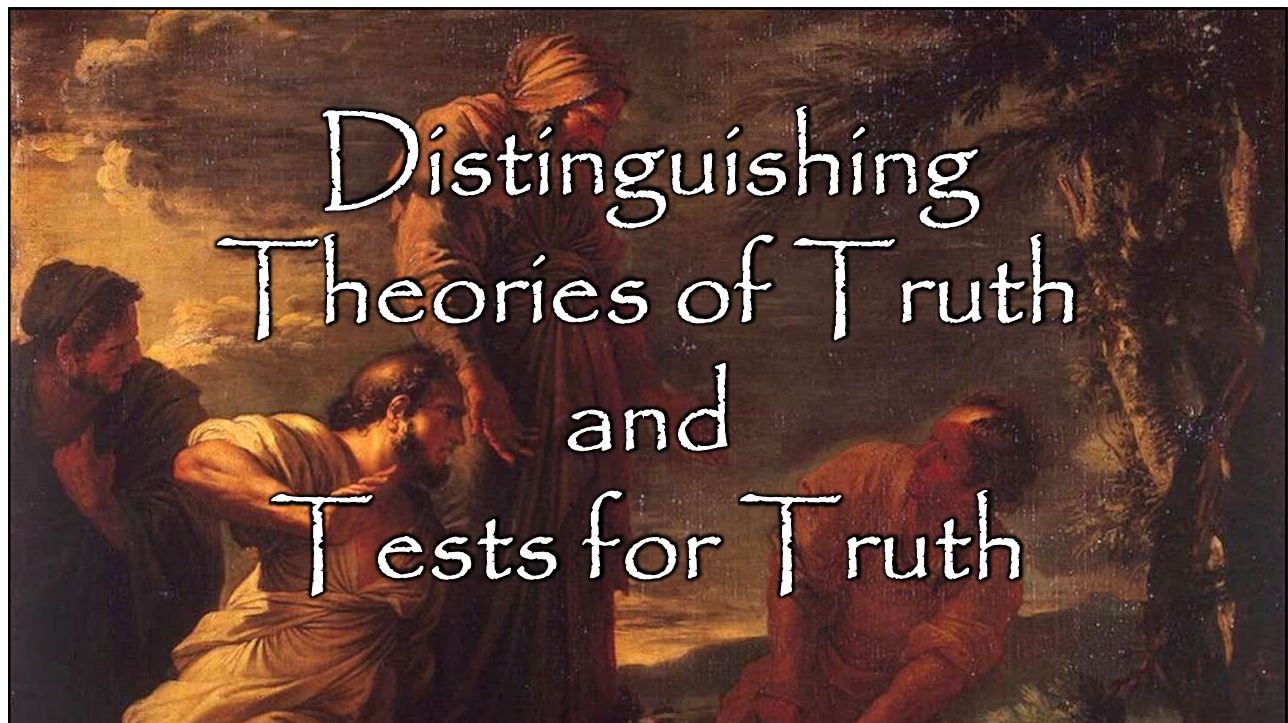


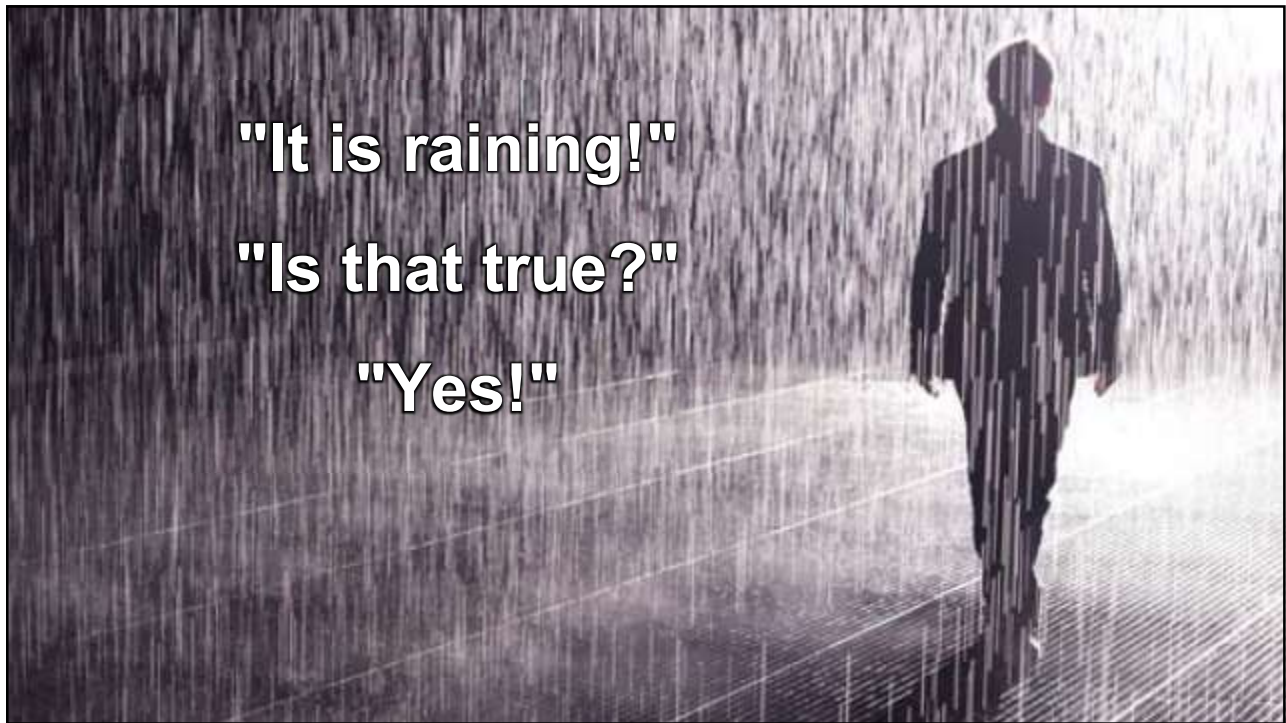


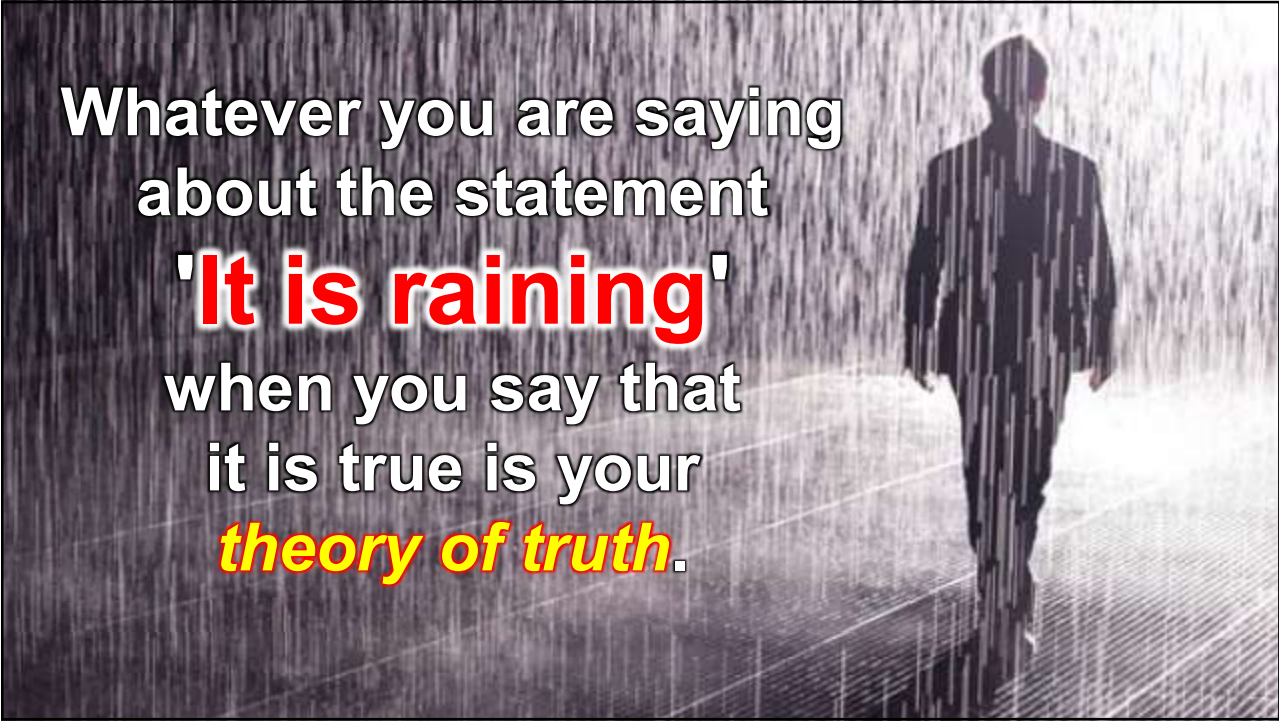
*Something can be objectively true
but change over time.*

*For example, it can be 37° in the
heat of the day and 24° in the cool
of the night.*

*But if it is 37°, then it is
objectively true that it is 37°.*





A person in a dark suit is walking away from the camera on a wet, reflective surface during a heavy rain. The rain is depicted as numerous vertical streaks, creating a sense of motion and atmosphere. The person's reflection is visible on the wet ground.

