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**Brian Dahle** . . . . . 2  
*California State Assemblyman,  
District 1*

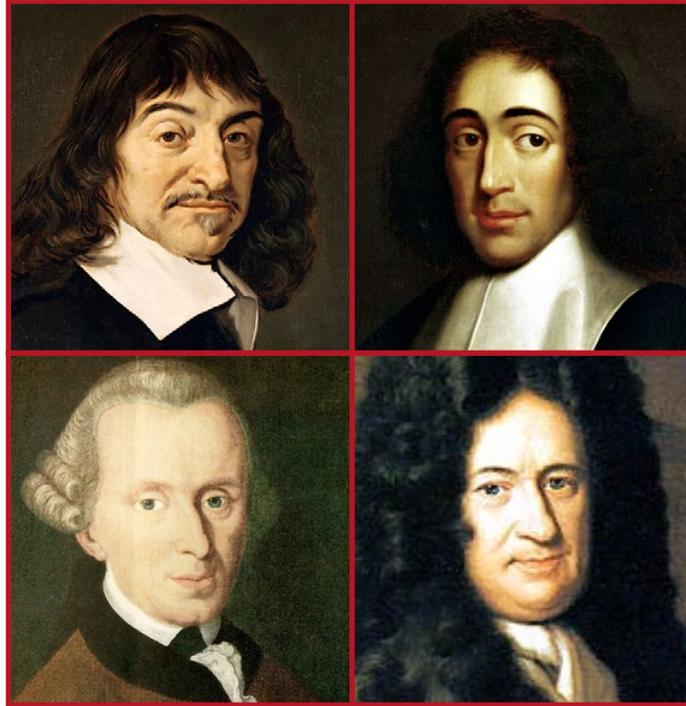
VERSE OF THE WEEK

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ABOUT

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# Rationalism, Rationality and the Scriptures



Fathers of modern Rationalism (clockwise from top left): René Descartes (1596–1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

**A**LL HERE IN THE CAPITAL HAVE CHOSEN a career that is based in intellectual property. As a Public Servant your ability to execute vocationally therefore, is directly related to the agility you possess in reasoning. One observation I have made in ministry in the capital is that this quality — to quickly and effectively reason — separates the senior Members of the community from the novice. Solutions to social problems, ideas, the ability to persuade, debate, write and speak, all depend and are under-girded by your acumen to reason well. Without it you're dust, as they say. With it you're a star.

Read on my friend.

  
Ralph Drollinger

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## Weekly Bible Studies

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*

SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*

HOUSE: 9:00 PM Tuesdays, Capitol Hill Club, Main Dining Room. *Dessert Served.*





■ ENDORSEMENT

**Brian Dahle**

*California State Assemblyman, District 1*



*“I am a believer and I as a legislator, I am away from home, my church, and my family four days a week. I try to attend a Bible study on Wednesdays, but I don’t always get that opportunity and so when Mike Shreve came by and told me he was a pastor and said, ‘How can I help you?’ I thought that was great.*

*“Mike visits my office every week and the Lord has blessed our time together. It seems when he comes by I always have some time, which is unusual because our schedules are so busy here at the Capitol. Sometimes Mike and I only have 10 minutes, but it’s blessed time.*

*Continued on page 3*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Scripture is the foundation upon which all good reasoning is built. It is the only reliable foundation for all logic and good judgment. It is the only trustworthy basis for the beginning of thoughts, ideas, actions and practices. The Word of God is intended to be the mind’s bedrock, its compass.

**II. RATIONALISM AND RATIONALITY**

As important as the aforementioned is however, a distinction must be immediately made between two close English words: Rationalism and rationality.

**RATIONALISM IS AN ANTI-BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY THAT IS CONDESCENDING TOWARD BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY**

In contrast to biblically based rational thinking, where in scriptural precepts, the presupposition of the Bible informing our premise for what is ultimate truth, the Rationalist sets his mind and his ability to reason as both the source and final test of all truth. The Rationalist’s mind becomes his god, since personal mental faculties are authoritative over and above Scripture in his way of thinking.

Accordingly, the Rationalist denies divine revelation; the beginning point of all reasoning that puts forth Scripture as preserved truth, untainted by the fall of man (known as “The Fall” per Genesis, chapter 3), wherein sin entered and affected the world — even to such an extent that it tainted man’s ability to reason perfectly without a bias for sin (this is commonly referred to in theology as the noetic effect of sin).

**SCRIPTURE ON THE OTHER HAND, IS UNALTERED BY THE FALL; IT IS UNTAINTED BY SIN**

Scripture has traveled the long road of time and is unaltered; the Bible is unstained by sin and its noetic effect on the mind of man.

