

# *The Journal of General Revelation*

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# The School of Abraham

Dr. Owen Anderson  
Arizona State University

I am going to introduce you to a new school. The school of Abraham. What would you know, and how would you know it, if you were in the school of Abraham? How did Abraham know things? We are looking at this question by asking, "What is a secular education?" We're starting there because the vast majority of students in the United States get a secular education from K through 12. Most children go to public school. When you graduate from there, you might go to a community college or go to university. It is a numbers question. The vast majority of students are getting a secular education. And the idea behind a secular education is that there are many opinions about topics like religion and these must be treated neutrally. And in fact, we had big wars in the West between these religious groups. They cannot get their act together. They cannot agree on things. And so, the last thing we want to let them do is to be in charge of anything because then what they have shown is that they just go after each other when they are at the helm.

## The Origin of Religion

What is religion? The most basic way to define religion is as the set of beliefs used to give meaning to a person's experiences. These beliefs are the basic beliefs that answer the foundational questions about knowledge, reality, and value. We find religion characteristically coming to expression as an attempt to organize rituals performed by priests to protect from natural evils and to receive bless-

ings of health and prosperity. Such a religion is concerned with the journey of the soul through the life of matter and change and into higher spiritual realms after death and even equality with God. While the materialists are often set as the enemies of religion, you can see that philosophical materialism meets the criteria in the definition of religion. They have basic beliefs used to give meaning to their lives. Although they deny the existence of the individual soul, they usually have rituals they believe will decrease natural evil. They believe in the journey of life itself from simple organism to complex and intelligent animals flying between the galaxies.

This definition of religion shows a remarkable similarity between the religions of the world. They agree on a great deal about this life and the next. The world arose from chaos - pictured as the sea; gods emerged and shaped the world of humanity; an evil deity inflicts the world with natural evils; the changeableness of bodily existence makes humans look for more in the afterlife and as a way to conquer death; and the soul must behave in prescribed ways to have a beneficial journey after death. Their differences are about the particulars of the soul's journey. We find this story in Babylon, we find it taught by Krishna to Arjuna, we find it in Greece and taught by Plato in the last chapters of his Republic or in the Phaedo, by the Egyptians in their Book of the Dead, by Buddha in his Four Noble Truths, the heroes must all descend to the underworld (Orpheus, Bacchus/Dionysius, Odysseus, Aeneas), and we can go on. The Hopi teach of the four worlds through which humanity has traveled and of the journey of the soul after death. They teach the rituals needed for the rain to guarantee food and success. When these religions mention a high god, this god is not involved in the world, is either impersonal or barely personal, does not rule except through lesser spirits, and is not concerned with human conduct. We will often find that it is the evil deity that imposed death on the world and the good deities that help humanity find enlightenment and overcome

death (compare this to Genesis 3, which is the inverse of that story).

These religious teachings were often guarded by the priests who taught that they had been given them through contact with daemons in mystic trances. The uninitiated were given only so much as was needed. A "religious" education is one where the uninitiated are gradually taught the mysteries of the religion. This is called "revealed religion" because it was not an object of general knowledge but of special revelation by a spiritual being to the priest. Perhaps the best known to philosophers is the priestess at Delphi, through whom the god Apollo spoke to Socrates' student. When "natural theology" is appealed to in the works of a Plato or Aristotle, the content is a Demiurge or unmoved mover uncensored with humans and co-eternal with the material world and human soul. Both of those philosophers were keen to discover the mysteries of Egypt and Babylon. We will call this the religion of Babylon, and it is what is taught in the humanities department of the School of Babylon.

Thus, religion is a matter of opinions, and there are lots of opinions. When we are engaged in education, we want knowledge. We want to know things. And so, the division between public education and then private education is that difference between knowledge on the one hand and opinions on the other hand. And that really shapes the way people think about reason and faith. The motto for The General Revelation Institute is "by faith we understand," in reference to Hebrews 11. Faith and understanding are not separate things. They are defined together. And in fact, the very first thing that we learn in Hebrews 11 is that by faith, we understand that God created the world. That is a truth from general revelation. But if you were to ask people what they think about reason and faith, they would say, "Well, they're different, maybe even opposed, and they're about different parts of life. Faith is when you believe things that you know aren't true. It's like wishful thinking. You have faith in Santa Claus. But Reason is things you can prove."