Whatever you are saying
about the statement
'It is raining'
when you say that
it is true is your
theory of truth.

A person in a dark suit is walking away from the camera on a wet, reflective surface during a heavy rain. The rain is depicted as numerous vertical streaks, creating a sense of motion and atmosphere. The person's reflection is visible on the wet ground.

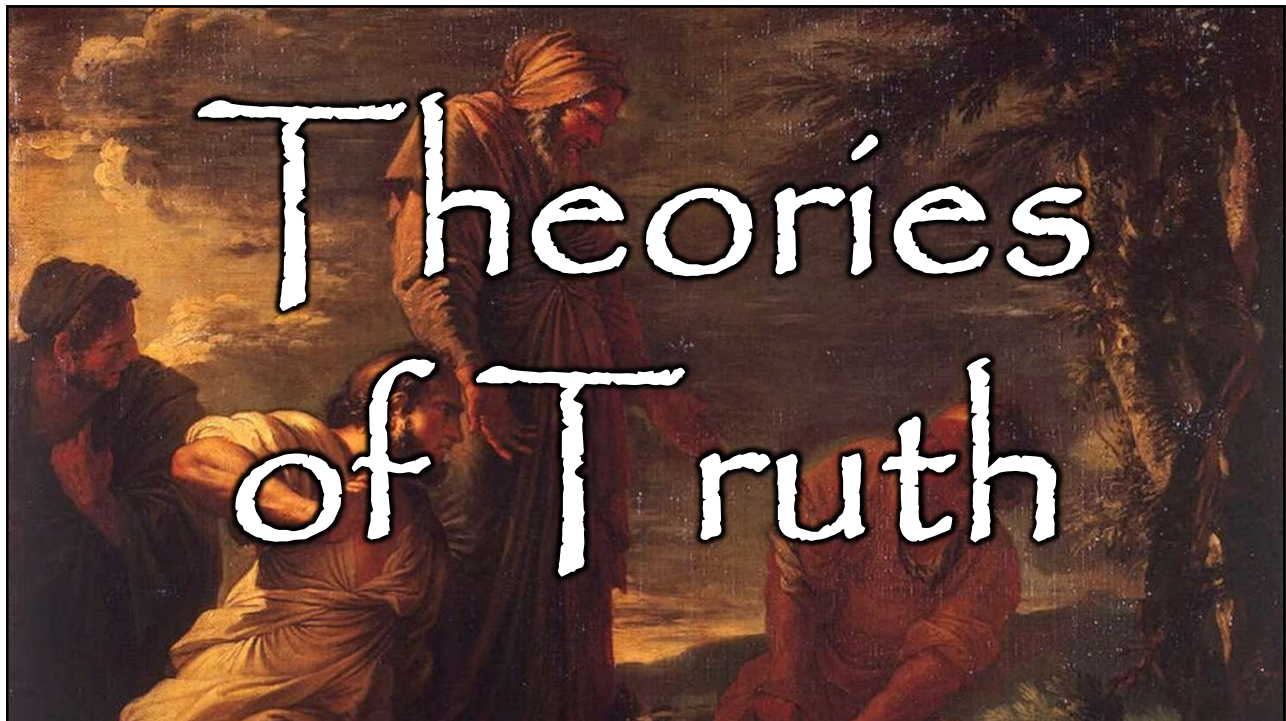
How you know whether it
is raining is your
test for truth.

∞ Theory of Truth ∞

how one **defines** the terms 'true' and 'truth' when saying that a statement is true

∞ Test for Truth ∞

how one **discovers** whether a statement is true, regardless of one's theory of truth







Correspondence

Truth is correspondence to reality.

- This says that a statement is true in as much as it corresponds to reality.
- Thus, the statement 'It is raining.'

'It is raining'

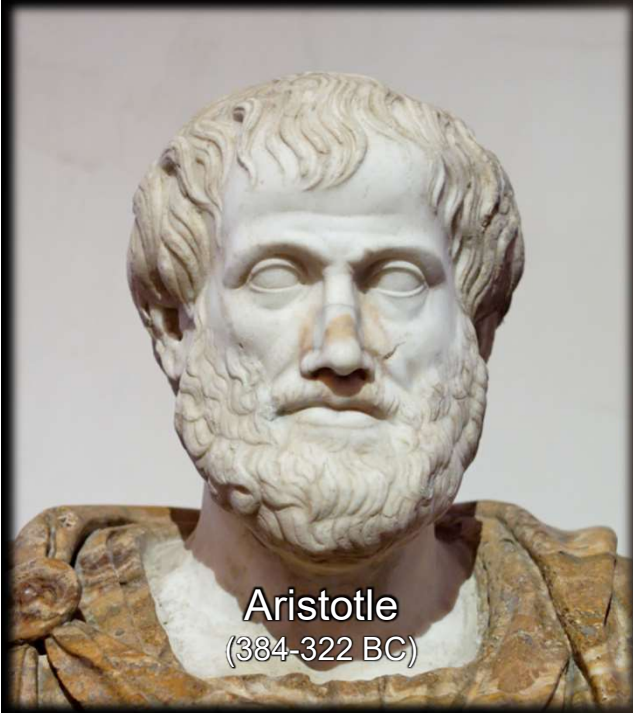
would be a true statement if it is in fact raining in reality.



'It is raining'

would be a false statement if it is in fact not raining in reality.

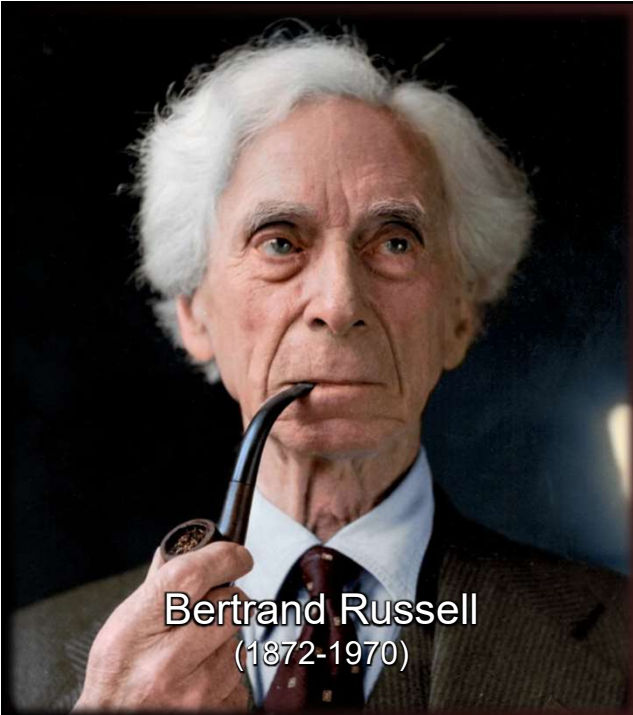




Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

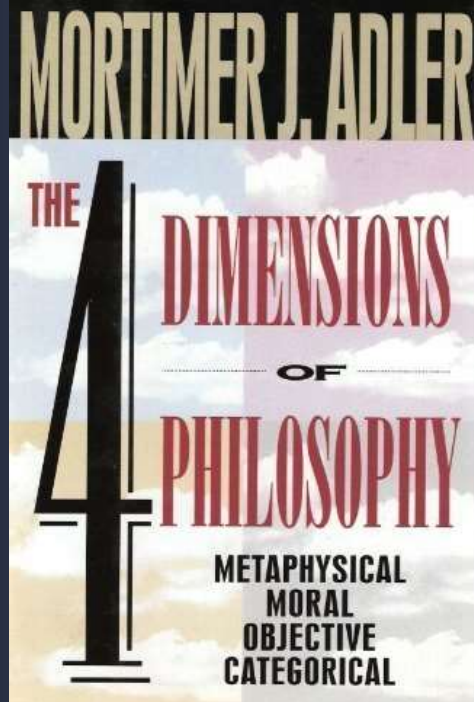
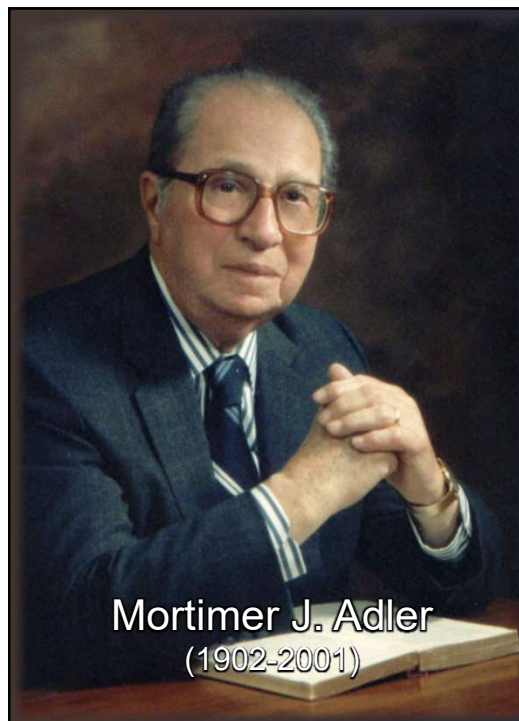
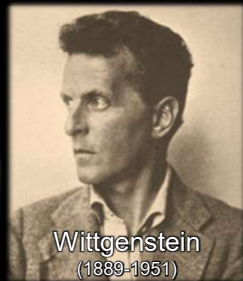
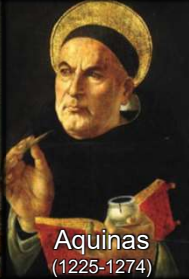
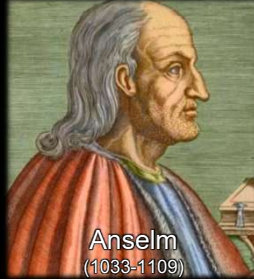
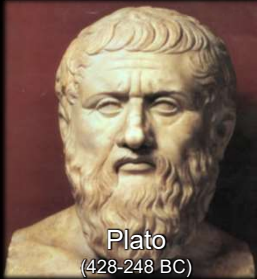
***"To say of what is,
that it is not, or of
what is not, that it is,
is false, while to say
of what is, that it is
and of what is not,
that it is not, is true."***

