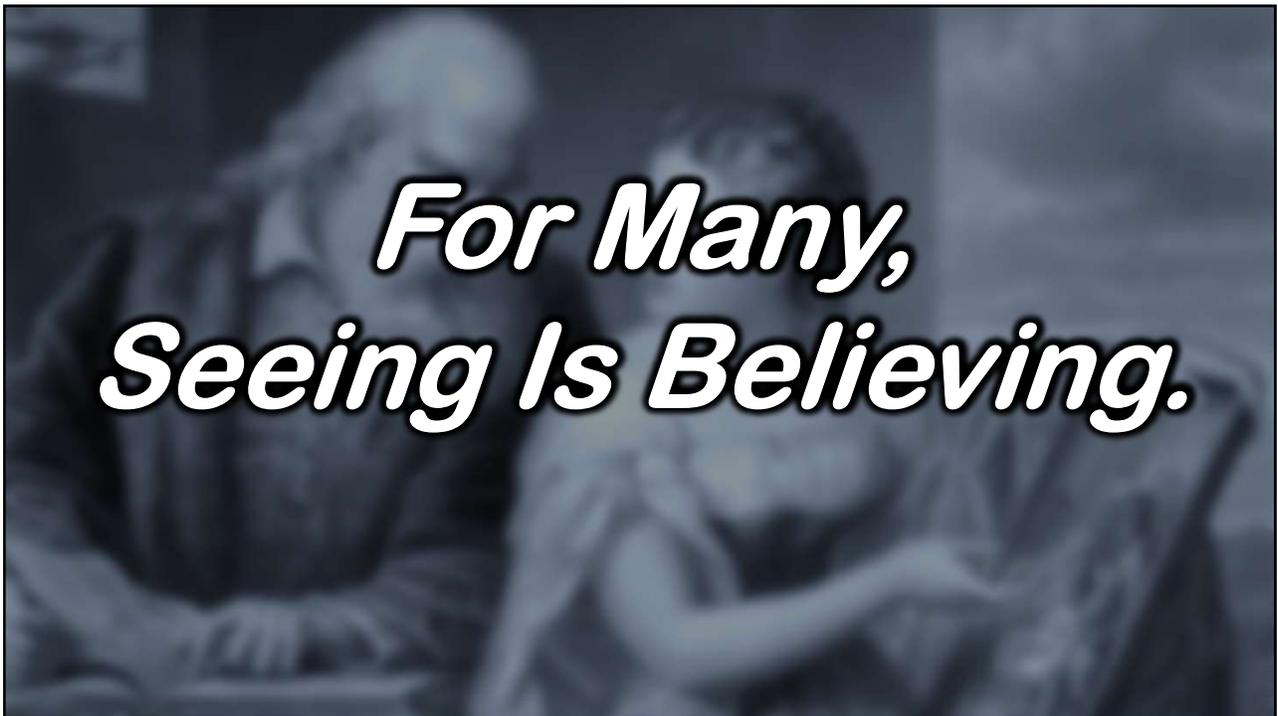


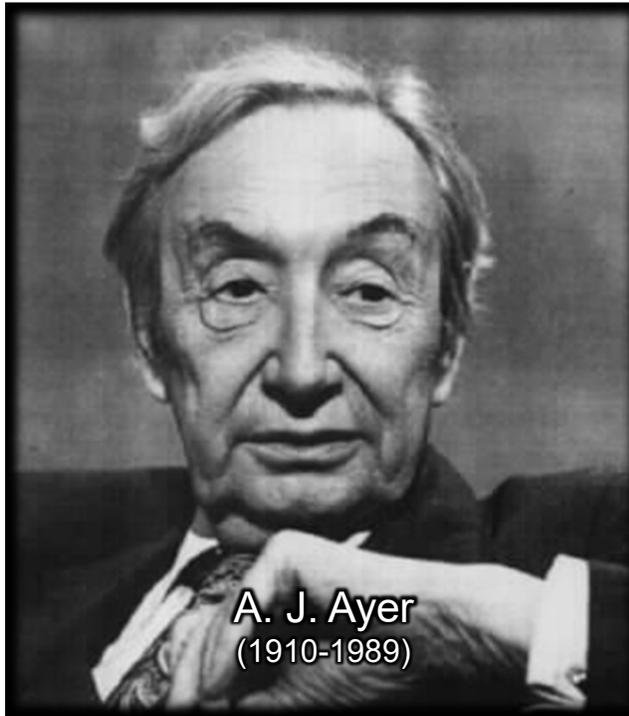


Seeing Is Believing?

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
Southern Evangelical Seminary



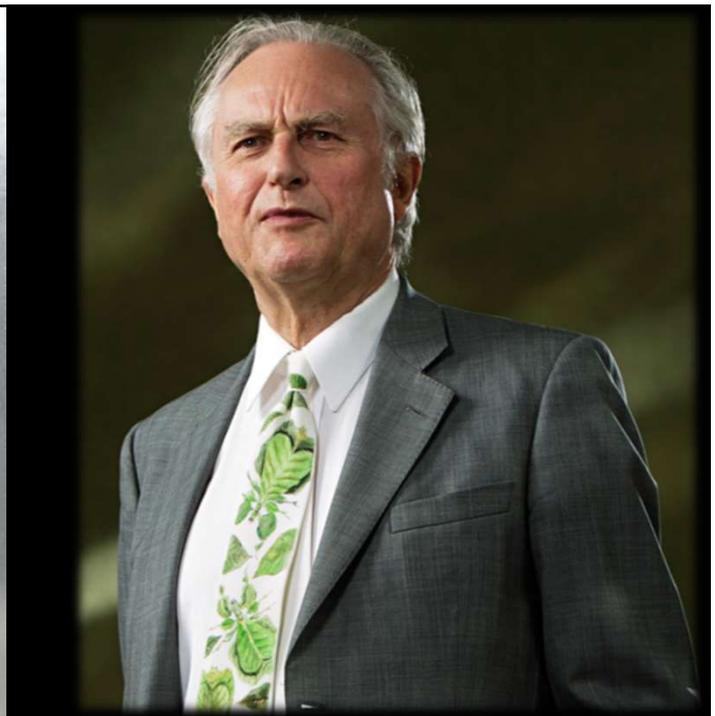
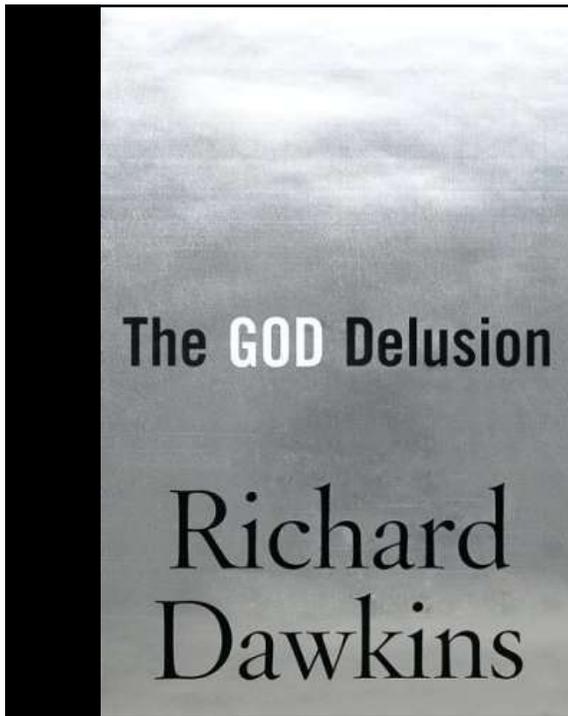
*For Many,
Seeing Is Believing.*

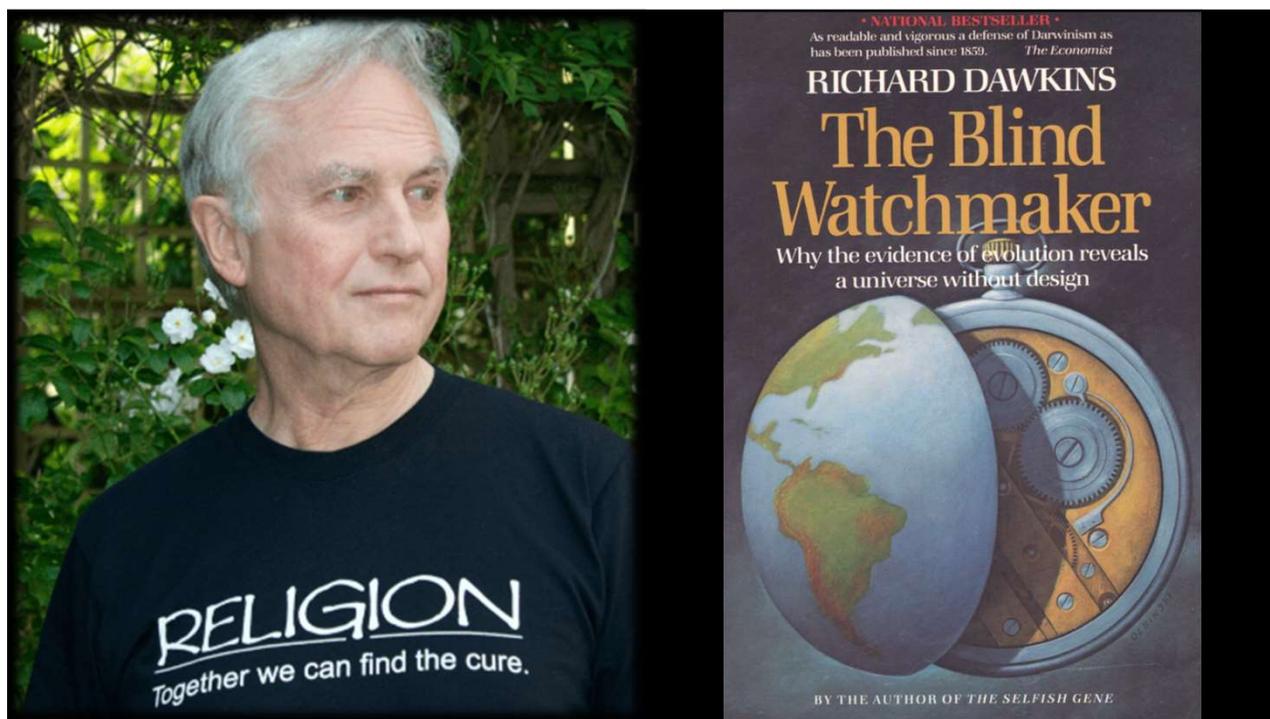


A. J. Ayer
(1910-1989)

"There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 48]





"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a **scientific question**, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one."

[*The God Delusion*, 58-59]

"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite **question of fact**."

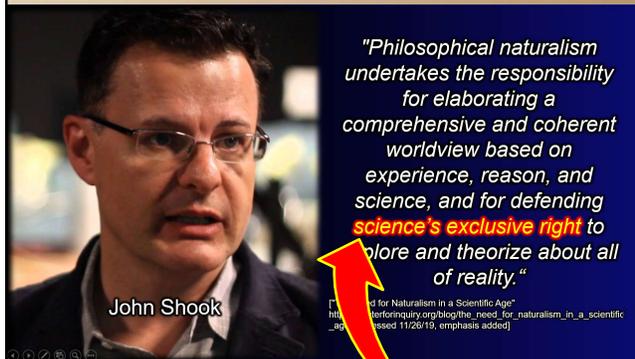
[*The Blind Watchmaker*, 37-38]



John Shook

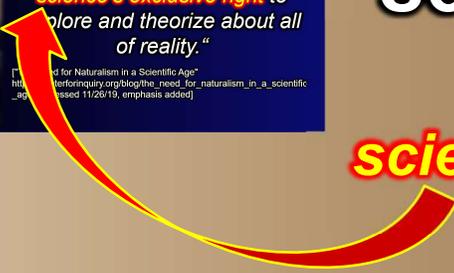
*"Philosophical naturalism undertakes the responsibility for elaborating a comprehensive and coherent worldview based on experience, reason, and science, and for defending **science's exclusive right** to explore and theorize about all of reality."*

["The Need for Naturalism in a Scientific Age"
https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/the_need_for_naturalism_in_a_scientific_age/, accessed 11/26/19, emphasis added]



John Shook

*"Philosophical naturalism undertakes the responsibility for elaborating a comprehensive and coherent worldview based on experience, reason, and science, and for defending **science's exclusive right** to explore and theorize about all of reality."*



Can you see how Shook's statement is self-refuting?

This is not a scientific statement!



but compare ...



John Shook

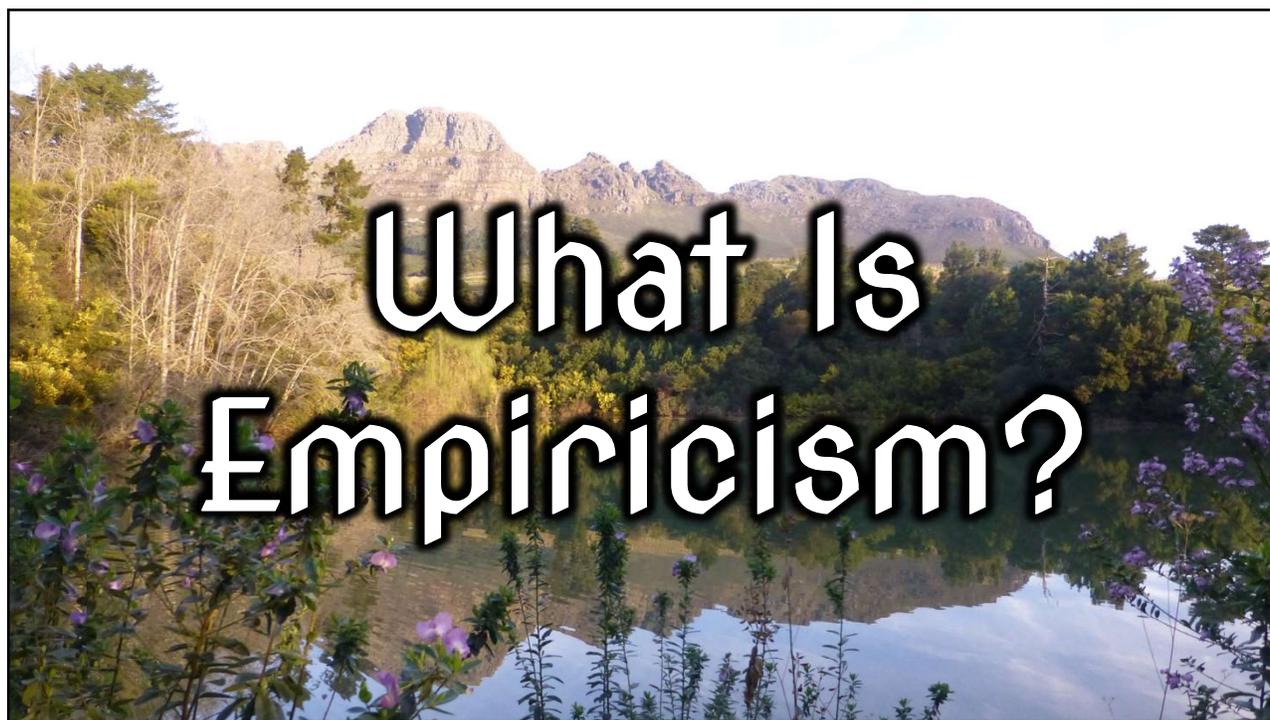
"It is quite correct that naturalism and supernaturalism are strictly opposed; if one is true, the other must be false. However, proving one false does not deliver a verification of the other's truth. These are not the only two metaphysical alternatives, after all. Three more competitors have long been around: platonism [sic], idealism, and skepticism.



John Shook

*However implausible, these lingering alternatives complicate the debating situation. **Only philosophy can finally adjudicate** among all five metaphysical options, and **only philosophy is properly equipped** to serve as theology's executioner.*

["Naturalism Vs. Supernaturalism: Framing the Debate," https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/naturalism_vs-_supernaturalism_framing_the_debate/, accessed 11/26/19, emphasis added]



∞ Empiricism ∞

sense experience is either:

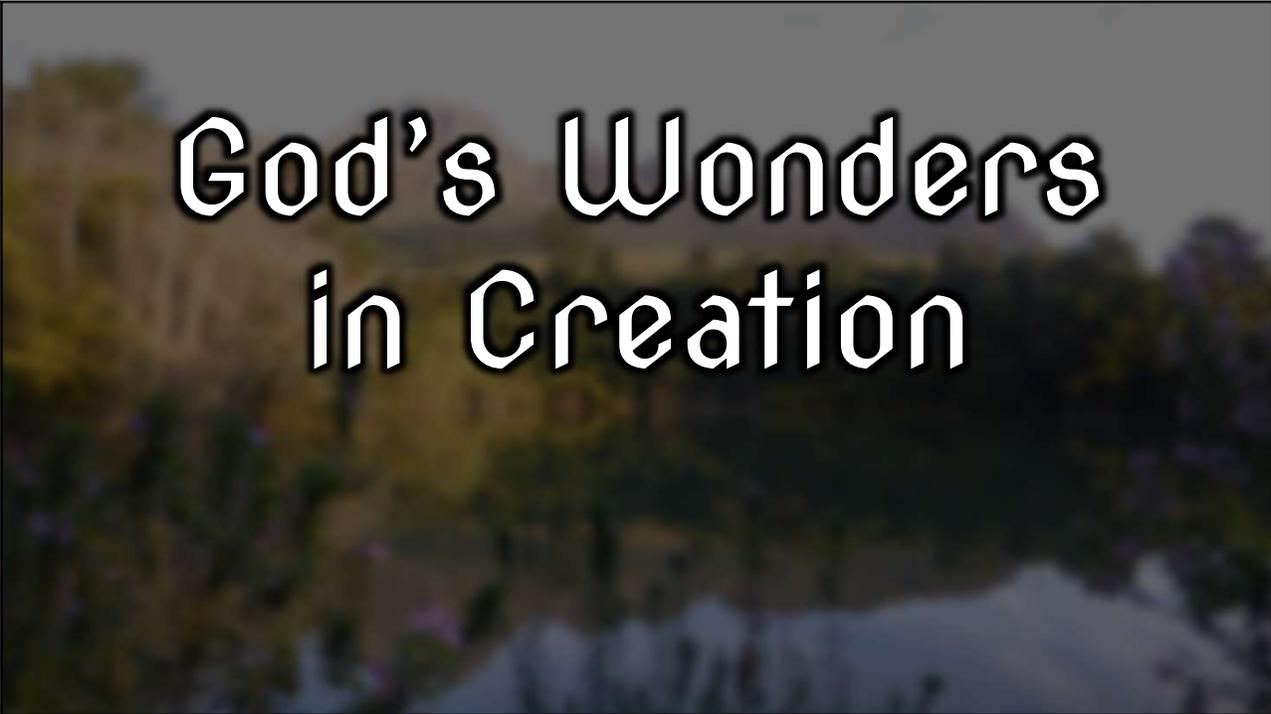
***the beginning of our
knowledge
about the world***

or

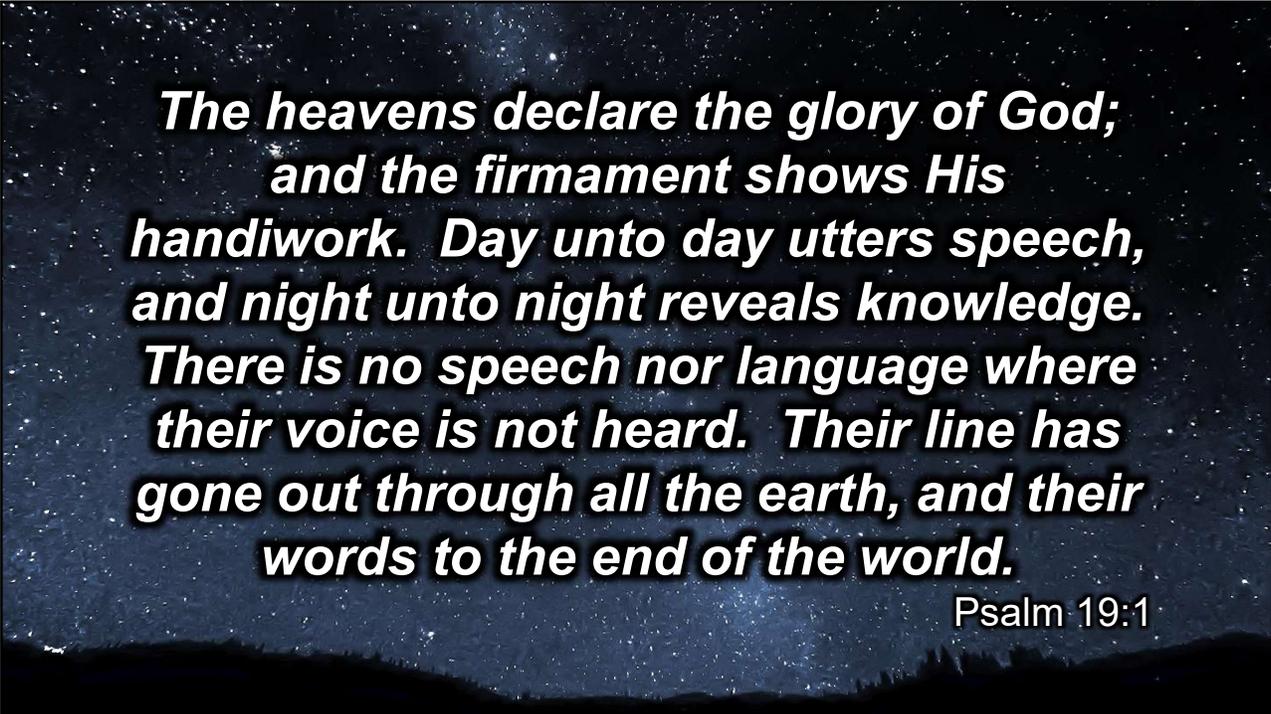
***the sole basis of our
knowledge
about the world***



