

Chapter One

EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology comes from the Greek root *epistēmē* meaning "knowledge, science", and *logos*, meaning "study of". It is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and grounds of knowledge. Literally translated, *epistemology* means the "knowledge of knowing." It *addresses* questions such as:

- What is knowledge?
- How is knowledge acquired?
- How do we know what we know?

Man must first recognize himself as an Effect. This means that something produced him by an Agent or Cause. We are a consequence, result, issue, outcome, or occurrence traceable to a Cause. If man were the cause of his own cognitive and rational faculty, he would be caught in endless quandaries that could never truly be confirmed. Therefore, man's awareness of the Cause of himself gives rise to the criterion or standard for determining the validity of knowledge. This criterion must be rigid and absolute to the principle of causality. What is the cause of man? Man must recognize that his cognitive, self-conscious, and rational faculty or power is only an effect, which he did not cause.

Determinant, Antecedent, Reason, and Cause mean something that produces an Effect. Cause also means to effect by command, authority, or force. Through Cause and Effect, Man has a will or desire to understand placed within him, which is essential to man's existence. A person's disposition, passion and volition come from man's mental powers manifested in the form of wishing, choosing, desiring, and intending. Without understanding the source

or cause of man's existence, he is caught in a labyrinth of endless theories, hypotheses and conjecture unfortunately never coming to the real truth.

To begin the quest for truth or knowledge, the journey requires a starting point. This axiom or self-evident maxim becomes the key to unlock truth. Without this essential presupposition or premise, truth would become clouded or compromised. Therefore, truth must begin with God, the Cause. The Creator is the beginning and the first point of reference in the search for knowledge.

Biblical Epistemology acknowledges that natural man possesses actual valid knowledge. Through this knowledge, he can deduce and arrive at valid conclusions tracing and confirming his origins. Therefore, man possesses actual knowledge about God. The Creator is the author, source and the sustainer of our being. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28)*. Man has been endowed with truth, and if he chooses to suppress this knowledge, it is a violation of the law of conscience. Conscience means to *know* in the sense of the moral goodness of one's own character with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good. By violation of conscience, man chooses willingly to rebel against God. ¹⁸*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their*

foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:18-21).

It is an obvious contradiction to claim that man suppresses what he does not know. If man did not possess actual knowledge, there would be nothing to suppress. Murder, robbery, rape, adultery, and theft could be condoned (might makes right) if there was no such thing as unrighteousness. In actuality, man **chooses** to suppress knowledge in unrighteousness and this suppression is in clear violation of the law of conscience. God has revealed this knowledge or truth to natural man and caused him to understand. Rejecting God's truth, knowledge or LAW on a continual basis, results in the Creator giving man over to a perverse mind: *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (Romans 1:28).* This rejection is to condemn as unworthy or evil. This transgression of God's law (**I John 3:4**) causes man to be morally abandoned, and if not corrected ultimately resulting in being foreordained to damnation.

Remember that God is merciful, slow to anger, gracious, longsuffering, and of great kindness (**Nehemiah 9:17**). As our Creator, He must know what is transpiring on earth, be aware of all our problems and have answers for every one of them. How can God help us with our troubles and assist us through this life? He simply must **communicate** with His creation! This act of transmitting information is communicated through a written message. This is a process by which meanings are exchanged through a common-sense system of symbols or words. The technology of the transmission of information is established by God's divine words to us. He must establish reliable communication with His people. Where can

God's Words be found? The answer is surprisingly simple! Communication from our Creator can be found in The Bible.

Faith in God and His Word becomes the primary building block in discovering the answers to the three previous questions: "What is knowledge?", "How is knowledge acquired?" and "How do we know what we know?" Without faith it is impossible to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**). What is the biblical definition of faith? *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).* God requires faith before revelation. You simply have to believe. The evidence is in the things not seen. After faith, the Revealer (God) begins to reveal or communicate His Divine truth through His words.

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the *Word was God.* ²*The same was in the beginning with God.* ³*All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3).* *WORD = GOD!