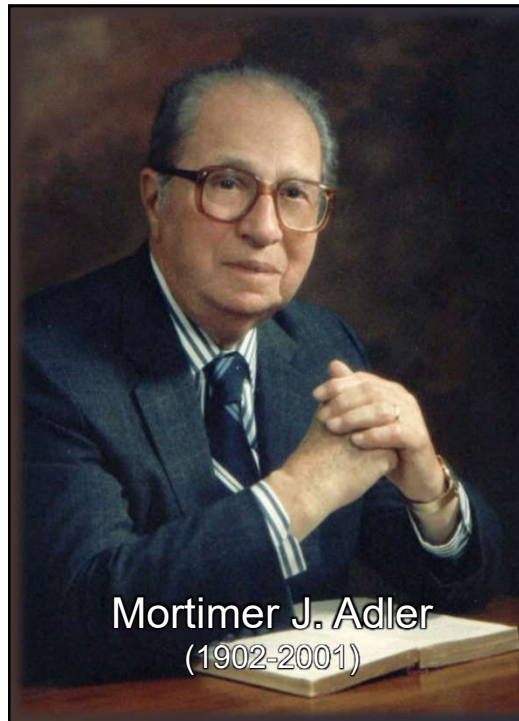
Metaphysics, IV, 7, 1011^b26-29 Translation by W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941). τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν τὸ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἢ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι ψεῦδος, τὸ δὲ τὸ ὄν εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἀληθές.



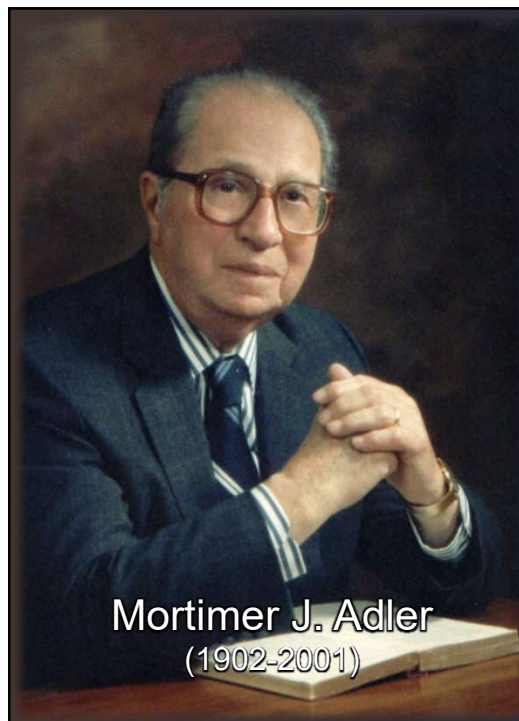
Bertrand Russell
(1872-1970)

Other Philosophers Who Hold to the Correspondence Theory of Truth





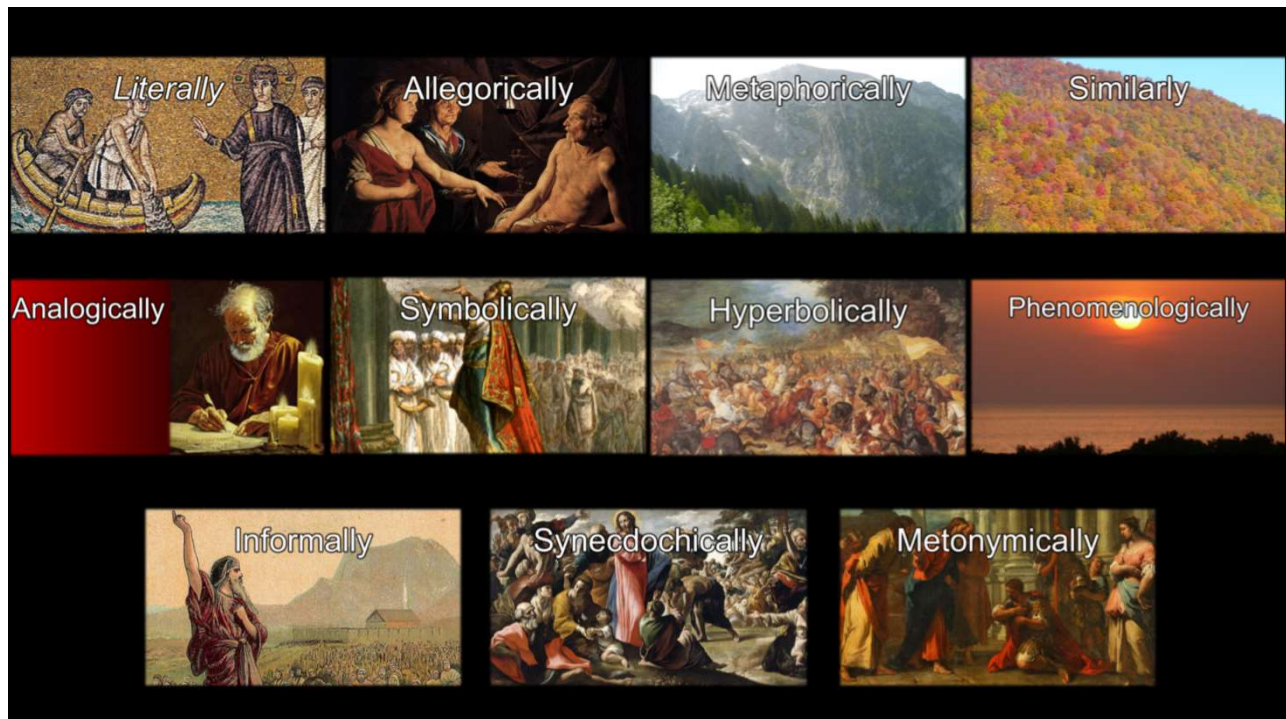
"To avoid a confusion that runs through philosophical controversies about truth it must be remembered that the correspondence theory of truth is not itself a test of truth. It merely states the definition of truth—what it is. This underlies all empirical and pragmatic tests of truth. ..."