**The Bible on
Empiricism:
Old Testament**

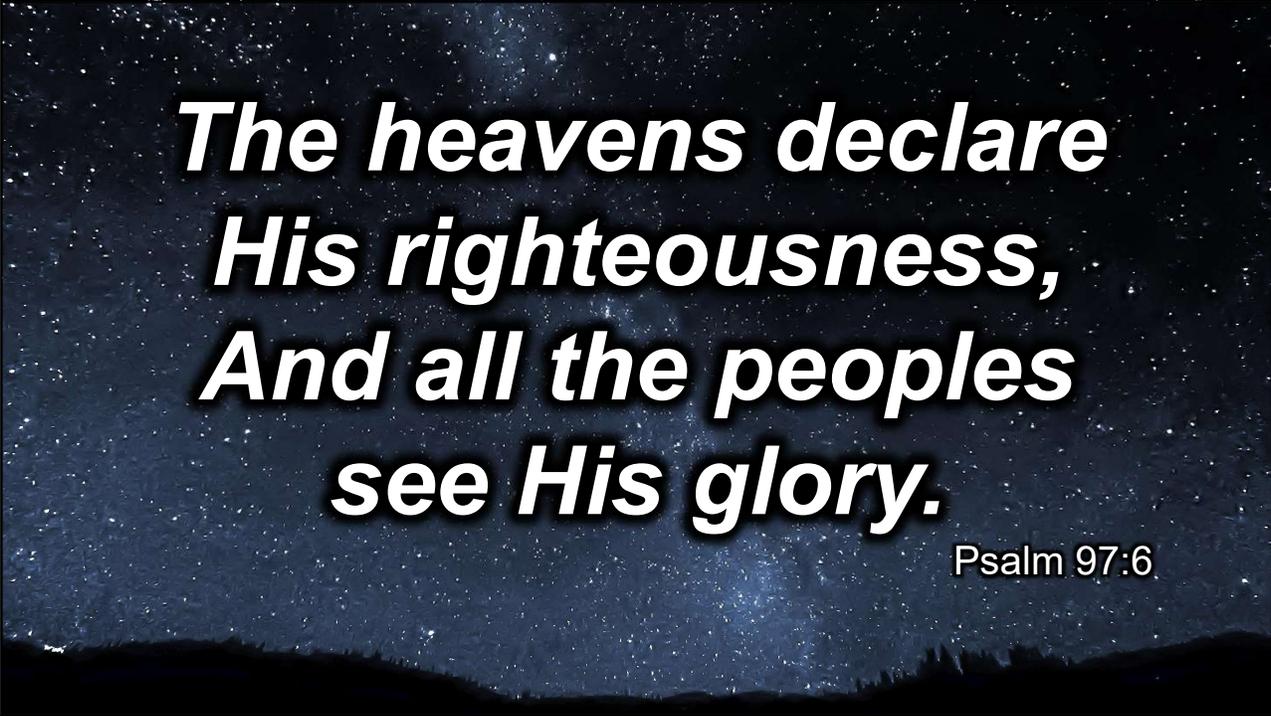


God's Wonders in Creation



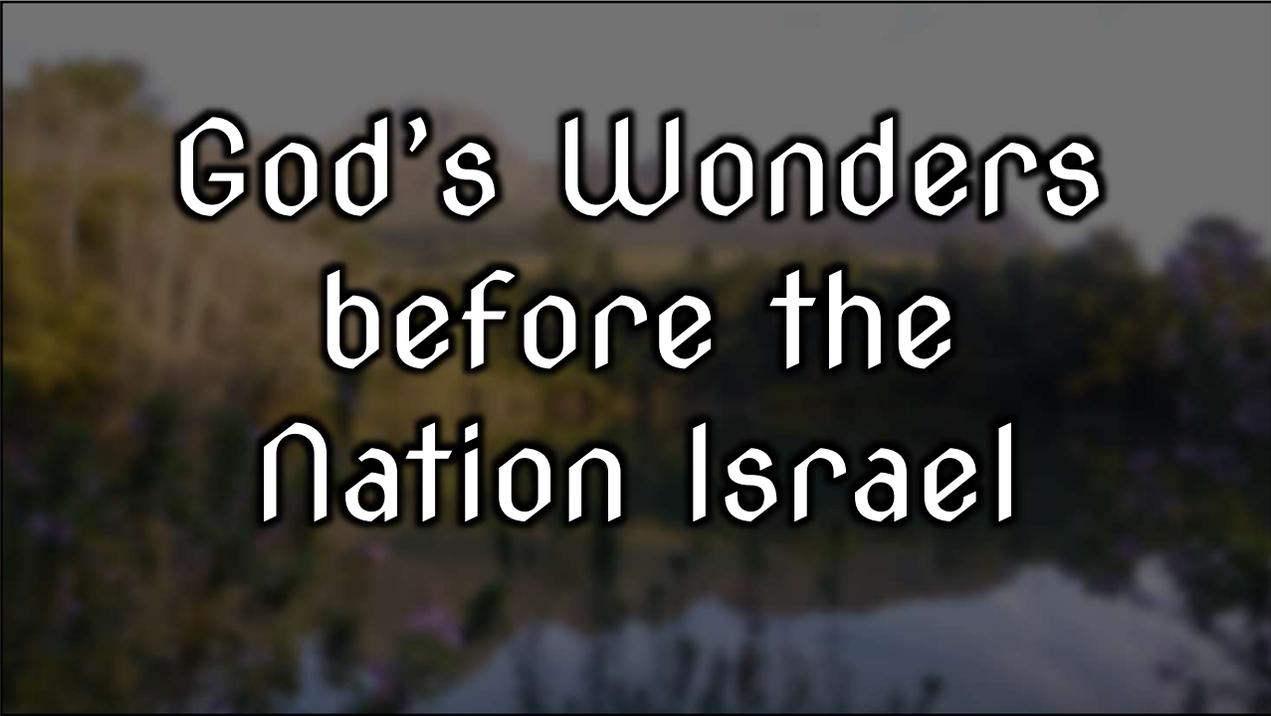
***The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament shows His
handiwork. Day unto day utters speech,
and night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language where
their voice is not heard. Their line has
gone out through all the earth, and their
words to the end of the world.***

Psalm 19:1

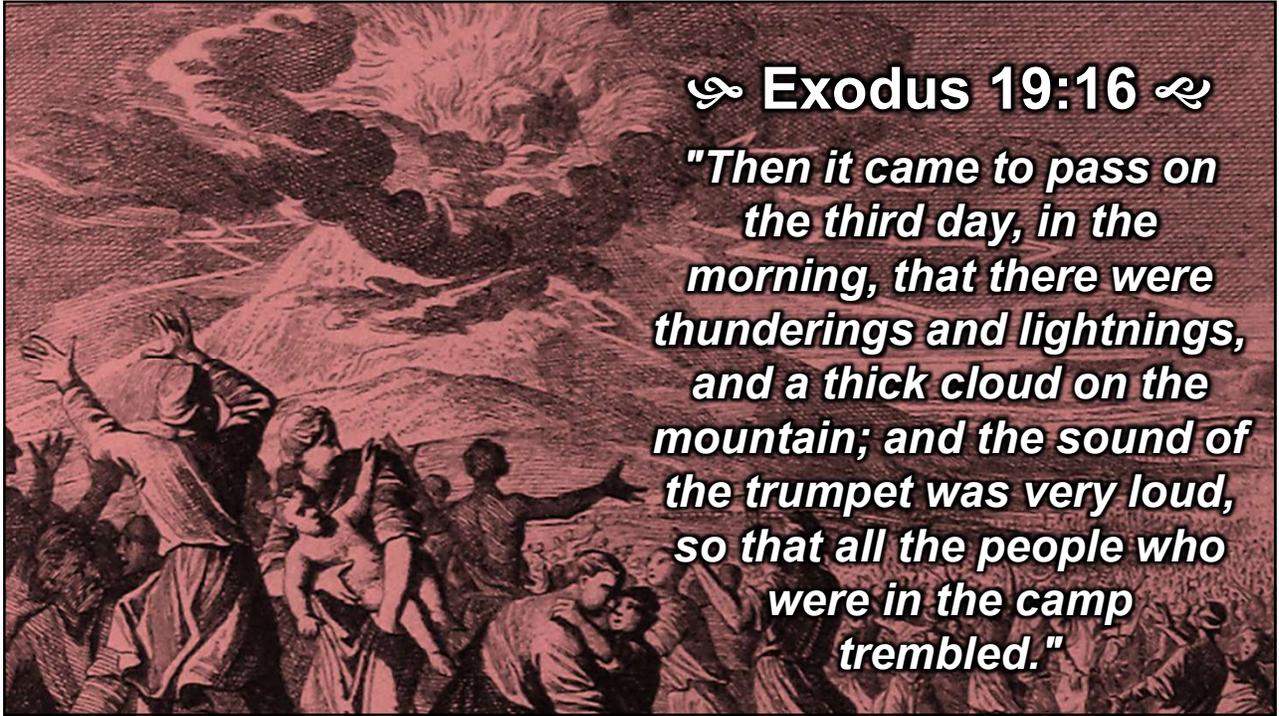


***The heavens declare
His righteousness,
And all the peoples
see His glory.***

Psalm 97:6

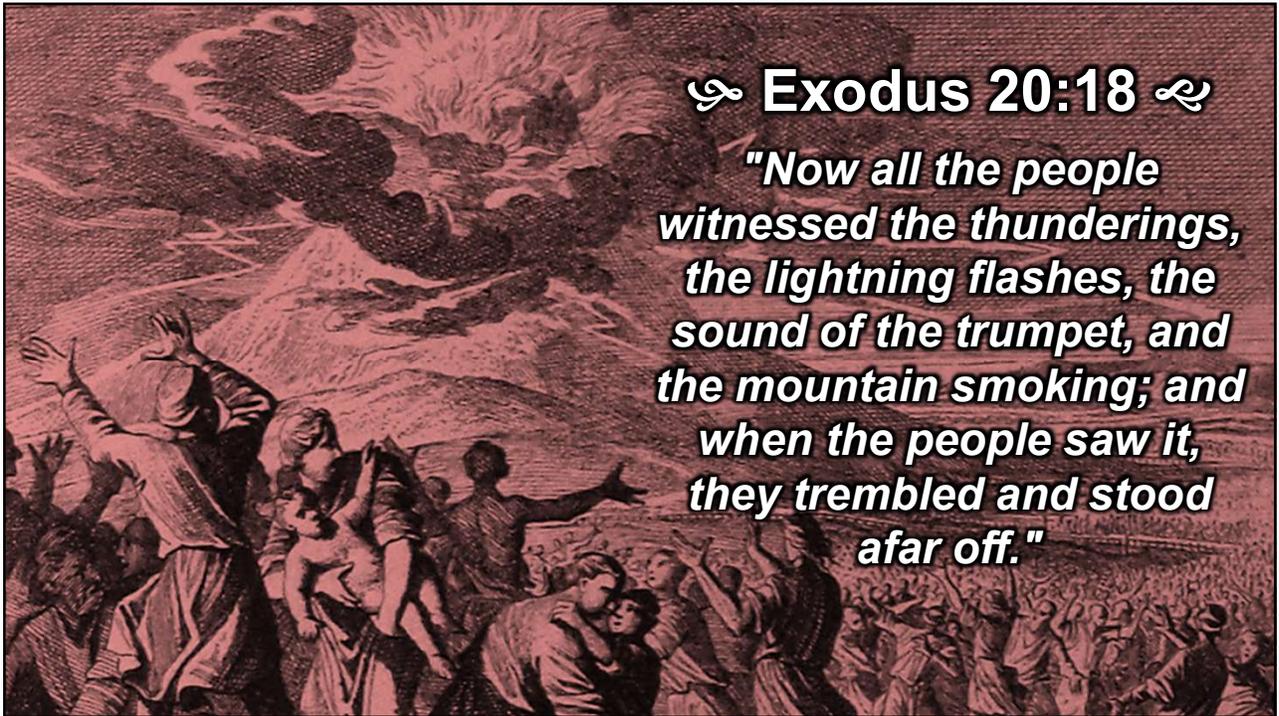


**God's Wonders
before the
Nation Israel**



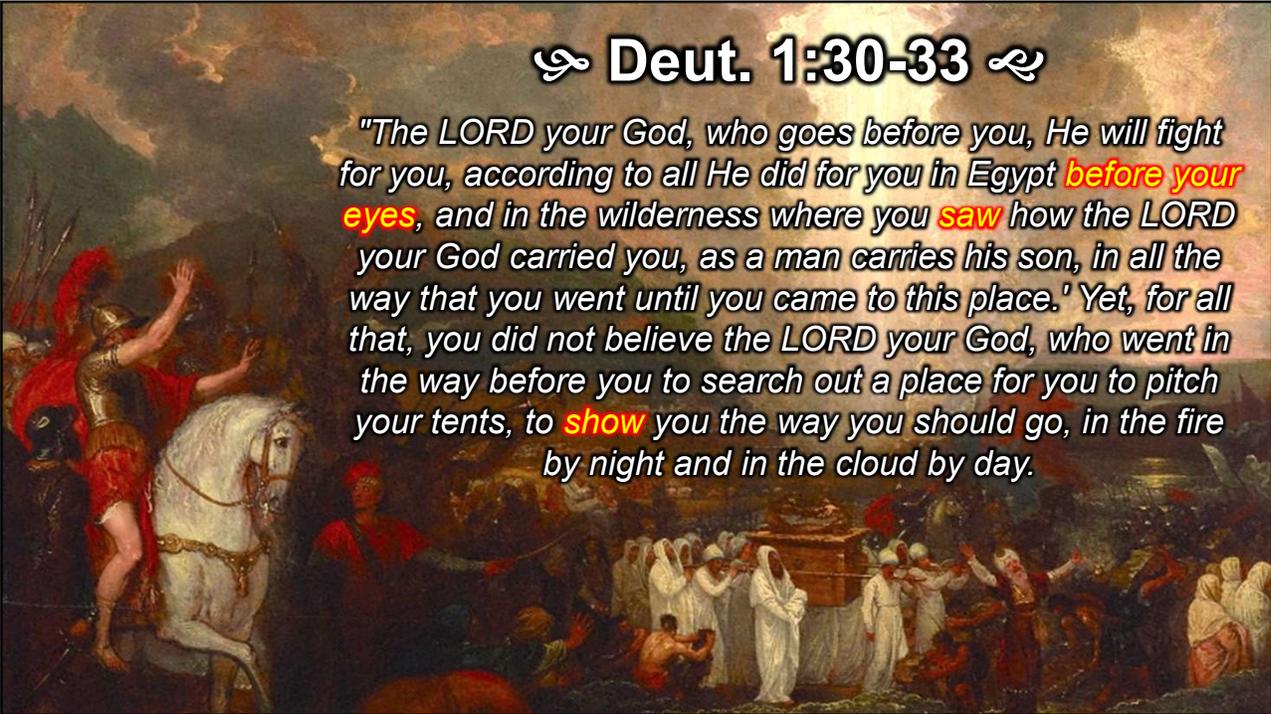
✧ Exodus 19:16 ✧

"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."



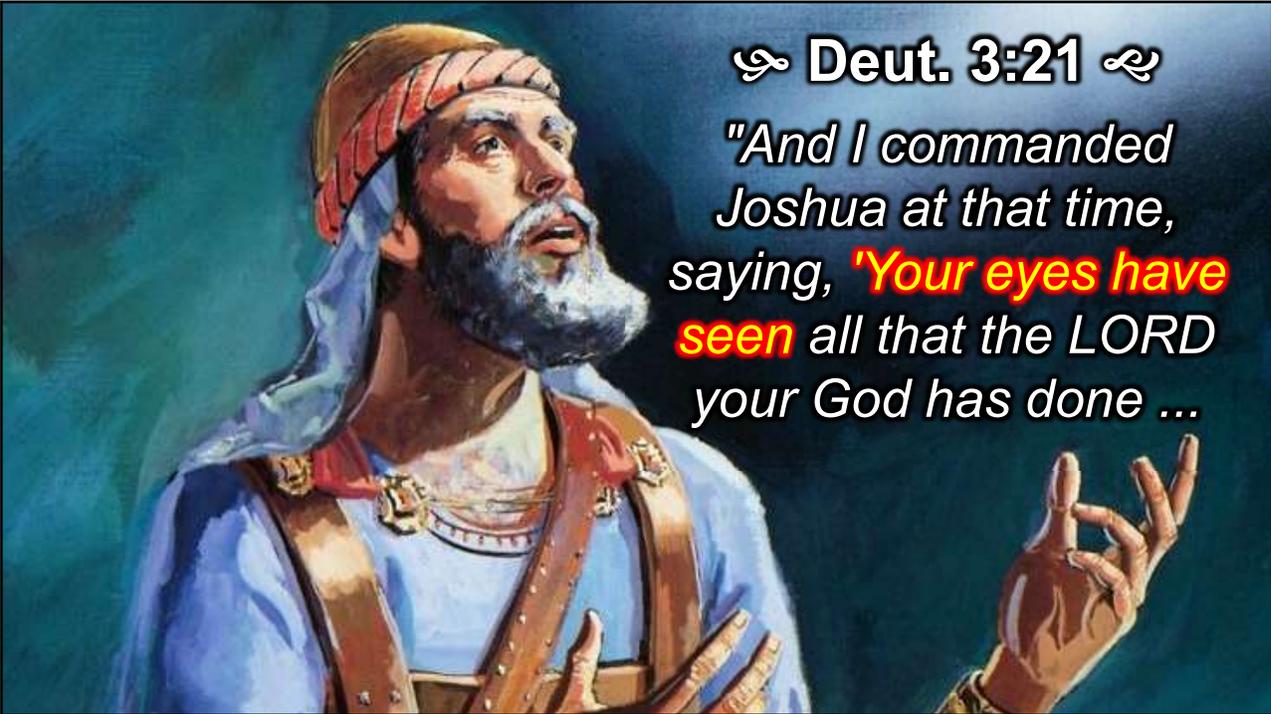
✧ Exodus 20:18 ✧

"Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off."



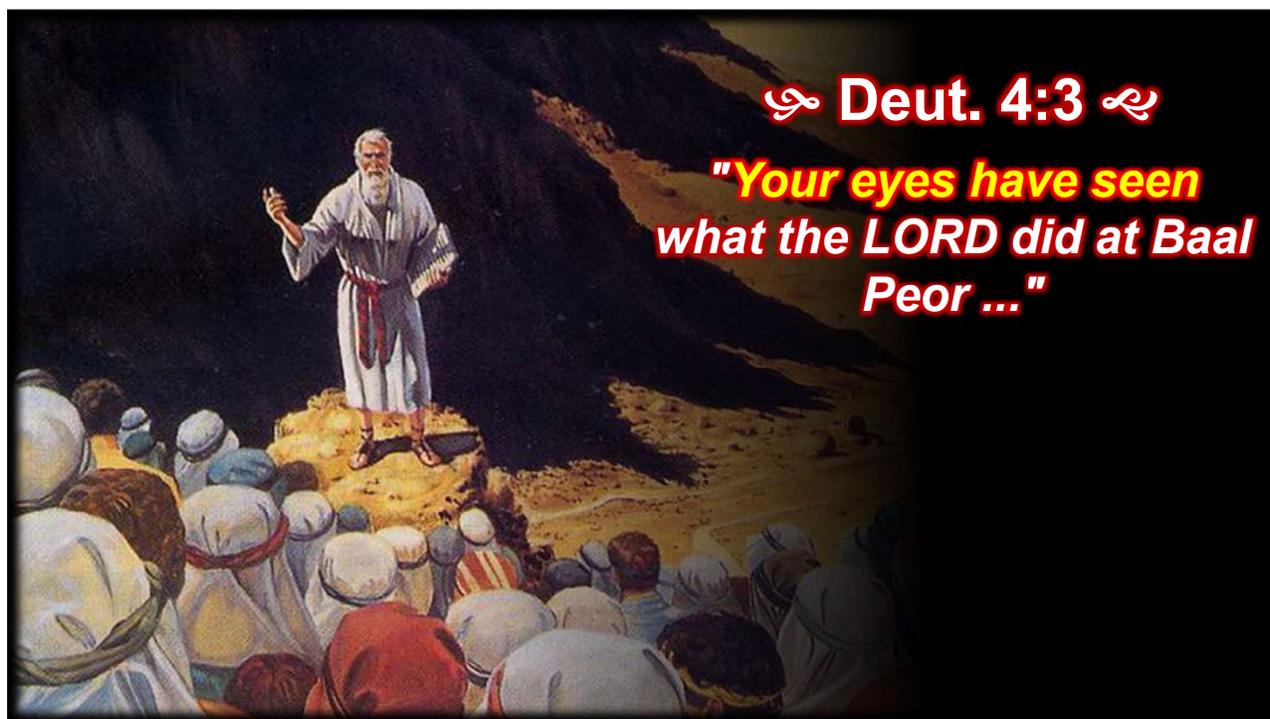
Deut. 1:30-33

"The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt **before your eyes**, and in the wilderness where you **saw** how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to **show** you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.



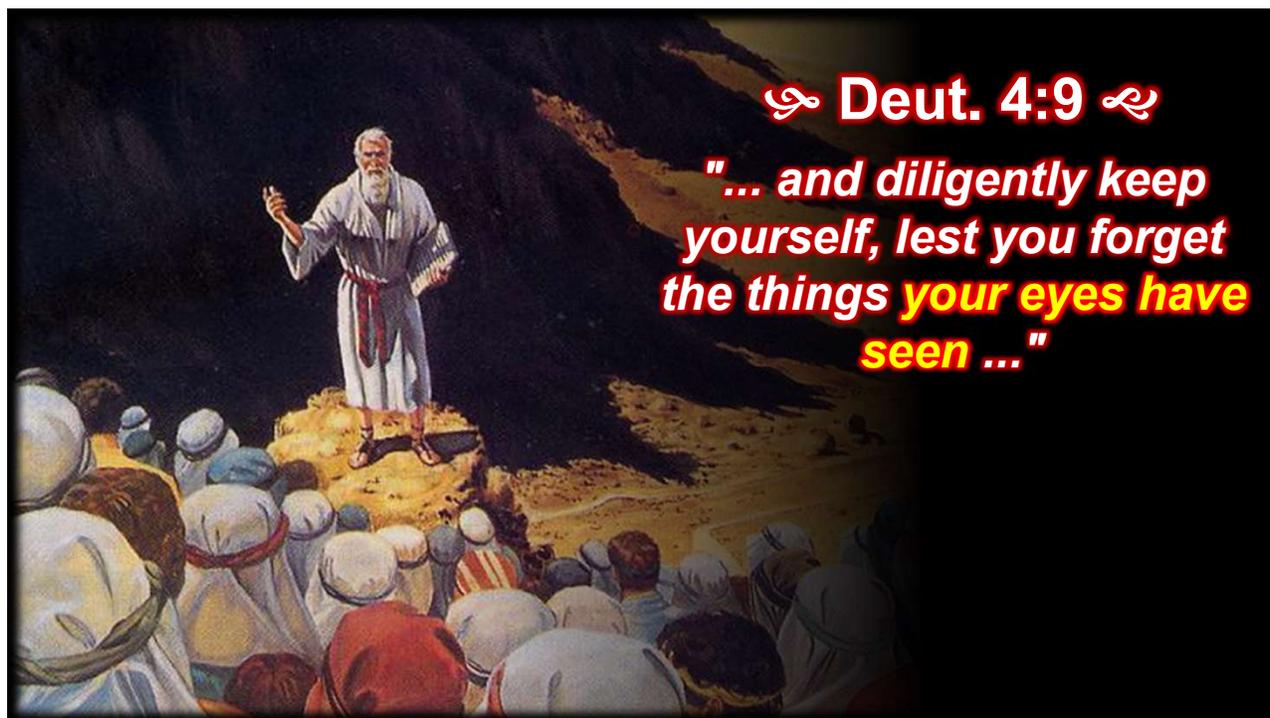
Deut. 3:21

"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, **Your eyes have seen** all that the LORD your God has done ...



