

# Epistemological Foundations for a Biblical Theology

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or

# Bob's Crazy Day With the Dandelions

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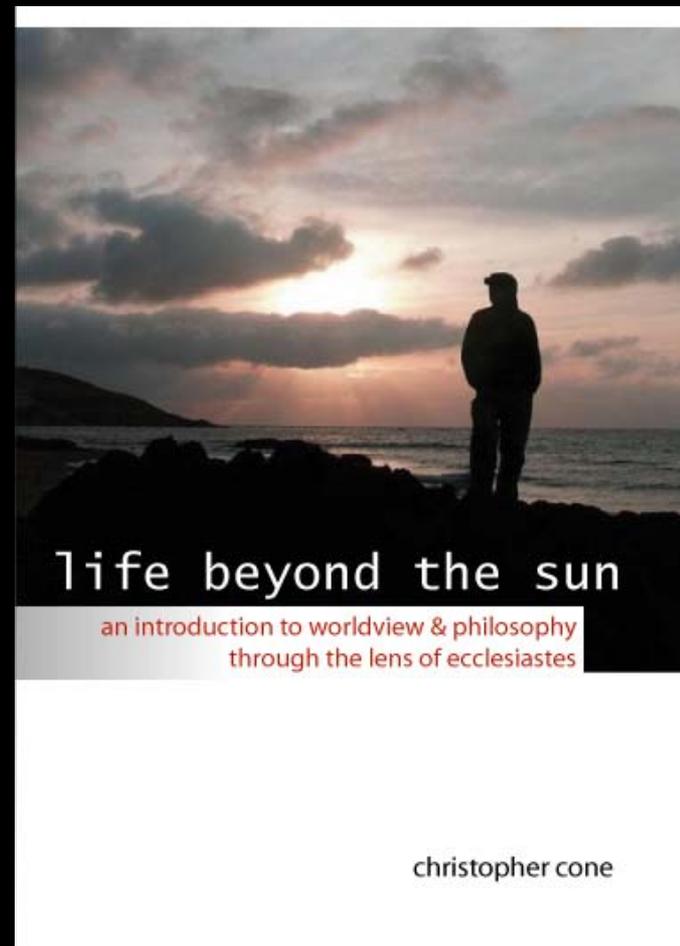
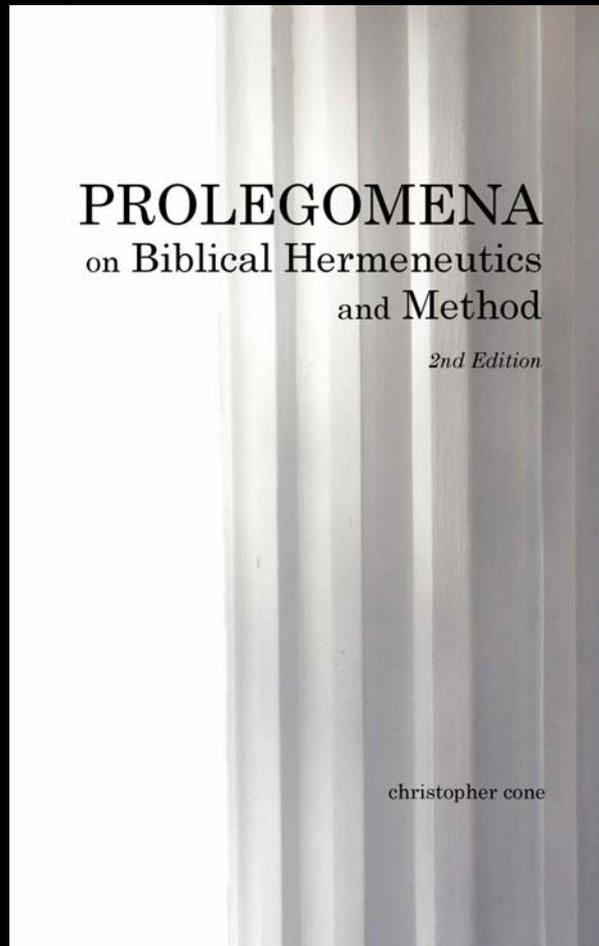
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# Who Cares About Epistemology?