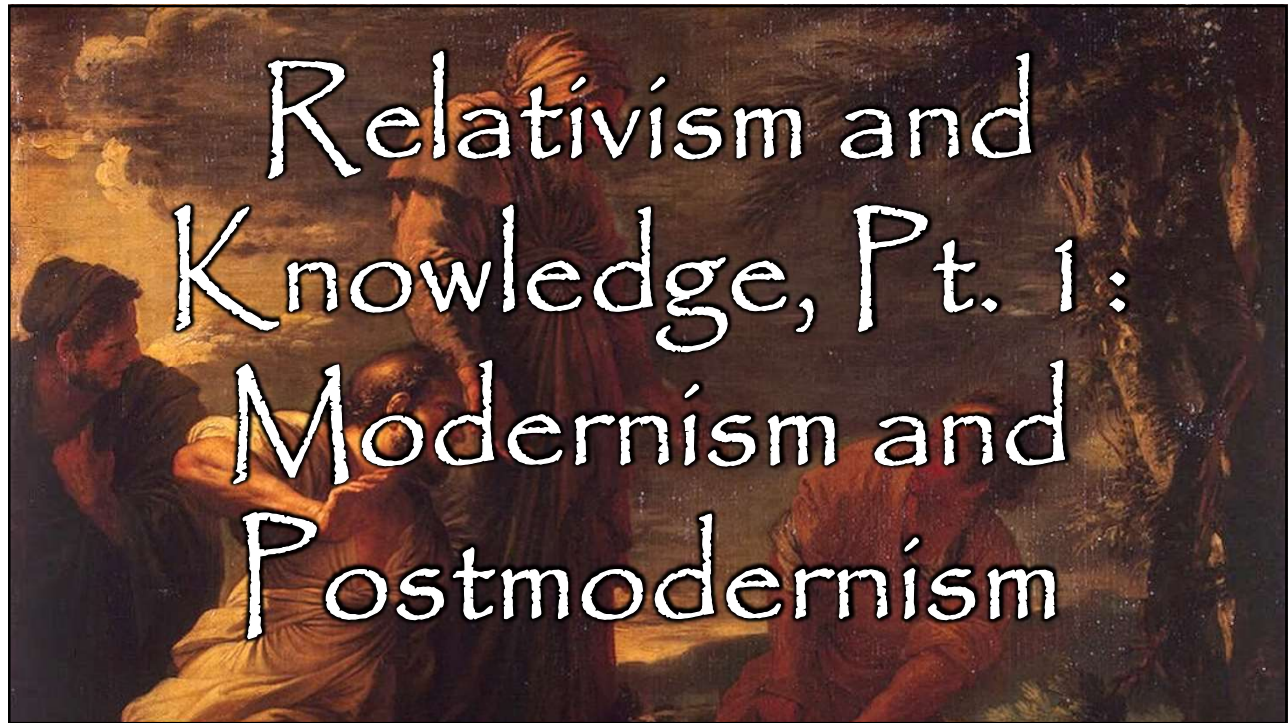


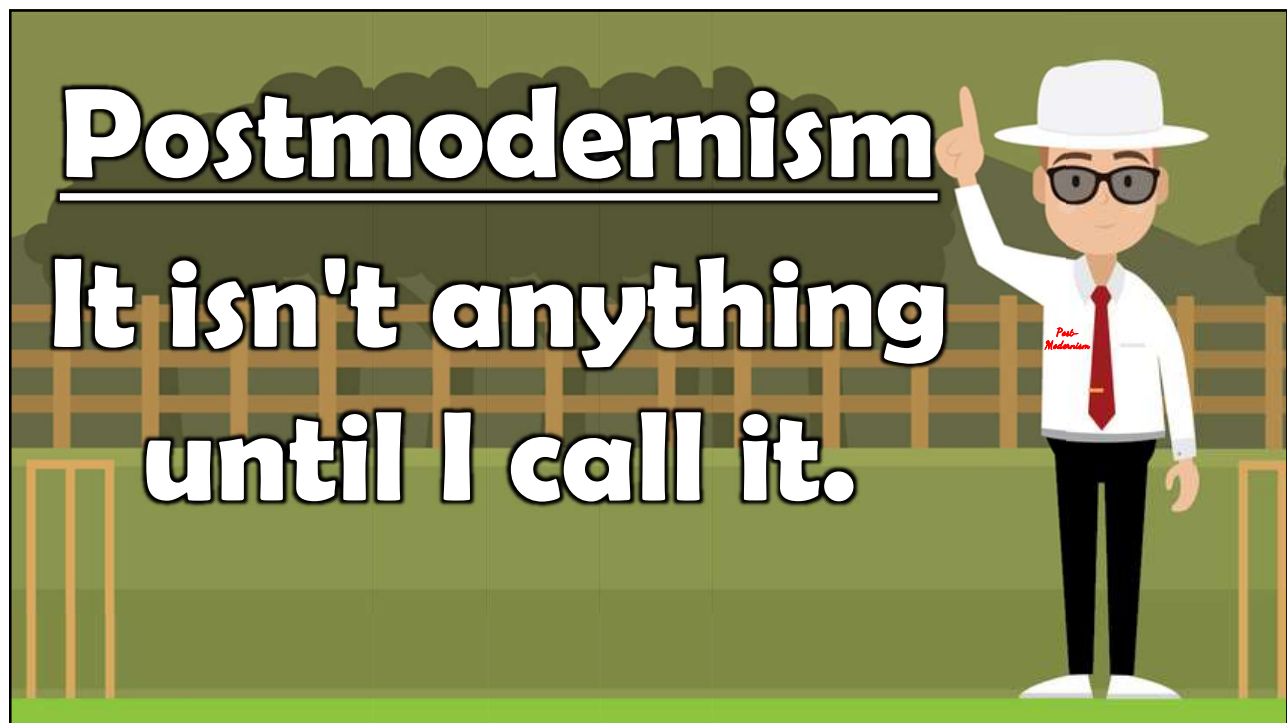
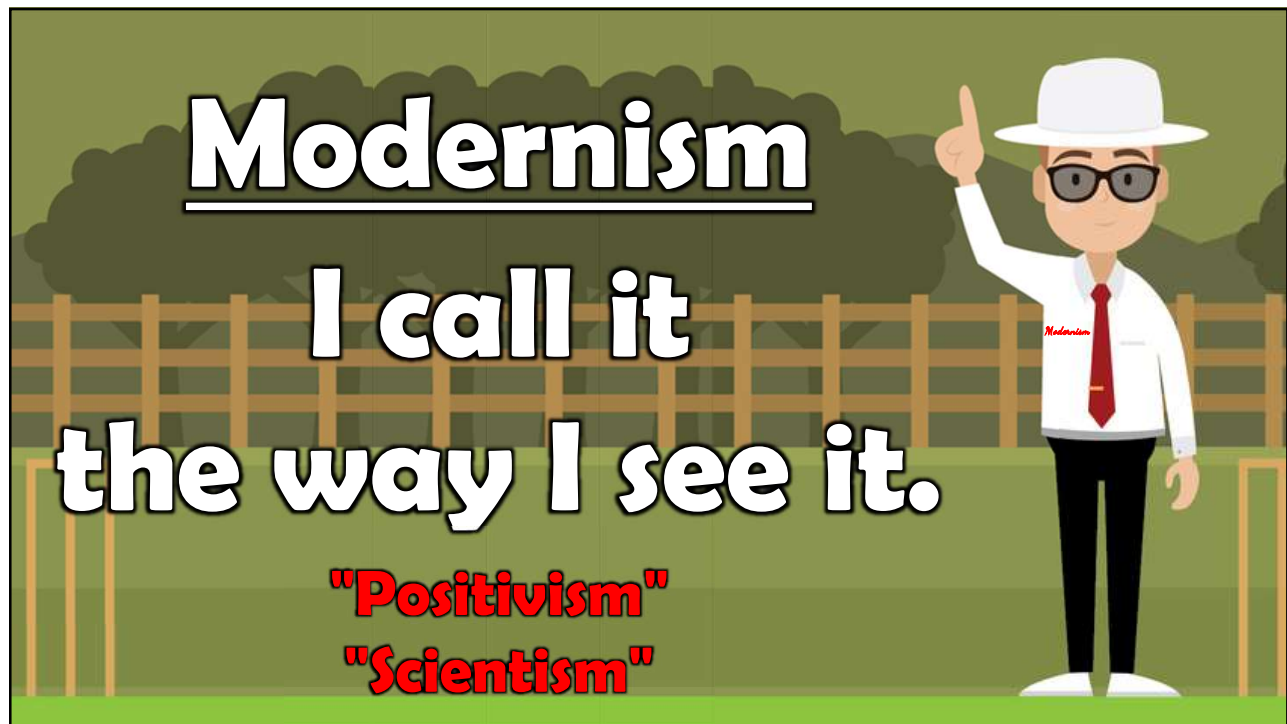
"The logical test of truth, such as coherence or the absence of intrinsic contradiction in a theory, do not presuppose the realist's definition of truth as agreement or conformity of our thinking with the way things, in fact, are. That is why idealists tend to define truth entirely in terms of coherence."

[Mortimer J. Adler, *The Four Dimensions of Philosophy: Metaphysical Moral Objective Categorical* (New York: MacMillan, 1993), 28]

What does it mean to correspond to reality?