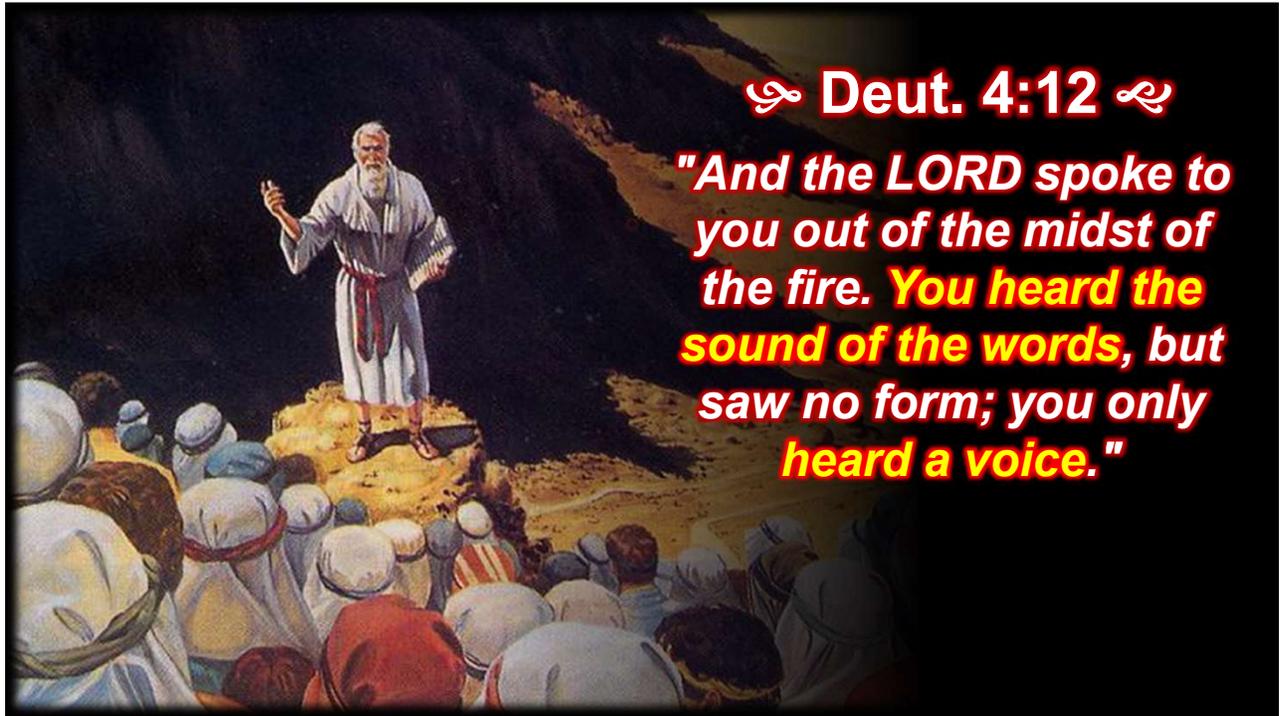
☞ Deut. 4:3 ☞

**"Your eyes have seen
what the LORD did at Baal
Peor ..."**



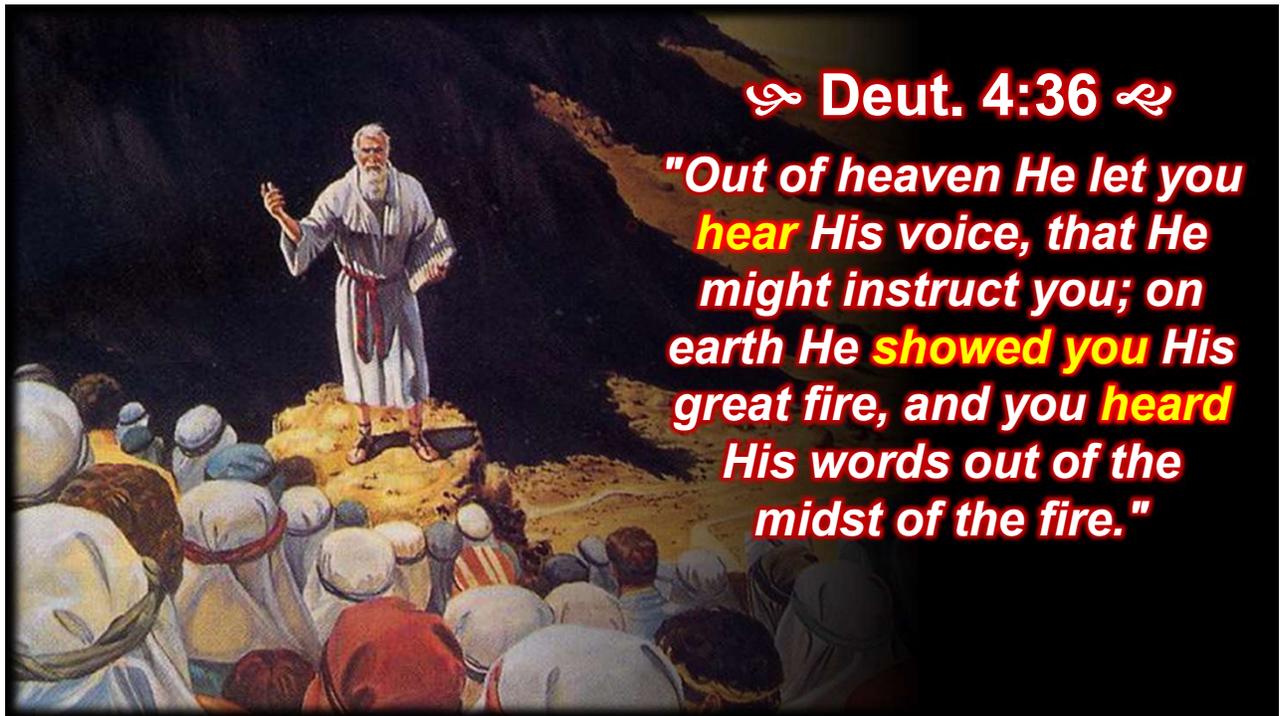
☞ Deut. 4:9 ☞

**"... and diligently keep
yourself, lest you forget
the things **your eyes have
seen ...**"**



☞ Deut. 4:12 ☞

"And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice."



☞ Deut. 4:36 ☞

"Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire."



Deut. 5:24

"And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives.' "

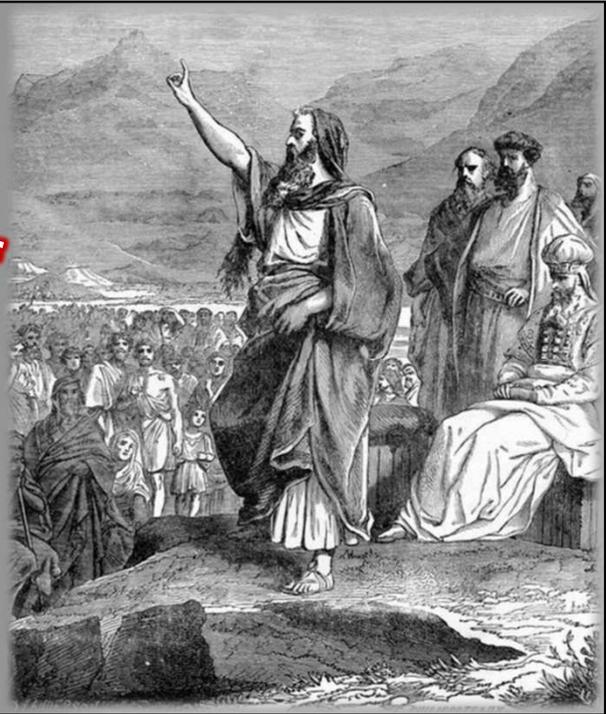
Deut. 10:21

"He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen."



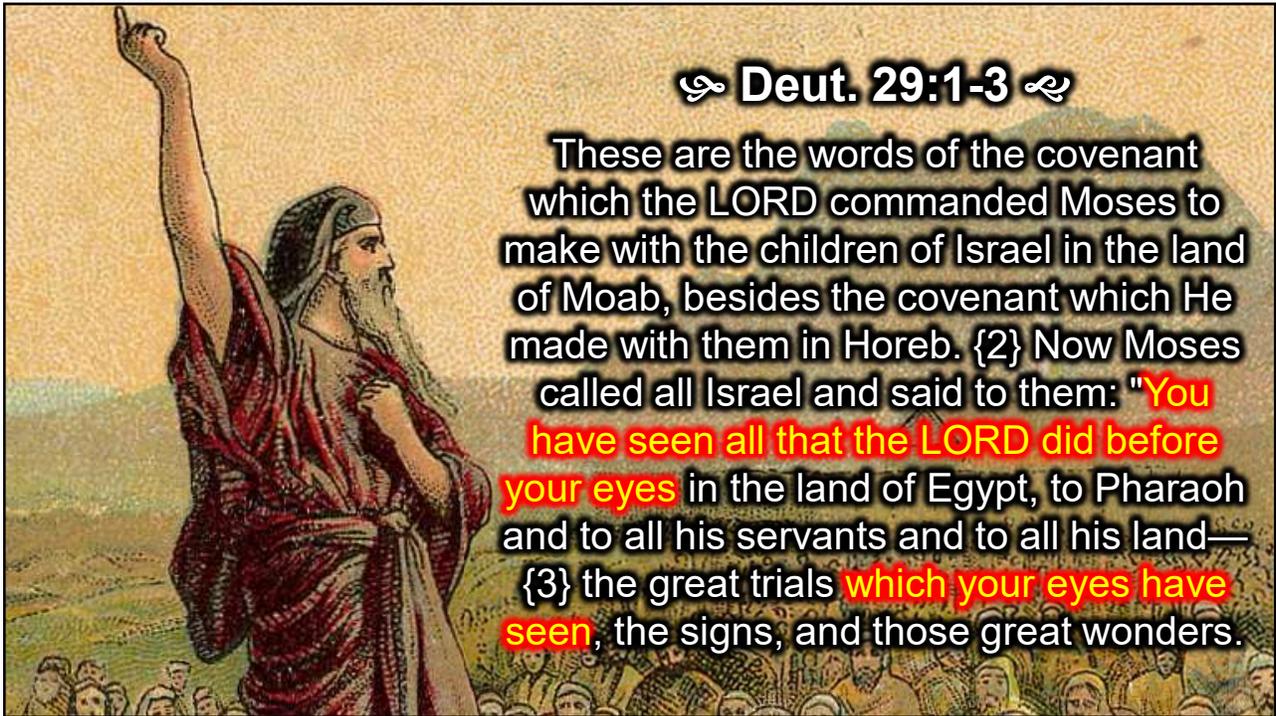
🌀 Deut. 11:7 🌀

"... but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did."



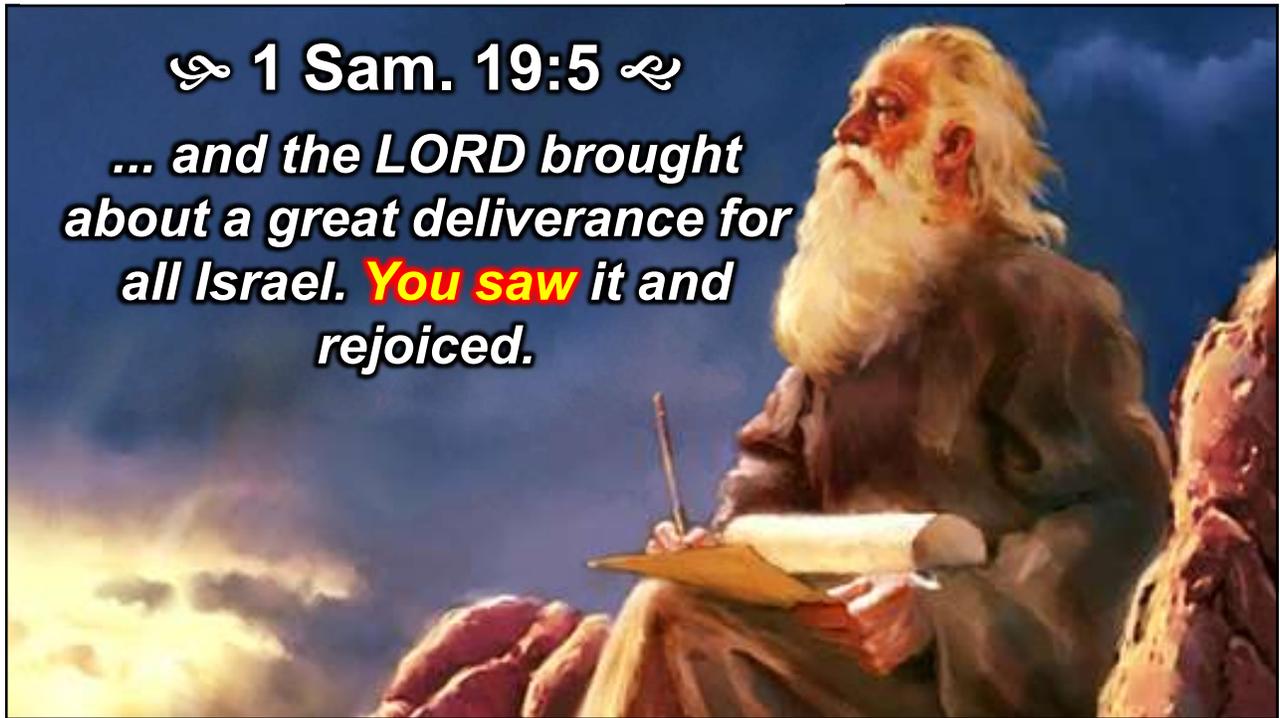
🌀 Deut. 29:1-3 🌀

These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb. {2} Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "**You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes** in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— {3} the great trials **which your eyes have seen**, the signs, and those great wonders.



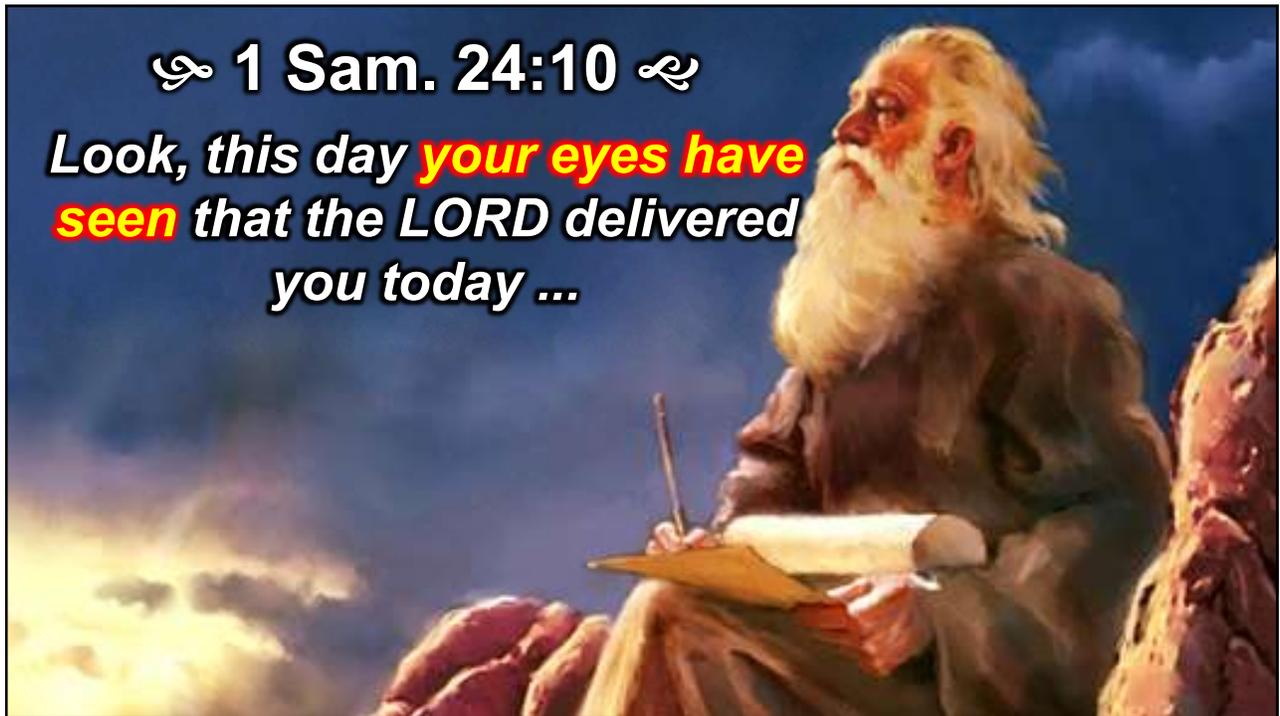
🌀 1 Sam. 19:5 🌀

*... and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. **You saw** it and rejoiced.*



🌀 1 Sam. 24:10 🌀

*Look, this day **your eyes have seen** that the LORD delivered you today ...*



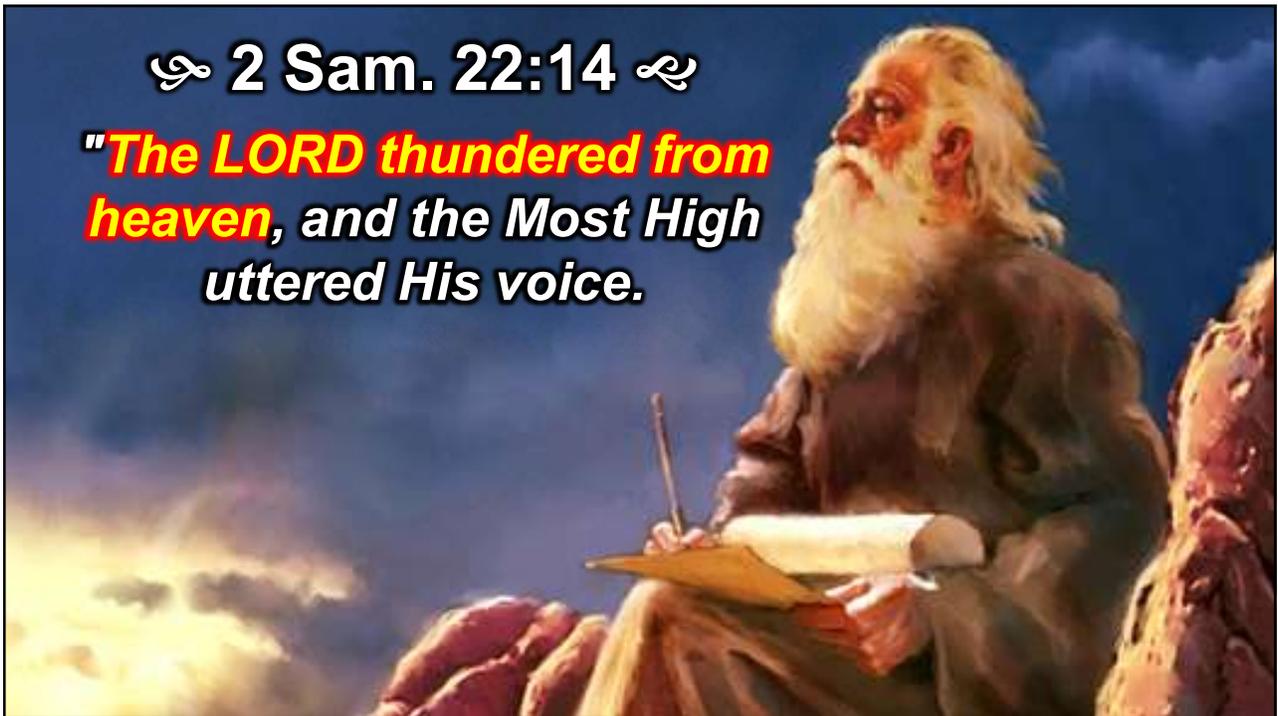
☞ 1 Sam. 7:10 ☞

**But the LORD thundered with
a loud thunder ...**



☞ 2 Sam. 22:14 ☞

**"The LORD thundered from
heaven, and the Most High
uttered His voice.**

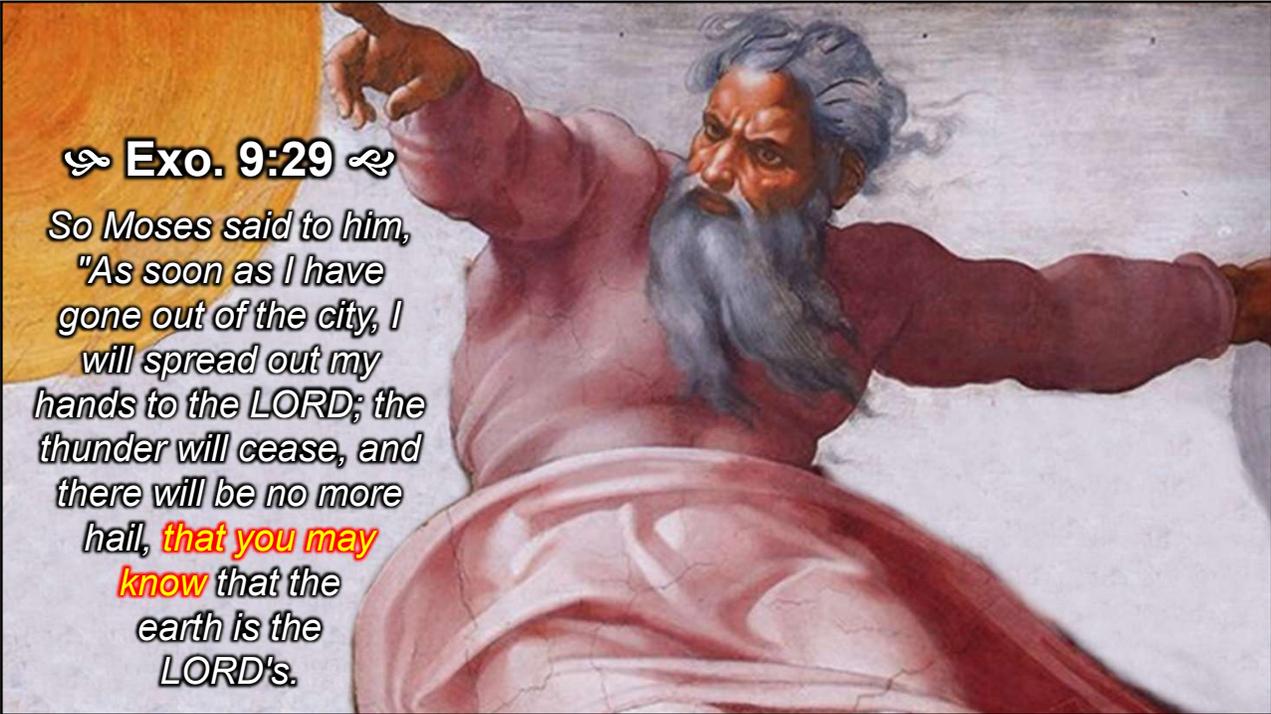


☞ Psalm 18:13 ☞

**The LORD thundered from
heaven, And the Most High
uttered His voice ...**

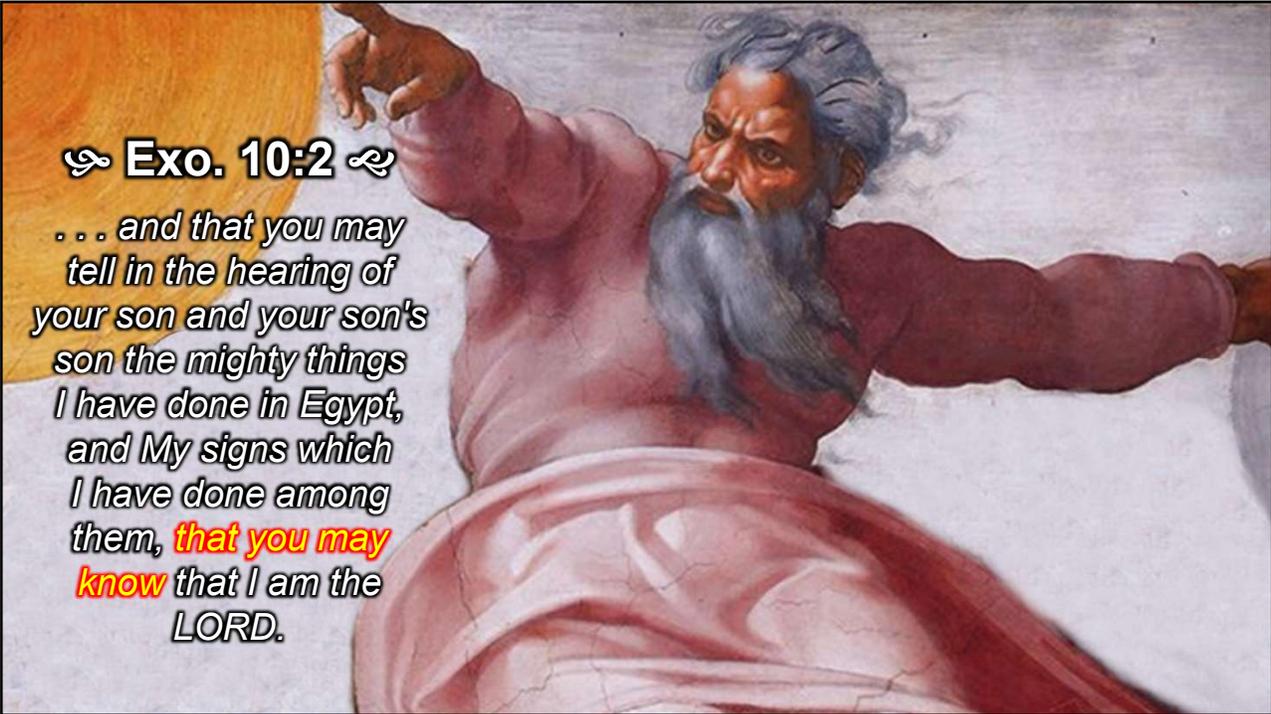
☞ Exo. 9:14 ☞

*... for at this time I
will send all My
plagues to your very
heart, and on your
servants and on your
people, **that you may
know** that there is
none like Me in
all the earth.*