The imputation of sin in Genesis 3 not only brought spiritual death to the soul of man, but it damaged his intellectual purity as well. Man possesses a fallen mind: This is evidenced by the fact that the closer he reasons in the arena of morality the greater the noetic effect is evident. From the perspective of biblical revelation, the Rationalist has not escaped the noetic effect of sin and he is either naïve or rejecting of this biblical premise.

Those who worship at the altar of their brain power are (and in their



pride of self being) the starting point for the discovery of truth, and in so doing, are categorically rejecting the biblical truth that the mind is fallen. In essence they are attesting to what the famous French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre meant when he penned, “A finite mind without an infinite reference point is absurd.” (Although the atheist-Marxist probably didn’t mean it the way I am interpreting it.)

In summary of the introduction, whereas the Christian rightly rejects the philosophical premise of Rationalism, it must be made clear that he does not reject rationality.

### **RATIONALITY IS THE USE OF THE MIND BASED ON AND UTILIZING GOD’S WORD AS ITS FOUNDATION**

Scriptural truth, as it is mastered by the Public Servant, becomes the always-reliable basis for proper thinking; the foundation that enables the ability to make wise judgments and good policy, not only in vocational pursuits, but in personal life. That is precisely what wisdom and discernment are: sound logic, clear thought and common sense based upon the mastery of scriptural precepts. Scripture is the bulwark upon which all good reasoning stems. Everyone in the Capitol needs to master the Scriptures in

order to be truly wise in personal, familial and vocational life.

Vocationally, to proffer policy that has no scriptural basis, is to act foolishly and disserve the people of our most fabulous country. Reason, apart from the Word of God, inevitably leads to unsound ideas, whereas reason subjected to the Word of God is at the heart of wise spiritual discernment and policy formation. God wants us all to use our minds based upon His Scripture; He wants us to be wise and discerning in all we do.

The Westminster Confession of Faith clarifies this when it states, “The whole counsel of God ... is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” (Chapter 1, Section 6). As you intently learn the Word, you will find that you are able to make sound and careful logical life decisions and policy formation because those abilities flow from knowing and embracing scriptural principles.

Interpret the text of Scripture accurately. Discover the context of the passage, the original authorial intent, and then apply its principles with sensible, careful, thoughtful and Spirit-directed reasoning. These are the building blocks, the ingredients of discernment. That’s how you craft good policy. That’s rationality not Rationalism.

#### ♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

### Psalm 111:10

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*



*In order to be wise, one must exchange his own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals for those of the true God who has revealed himself in Scripture.*

*Continued from page 2*

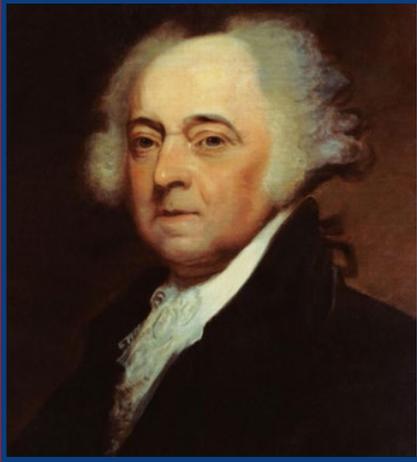
*“It’s wonderful that Mike is in the Capitol sharing his faith with others, what he does is so important. His ministry means a great deal to me personally, and to a great many people here at the Capitol as well.”*



**MIKE SHREVE**  
Ministry Leader to the California State Legislature in the Sacramento Capitol.



John Adams



“The Christian religion is, above all the religions that ever prevailed or existed in ancient or modern times, the religion of wisdom, virtue, equity and humanity.”

— John Adams, second President of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; judge; diplomat; one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

John Adams, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 421, diary entry for July 26, 1796.

When Martin Luther was instructed to recant his teachings on what the Bible taught regarding true salvation and how one achieves it via faith alone (versus the payment of indulgences, etc.) his response is illustrative of this very point. He said, “Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience would be neither right nor safe. God help me. Here I stand, I can do no other.” Luther’s reasoning was based on the convictions he’d gained from studying Scripture.



Martin Luther

ing. You may think you are, but you’re misguided. In the end your policies, home-crafted brews, void of scriptural precepts, will not serve you nor the people well.

Now let us turn our attention to the biblical passages that underscore the premises of this introduction.

### III. SELECTED OT PASSAGES ON THE NEED FOR WISDOM AND DISCERNMENT

In the passages that follow, note the repetitious and inner-connectivity of the words *truth, knowledge, discernment, wisdom and understanding* and how they stem from God and His Word.