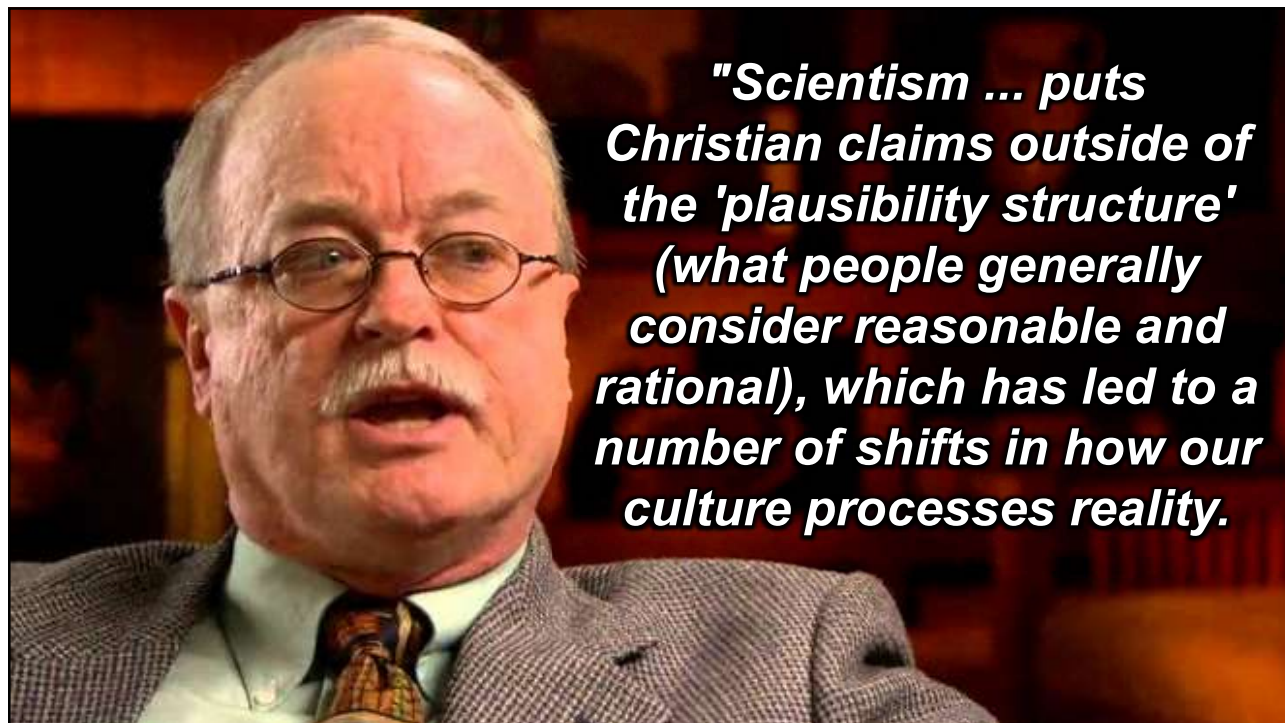
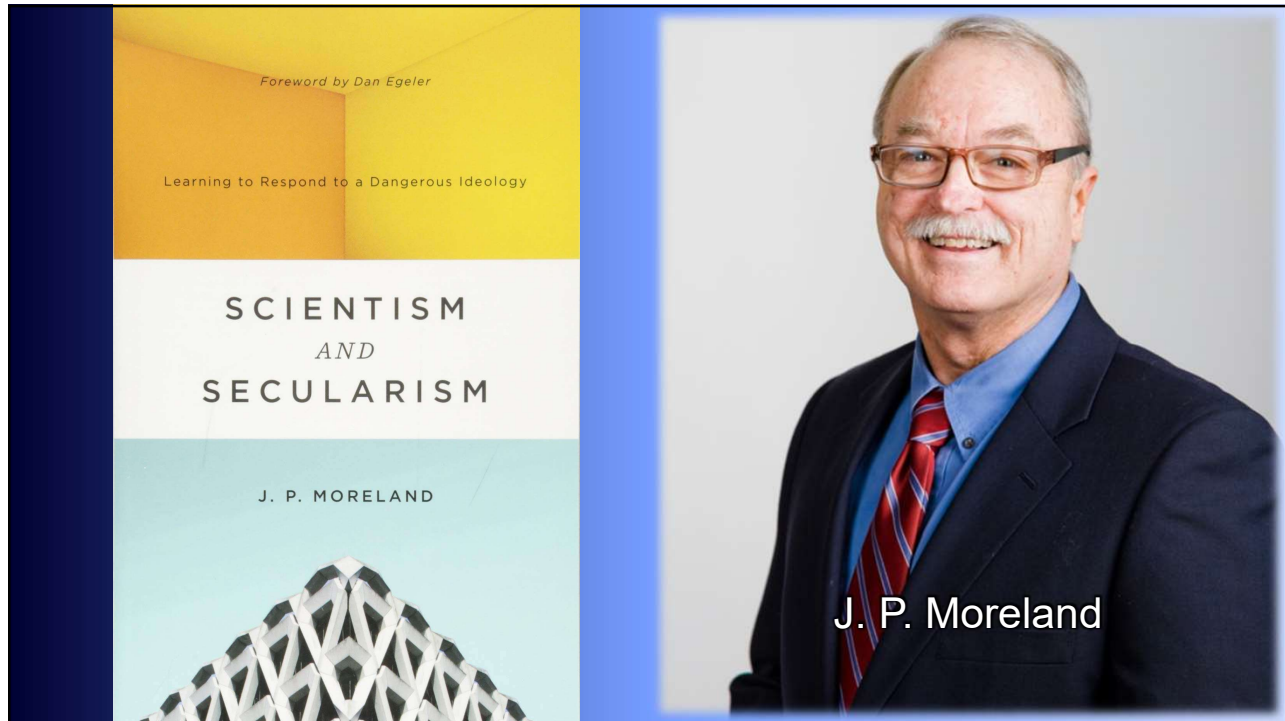


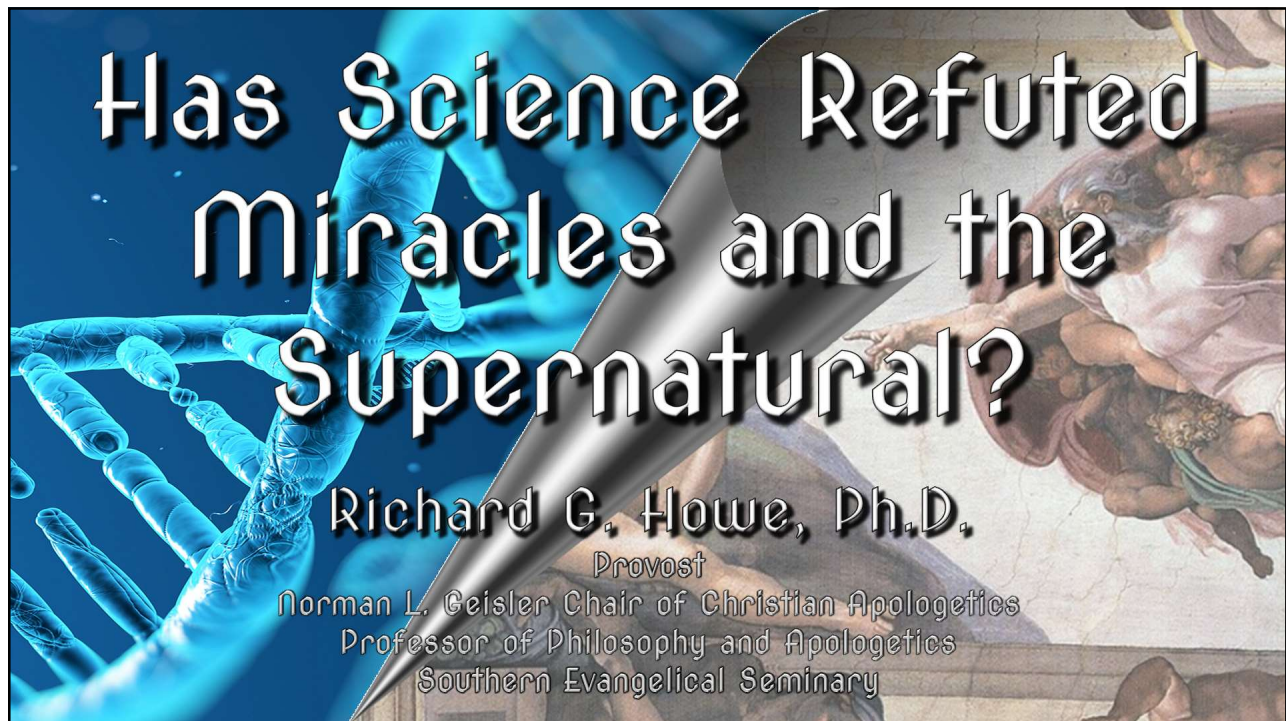
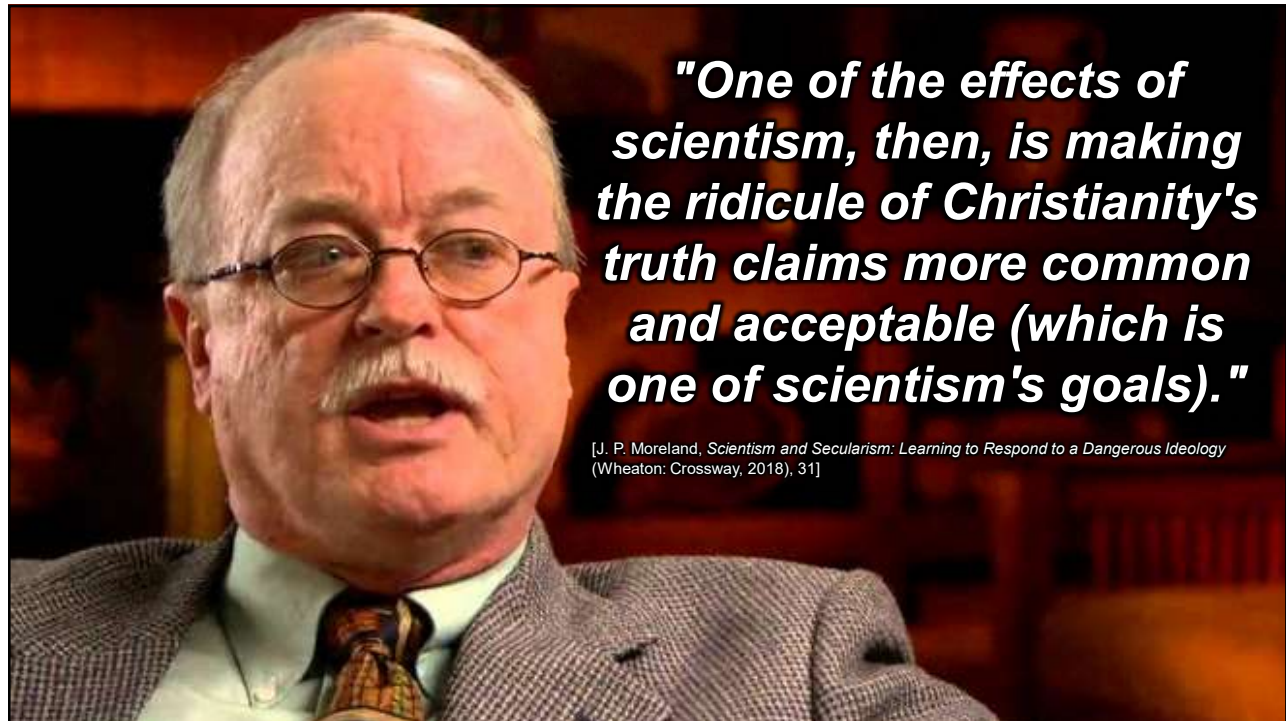
To be sure, scientism is not a form of relativism.