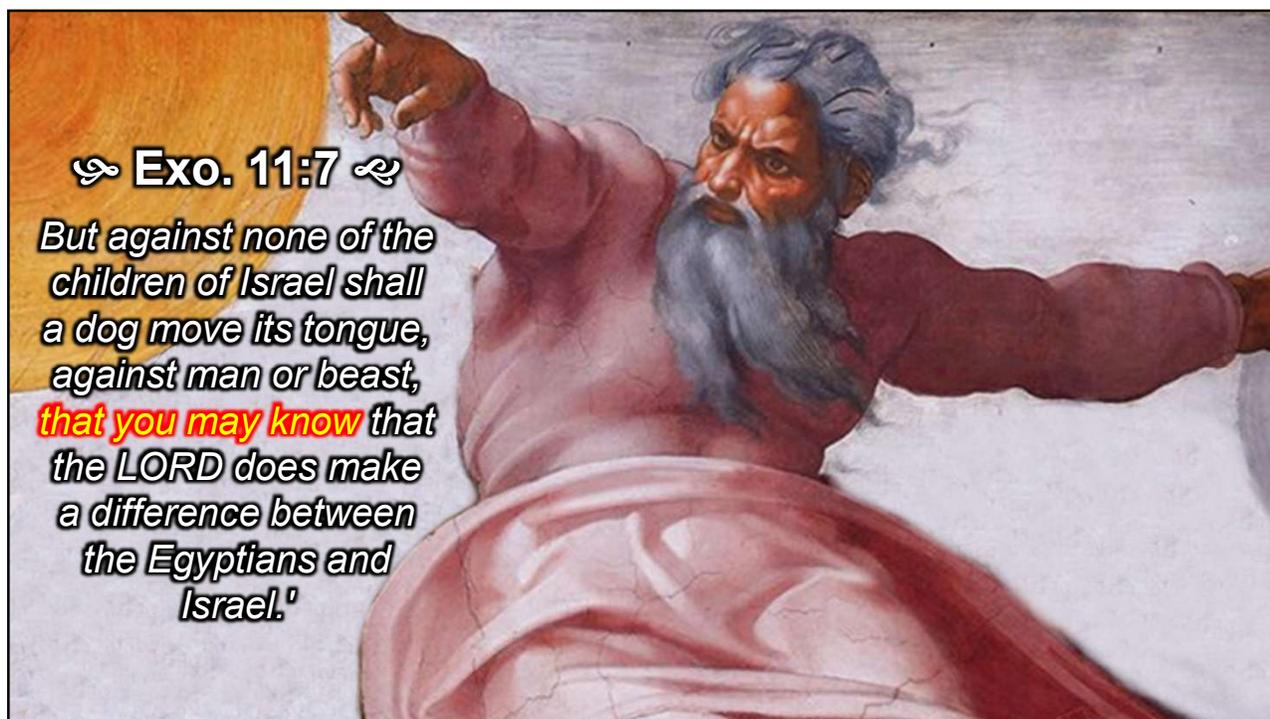
☞ **Exo. 9:29** ☞

So Moses said to him,
"As soon as I have
gone out of the city, I
will spread out my
hands to the LORD; the
thunder will cease, and
there will be no more
hail, **that you may
know** that the
earth is the
LORD's.



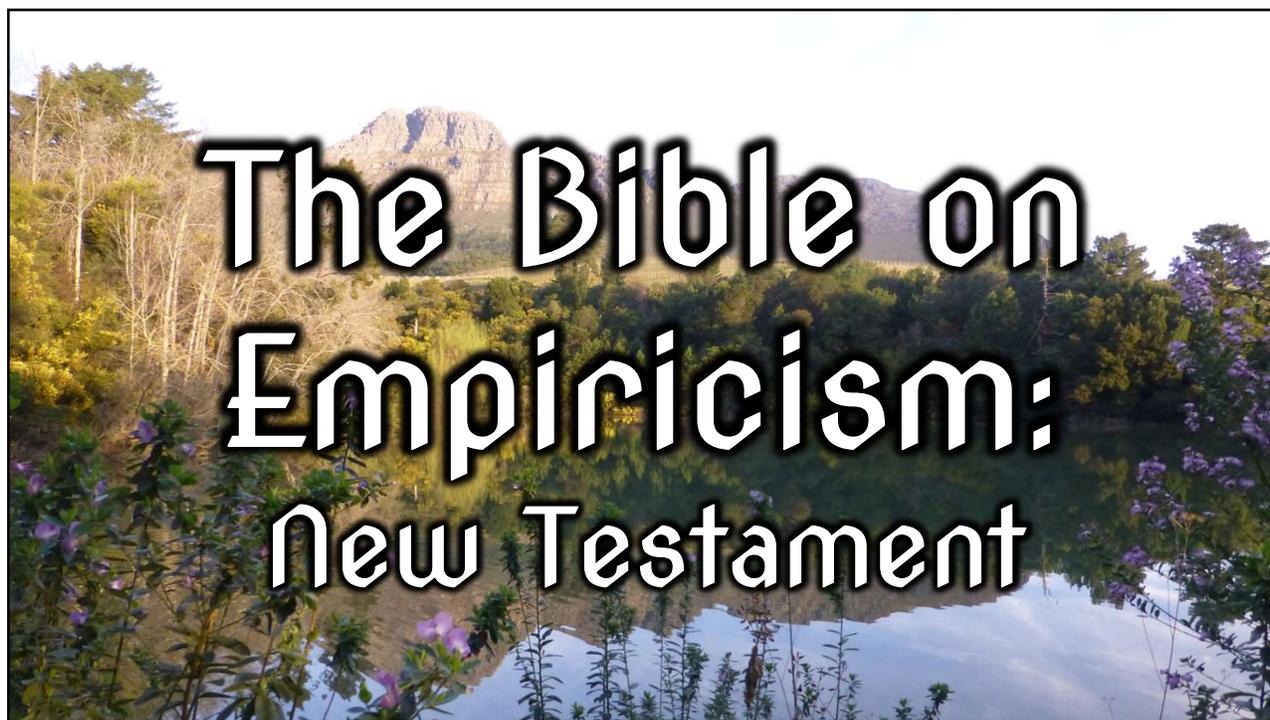
☞ **Exo. 10:2** ☞

... and that you may
tell in the hearing of
your son and your son's
son the mighty things
I have done in Egypt,
and My signs which
I have done among
them, **that you may
know** that I am the
LORD.



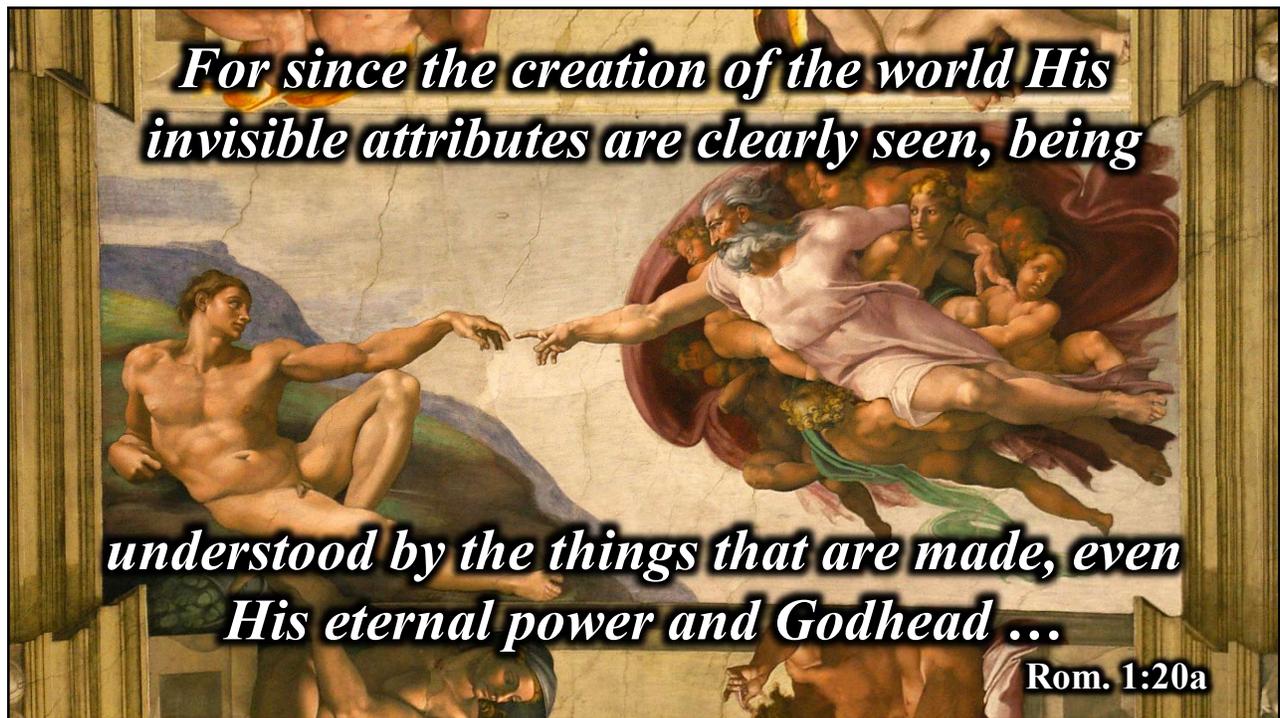
🌀 Exo. 11:7 🌀

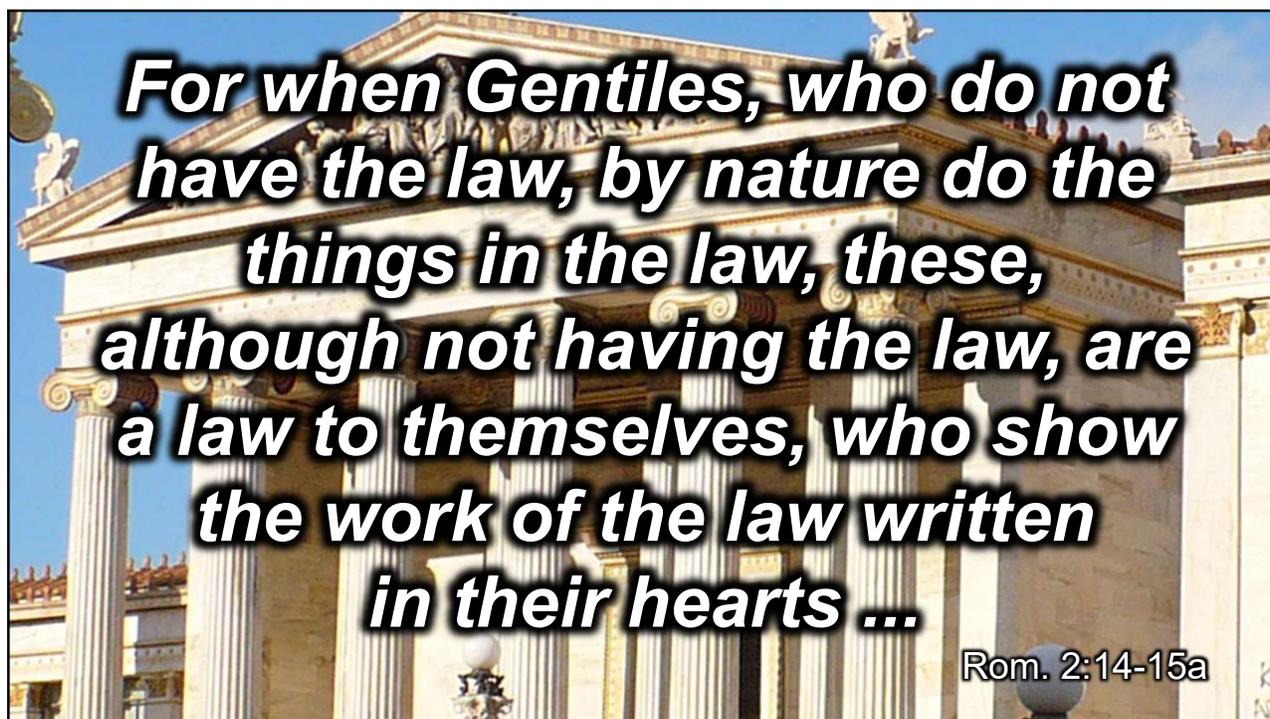
*But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, **that you may know** that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.'*



The Bible on Empiricism: New Testament

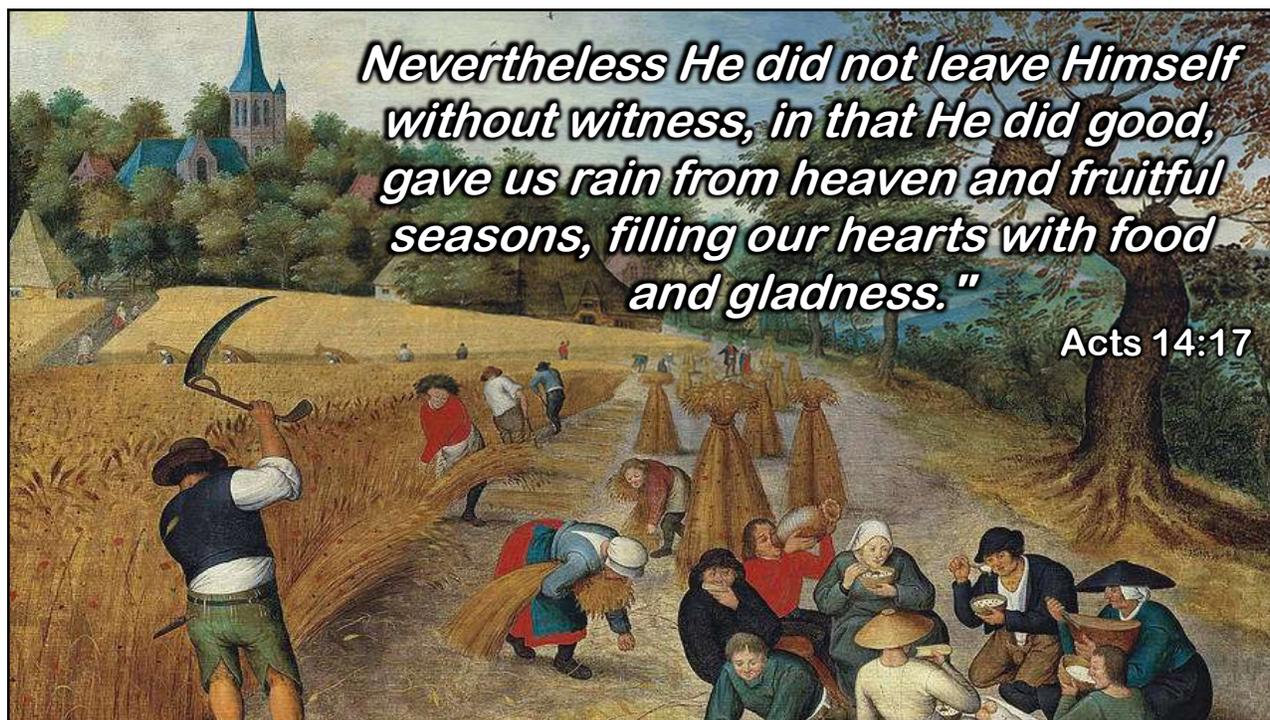
God's Wonders in Creation





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

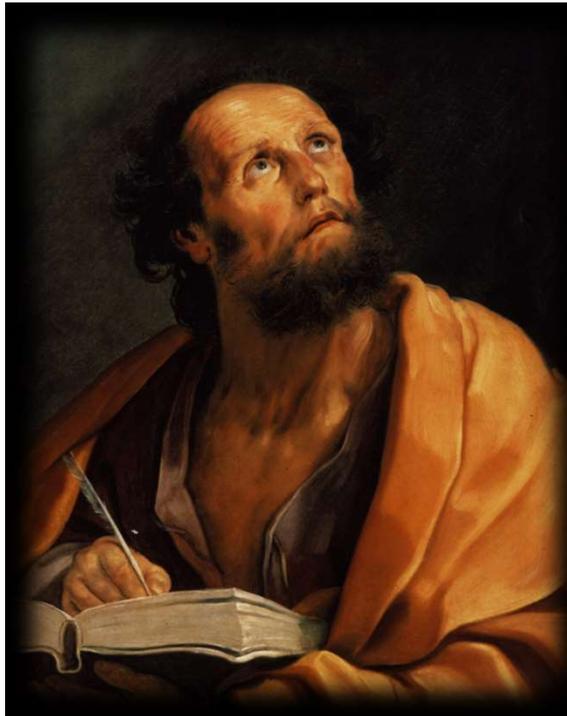
Rom. 2:14-15a



Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Acts 14:17

God's Wonders surrounding the Resurrection of Jesus



☞ Luke 1:1-4 ☞

*"Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were **eyewitnesses** and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed."*

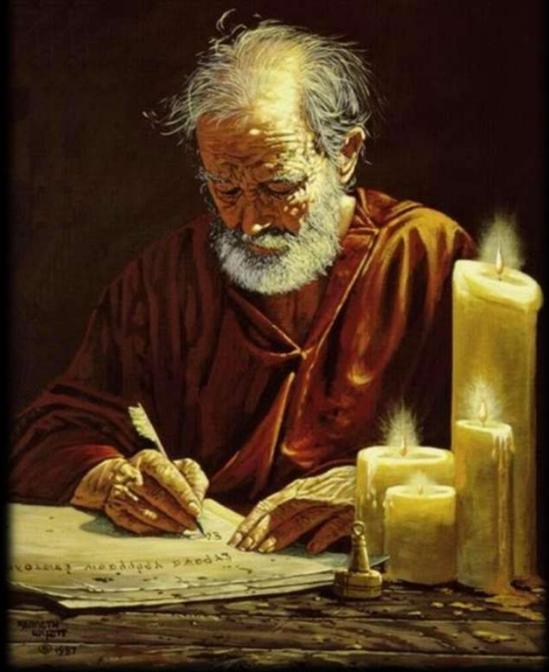
🌀 Acts 10:37-41 🌀

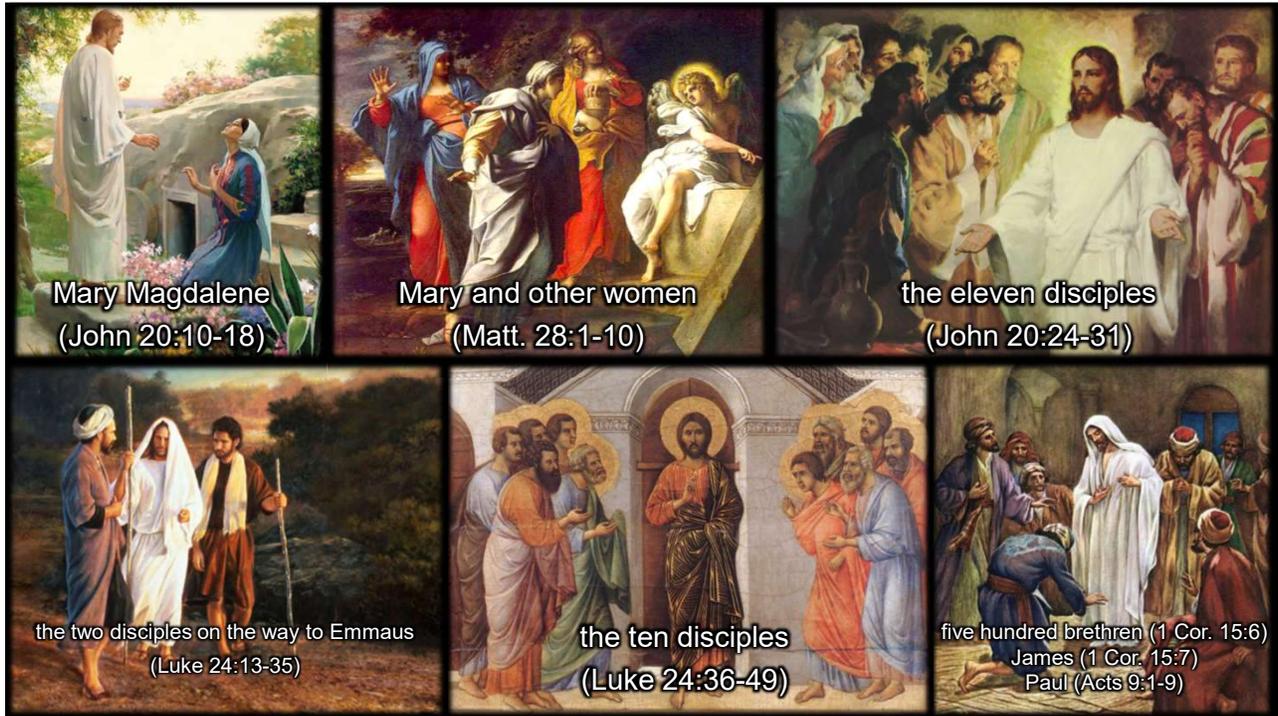
"And we are **witnesses** of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and **showed Him openly**, not to all the people, but to **witnesses** chosen before by God, even to us who **ate and drank with Him** after He arose from the dead."