- Epistemology = The study of knowledge.  
Answers the question: “How can we know?”
- Epistemology = necessary first step.
  - Before we can answer other questions, we have to first answer the question of the nature of evidence
  - It is the first of four major disciplines: epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, socio-political thought

# Who Cares About Epistemology?







# Bob's Brain on Descartes

**“it is the part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been deceived.”**



# Bob's Brain on Descartes

**“I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind.”**



# Bob's Brain on Descartes

**“Cogito ergo sum.”**

**“I think, therefore I am”**

**Reason is the ultimate  
arbiter of truth**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**“All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure: the mind has but a slender hold on them; they are apt to be confounded with other resembling ideas...”**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**“...on the contrary, all impressions, that is, all sensations, either outward or inward, are strong and vivid; the limits between them are more exactly determined; nor is it easy to fall into any error or mistake with regard to them.”**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**This proposition “might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon, which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them.”**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**“No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous...”**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**“When anyone tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened...”**



# Bob's Brain on Hume

**Experience is the ultimate  
arbiter of truth**



# Bob's Brain on Nietzsche

**We can know phenomena  
(experience)**

**But we can't know  
noumena (reality)**

**Therefore, noumena =  
irrelevant**



# Bob's Brain on Nietzsche

**“I entreat you, my brothers, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes! They are poisoners, whether they know it or not. They are despisers of life, atrophying and self-poisoned men, of whom the earth is weary: so let them begone!”**



# Bob's Brain on Nietzsche

**“That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power; and that is so even when you talk of good and evil and of the assessment of values...”**



# Bob's Brain on Nietzsche

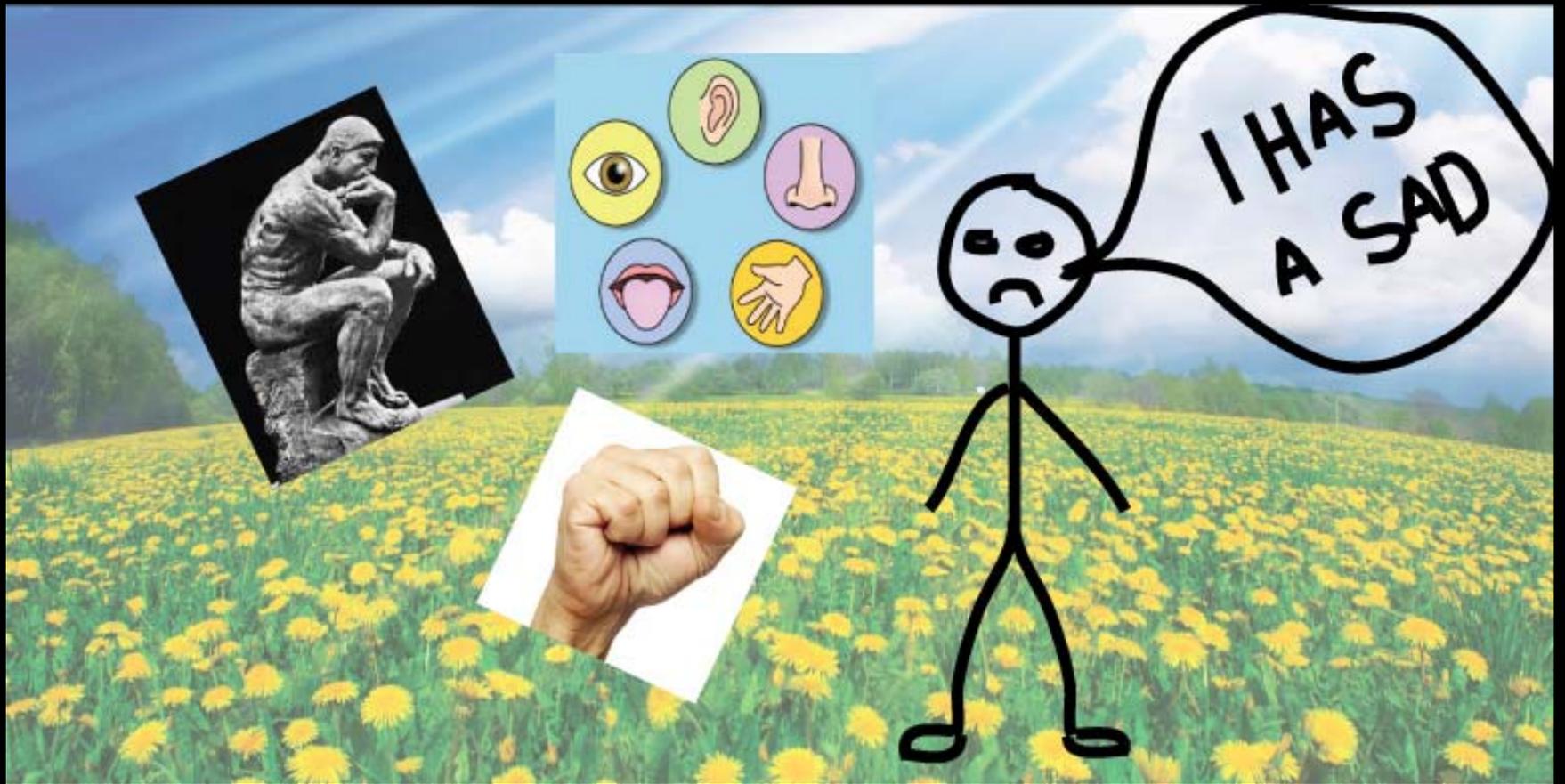
**“Where I found a living creature, there I found will to power; and even in the will of the servant I found the will to be master.”**