The idea is that the hard sciences, mathematics, and all of that is Reason. And the idea is, of course, that those subjects in public education are matters of knowledge where we use reason. Private education is about opinions, where they have faith in things that are unprovable. This is the way that education is framed in our culture. Now, what does it mean to add "Christian" to that one solution? How does having a Christian professor affect math? Two plus two is four. That is the case for both the atheist mathematician and the Christian mathematician. Adding "Christian" usually means you are developing a kind of a culture around the education. Still, it doesn't affect the education content in these classes, like physics and math, that are about knowledge.

## Secular Education

A secular education is about general revelation. I am a professor at a secular university, Arizona State University. I teach philosophy and religious studies. I also teach at Phoenix Seminary, a private religious institution, where I teach philosophical theology. So I am coming into this lecture with both backgrounds, although really as a secular professor because that is where I have spent my career. And I want to challenge the assumptions we have just developed. A secular education is about the study of this world. That is what secular means: this world. And everybody can study this world, which is why it is called general revelation and why coming to conclusions is not shaped by if you are a Christian or not a Christian it is shaped by the use of your mind to use reason and form arguments. And anybody can do that. However, what I am going to say is the problem is not secular education. The problem is we have not had enough secular education. I will repeat it: We need more secular education.

Why do I say that? We need more study of general revelation. In fact, we have not been doing it at all at the basic level, and that is the problem. It is as if we have been only

studying a very small part of the content of secular education, and we have ignored the vast majority of general revelation. If we were truly to throw ourselves into the study of general revelation, we would get the kind of education Abraham had. This is why I am going to write about the School of Abraham.

The study of this world would mean the study of God's revelation. That revelation (General Revelation) is clear and full. God makes himself known through his works, and those are clearly revealed to all persons at all times, no matter where you live on the face of the earth. Everyone starts equal with respect to general revelation. Now, in our culture, one of the challenges, one of the things we talk about, is privilege and who has privilege, and who does not, and how to balance it out. Well, with respect to general revelation, we are completely equal no matter where you live. And in fact, it kind of works the opposite of the way our cultural dialogue works about privilege. What I mean is the more light you have, the more in trouble you are for ignoring it.

## The Knowledge of God

God is only known as He reveals Himself to us. All of God's works of creation and providence reveal His glory. Creation is revelation. This is available to all people. Now we are going to look at some arguments. Many who work in natural theology (the study of general revelation) say it is bare and minimal. This view says that you have some nice hints about who God is but just wait till you are dead and you see him. The claim is that it is in the Beatific Vision that you will get the information you need about God. But we only know God as God reveals himself to us. We never have direct access to the being of God. "God is a Spirit whom no man has seen or can see."

God revealed Himself to us in general revelation and special revelation. Those are the ways we know God. And

we are told more specifically in John 1 about the Word, the Logos, the Logos is what makes God known. This idea that you will die and be able to bypass the Logos and all the works of God to get more information is as if you want to sidestep the Word of God. No, we know God by the Word, and the Word comes to us in both general and special revelation. Persons pursuing the otherworldly religious experience have generally ignored the works of God. They want some other way to know God. So the challenge of our day is: Can you show that God is real? Our highest good is knowing God. Our chief end is knowing God. And that's the purpose of education.

Education is teleological, which means goal oriented. You get an education to do something, to get something. If you ask a student why they are getting an education, they will say something like, "Well, I want a degree in nursing. Why? Well, because I want to get a job. Why? Because I want to make money." They are getting education for a purpose. So, ultimately, our education is that we want to know who God is and how God revealed Himself. We are going to take it for granted that this is the purpose, the goal, of education. Education can and should direct us to our chief end. If your education is not doing that, then you are not getting educated.