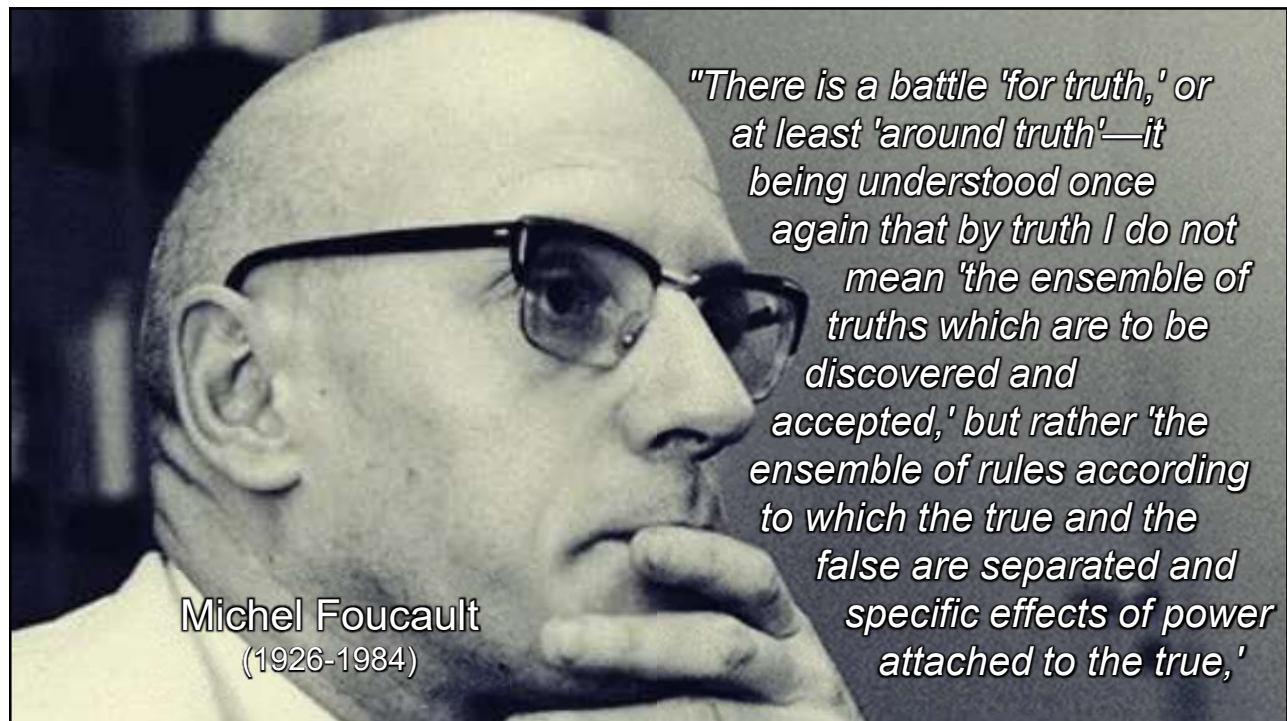
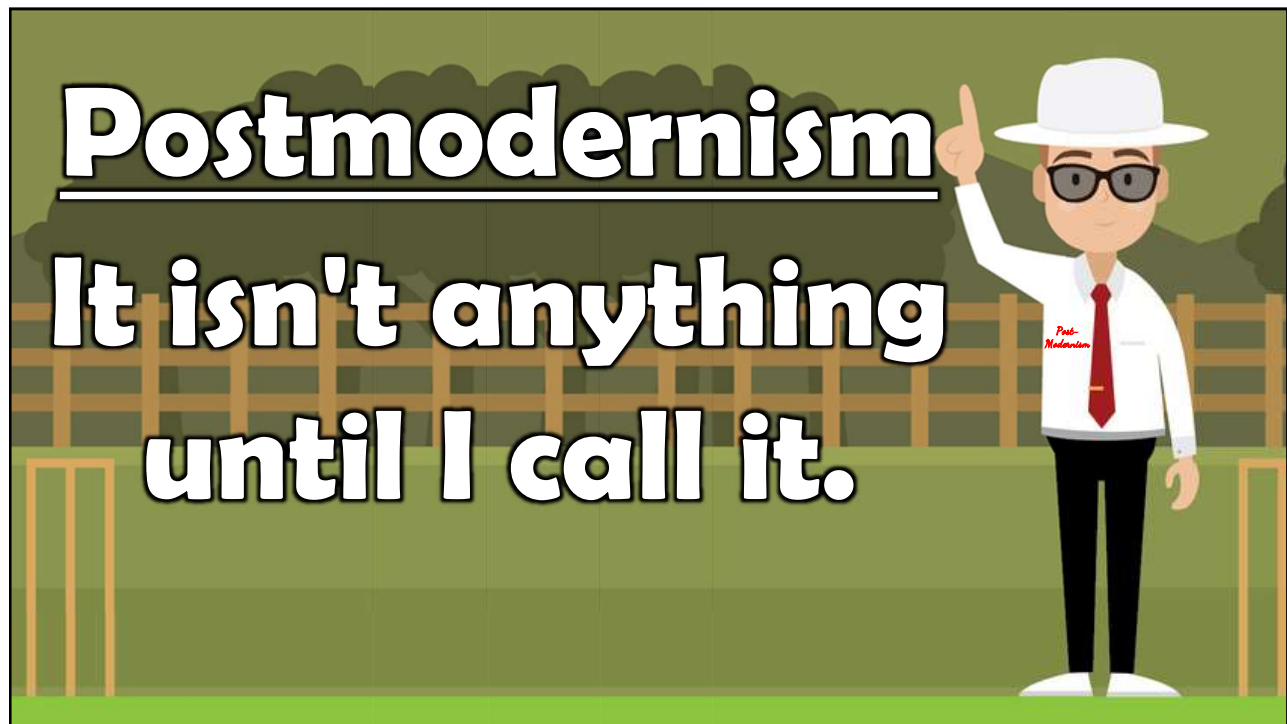
I bring it up here in anticipation of what we could say on another occasion regarding the classical view of knowledge.