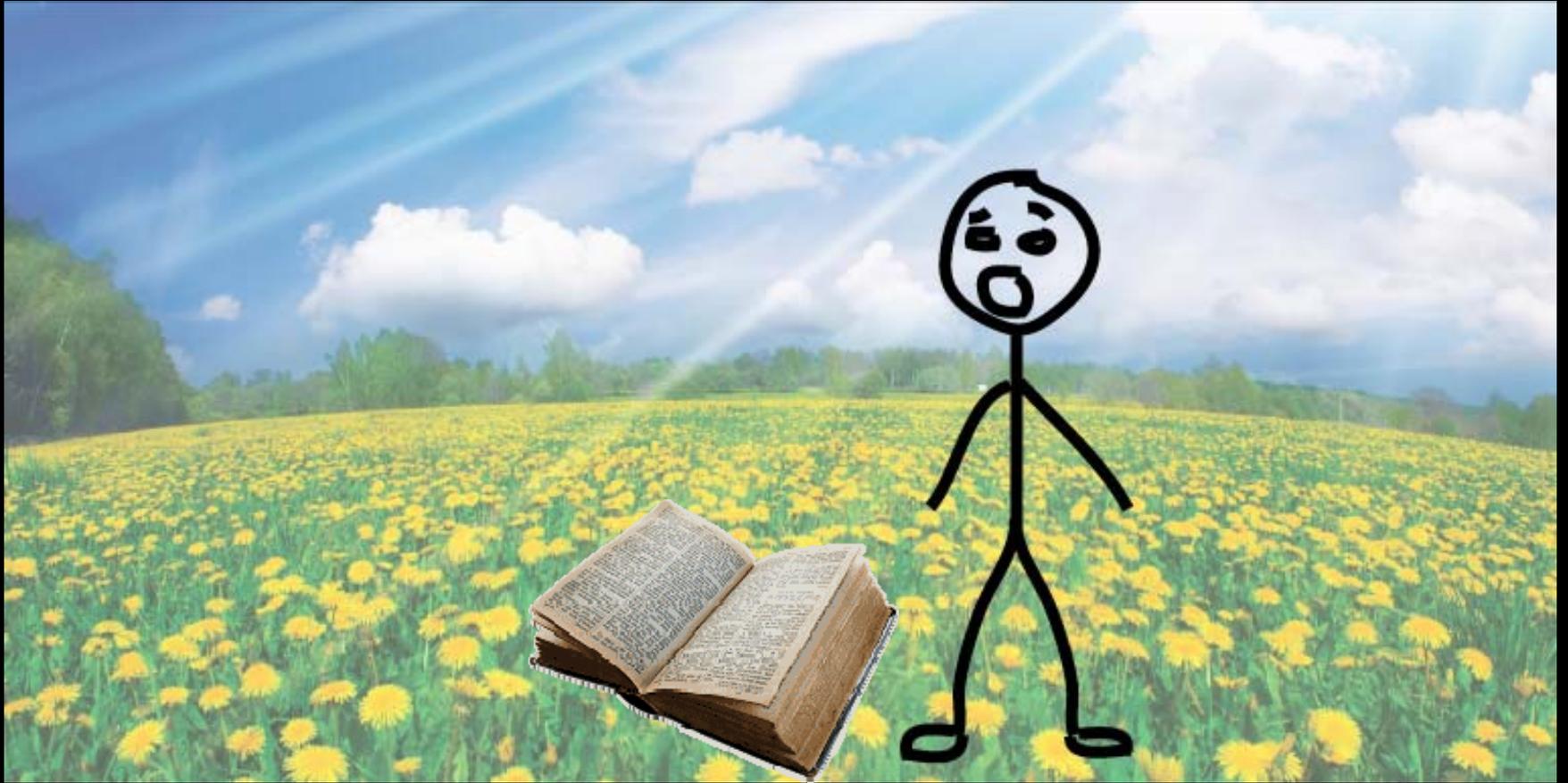
# Bob's Brain on Nietzsche

**We are the ultimate  
arbiters of truth**





# Bob Finds a Book



# Bob Reads a Book

**“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5)**



# Bob Reads a Book

**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov 1:7)**

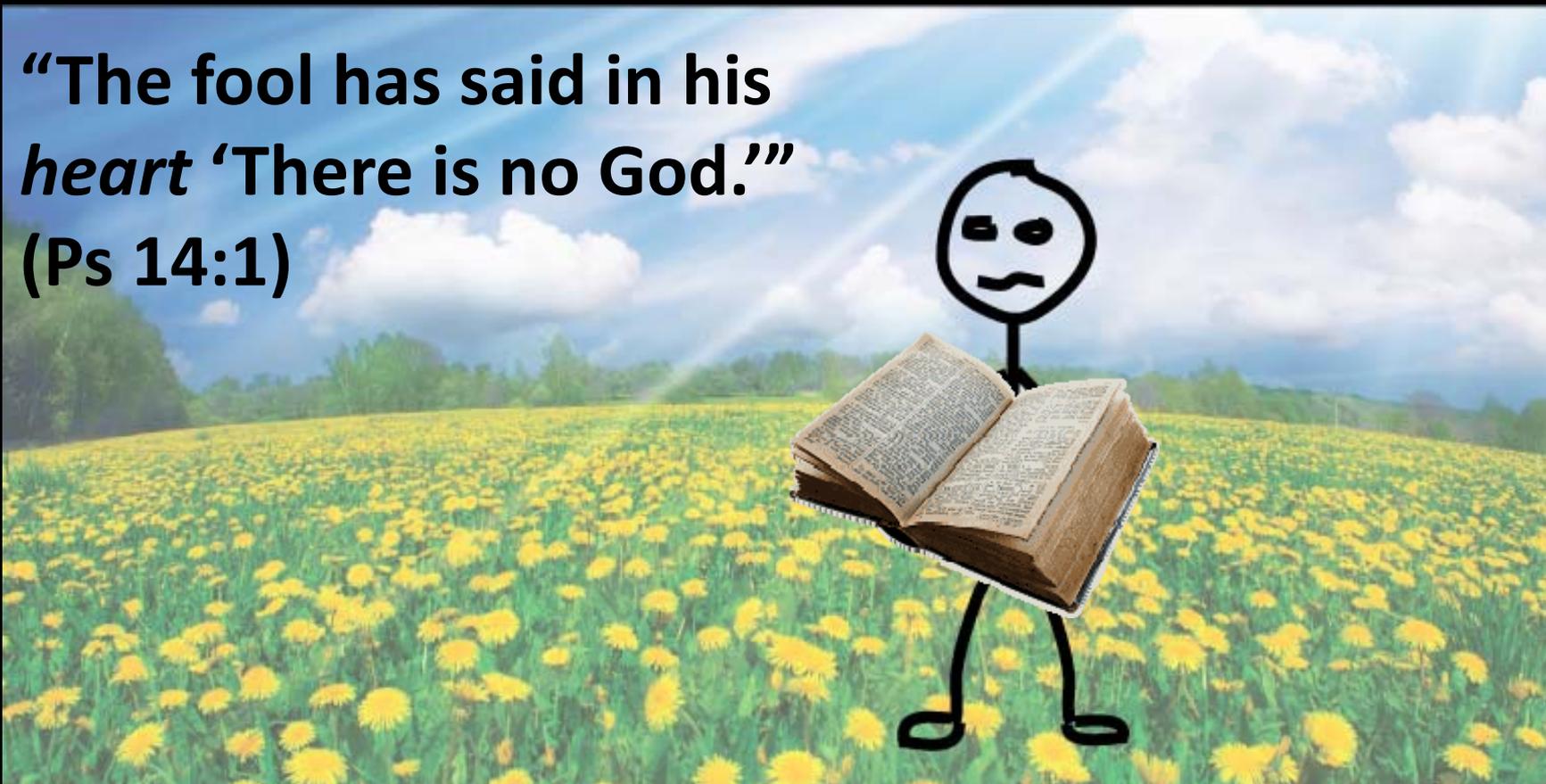
**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov 9:10)**

**“The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom” (Prov 15:33)**



# Bob Reads a Book

**“The fool has said in his  
*heart* ‘There is no God.’”  
(Ps 14:1)**



# Bob Reads a Book

**“For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from His mouth comes  
wisdom and  
understanding” (Prov 2:6)**



# Bob Thinks About Pillars: Pillar #1: The Biblical God Exists

- **What About God?**
  - Exclusivity (Ps 86:10)
  - Holiness (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8)
- **God, not faith, is the final arbiter of truth**
  - Not fideism
  - Taste and See (Ps 34:8)