We are especially thinking about humanities classes right now. Not so much job training classes as much as humanities classes which claim to teach us about the human condition. And the human condition requires us to know about our origin and our purpose, and that gets us right into these questions from general revelation. Our problem is we are not doing enough of that kind of education. We need to have more study of general revelation, and that could be done either at a public school or at a private school. I am not making a claim here about whether all education should be public; only that these are the kinds of questions you would want to be studied in public high school. The complaint I hear from high schoolers is that it is meaningless and purposeless. They know they are just

put there for four years to be out of the way. Have you kind of noticed how public schools look like prisons? They're locked in. But what they want is meaning and purpose. And that is the study of general revelation. That is what they should be getting in high school. That is what would bring it back to life.

## The Academy: The School of Babylon

Our study of the secular academy is often traced to Plato. Plato's Academy. And it is reported to us that over the door of Plato's Academy was the saying, "Let none ignorant of geometry enter here." That was the standard to get into university at the time. You had to have some mathematical knowledge. We still kind of do that, right? You have to have pre-college algebra or something to get in. But Plato is not talking simply about that. He is not talking only about mathematics. What he is talking about is the eternal forms described by geometry, those things which are unchanging and without beginning. Geometry directs our minds to the unchanging world, which is exemplified, he thought, in the heavens. The heavens were made of spheres that are perfect and unchanging. And you know, he was wrong about that, and he was projecting his own philosophy onto the world.

Plato got this from the Egyptians. You probably think of the Egyptians in terms of the pyramids. Those speak to the Egyptian desire to have lasting geometrical forms and make something out of stone that somewhat looks like the perfect pyramid or triangle. Even those stones decay. This world is a world of impermanence and decay and, therefore of evil. According to this line of thought, we need to leave this world and go to the world of the eternal forms where there is no decay. That is the foundation Plato laid as the beginning of the academy. Plato is simply an apologist for the pagan system found in Egypt or Babylon.

The systems coming out of Egypt and Babylon are very similar in this respect. It is the School of Babylon. And we



will contrast it to the School of Abraham, who left the Babylonian School and transferred to a different school. Many Christians have looked to Plato and thought his eternal forms sound great and are a step closer to God. Plato's demiurge is not God the Creator. The Demiurge did not give the material world existence. Plato, just like other pagans, taught that the Demiurge and the material world - and the human soul - are all without beginning. This is what Abraham had to reject. He rejected the Demiurge and the eternity of matter and the soul. Instead, he affirmed God the Creator and that both matter and the soul had a beginning.

Plato taught that knowledge means a perception of these eternal forms. You never had that perception in this life of matter and decay. Therefore, he reasons, you had it in a previous life before you entered the body. That is what knowledge is for Plato. In *The Republic*, Plato teaches that your soul is on this journey, which he almost directly borrows from the Babylonians and Egyptians. The character Er may have been one of the Zoroasters. They taught what happens to your soul when you die and the kinds of things it will encounter. All of that is a platonic education. It is the Babylonian education.

The School of Babylon is still with us. This might be a surprise because you think education is mostly materialistic and evolutionary. Yes, but is not evolution just that story of the transmigration of life as it goes through many permutations? They might deny that you have an immortal soul that does transmigrate but then argue that life itself does that. And this world is still just a world of change and suffering. And that is all the materialist teaches. This is what Plato defended. I think that if you had the option between the two, you would actually pick materialism. You would choose non-existence at death. And that is because if you have been reincarnating from eternity, which means suffering life after life after life, and you still have not reached enlightenment, do you think you will the next time? If you have been reincarnating from eternity without beginning, you will never reach enlightenment. So it

would be better not to exist. In the reincarnation model, you suffer from life to life.

