

**Philosophy of Adam Leinss**  
**Mr. Sinclair**  
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As St. Augustine said, “*We must believe something before we can know anything.*” That is the focus point of epistemology, which seeks to find out how we know what we know. Gordon Clark said that the starting point we choose determines all that follows. There are three that one can choose: the authority of sensation, the authority of logic, or the authority God. I have chosen the authority of God.

There are two groups that Christians fall into, either Calvinists or Arminians. “Calvinism emphasizes the ultimacy of divine sovereignty and scriptures that teach God’s omnipotence. Arminism stresses the reality of man’s experience of choosing and scriptures that emphasize human responsibility” (Morris 130) . I am a Calvinist at heart, which will be evident throughout the rest of the paper. I believe in the God of the Christian Holy Bible who is sovereign, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and personal. The question then arises why I believe this statement. Acts 13:48 says “*You believe because you were appointed to believe.*” According to Romans 3:10,11: “*There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, **no one who seeks God.***” Therefore, it is logical to say that if no one seeks God, He must “seek” us. The Bible indicates that God choose certain people to become part of His saved family, as it indicates in Ephesians 1: 4,5: “*For he chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will....*”

“Most Calvinists contend that the ‘whosoever’ scriptures apply only to the ‘world’ of the elect. Arminians will interpret the ‘predestination’ scriptures in terms of God’s foreknowledge of man’s free choice” (Morris 131). There is a major problem with the Arminian’s explanation. Left to our own will, according to Romans 3:10,11, we would all reject God. So, in order to save

us, God helps us make that choice, as we see in John 6:44: “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*” After God helps us make that choice, he sends us the Holy Spirit, seen in Ephesians 1:13: “*...having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*” The reason God does this is because we still have the sin nature in us. The Holy Spirit guides us so that we make the right choice.

The Bible does speak to those who have not been predestined to be the sons of God, and therefore use the starting point of logical or sensation. People who use sensation as their starting point are talked about in Romans 1:20: “*For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*” According to this verse, even if a person has not read the Bible or heard about Jesus Christ, he is still responsible by general revelation (evidence from what has been made) using his senses to see what has been made. Our senses are reliable to the point that we are condemned by them! In fact, senses are involved in the salvation process. The Bible says that “*Faith comes from **hearing** the message and the message is **heard** through the word of Christ*” (Romans 10:17). Our senses are not perfect and neither are we, but we must use them in order to communicate with God.

People who use logic as their starting point are talked about in Romans 2:14,15: “*Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.*” Even without sense experience a person is still accountable to God, because the Laws of God are written on their hearts.

The common questions then arise: “What if someone is born without any senses? What about newborn babies that are killed or retarded people? They still have the authority of logic. Are they still accountable to God?” This question cannot be completely answered, because the Bible doesn’t come out and make an exception from His absolute laws for anyone. That makes sense, because if God listed all the people that would be exempt from His judgement, then they would cease to be absolute laws (the same for everyone in all situations). Romans 3:23 says: *“For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* When David’s baby died however, he said this: *“Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me”*(II Samuel 12:23). David indicates that he will see his child again, even though his child never made a choice for Jesus Christ. This gives hope to Christian families who have lost babies, but that is all it gives.

Even without the Bible, using the Law of Complexity, one can see how probable the existence of God can be. During the last thirty years, scientists have discovered that the existence of intelligent life depends upon a complex and delicately balanced set of initial conditions simply given in the Big Bang itself. We now know that life-prohibiting universes are vastly more probable than life-permitting universes like ours. The number of seconds in the history of the universe is about  $10^{18}$ , that's ten followed by eighteen zeros. The number of subatomic particles in the entire universe is about  $10^{80}$ .

Now with those numbers in mind, consider the following. Donald Page, one of America's prominent cosmologists, has calculated the odds of our universe existing as on the order of one chance out of  $10^{10^{123}}$ , a number which is so inconceivable that to call it astronomical would be a wild understatement (Craig)!