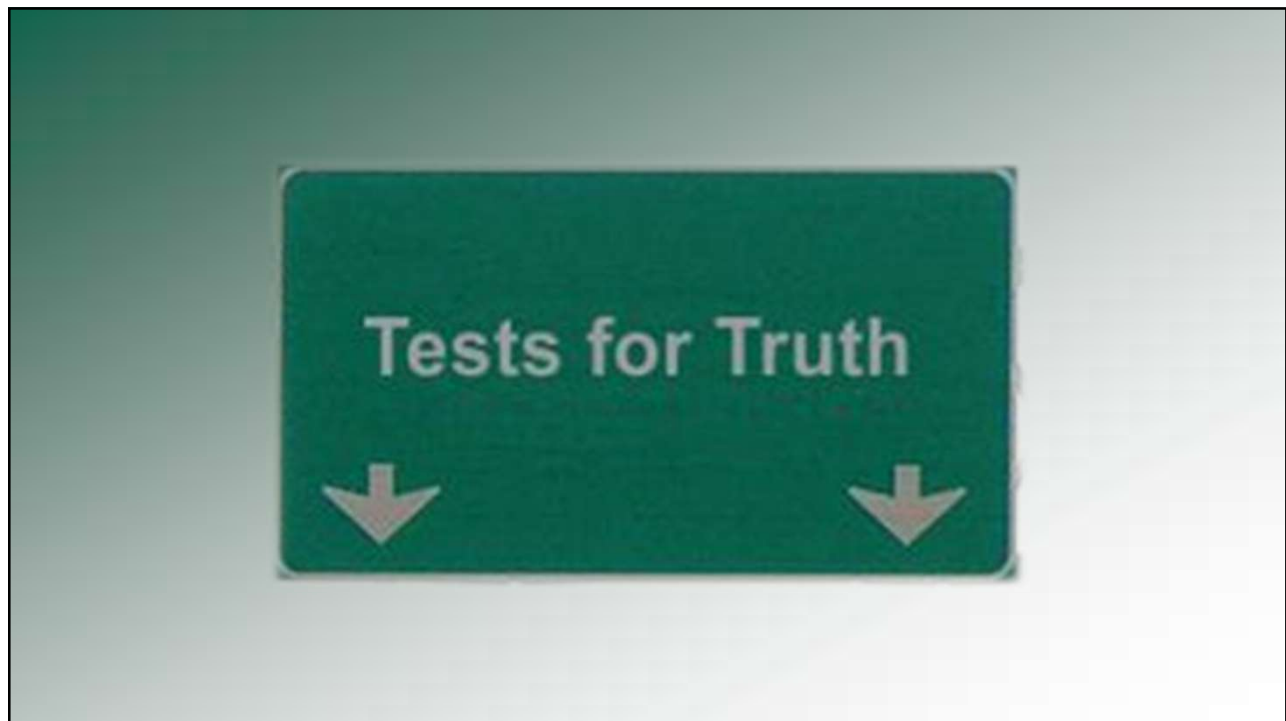
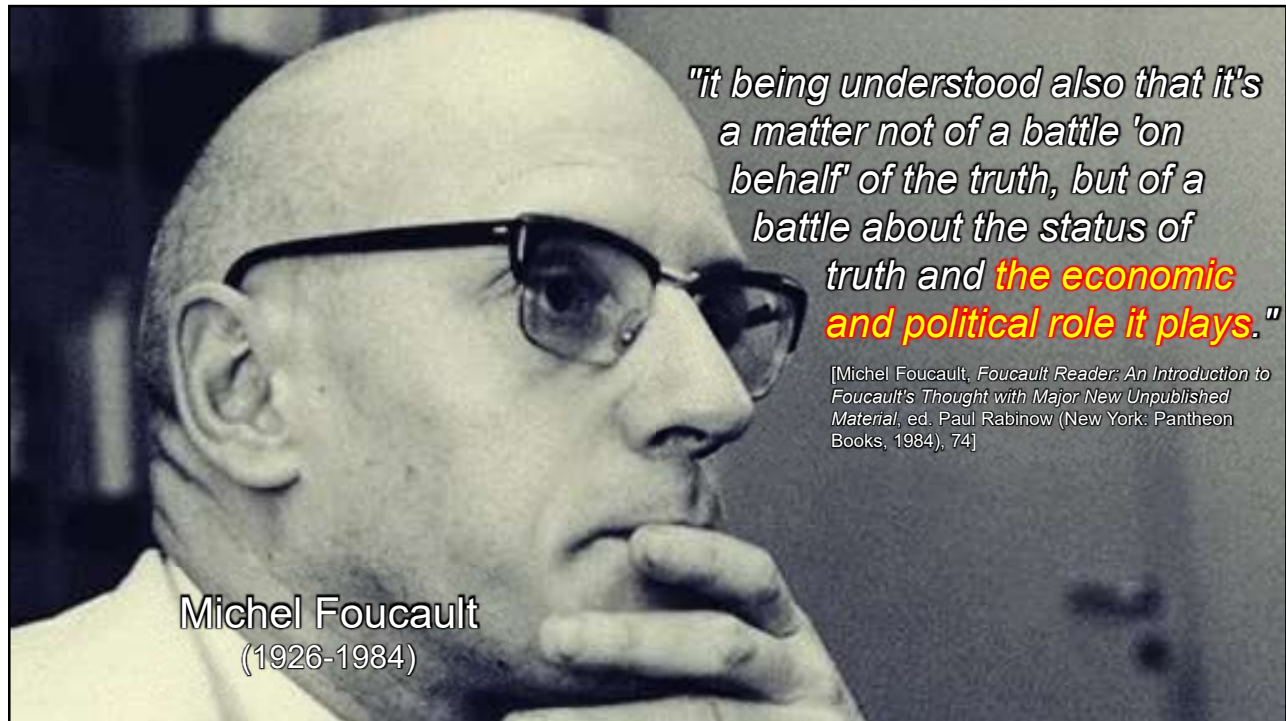
Seeing the bankruptcy of modernism might help explain (at least in part) why postmodernism arose in the first place.

Postmodernism arose as the wrong reaction to Modernism's failed view of human knowledge.



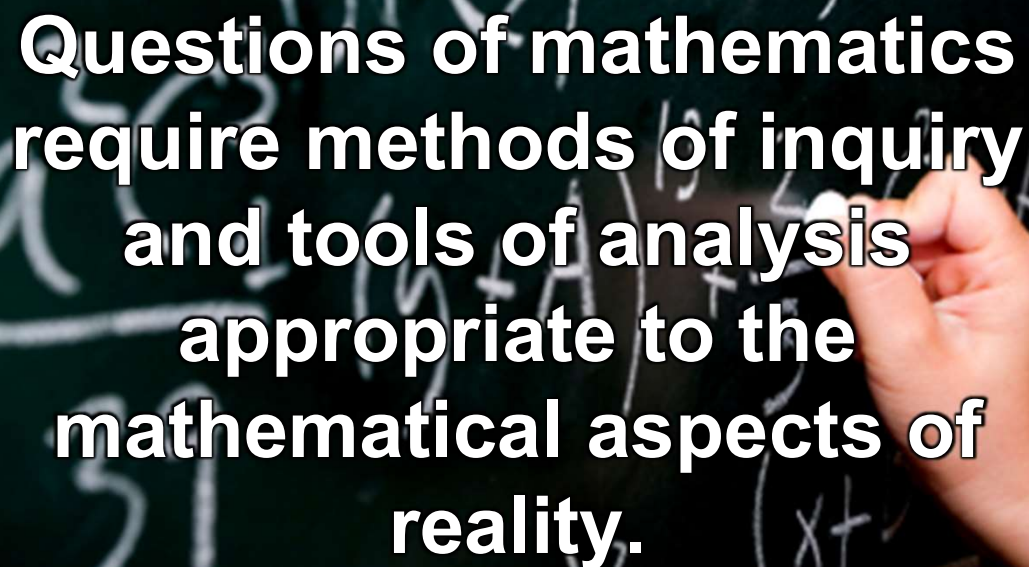




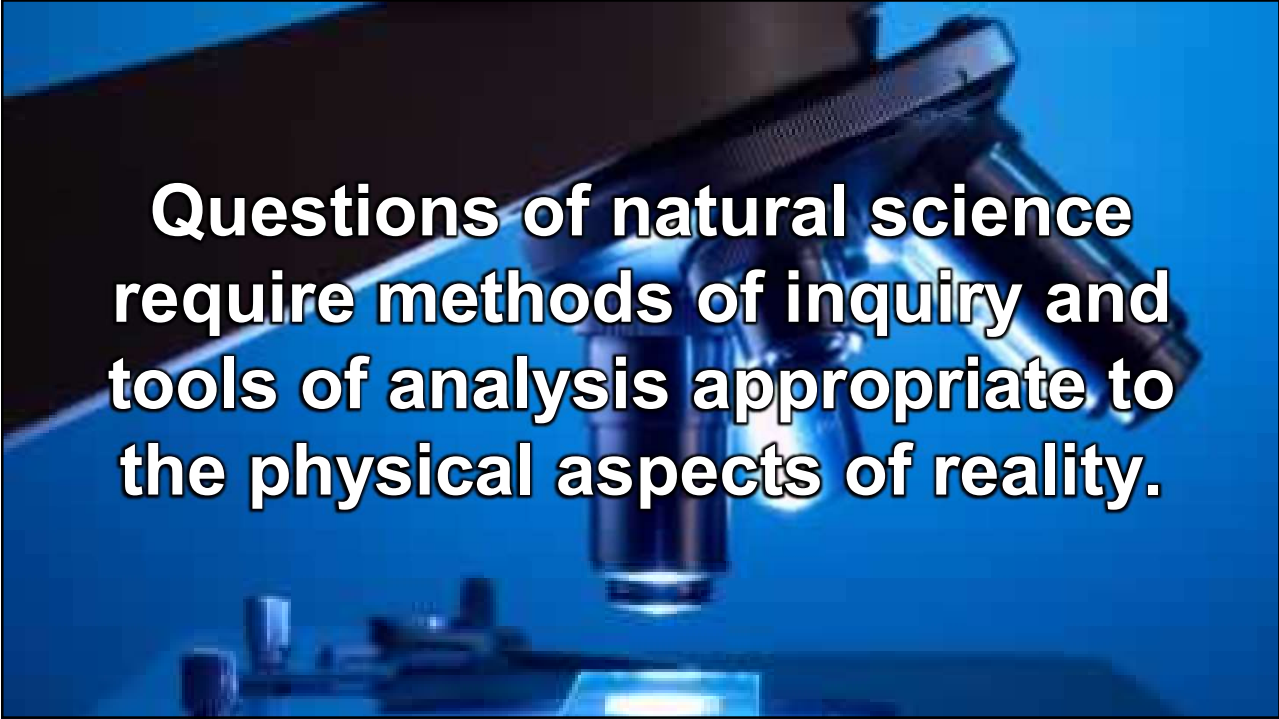


In many instances, the test for truth will differ according to the kind of thing about which the statement is made.