We still have this School of Babylon with us today. It is a bare view of just studying the material world and how it relates to the forms of mathematics. Many Christians Scholastic look to Aristotle for proofs for God's existence. But those proofs do not conclude with God the Creator. They can give you a Demiurge. They can give you a vague, distant, moral governor who is not involved in the world at all. Or a designer who designs by being perfect and everything else strives to be like it, but not because of providential rule or special creation. Thus, Aristotle, like Plato, is just an apologist for that Babylonian or pagan system. His arguments for "god's" existence are consistent with the god of Babylon. They are a rejection of God the Creator and Genesis 1:1.

The same is true for Plotinus. He is a pantheist who teaches that all is one. All is God. You are God. And that is the highest truth. Plotinus rejects God the Creator. And yet you will see Christians who say natural theology is just the study of Plato or Aristotle or Plotinus. And the furthest you can get is that Demiurge or the uncaused cause. And these Christians say after that you need the Bible for more information. They claim these types of thinkers (Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus) are the best you can do in the study of general revelation. So, it is these Christians who created the current public school problem. They created it by ignoring general revelation and treating it like it is bare and minimum instead of seeing the full revelation of God given to all humans to which we are all accountable. Aquinas said that most people are not smart enough to understand proofs of God's existence. They just have to be told God exists. This is a very low view of the human ability to know God through general revelation.

There has been compromise by Christians with the School of Babylon. This gives us the problems we have now in education because the idea is that reason can, at best get you to Aristotle. The School of Babylon is ratio-

nal and only contradicts scripture, not general revelation. Such Christians say this is why we need to rely on faith: grace completes nature. The School of Babylon and its Demiurge or unmoved mover are the best we can expect from reason and general revelation. And so, modernity has been shaped by this false division between reason and faith that is an outgrowth from a failure to understand clear general revelation of God the Creator and Ruler.

## The School of Abraham

What is the School of Abraham? What is the admissions process like? We begin learning of Abraham in Genesis 11, and then his story begins in Genesis 12. And he is called by God to leave Ur, a Babylonian city. You might say, "that is special revelation, God's call to Abraham. I thought we were discussing general revelation." We read about Abraham in the Book of Genesis, which is Scripture. But how did Abraham know what he knew? Not just what did he know. But how did he know it? I wonder if when we think of Abraham, we have a real one-dimensional view of what he knew and how he knew it. I want to give a full view of what he knew and also how he knew it.

Did Abraham know by a special religious experience? He heard a voice telling him to leave Ur of the Chaldees. Do you believe all voices you hear? How would you know who is speaking to you? Presumably, if there are demons, they would want to imitate God, and they could deceive you. So just hearing a voice is not the answer about how Abraham knew.

What did Abraham know, and how did he know it? This is where we begin understanding the School of Abraham to contrast it with the School of Babylon and Plato's Academy. Abraham did not have the Bible. Perhaps he had an oral tradition about Creation, the Fall, Redemption, and the Flood. The difficulty is that there were a few competing oral traditions at the time. How would he know which one to believe? The Babylonians had their own account

of those same things. They had their own explanation of why the flood happened. They had their own descriptions of why there is good and evil in the world. Abraham has to know which of the stories to believe. How did he know which narrative is true?

We are told that Abraham was looking for a city whose maker and builder, or founder, is God. What is a foundation? This is a common word that is used in education. ASU has its own foundation, the ASU Foundation. Most schools have something like that, which is the economic foundation of their school. We talk about the economic foundation of our government. Abraham understood that God is the one who lays the foundation. Around the time of Abraham, you have people planting cities. Abraham lived in one of them named Ur. Humans were founding cities. These are ways of life together. Ways of trying to get through suffering together and minimize the impact of natural evil. Life is harder when we are on our own facing natural evil. If we come together and work together, we can ease our discomfort.

Even so, we still have to face death. Humans make up stories about the soul in the next life. What must we do to have a "good" afterlife? This is part of the way Plato and others understood evil. Death is not a judgment or a call to repent but rather a process in the journey of the soul. Abraham knew of those stories. He knew they were false. And he is looking for the correct foundation. And he has this idea that it is a city founded by God. The other cities will get us where we need to go. At best, they provide some relief from natural evil if we agree to go along with their way of life.