Robert Jastrow, the head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, has called this the most powerful evidence for the existence of God “ever to come out of science.” Once again, the view that Christian theists have always held, that there is an intelligent designer of the Cosmos, seems to me to be much more plausible than the atheistic interpretation of chance(Craig).

People who do not “trick” themselves into not believing that there is a God usually have misconceptions about Him. One of the most popular ones is that God is far away from us. They believe that He takes a “hands-off” approach and sits back and watches us from millions of miles away. As Amy Grant sings: “From a distance, God is watching us.” It’s clear that Miss. Grant has a distorted view of God. Acts 17:27, 28 states “...*though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we move and have our being.*”

Another misconception is that God changes by people’s prayer. Unsaved people think Christians use God as a “genie” or “good luck charm.” This is not the case. God is immutable (unchangeable). “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” (James 1:17) “*For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*” (Mal. 3:6) Again, the point is made: “*God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?*” (Numbers 23:19).

Some people have said that prayer changes God, but it does not. The change is not on the part of God when we pray. Rather we pray, and through the aid and help of the Holy Spirit, who makes intercession for us, according to the will of God, we become conformed to the will of God. The change is in us, not in the immutable God of heaven. A comfort and blessing of this doctrine of

the immutability of God is it sustains us in the storms of life. When problems arise, when death occurs, when sorrows come and things are beyond our comprehension and understanding, we can turn to such verses as Romans 8:28 : *“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* The doctrine of the immutability of God gives us a solid foundation on which to base our hope. In times of our failures we are assured by the faithfulness of God and the unchangeableness of God that those of us who know Him as our Savior will not be sent to hell.

Another misconception people have is who God really is. Many call Him “the man upstairs.” God is not a man. God is a living Spirit in triune (three beings in one) form. In the Old Testament, He visited people in fire and cloud; in the New Testament, He visited in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ: *“Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire”*(Deuteronomy 4:15-16). *“God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* (John 4:24). God is three beings in one: *“God is three Beings in one...the Father, the Word [Jesus], and the Holy Spirit* (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:17). In another verse, it says: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (Matthew 28:19). The Word of God who created the world is Jesus (John 1:10). Jesus is God's Word in all creation who creates both physical and spiritual life. Before Jesus took on human nature, He was Spirit. When He lived as a human, He spoke God's words after the Holy Spirit came upon Him when He was baptized by John the Baptist (John 1:32-34)

Along with misconceptions, the atheist likes to bring up puzzling questions used to baffle the Christian. Atheists often argue against God's existence from the problem of evil. Their

argument goes as follows: “If God is all loving, He would have prevented evil from entering the universe; if God is all powerful, He could have prevented evil; evil exists, therefore there is no such God.” Although we can never give a complete answer to this question, one of the main reasons God allowed evil was to manifest His redeeming grace.

“If man had never sinned and therefore never needed a Savior, He could never have known God in the fullness of his love. A redeemed sinner, saved through faith in the One who died for him, would love Him with a far deeper love rather than love based only on His work in creating and providing for him” (Morris 120). Suffering is an aspect of God’s loving discipline; we learn through suffering, as Hebrews 12:7,11 states this: “*Endure hardship as discipline...No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*”

Finally, suffering keeps us from thinking more highly of ourselves than we should; it is a reminder of our mortality, and of God’s sovereignty: “*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassing great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh...there time I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, **for my power is made perfect in weakness**’” (2 Cor. 12:7,8-9).*

I hold the view that the Bible is the standard of ethics and morality. Truth and morality are absolute. Therefore, all ethical systems which either admit relativism (a theory that knowledge is relative to the limited nature of the mind and the conditions of knowing) or cannot justifiably establish absolute morality must be false. Second, there can be no such thing as absolute or universal morality apart from God. Therefore, no system which leaves God out can be true because it cannot affirm absolute morality without being inconsistent with itself through

presupposing God.