🌀 1 John 1:1-3 🌀

"That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen with our eyes**, which we have **looked upon**, and **our hands have handled**, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have **seen**, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have **seen and heard** we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."





To Be Sure ...

- ✓ *Our sensory faculties are not infinite.*
- ✓ *Our sensory faculties are not infallible.*
- ✓ *Our sensory faculties are affected by the Fall.*

You hear concerns like ...

- Empiricism can't give you logic.*
- Empiricism can't give you metaphysics.*
- Empiricism can't give you morality.*
- Empiricism can't give you God.*

Then the concerns go ...

Either ...

- ✓ *Empiricism can't justify induction (inductive reasoning).*
- ✓ *Empiricism shows that deduction (deductive reasoning) is nothing more than circular reasoning.*
- ✓ *Because of this, Empiricism cannot give us any knowledge at all.*
- ✓ *Thus, some other means is necessary for human knowing.*

Or ...

- ✓ *Because empiricism can't give logic, metaphysics, morality or God, then empiricism proves none of those disciplines are true.*
- ✓ *Thus, empiricism is just another way of saying that science is the only way to truth.*

Then the concerns go ...

Either ...

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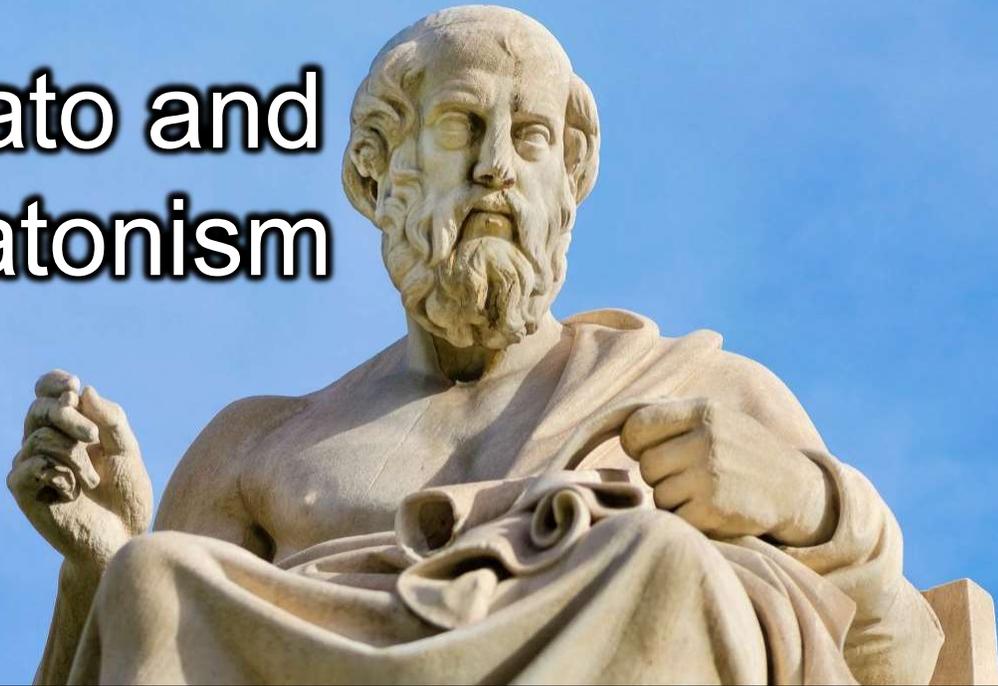
- ✓ *Because empiricism can't give logic, metaphysics, morality or God, then empiricism proves none of those disciplines are true.*
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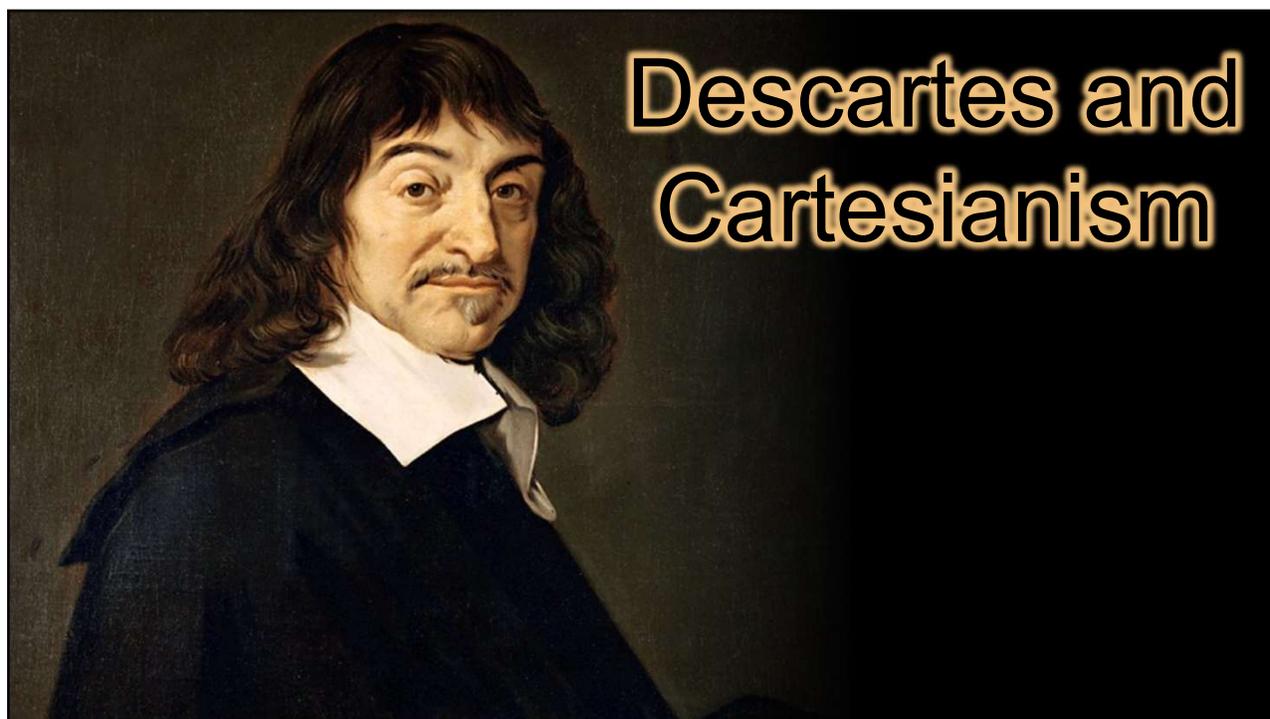
SELF-REFUTING!

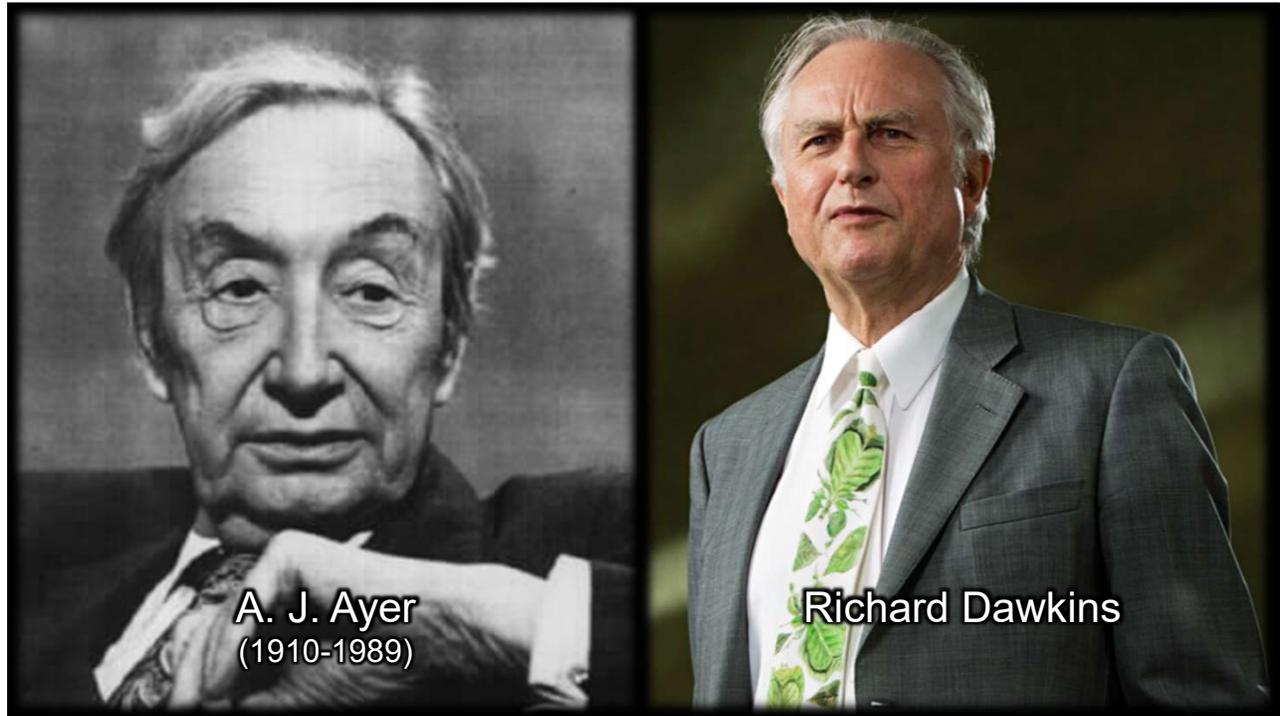
Challenges to Empiricism:

The Challenge of Rationalism

**Plato and
Platonism**



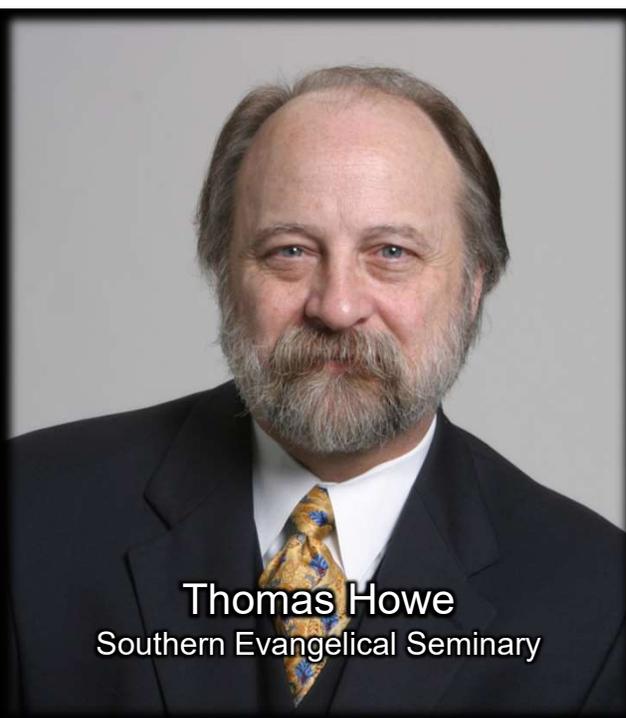
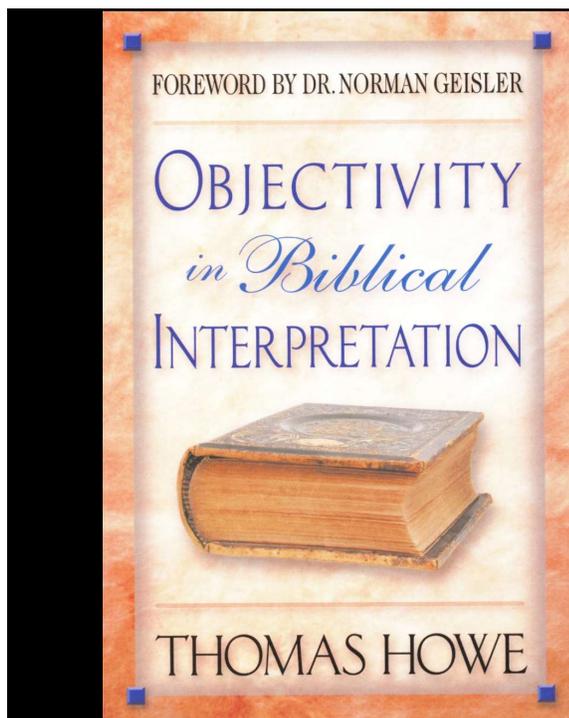




A. J. Ayer
(1910-1989)

Richard Dawkins

*Challenges to
Empiricism:
The Challenge of Postmodernism*

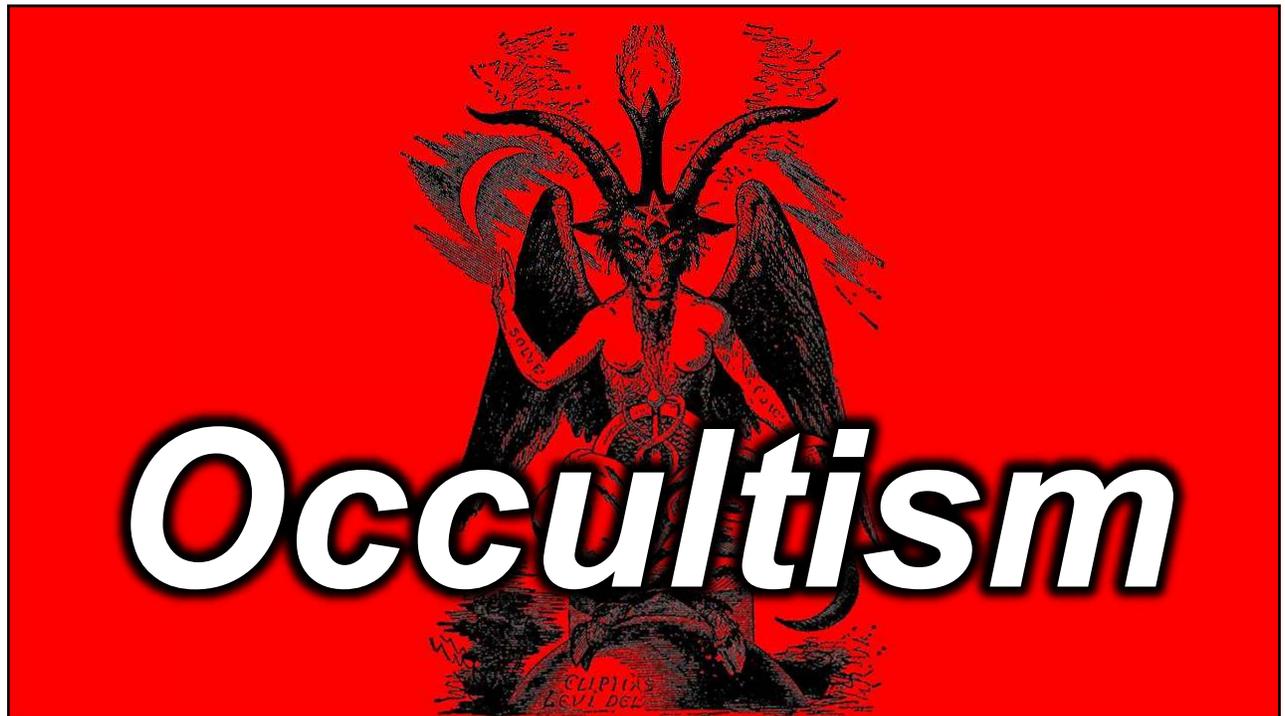
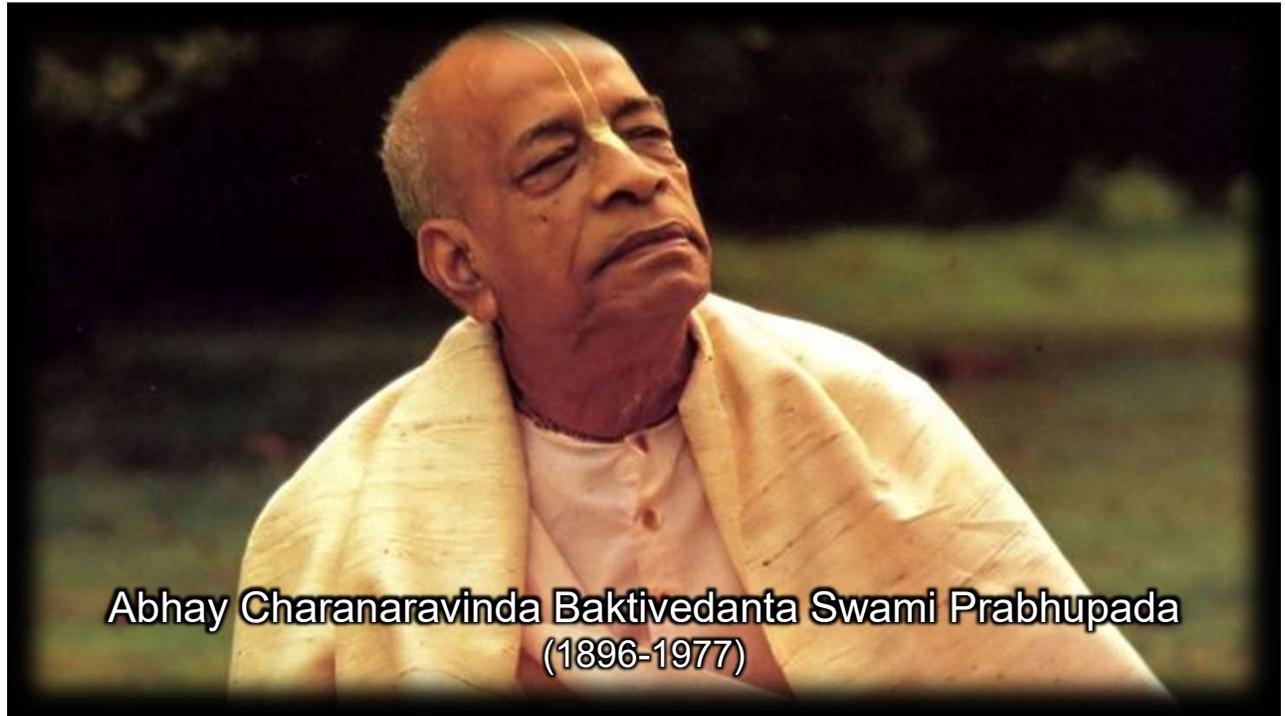


Thomas Howe
Southern Evangelical Seminary

Challenges to Empiricism:

Eastern Thought and the Occult







Responding to the Concerns about and Challenges to Empiricism

Inadequate responses ...

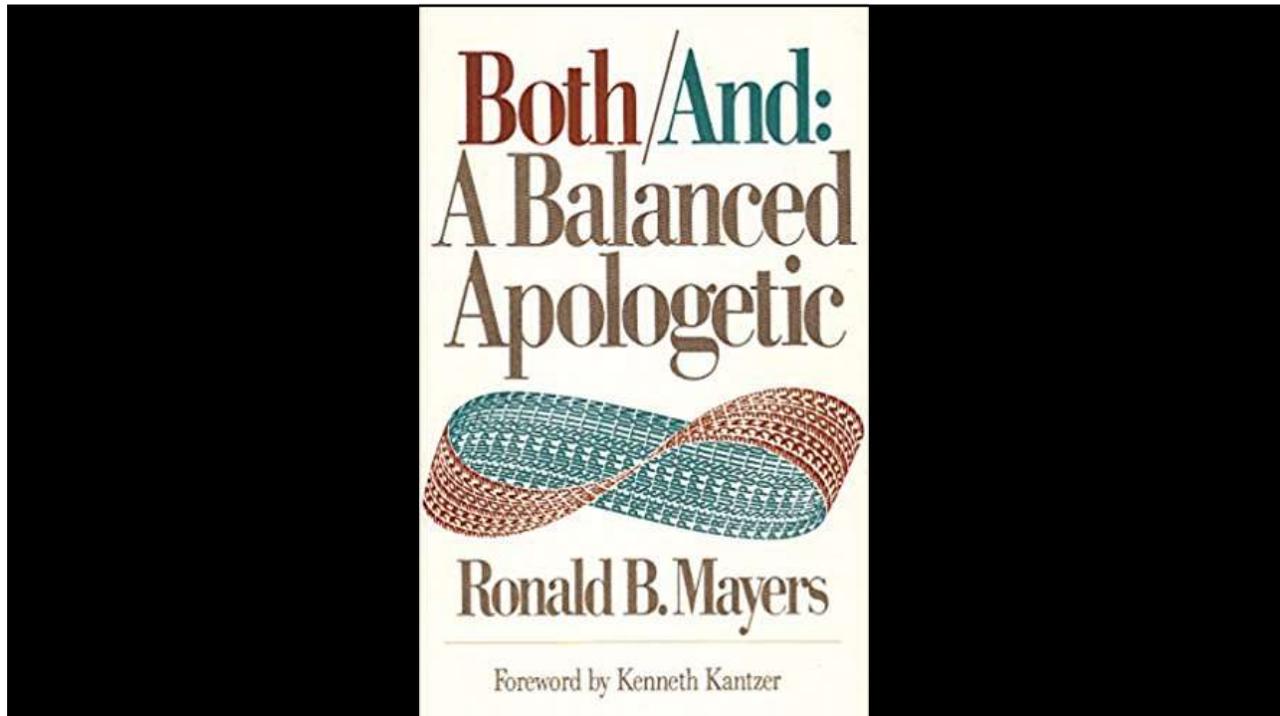
Some Christians mistakenly think that our fallenness prevents humans from knowing truth through our senses.

They then insist that some sort of Presuppositional apologetic method is required.



Inadequate responses ...

*Other Christians mistakenly think that what is needed is some sort of "balanced" apologetic in terms of which the methods of empiricism are supplemented by other means of "knowing," often drawing elements from **Scripture**, Rationalism or Intuitionism.*



Inadequate responses ...

Some Christians mistakenly think that Special Revelation (the Scriptures) are somehow given by God as a remedy to the failings of our senses.

What about the concerns ...

- Empiricism can't give you logic.*
- Empiricism can't give you metaphysics.*
- Empiricism can't give you morality.*
- Empiricism can't give you God.*

God has created us as humans to be able to know the physical world through our senses.