A foundation provides us with the answers about basic things. It answers questions about how we know, what is real, and what is good. These are the questions about authority, reality, and value. What are these truths? Well, they are our most basic presuppositions. And a presupposition simply is a pre-belief. A supposition is a belief. A pre-supposition is the belief that comes before that one.

It is a belief that supports it logically. We are looking for the most basic presuppositions. That is the bottom. There is nothing before that. The foundation on which the rest of your belief system is built. We are making an analogy either to a city or to a construction. Will you want to build on a solid structure? You must build on the rock that will not move. Truth is immovable. And basic truths are those on which all else in our worldview builds. So, we are using that analogy right from building the foundation.

## What Abraham Could Know?

What are the basic things that Abraham knew, and how can we know them? He did not have Genesis. Even so, he could know that there is a beginning to some things and not to other things. He could know that only God is without beginning and that God created all else from general revelation. The Babylonians and the Egyptians both wanted to find what is without beginning and unchanging. Numbers, and the heavens, and the forms, were their answers. They wanted to get to the eternal but stopped with these disembodied ideas or the eternal heavens.

Abraham could know that the sun had a beginning. The sun came to represent the unchanging and eternal being for the Egyptians and Babylonians. We see Plato speak of it this way in his Allegory of the Cave (The Republic, Book 7). Aristotle said that it is without a beginning. It is almost universal that the peoples of the world, at some point, worshiped the sun as their God or as an analogy to their God. It is interesting that Psalm 19 specifically directs us to the sun. The sun had a beginning. A quick way to know this is that the sun is finite in size, and it is limited in size. And it is giving off heat. And whatever is limited but giving something off cannot do so forever. And that means it will burn out. If it had existed from eternity, it would have already burned out. But it has not. Therefore, it has not existed from eternity. That is straightforward and simple or clear.

Anyone can know, from general revelation, that the sun and stars are not without beginning. What you find in many of the pagan systems, including Babylon and Egypt, is that the origin deities arose out of water. The original deities were a duality of male and female associated with the earth and sky. Thus, you have three of the four elements: water, earth, and air. Next, you find them speaking of fire as the animating force behind all things. And there you have the link to the sun. The fire-worshippers were an early and influential cult in ancient Babylon that developed into what we now call Zoroastrianism. Abraham would have confronted this belief. But how did he know it was false?

Abraham could reason from general revelation that the entire Babylonian system was false. He would do this by knowing the following:

1. In the beginning, God (the Clarity of God's existence)
2. The rule of God (the Clarity of God's providence)
3. The moral law (good and evil)
4. Sin and natural evil (their purpose and order)
5. Vicarious atonement (representation in a sacrifice)
6. The kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God
7. The promise

Here we are listing what he could have known, and we have other resources to give the arguments to show these things are true. Please follow up with those (e.g. The 12 Arguments). Abraham could know that something is eternal (without beginning). He could know that the material world had a beginning. This means he could know that what is eternal is incorporeal. Abraham could also know that not everything is material. The soul is real. But he could also know that the human soul is not eternal, nor can it become God. He could reason that if God is not material,

then God is a spirit. God sees, hears, and knows. Abraham could know that as Creator, God is sovereign over the creation. And Abraham could know that as Creator, God determines what is good and evil by determining the nature of things. So, Abraham could know both that it is clear God exists, and, secondly, it is clear that God rules over the creation. Both of these are in direct opposition to what was taught by the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks, as well as by their greatest apologists like Plato and Aristotle.