# Bob Thinks About Pillars: Pillar #2: God Has Revealed Himself

- **General Revelation**

- Ps 19; Rom 1:18-20

- **Special Revelation**

- 2 Tim 3:16-17

- **Personal Revelation**

- Jn 1:1-18; Heb 1:2



# Bob Thinks About Pillars: Pillar #3: Natural Man's Incapacity

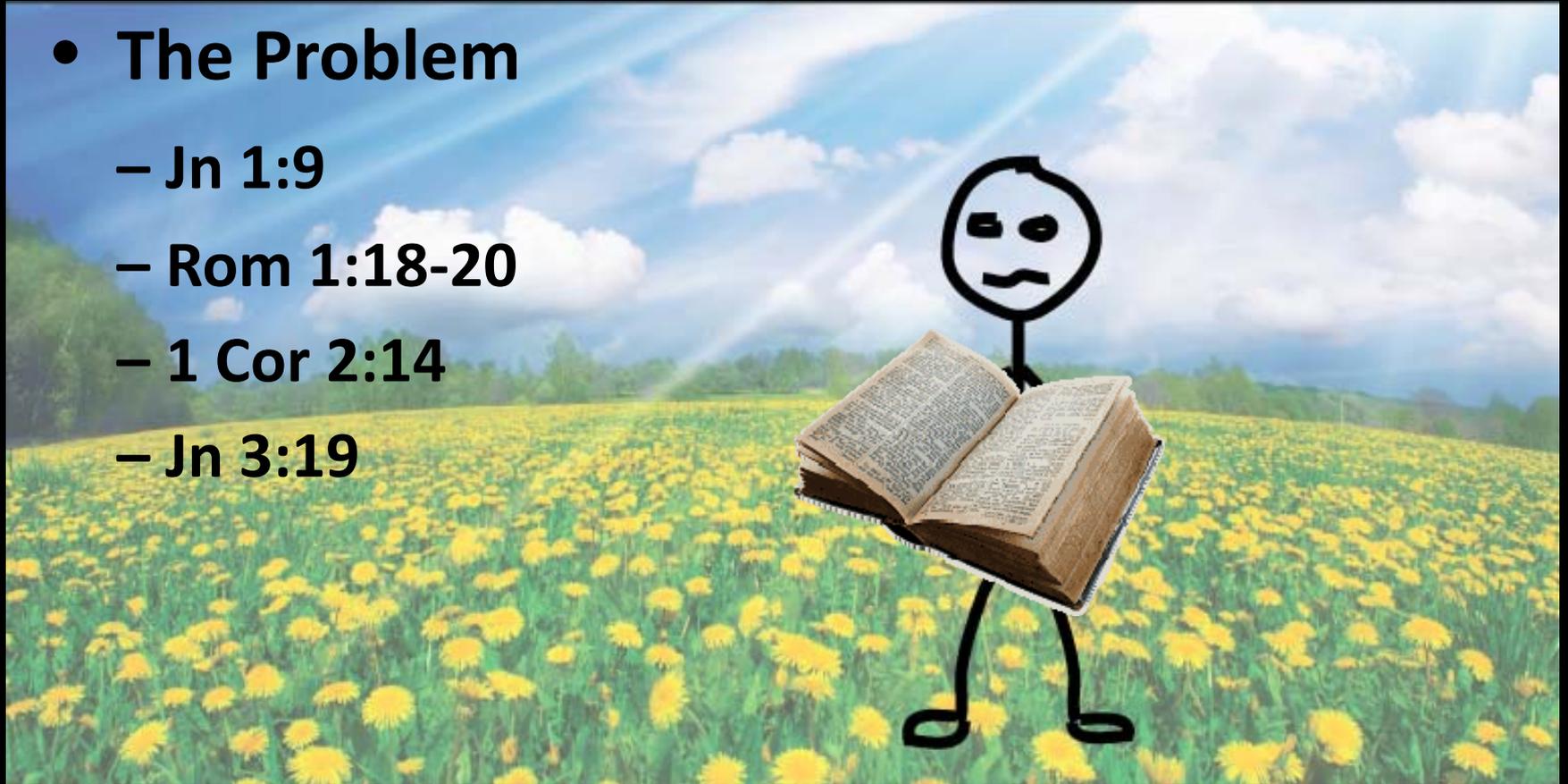
- **The Problem**

- Jn 1:9

- Rom 1:18-20

- 1 Cor 2:14