By objective, absolute morality I mean that there is a real right and real wrong that is universally and immutably true independent of whether anyone believes it or not. Since almost all people assume certain things to be wrong (such as murder), the best explanation is that such things really are wrong. Indeed, how could anyone hold that the truth “rape is wrong” is not a moral absolute? Further, moral relativism is self defeating. “The statement ‘there are no absolutes’ is itself absolute. One cannot support relativism with a non-relative statement” (Perman).

Utilitarianism defines right as what brings the greatest good to the greatest number of people. This seems to make right and wrong simply a matter of preference. It disguises this relativism in that it is the preferences of society that determines right, not preferences of the individual. This does not make morality any less of a principle than if right is defined by what benefits a single individual. No one can accurately predict what will happen in the long run. For all practical purposes, a utilitarian definition of good is useless.

If these ethical theories are to remain consistent with themselves, they cannot assert absolute morality. Morality is purely subjective and changeable with these views. Unless the moral law is grounded in and given by an absolute being, the moral law cannot be absolute. Furthermore, absolute morality means that man is subject to something greater than himself. If, however, mankind is the ground of this moral law in any way, then he is not subject to something greater than himself. Clearly, only God can be the ground of morality.

Reason cannot establish absolute morality either. First, reason has the same problem as morality: it has no foundation without God. How could using reason that has no foundation itself



be the foundation for morality? Second, without God the world is purely material. But then there is no distinction between chemical reactions in our head and those in a swamp. In that case, how could our thoughts have any meaning? We would “have no reason for assigning truth and falsity to the chemical fizz we call reasoning or right and wrong to the irrational reaction we call morality”(Wilson).

Finally, “even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or a Saint” (Craig). What good would a moral law be that we are not ultimately held accountable to? But God is necessary for people to be held accountable to objective morality.

Something is not right because God commands it, nor does God command it because it is right. Morality necessarily flows from God's own nature. Psalms 145:17 says: “*For the Lord is righteous in all His ways...*” Right is right because it reflects God's character. Wrong is wrong because it does not reflect God's character, but attacks it. This eliminates any arbitrariness in God without making Him subject to anything because the ground of morality is located in God Himself. Since God is absolute, morality is therefore absolute. This is what it means for morality to be grounded in God.

Then question then asked is this: “Are we ethically accountably to civil government?” The 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, particularly verses one through seven tells us that we are:  
*“<sup>1</sup>Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*  
*<sup>2</sup>Consequently, he who rebels against authority is rebelling against God...<sup>4</sup>...but if you do wrong,*

*be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. <sup>6</sup>This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing."*

We learn from Jesus that we are not to obey civil governments when we are commanded to perform acts of sin. One instance of this is when the Sanhedrin commanded the apostles not to preach about Jesus. The apostles disobeyed the Sanhedrin and confessed that *"we ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:22-42). Furthermore, while Paul and Peter commanded Christians to obey the government, they also warned of the upcoming tribulation that ironically came by the same government Christians were commanded to obey. The tribulation was brought upon all of the apostles and faithful Christians for their belief and profession of Jesus Christ to be Lord. The unwavering faith of many resulted in death because of their refusal to deny Christ with their mouth and their refusal to worship men and the idols of men (McNabb).

In conclusion, everyone on earth knows that there is a God. The problem is that sin has separated us all from God (*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* - Romans 3:23). Through the ages individuals have tried to bridge this gap in many ways without success (*"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."* - Isaiah 64:6). Jesus Christ provides the only solution to our problem. He died on a cross and rose from the grave, paying the penalty for our sins and bridging the gap from God to man (*"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, except through me'."* - John 14:6). We must believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as our Savior (*"If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

-Romans 10:9). The four basic steps can be summed up as this: Step one: Admit you are a sinner. Step two: Be willing to turn away from your sins. Step three: Believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins on the cross and rose from the grave. Step four: Pray to invite Jesus Christ to come into your life as Lord and Savior. You then will have eternal life with God in heaven!