Third, Abraham would have known about the moral law. Abraham would have known what is good and what is evil, and the moral law describes how to get to what is good. If you want the good, here's what you must do. And if you don't do this, you're headed toward evil. There are two paths. Life and death, good and evil. And Abraham would have known those things. And again, not by quoting scripture, but by using reason to understand the nature of things. Abraham would have known that the purpose of humans is given to them by the Creator. It involves using our mind to understand things so we can live out the rest of our lives. What we believe to be true affects the rest of how we feel and what we do. And so that gets back to the chief end of education. The chief end of Abraham's School is that we might know God. He would know about the reality of sin because of the unbelief he saw. And that the purpose of evil is to deepen the revelation of the glory of God. The Egyptians and the Babylonians deal with it in the way I said Plato does, which is this world of change is limited and involves fighting over resources. They are describing the world after the curse of Genesis three. But before that, creation was very good. It didn't have those elements. Those were introduced and imposed into the world by God, not by demons or the devil or Adam or Eve. God imposed sufferings on the world, and much of the School of Babylon, is spending its time on how to ease sufferings in this life through medicine and other sciences.

So the idea behind much of the Babylonian education is just diminishing suffering in life. And I am not suggesting

we should not do that, but I am suggesting there is more to suffering than to be eased or overcome, which is that you hear the suffering as a call to stop and think. You have not been seeking the most important things in life. And that could be at the individual level, but it could be at the corporate level. You might be handed over to the disciplining hand of God as a group. Because you've turned your back on God. That is not due to demons. That is not due to matter being imperfect. That is due to the providential rule of God.

Abraham could know that natural evil was imposed after sin as a call to repent. It is not the inherent punishment for sin but a call back from God. And Abraham could know that moral evil begins in our failure to think through these things. It begins in unbelief. It begins with a challenge to the Word of God. "Did God really say?" Abraham would know that our first parents failed this test. He would know that their failure affected all the rest of us, both in our being born in sin and being born in a world filled with natural evil. From there, he could know about our need for vicarious atonement. This is the point that takes him right up to redemptive revelation. So far, he has been reasoning from general revelation. But that reasoning takes him to this point: God has both punished us for our sins in the inherent consequence of spiritual death and has called us to repent by imposing natural evil. How will God be both just and merciful toward mankind in their sin? This is answered in special revelation. There he would expect to be taught about the vicarious atonement that takes away the sin of the world.

Abraham could know that in sin, mankind works to establish a kingdom of darkness. But he could also know that God would establish His own kingdom on earth. And this kingdom must be established by God, not man, because all men are born dead in sin. Entering this kingdom of God requires being born again. Thus, Abraham was looking for a city whose maker and builder is God. He had access to some pretty good cities for the time, like he



is around the New York and London of his day. But those cities are founded on the Babylonian system of falsehoods. Abraham was a pilgrim and stranger in the world, not in the sense that the Babylonians taught - that is as a pilgrim passing through the material world to some higher spiritual realm - but in the sense of a stranger in this world's system, which is corrupt and going to fail. He is looking ahead to that other City. This is his faith.

And now get to the promise. Where we find out that Abraham is a post-millennial in believing that the whole world will come to know God through him, and that all nations of the earth will be blessed through him. Not most of them. Not a couple of them. All nations will be blessed by God, and Abraham could know that does not happen in his lifetime. As the father of the faithful, his faith is grounded on this understanding growing from his ability to reason.

You should have the same education Abraham had. You should be able to know points 1 through 7, above. You should be able to give those proofs at the College level. They are the Elementary level. Perhaps you could be introduced to them in Middle School. At that age, you are starting to argue about them. And then High School and College, you should be really able to defend these. If you were not taught how to reason like Abraham, you were not given a sufficient education. You did not have the foundational truths that he had. And so, that lack comes up later in life around, say, midlife, it comes up as emptiness, boredom, and meaninglessness. Life is empty because we did not get the foundational truths in place. And that emptiness will call you to begin thinking, and by God's grace you will.

## Biblical Atheism

In the Psalms, we are told of the fool who says, in his heart, there is no God. This atheist says that God does not see and God does not hear. This is the philosophical de-

scription of the Babylonian belief system. The claim is that what is eternal, without beginning, cannot see or hear or understand. This has different names in their system: the absolute, being itself, the uncaused cause, the unity, the one. Why do many Christians believe these are the same as God the Creator? Abraham must have known they are not the same since he opposed Babylonian idolatry.