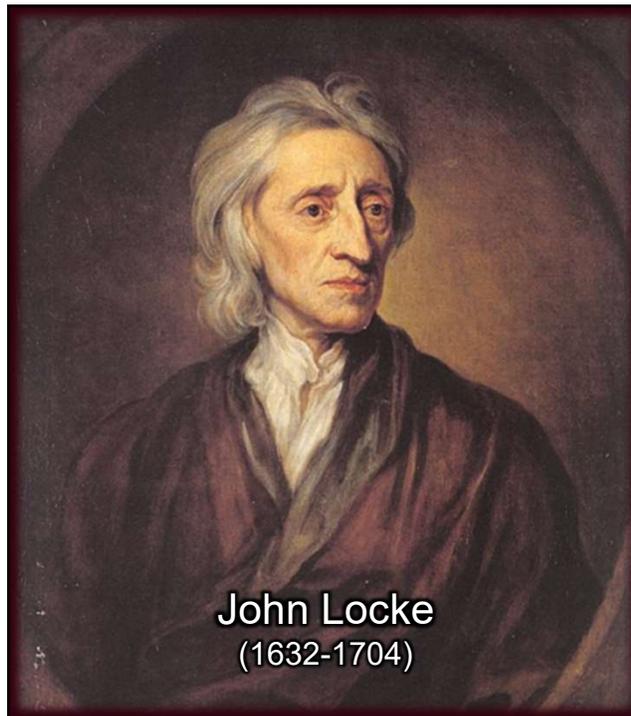
It is no wonder that the enemy would not want us to trust our senses since:

- *It is by them that we see that the heavens declare the handiwork of God. (Ps. 19:1)*
- *It is by them that the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen by the things that are made. (Rom. 1:20)*
- *It is by them that the Christian is able to "make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Pet. 3:15)*





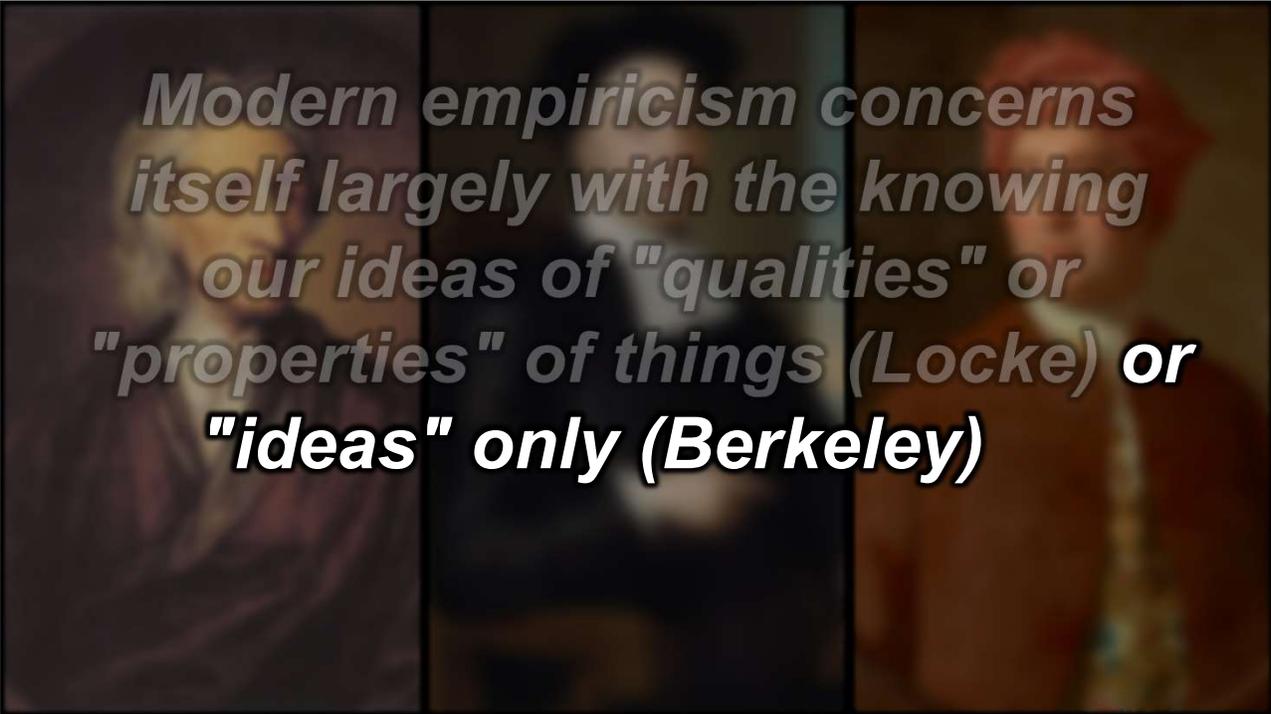
Modern empiricism concerns itself largely with the knowing our ideas of "qualities" or "properties" of things (Locke)



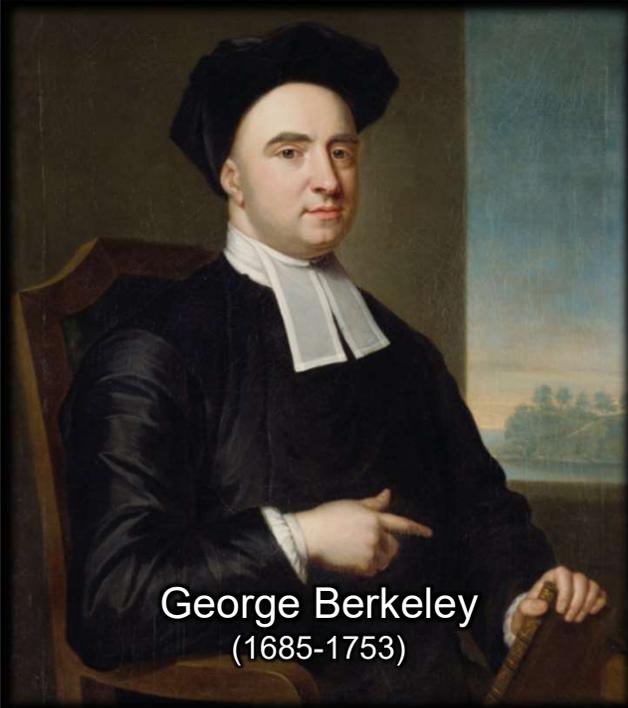
John Locke
(1632-1704)

*"Since the Mind, in all its Thought and Reasonings, hath **no other immediate Object** but its own Ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident, that **our Knowledge is only conversant about them**. Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas. In this alone it consists."*

[An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, IV, I, 1, §1-§2, ed. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 525]



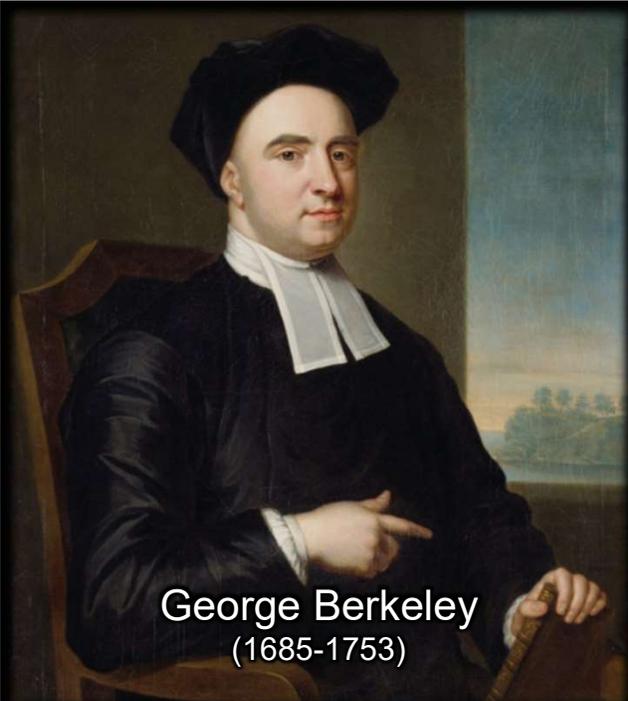
Modern empiricism concerns itself largely with the knowing our ideas of "qualities" or "properties" of things (Locke) or "ideas" only (Berkeley)



George Berkeley
(1685-1753)

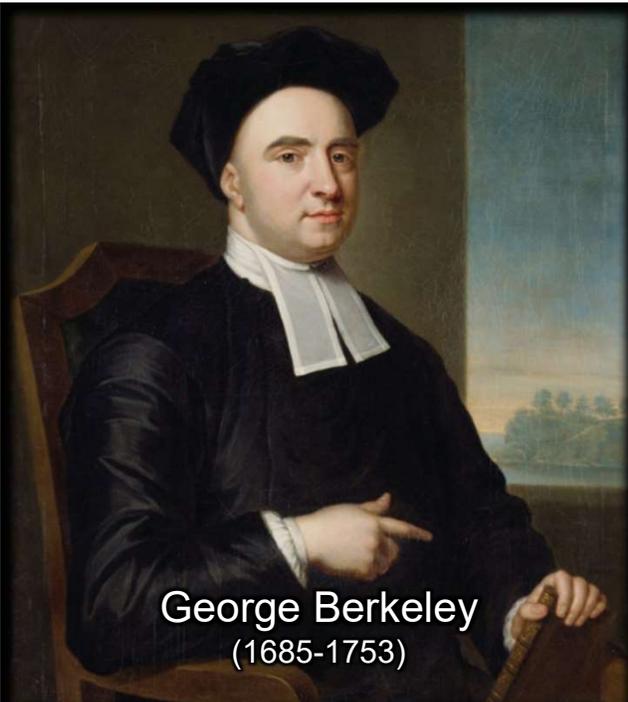
"For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percipi, nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them."

[A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, "On the Principles of Human Knowledge," § 3, in *The Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), 152]

A portrait of George Berkeley, an 18th-century philosopher, wearing a black clerical cap and a dark robe with a white collar. He is seated in a wooden chair, pointing his right hand towards the right. The background shows a window with a view of a landscape.

George Berkeley
(1685-1753)

"It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects, have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding ... yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question may ... perceive it to involve a manifest contradiction."

A portrait of George Berkeley, an 18th-century philosopher, wearing a black clerical cap and a dark robe with a white collar. He is seated in a wooden chair, pointing his right hand towards the right. The background shows a window with a view of a landscape.

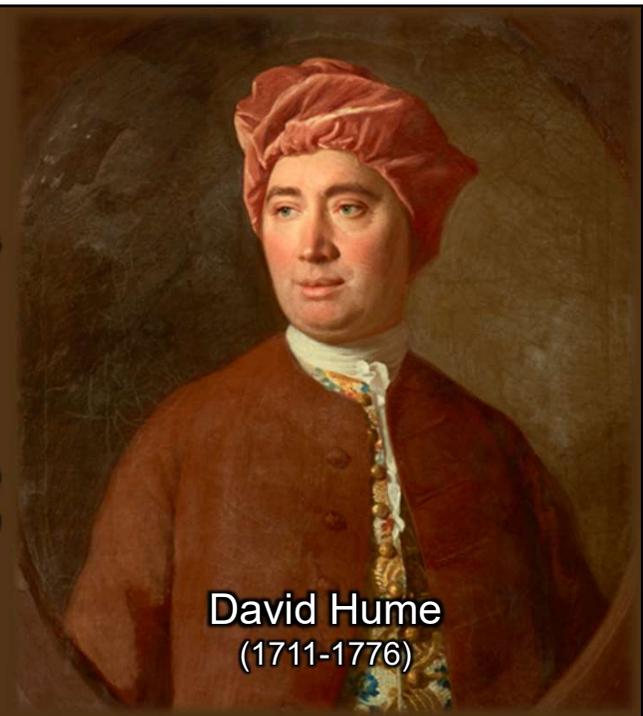
George Berkeley
(1685-1753)

"For what are the forementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense? and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations? and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these, or any combination of them, should exist unperceived?"

[Human Knowledge, "On the Principles of Human Knowledge," 152]

Modern empiricism concerns itself largely with the knowing our ideas of "qualities" or "properties" of things (Locke) or "ideas" only (Berkeley) or "impressions," "sensations" or "phenomena" only (Hume).

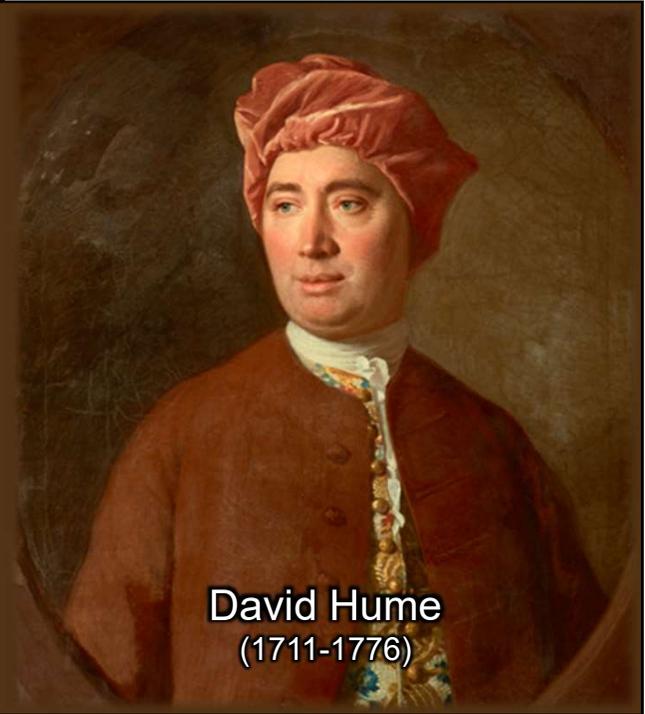
"By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them (if that be possible) and could not arise either from the energy or the mind itself, or from the suggestions of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us?"



David Hume
(1711-1776)

"... The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning."

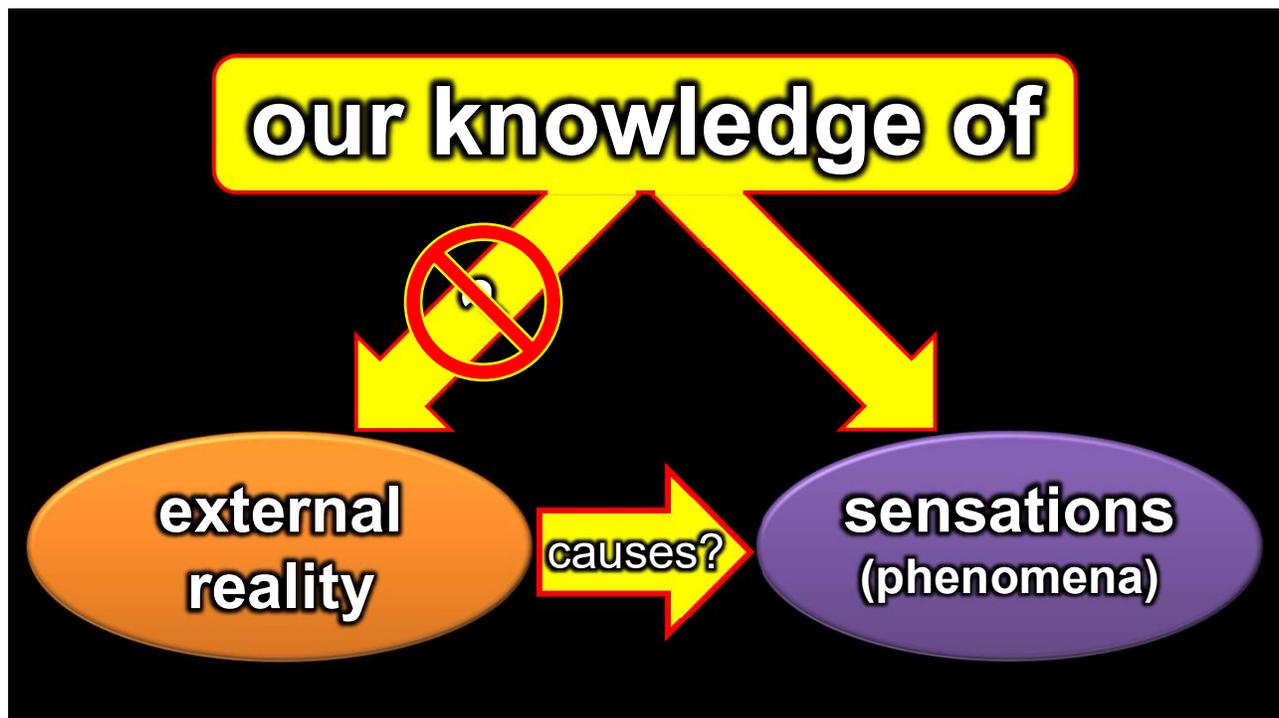
[*Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby Bigge, 3rd ed. revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), §XII, Pt. I, pp. 152-153]

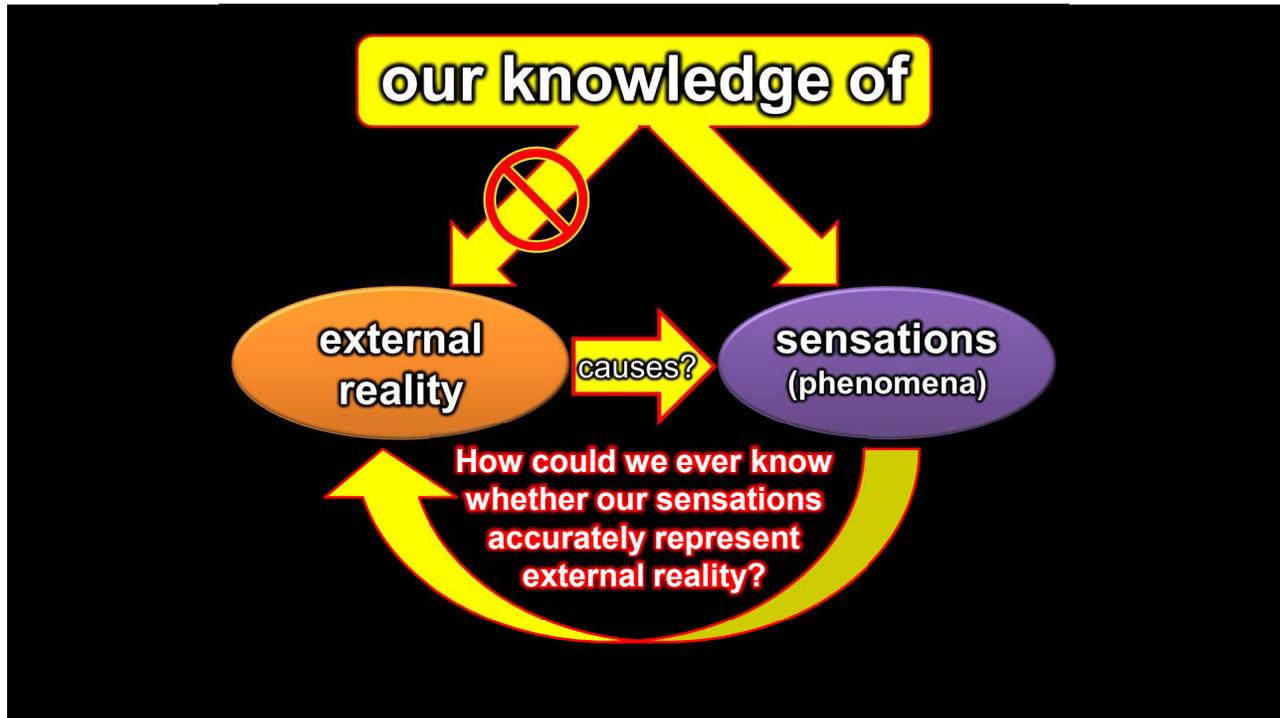


David Hume
(1711-1776)

Early on, modern empiricism was committed to the notion that such sensations were "caused" by external objects or by "substances," though such objects or substances were ultimately inexplicable or unaccounted for by the wider philosophy of these Modern Empiricists.

Later, Empiricists such as Hume began to realize the implications of such a divorce between knowing sensations (also called "phenomena") on the one hand and reality antecedent to (and supposedly the "cause of") these sensations on the other.





Contemporary empiricism became absorbed into epistemology more broadly considered.

It concerned itself with issues related to the strict definition of terms and the rigors of formal logic (Analytic philosophy).

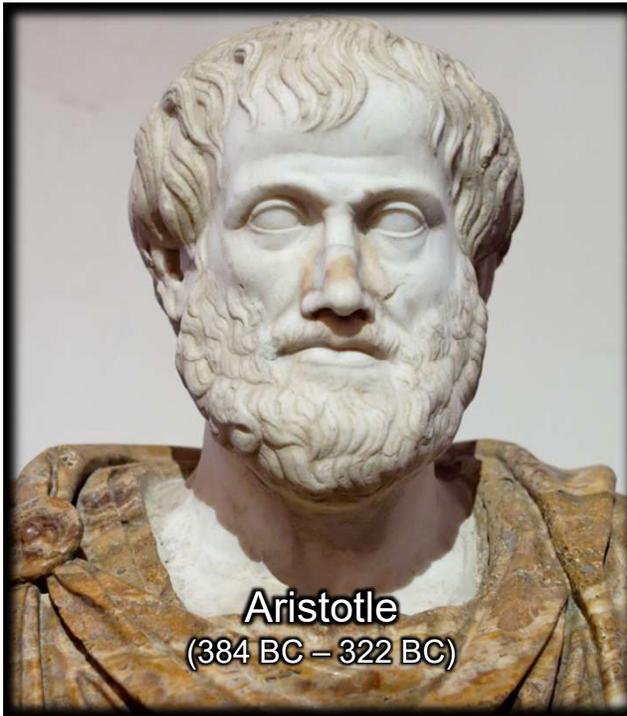
It attempted to eliminate the philosophical challenge of accounting for any antecedent realities like substances by restricting itself as a second-order discipline which should only be concerned with aiding the endeavors of the natural sciences (Logical Positivism).

***Most recently, certain aspects of contemporary epistemology have challenged the assumptions of the justification discussion and have sought instead to talk in terms of "warrant."
(Plantinga)***

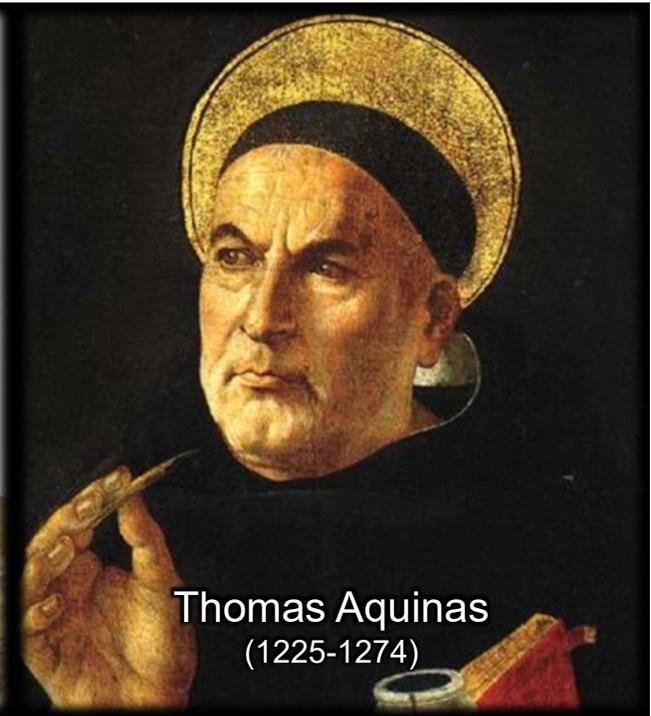
Too many Christians have more or less surrendered the territory of empirical knowledge to the Logical Positivists and to "**scientism**" (e.g., Richard Dawkins).