#### A. PSALM 51:6

*Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.*

This passage appears right after David exclaims his sinful status, not only of himself, but for all of mankind, wherein he states, *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me* (51:5). Even though man is innately sinful, God *desires* all to know His *truth* and then as a result, live skillfully (*wisdom* is “the skill at living life for God’s glory”).

It follows then that those, including yourself, who spurn the truths, precepts and great doctrines of Scripture — and sound reason based on the same — are not wise or discern-



## B. PSALM 111:10

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do his commandments;*

*The fear of the Lord*, this passage states, is the *beginning* point of living, or legislating skillfully. A reverential awe and a submissive *fear of the Lord* are essential to *wisdom*. Without it man rejects God's Word, thinking and concluding matters with his own mind (Rationalism), devoid of any heavenly plumb line, standard or premise. As was stated in the introduction, he becomes his own god.

**DR. "WELLITHINK"  
BECOMES THE  
SUPERIOR SOURCE  
OF KNOWLEDGE OVER  
AND ABOVE THE GOD  
OF THE BIBLE**

In order to be wise, one must exchange his own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals for those of the true God who has revealed himself in Scripture; such equates to *fearing the Lord*.

## C. PSALM 119:66

*Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments.*

Note again the clear relationship between God's Word (*Your commandments*) and having *discernment* and *knowledge*. The premise of Scripture is that these ideas are intrinsically intertwined. One cannot possess one without the other.

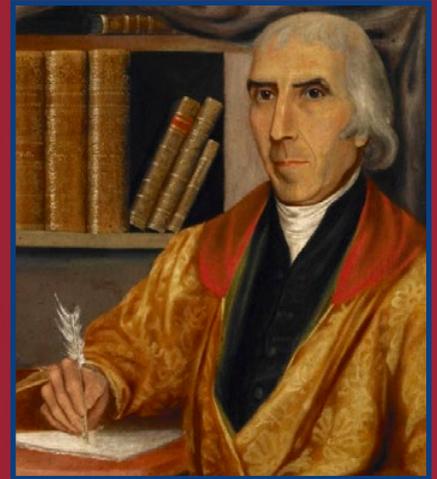
## D. PROVERBS 2:2-6

*Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Accordingly, the *knowledge of God* is derived only, achieved only, from and via the study and application of His Book. Further underscoring the connection between the words of *His mouth* being from the Bible, contained in Scripture, is evidenced in what Paul states to Timothy in 2Timothy 3:16 and 17:

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Jedidiah Morse



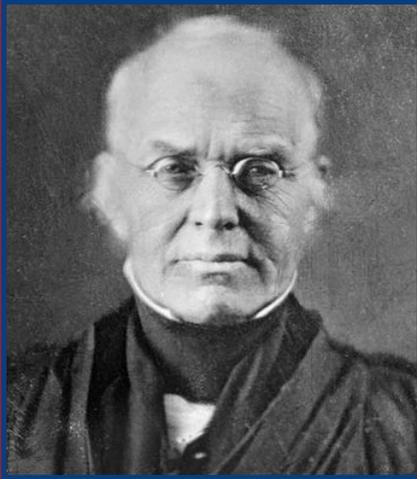
"To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. All efforts made to destroy the foundations of our Holy Religion ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation ... in the same proportion will the people of that nation recede from the blessings of genuine freedom ... Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government — and all the blessings which flow from them — must fall with them."

— Jedidiah Morse, historian of the American Revolution; educator; "Father of American Geography"; appointed by Secretary of State to Document Condition of Indian Affairs.

Jedidiah Morse, A Sermon, *Exhibiting the Present Dangers and Consequent Duties of the Citizens of the United States of America*, Delivered at Charlestown, April 25, 1799, The Day of the National Fast (MA: Printed by Samuel Etheridge, 1799), p. 9.



Joseph Story



“One of the beautiful boasts of our municipal jurisprudence is that Christianity is a part of the Common Law. There never has been a period in which the Common Law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundations.”

— Joseph Story, U.S. Congressman; “Father of American Jurisprudence”; U.S. Supreme Court Justice appointed by President James Madison.

Joseph Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, William W. Story, editor (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851), Vol. II, p. 8.

The Greek word for *inspired* is *theopneustos*, meaning “God breathed.”

**THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE ACTUAL EVIDENCE OF GOD’S BREATH**

**E. PROVERBS 4:7**

*“The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding.”*

I prefer the more vernacular NKJV translation of this passage, *“Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.”* This passage goes on to personify wisdom in 4:8-9 and list her benefits: *“Exalt her [wisdom] and she will promote you. She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you* (NKJV).”

These are the tremendous benefits inuring to those who are *attentive, inclining, crying for, lifting their voices for, seeking, and searching* (cf. Proverbs 2:2-4) for God’s *wisdom*. Why would anyone avoid such blessings? Start in on the habit of Bible study today and get blessed my friend!