The "Biblical atheist" denies the rule of God in the world. God's rule is both general and redemptive. In Hebrews 11:9, we are told that "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead." How did he do this? He was told, that through Isaac his descendants would become as numerous as the sand on the shore and that through him, all nations would be blessed. But then he was also asked to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. He could know that Isaac is not the final sacrifice because Isaac himself needs to be atoned for. Isaac was born with sin, and this is symbolized in circumcision. Abraham would also know that death entered after sin as a call to repent. When sin is finally removed, death will be removed with the resurrection of the dead. Death is not permanent. Abraham could conclude that although he was to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, God would raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promise. We are given this one example of how Abraham could reason, and it points us to much more.

The normal Christian analysis of pagan polytheism is often very superficial. It is not hard to show that there are no gods riding around on clouds or sitting on top of mountains. But that is not the essence of pagan idolatry. We could call that "physical idolatry," while we are asking how Abraham knew "conceptual idolatry," was false. How did Abraham confront this more philosophical level of idolatry? In addition to the pagan beliefs already mentioned, there was also the attempt to interact with "angelic beings." Perhaps these were deified human rulers who emerged from the waters (the Flood) and whose descendants kept control by claiming the ancestral ruler had become a god to continue to rule. Or perhaps they looked to

contact demons who promised special insights. The idea would be that religious experiences of the afterlife would then help guide the human souls after death.

Much of this religion revolved around death. They could not overcome death. Death had been imposed by God due to sin as a call to stop and repent. Rather than repent of unbelief, these idolaters looked to minimize death by viewing it as a step in their spiritual journey to becoming gods. Their stories often involved the evil deity who imposed death, thus casting God as the villain. We have much of this still with us today in how people think of death as a transition to a new state or as the opportunity to become higher spiritual beings. This view culminates in what is called the Beatific Vision, which is where the soul sees being-in-itself in a disembodied state after death. In the pagan system, this was the highest goal: the union with God.

The School of Babylon teaches that evil is due to the limitations of the material world. In their system, the creation is not very good. It is the source of evil. The enlightened soul must flee this world to the "upper realms" where the eternal stars rule. We find this otherworldliness still ingrained in Christian thought. Even famous Christian Analytic Philosophers teach evil is due to this world or to the operation of evil spirits. Natural evil, including death, is thought to be just a part of how things are and an inherent process of the transmigration of life in the evolutionary process. That is the height of Christian philosophy, which means it has not advanced past the School of Babylon. It has not yet even entered the School of Abraham, let alone graduated.

## Transfer Your Education

And so, what I said, in the beginning was, if an education does not get you these things, it is not an education. And that is true for Christian philosophy, also. You can become a Christian Ph.D. in philosophy, and you have never

been asked to show that only God is eternal. They are content with the Five Ways, which the Babylonians can also use. They do not establish that it is clear that God exists, so that unbelief is without excuse. You could even be at a Christian institution, mentored by a very famous Christian philosopher, and he would say, we do not and cannot prove God exists. We just believe it in the right way. He may have taught a generation of young Christians to be fideists and that natural evil is due to the activity of demons. So, you could still be in the school of Babylon while learning like that.

In the beginning, I asked what Abraham knew and how he knew it? Well, by using reason to understand general revelation. There is no division between faith and reason. The faith of Abraham comes out in that he lives as if the things he understands are true. And he comes to understanding through reasoning. That is why he is the father of the faithful. And so, we want to get this foundation in place. To grow up in our faith and not stay babies. Can you imagine having a city run by babies? They would mostly vote for pacifiers. Things that give them give them comfort throughout the sufferings of life. And there are adult versions of pacifiers. They just keep voting for pacifiers, and they have to get a little more sophisticated than just a piece of plastic, but only a little. The Romans called it bread and circuses.

Mature grown-ups have the foundation in place, which means they got this education just like Abraham did. That is the goal of a real secular education. Transfer from the School of Babylon to the School of Abraham. Learn to show how these foundation truths about knowledge, reality, and the good are true. Then live out a life of understanding built on that foundation as you look forward to the City of God.