They have erroneously let contemporary scientists set the agenda when these scientists claim that all knowledge is constrained to the boundaries of the physical world.

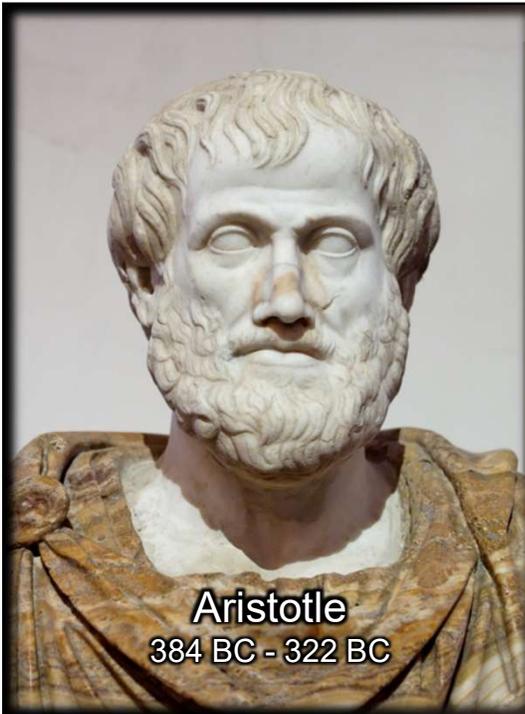
These Christians have lost sight of the fact that, while all knowledge **begins** in experience, that is not the end of the matter.



Aristotle
(384 BC – 322 BC)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

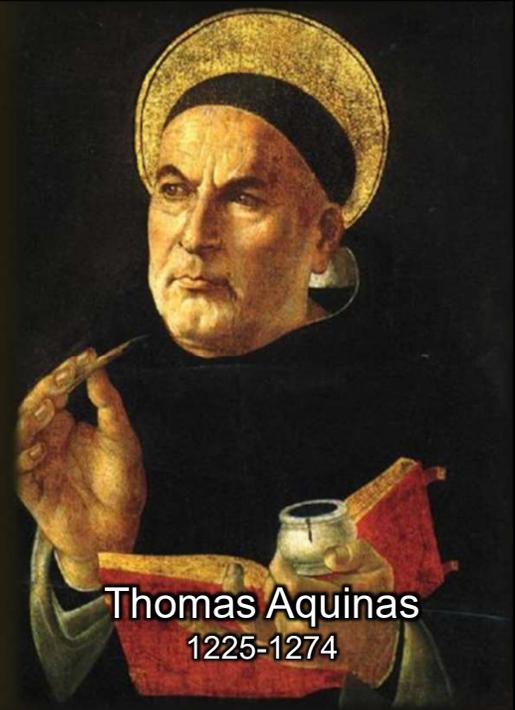


Aristotle
384 BC - 322 BC

"Further, where a series has a completion, all the preceding steps are for the sake of that. Now surely as in intelligent action, so in nature; and as in nature, so it is in each action, if nothing interferes.

"Sensible things [are that] from which human reason takes the origin of its knowledge."

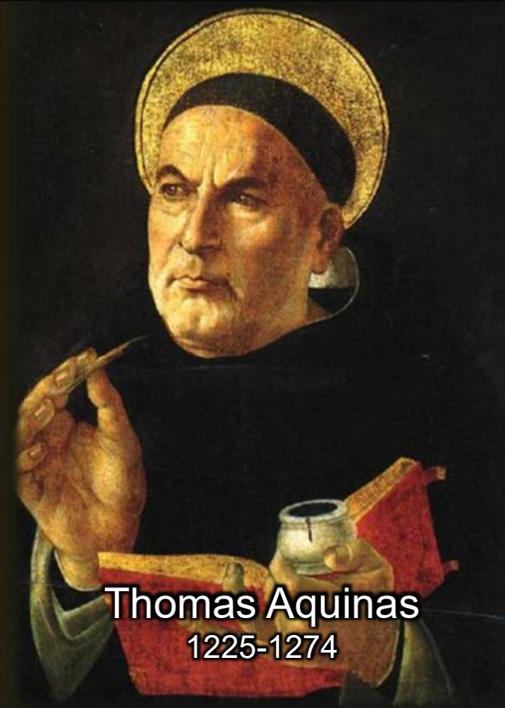
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 9, §2. Trans. Anton C. Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), I, 77]



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."

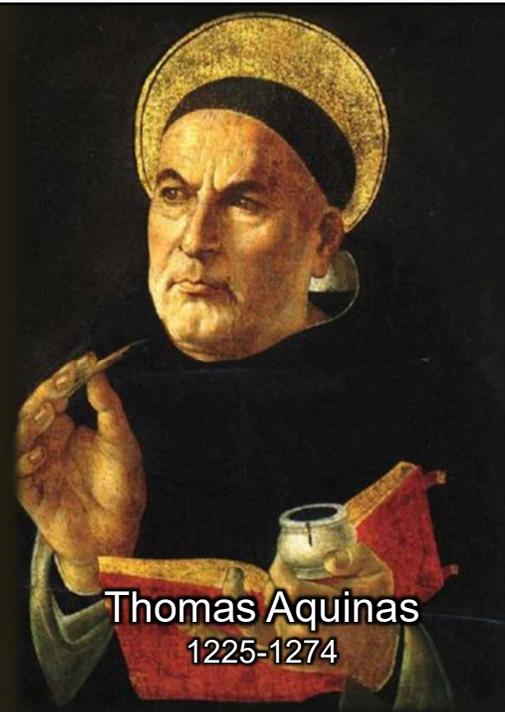
[[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3. trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted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



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"According to its manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the sense for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasp by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things."

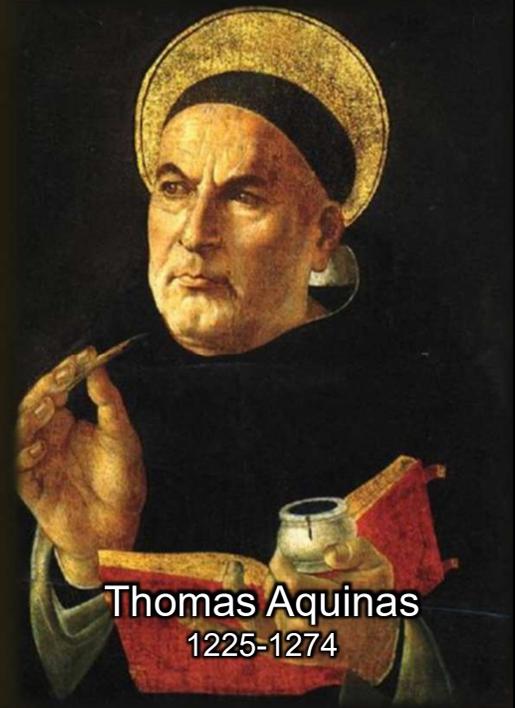
[[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 3, §3. Trans. Anton C. Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), I, 64]



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"Our senses give rise to memories, and from these we obtain experiential knowledge of things, which in turn is the means through which we come to an understanding of the universal principles of sciences and art."

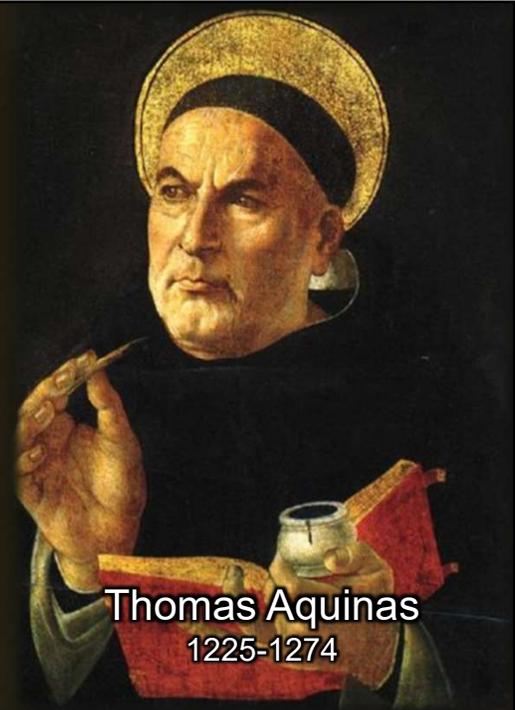
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 83, §26. Trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), II, 279]



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"Our knowledge of principles themselves is derived from sensible things."

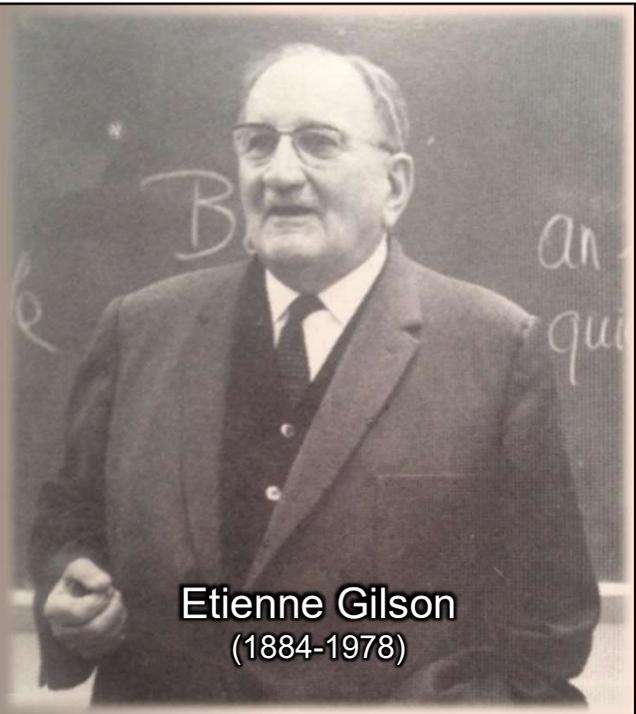
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 83, §32. Trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), II, 282]



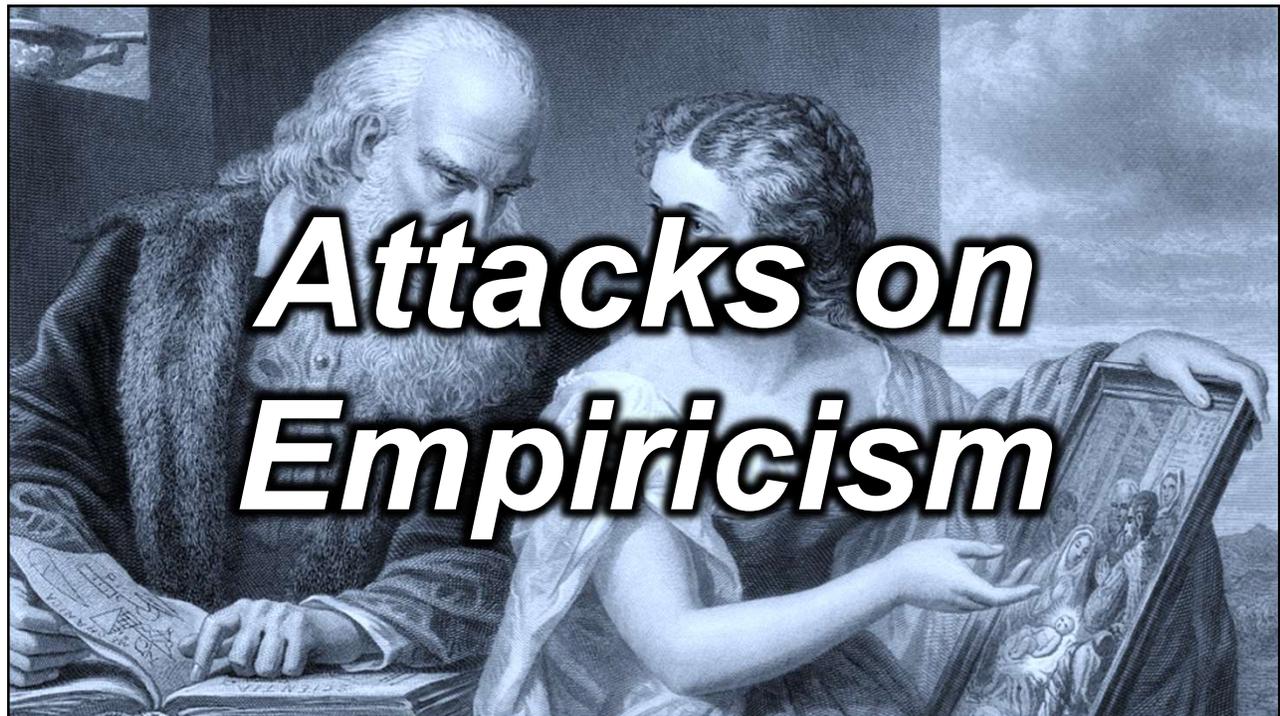
Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"The senses are only the bearers of a message which they are incapable of reading, for only the intellect can decipher it."

[Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 199. While in context Gilson was referring to the act of existing, I believe this point can be extended to other metaphysical aspects of things.]

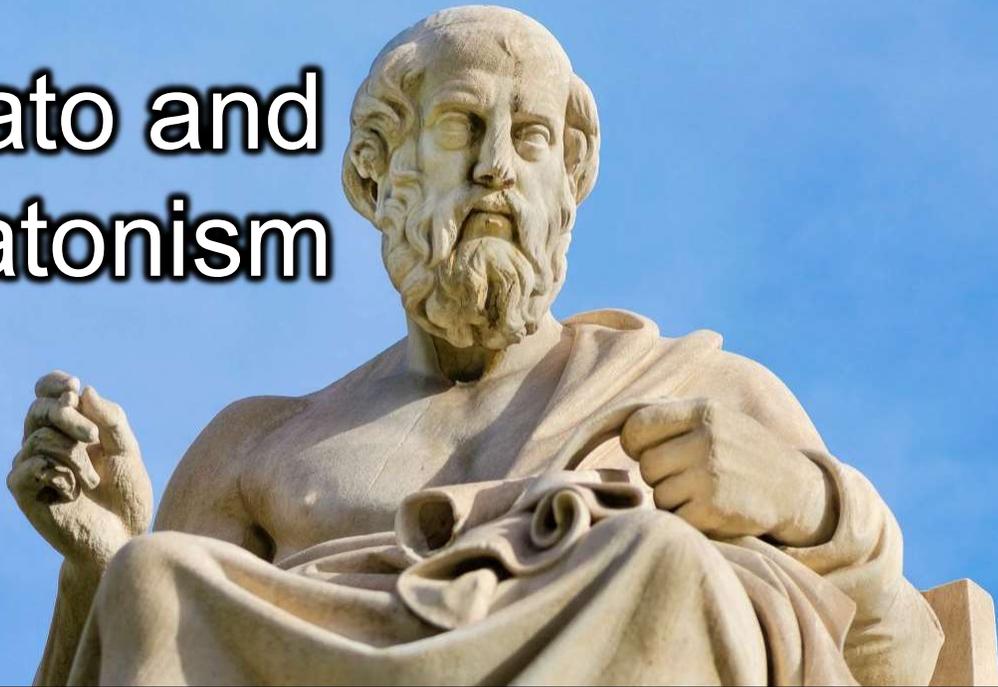


Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

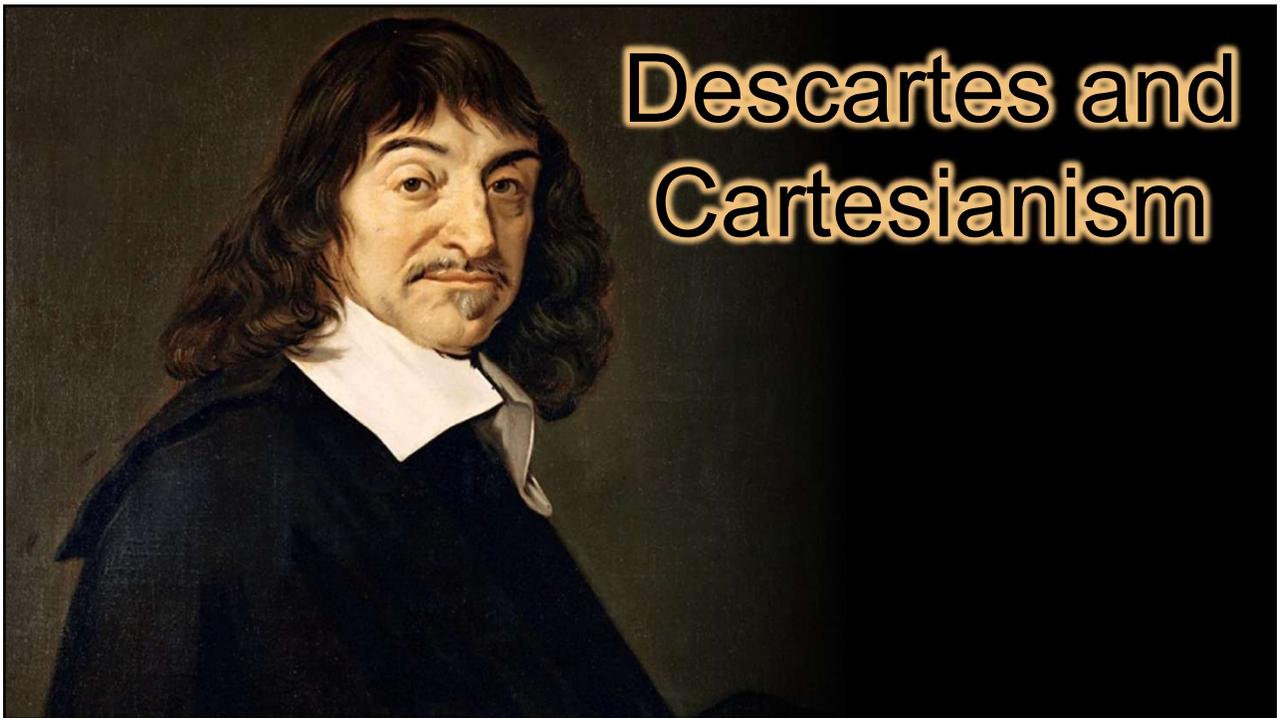


Attacks on Empiricism

Plato and Platonism



Descartes and Cartesianism

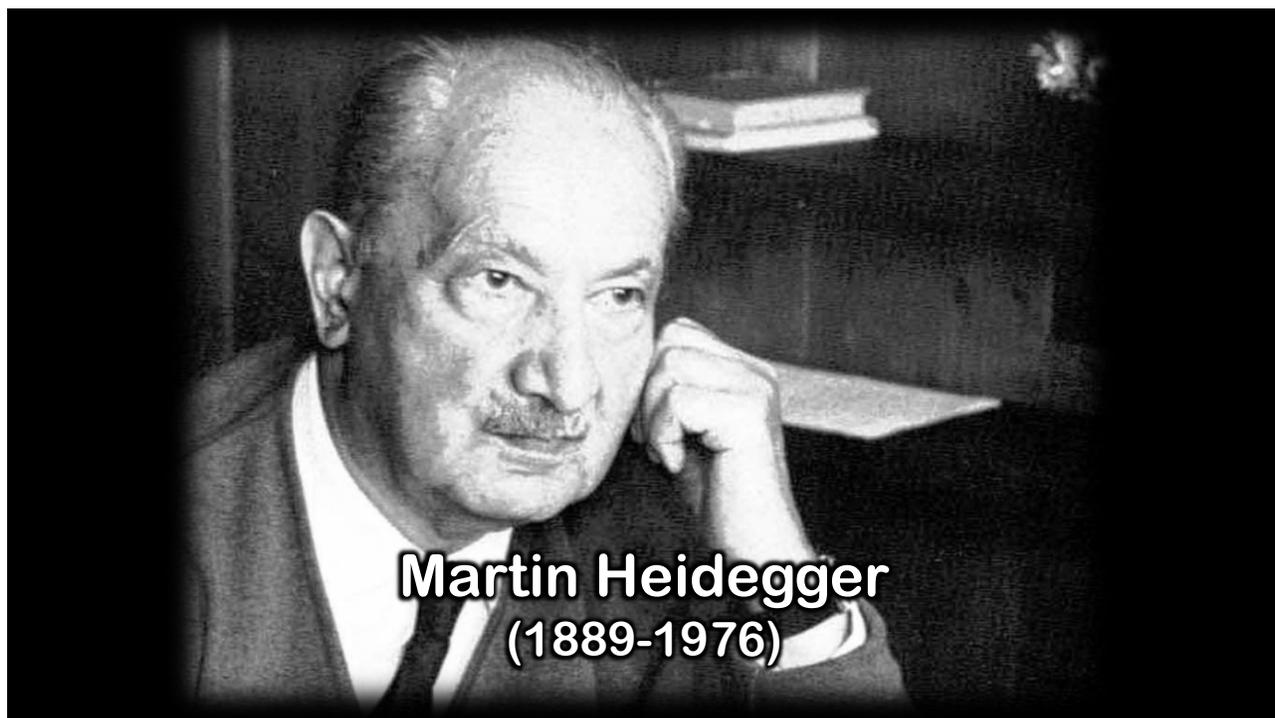
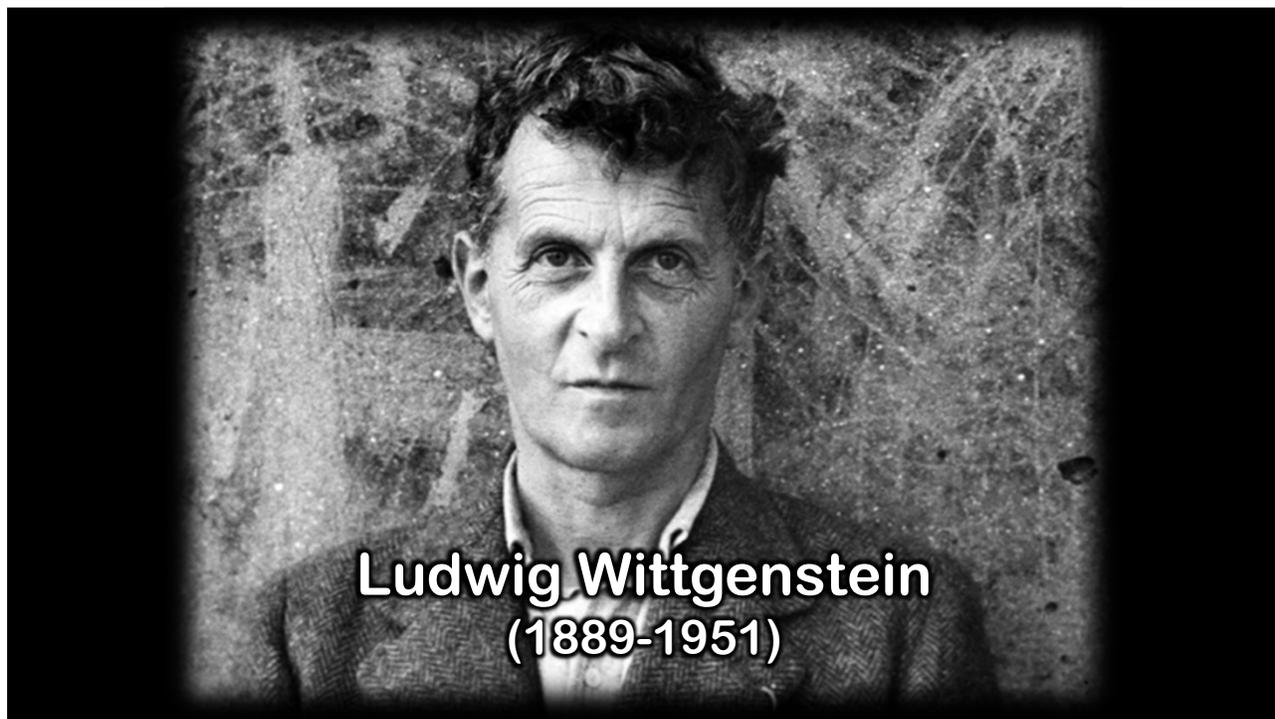