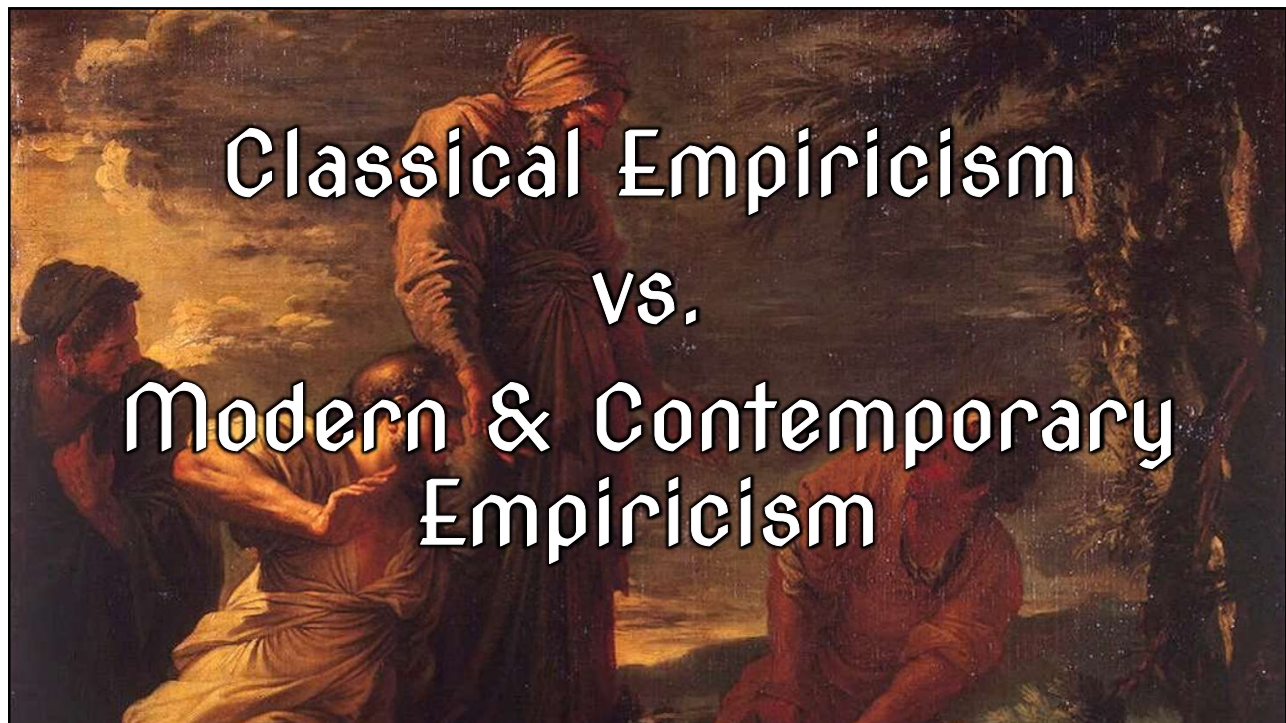
Different aspects of reality require different methods of inquiry and tools of analysis.

A hand is shown writing on a chalkboard. The board is filled with various mathematical equations and symbols, including x^2 , x^3 , x^4 , and x^5 . The text is overlaid on the board.

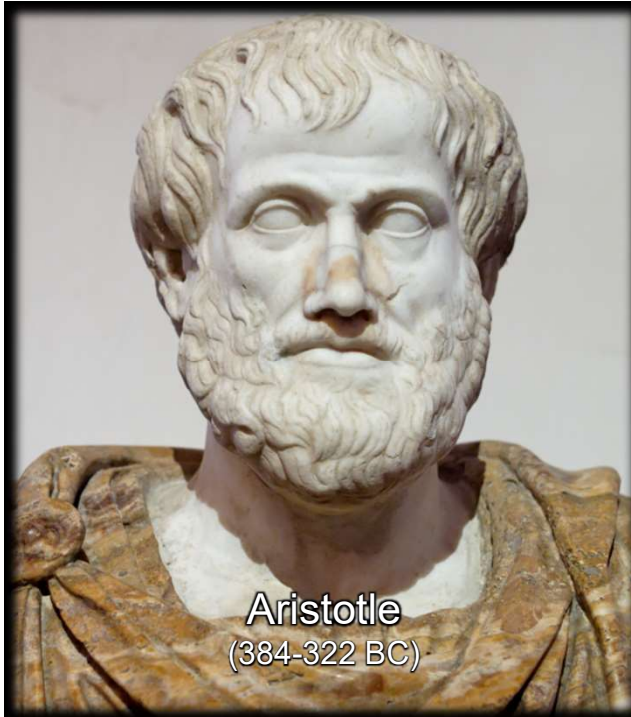
**Questions of mathematics
require methods of inquiry
and tools of analysis
appropriate to the
mathematical aspects of
reality.**

A close-up of a microscope with a blue background. The text is overlaid on the image.

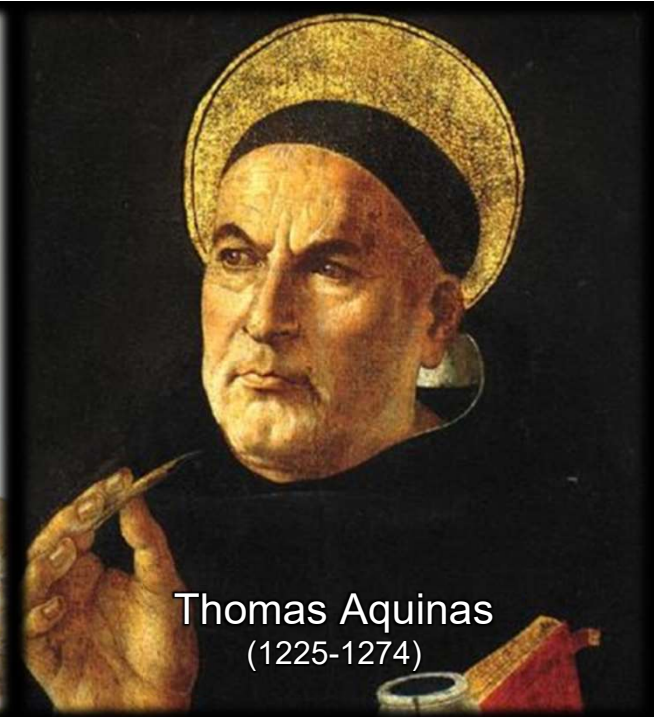
**Questions of natural science
require methods of inquiry and
tools of analysis appropriate to
the physical aspects of reality.**



Classical Empiricism



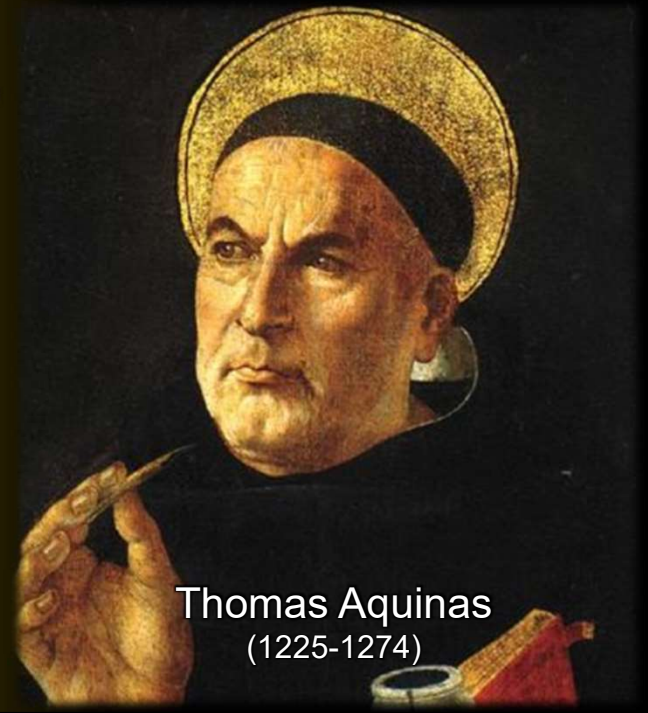
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it begins in sense; second, it is completed in the intellect."

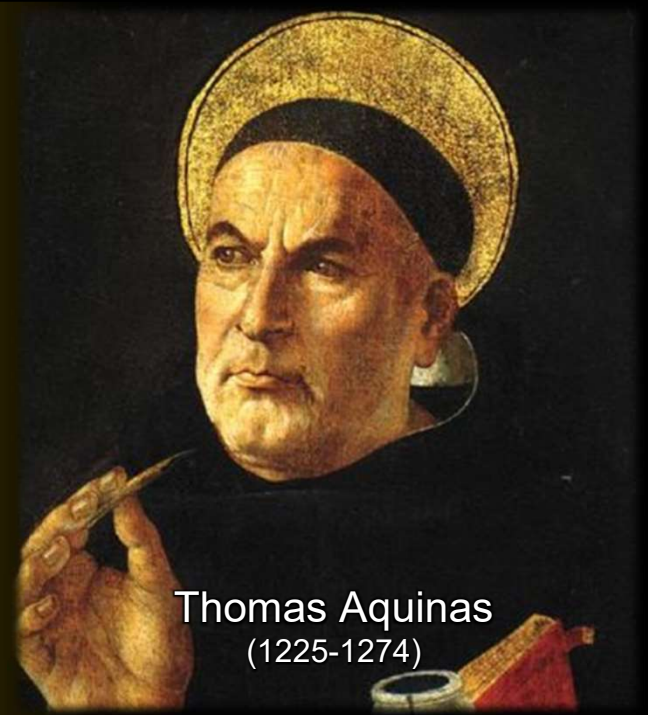
[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3. trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Truth is defined by the conformity of intellect and thing; and hence to know this conformity is to know truth."

Summa Theologiae I, Q. 16, art. 2.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)