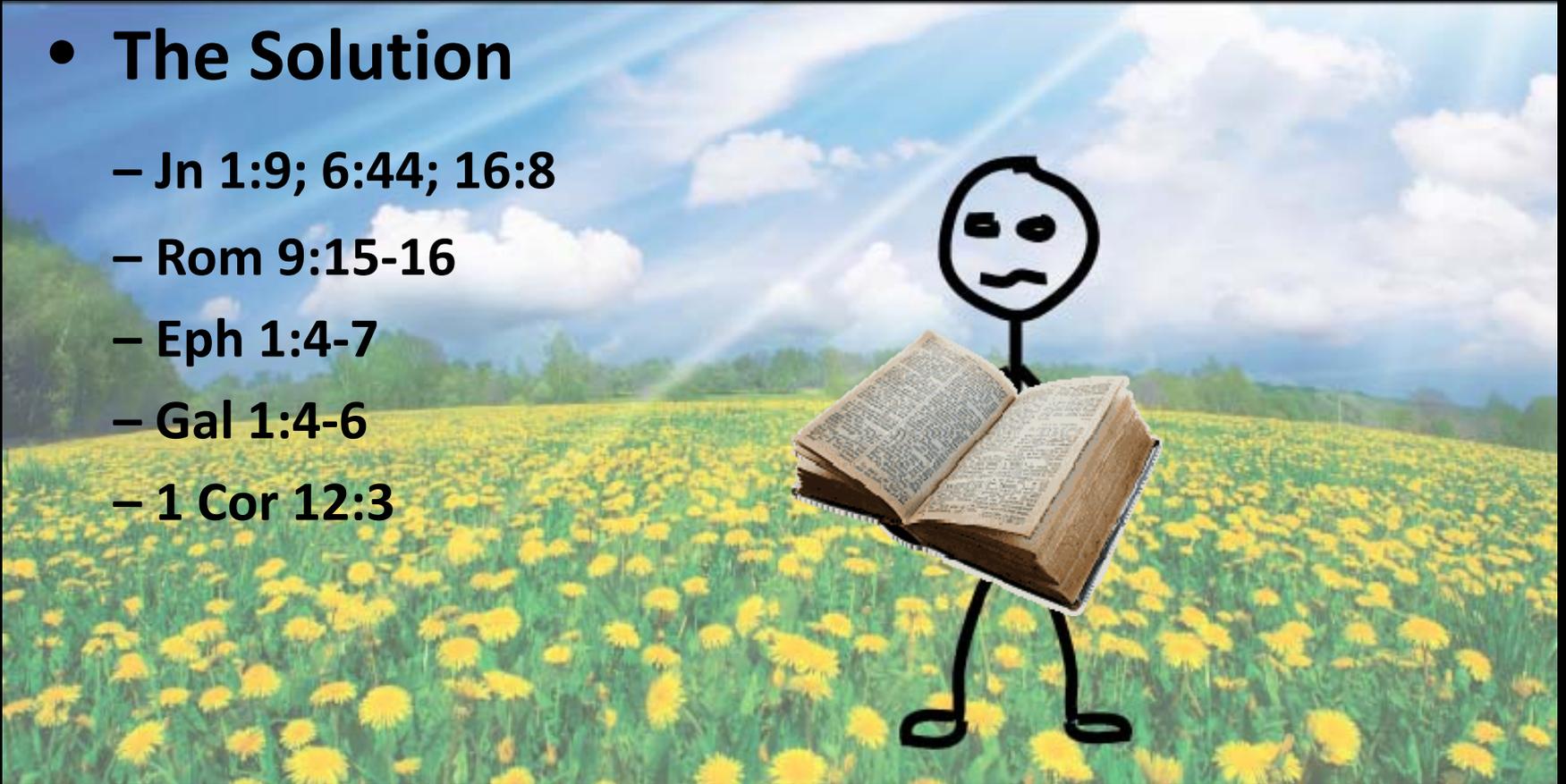
- Jn 3:19



# Bob Thinks About Pillars: Pillar #3: Natural Man's Incapacity

- **The Solution**

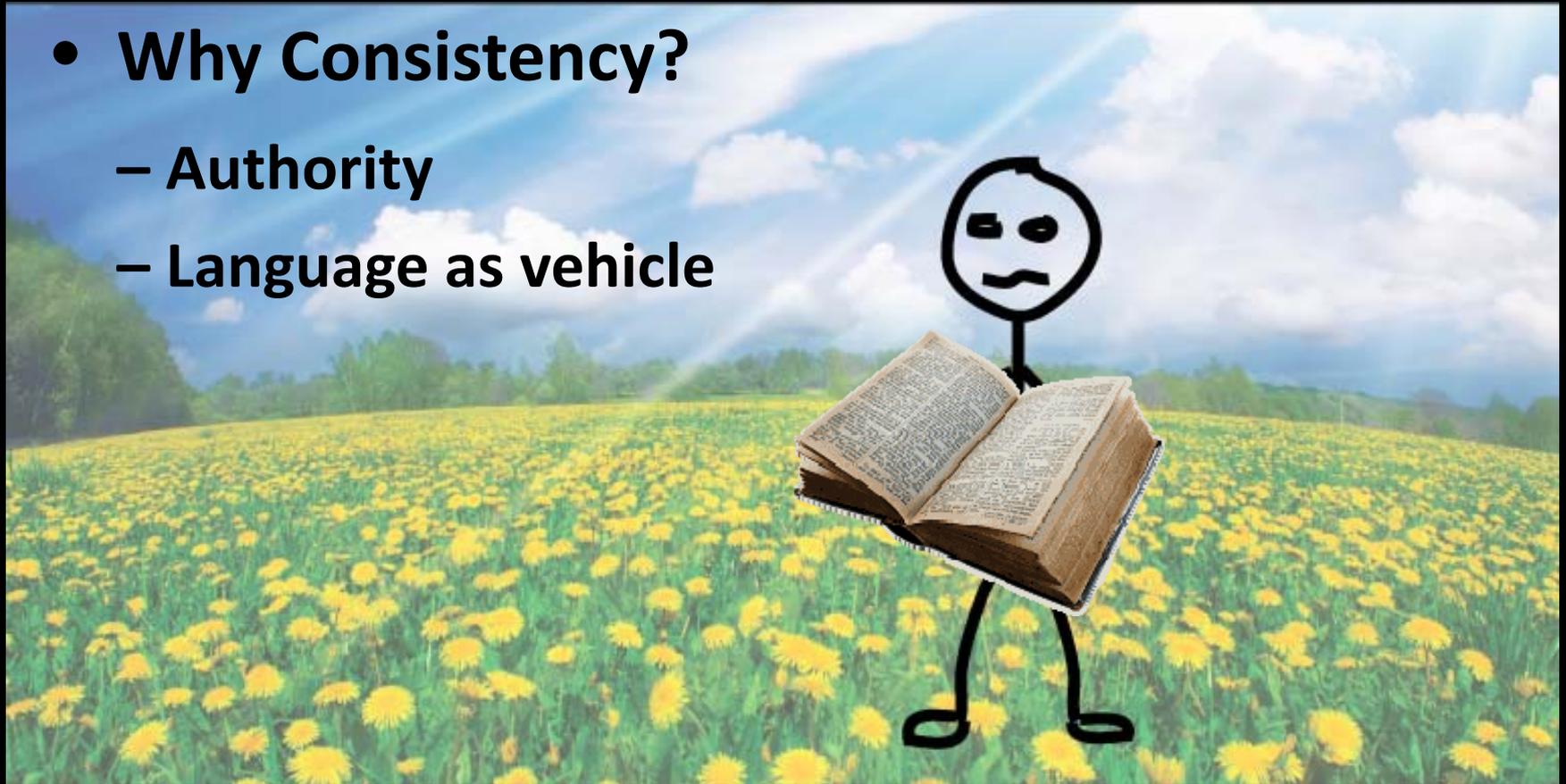
- Jn 1:9; 6:44; 16:8
- Rom 9:15-16
- Eph 1:4-7
- Gal 1:4-6
- 1 Cor 12:3



# Bob Thinks About Pillars:

## Pillar #4: Consistently Applied Hermeneutic Needed

- **Why Consistency?**
  - Authority
  - Language as vehicle



# Bob Thinks About Pillars:

## Pillar #4: Consistently Applied Hermeneutic Needed

- **Which Hermeneutic best accommodates authority and language?**

- Spiritualization
- Allegorical
- Theological
- Canonical/Complementary
- Trajectory
- Genre Override
- Literal Grammatical-Historical



- **Which Hermeneutic is modeled in the Bible?**

Bob Can Have Certainty.



This Makes Bob Happy.