Now let us turn our attention to NT passages that underscore the necessity to reason from Scripture versus

reasoning not from Scripture.

**IV. SELECTED NT PASSAGES ON THE NEED FOR WISDOM AND DISCERNMENT**

**A. COLOSSIANS 1:9**

*For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*

Paul prayed that the Colossian believers would *be filled with the knowledge of His will* which is equated here with possessing *wisdom and spiritual understanding*. It is quite easy to discern God’s will with your mind and your rational faculties when you have habitually and continually *filled* it with God’s precepts from regular study. A *wise* person can therefore be further understood as someone who has accumulated and organized God’s principles in order to automatically apply them in daily living.

Remember when you first learned to drive and how much concentration and effort it demanded? Now you drive almost subconsciously from regular practice and application of your state’s driving laws. *Wise* living is parallel to this.



**WHEREAS THE WORLD  
MIGHT CALL YOU AN  
IDEOLOGUE, SCRIPTURE  
CALLS YOU A PERSON  
OF CONVICTION —  
SOMEONE WHO HAS A  
SURE RUDDER!**

Inviolable principles stemming from God's Word are infallible and indefatigable.

### B. COLOSSIANS 2:3

*In whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

This Pauline passage exclaims that *all the treasures of wisdom* are in *Christ*. Our sufficiency for *wisdom and knowledge* is not found extra-biblically in some other form. It is in *Christ* alone.

This is a bold, contrasting statement given the context of what Paul is stating: Contextually, the Colossian church was being attacked by Gnostic heresy — the Gnostics' view of the beginning point of knowledge was that it was something they singularly possessed. The Gnostics were esoterics (M & W: knowledge that is restricted to a small group) in their understanding of the origins of knowledge, ancient day Rationalists if you will. Paul herein is combating and refuting this erroneous idea of the beginning point

of knowledge — as if the Gnostics possessed a secret source of *wisdom and knowledge!*

Like many Rationalists today they possessed an aura of elitism. They were the “haves” and others, in this case the believers in Colossae, were the “have nots.” Paul discounts their falsities stating *all the wisdom* of God and *knowledge* about Him is revealed through *Christ* and His written Word!

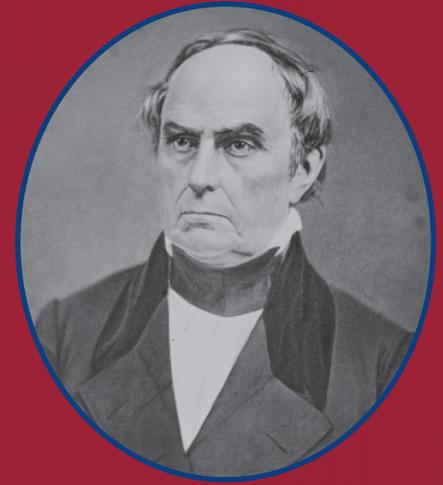
The Word of God, not self-thinking void of scriptural truths, human surveys, socio or physiological analyses, etc., should be your preeminent basis for *knowledge* in policy formation and decision making! Whereas the Word of God is unchanging, history reveals that the latter epistemological sources (epistemology: “the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity” [M&W]) history reveals, fluctuate over time. Their degrees of certitude are less than the total certainty of the Word of God.

### C. 2TIMOTHY 3:16

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

This passage, mentioned previously in relation to Proverbs 2, is deserv-

Daniel Webster



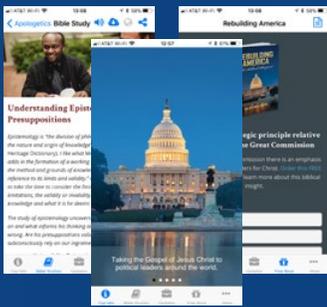
“Whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens.”

— Daniel Webster, U.S. Senator; Secretary of State; “Defender of the Constitution.”

Daniel Webster, *The Works of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), Vol. 1, p. 44, A Discourse Delivered at Plymouth, on December 22, 1820.



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ing of stand-alone consideration in this study and outline. Literally, *inspired* means “God-breathed.” In essence another way to state this is, *all Scripture is given by inspiration*. God divinely *inspired* or “inspired” the writers of His Word. It is therefore a reliable foundation from which you can reason. It is your primary, superior basis for authoritative reasoning.

## V. CONCLUSION

The wise Public Servant must regularly study the Word of God in order to have a lasting impact in service to the state. To craft policy that is not somehow rooted in Scripture is to have a temporal effect and is of disservice to the country. Reason from Scripture verses rationalizing from your mind only. [cm](http://www.capmin.org)

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