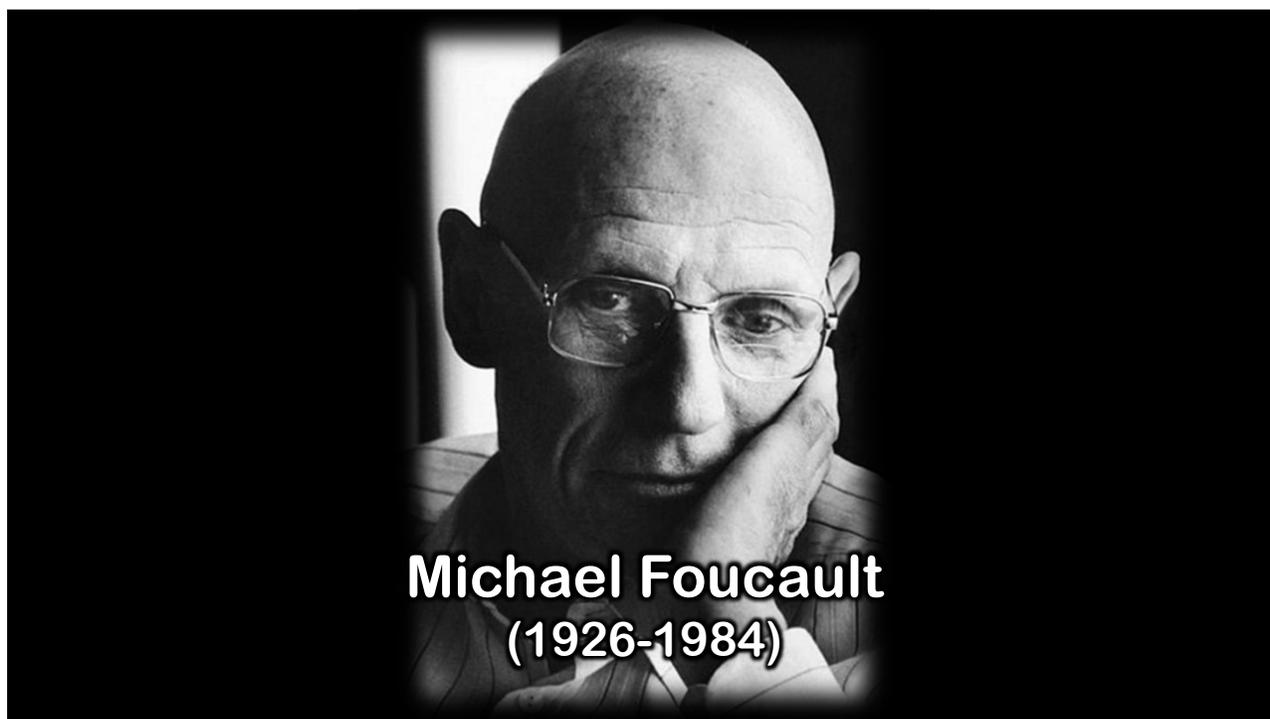
A blurred, dark-toned image of two figures, possibly a man and a woman, in a contemplative or intimate pose. The image is out of focus, with the subjects appearing as soft shapes against a dark background.

Postmodernism

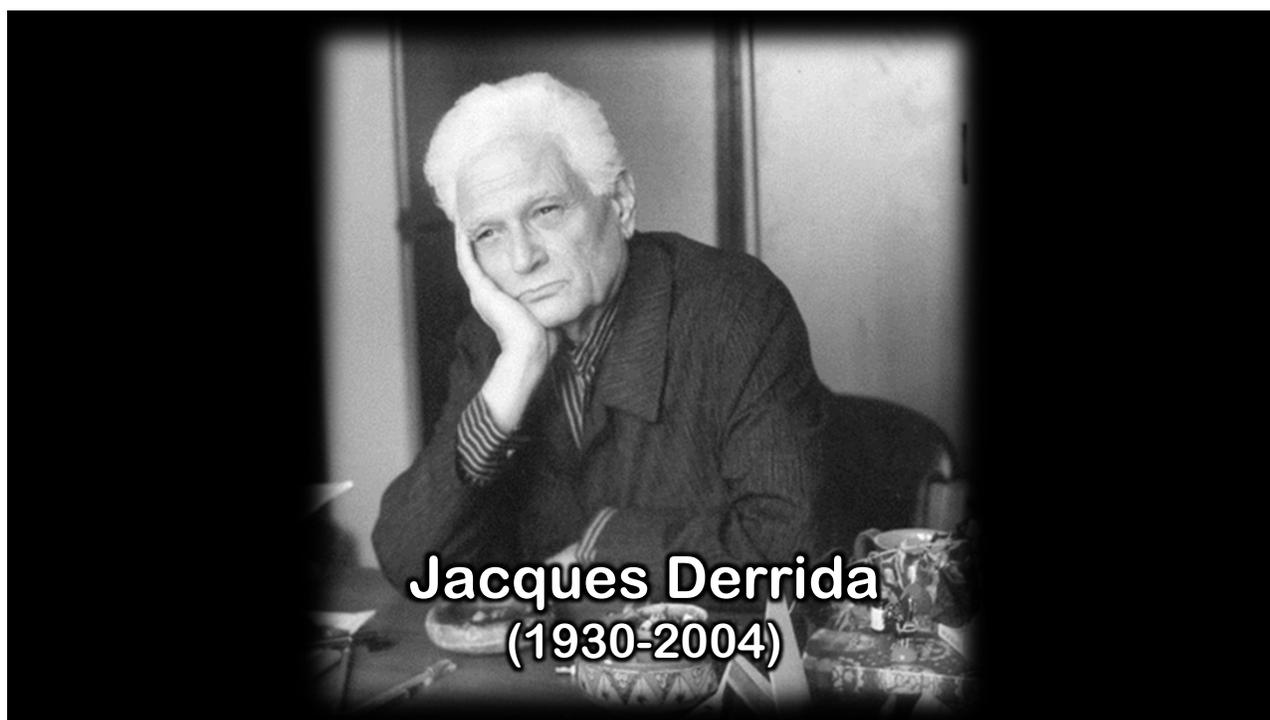
A black and white portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche, shown in profile from the chest up. He has a prominent mustache and is resting his chin on his hand, looking thoughtfully to the left. He is wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt.

Friedrich Nietzsche
(1844-1900)

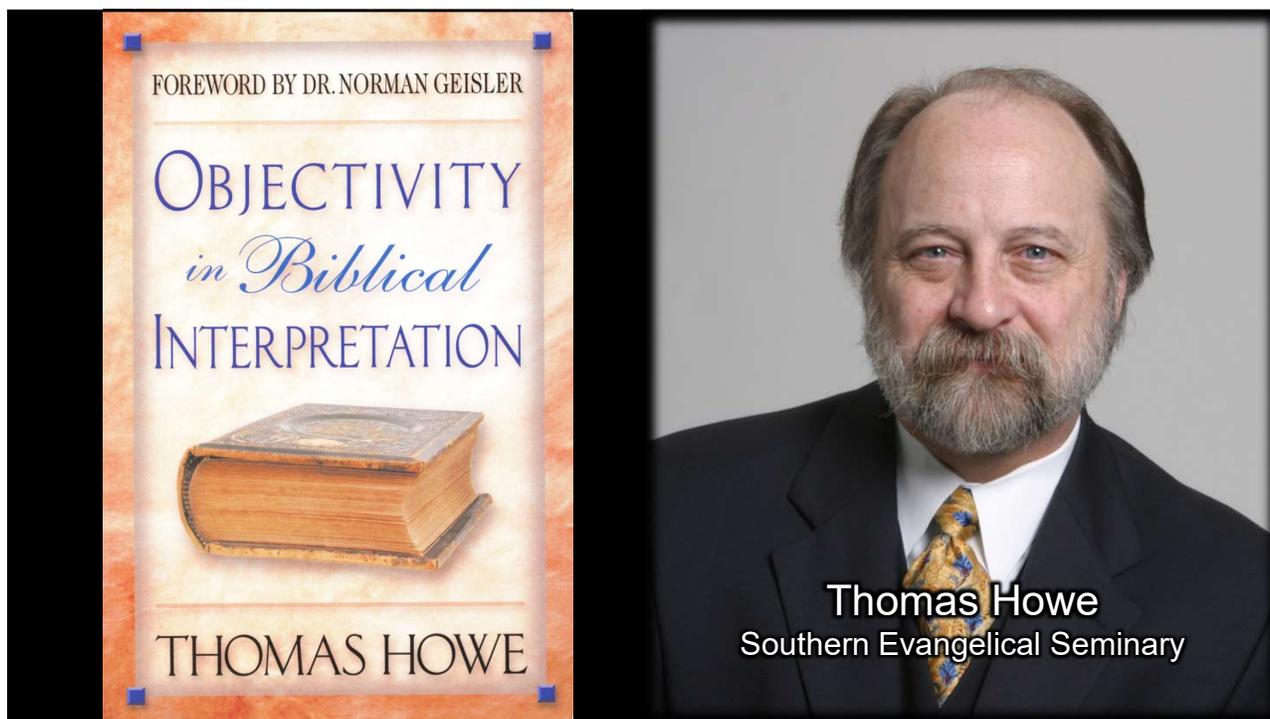




Michael Foucault
(1926-1984)



Jacques Derrida
(1930-2004)



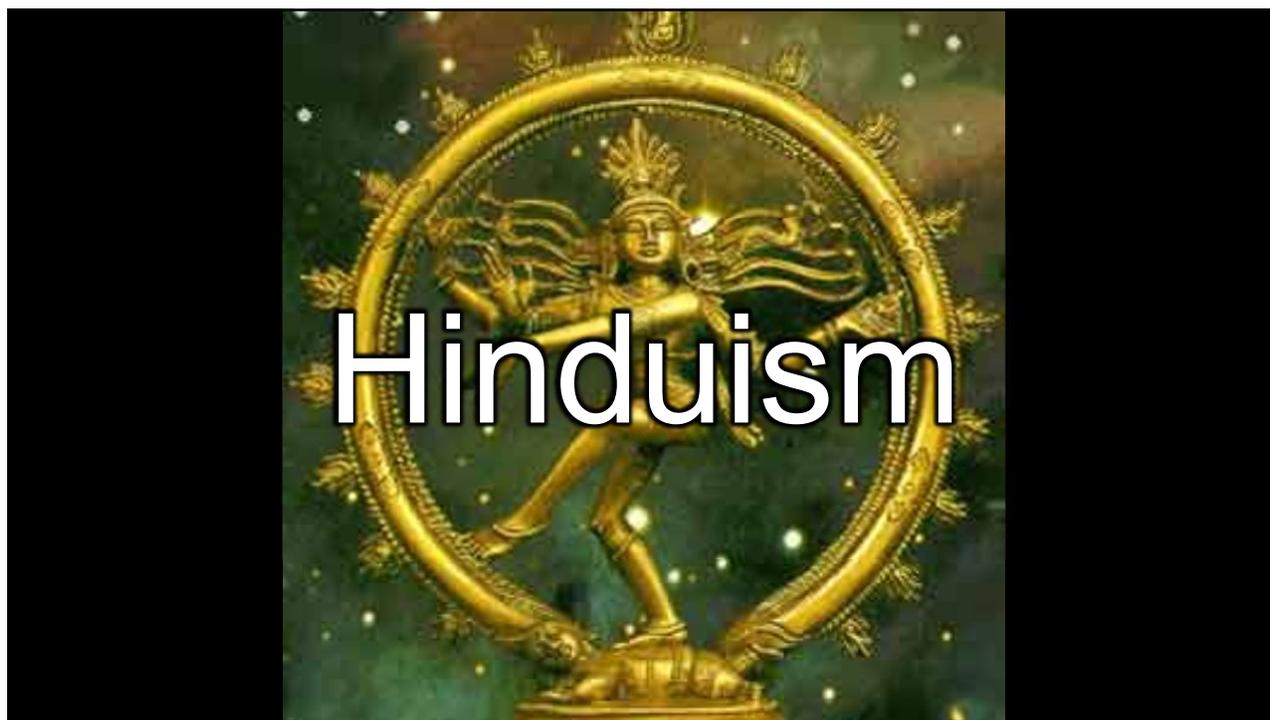
FOREWORD BY DR. NORMAN GEISLER

OBJECTIVITY
in Biblical
INTERPRETATION

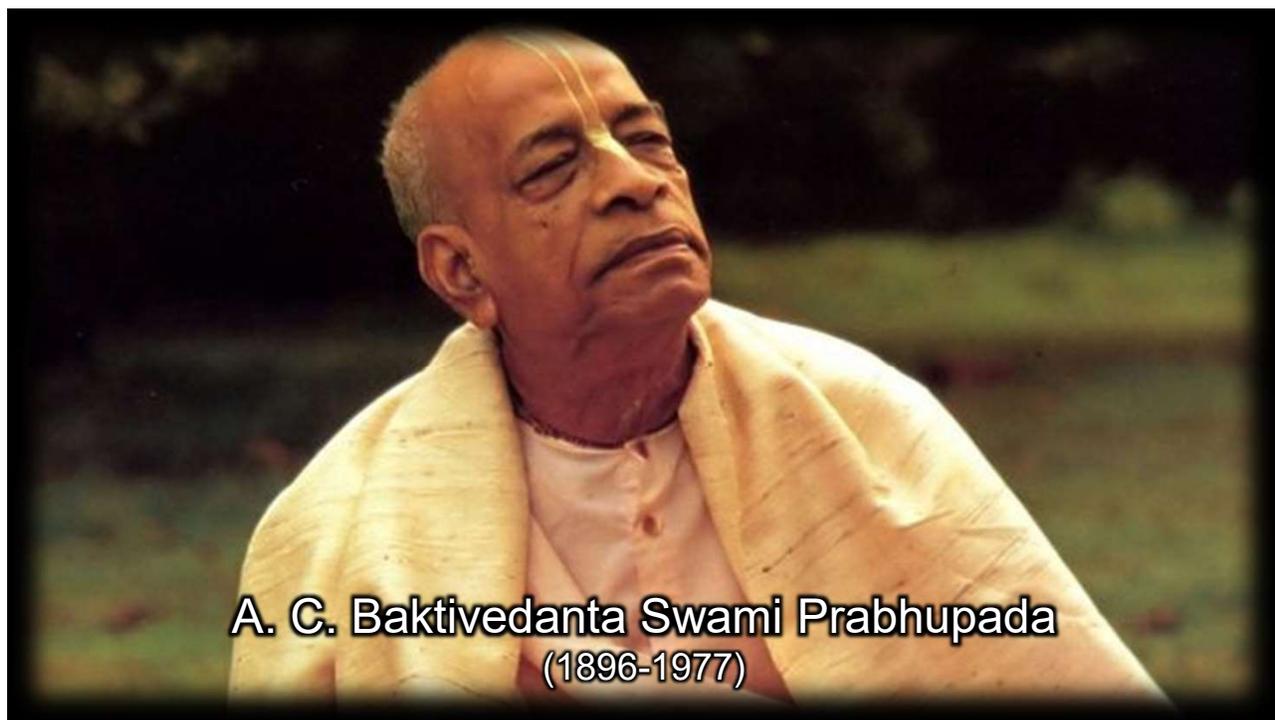


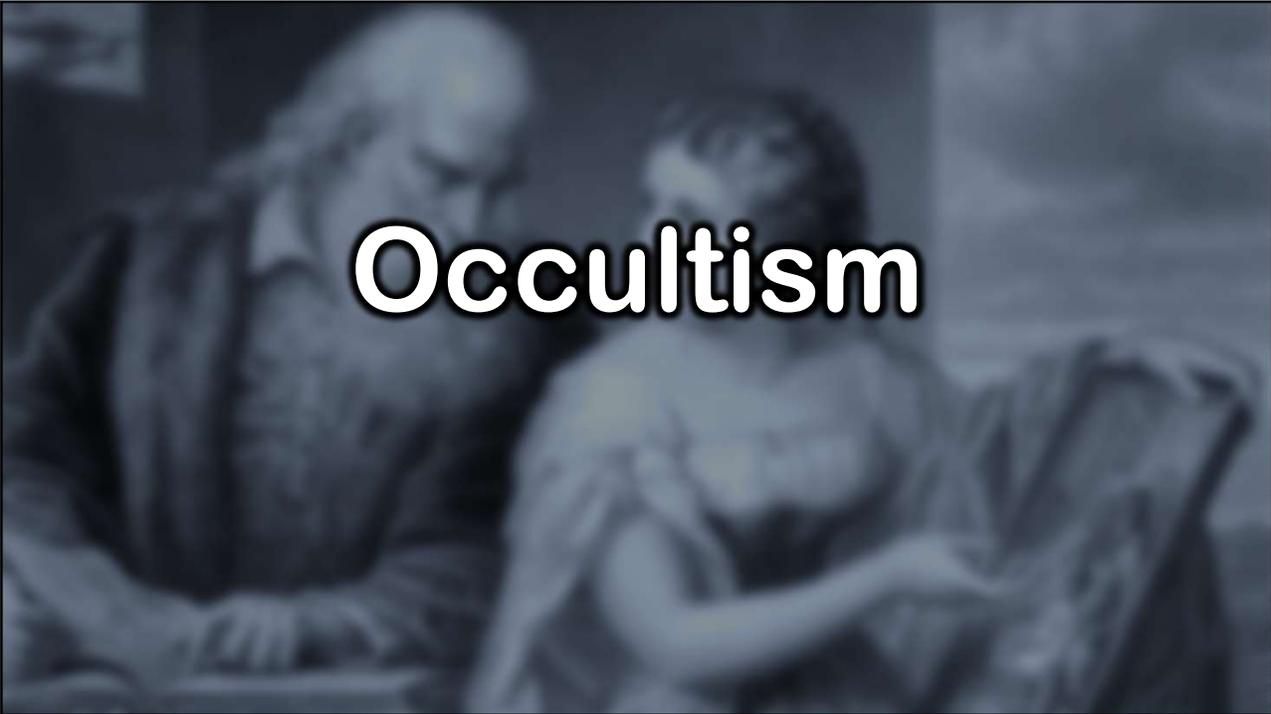
THOMAS HOWE

Thomas Howe
Southern Evangelical Seminary

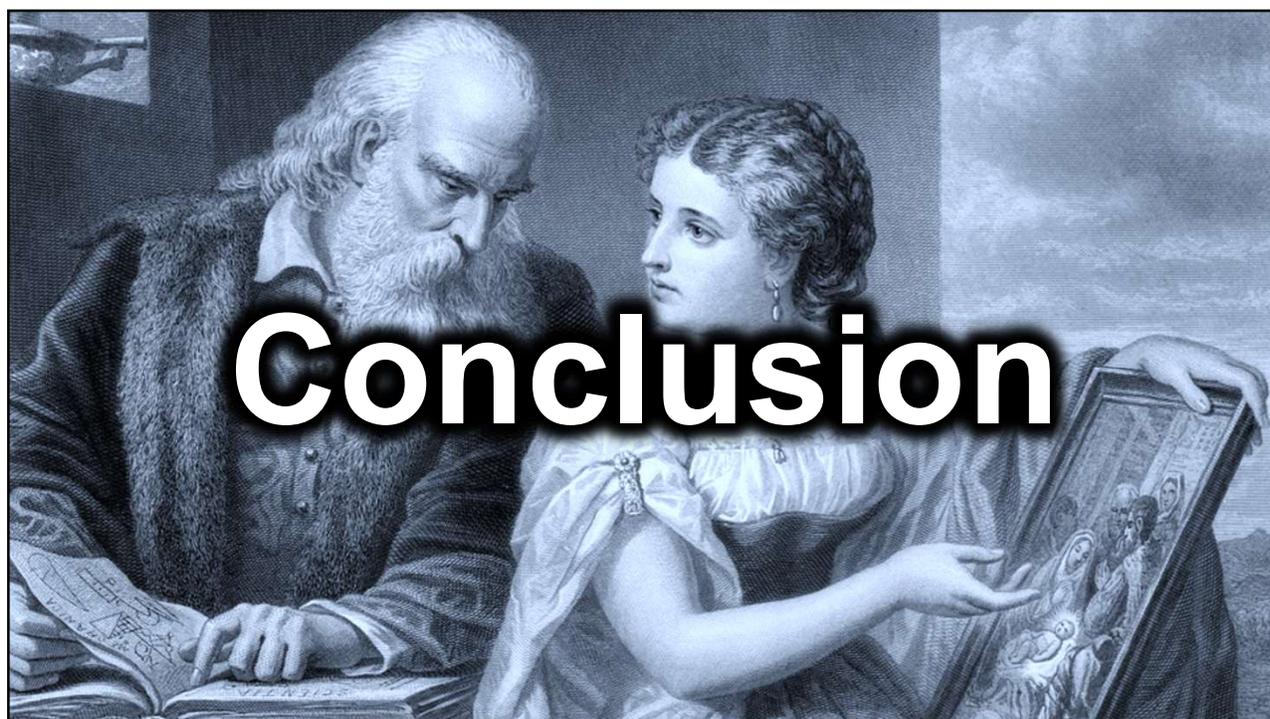


Hinduism









God has created us as humans to be able to know the physical world through our senses.

It is no wonder that the enemy would not want us to trust our senses since:

- *It is by them that we see that the heavens declare the handiwork of God. (Ps. 19:1)*
- *It is by them that the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen by the things that are made. (Rom. 1:20)*
- *It is by them that the Christian is able to "make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Pet. 3:15)*