

SESSION 6: THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND BEYOND: HOW CAN WE KNOW GOD?

1 An intellectual crisis

1.1 Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)

1.2 Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

1.3 Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677)

1.4 Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

1.5 Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

1.6 Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

1.7 Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)

2 What they say about Scripture

Person	Summary	Scripture is...
Erasmus	"The Church determines that God can be believed."	
Descartes	"The thinking self determines that God can be believed."	
Spinoza	"Reason determines <i>when</i> God can be believed."	
Kant	"I determine what ought to be believed."	
Schleiermacher	"We are already aware of what ought to be believed."	
Nietzsche	"No-one can tell me what ought to be believed!"	
Derrida	"Words cannot tell us what ought to be believed."	



REAL FOOD SHORT TALKS:
GLORY TO THE KING OF AGES - LESSONS FROM CHURCH HISTORY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3 What Scripture says about them

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" **Genesis 3:1**

3.1 Scepticism is a moral problem, not an intellectual one

"How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you." **Proverbs 1:22-23**

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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. **Romans 1:19-20**

¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. **2 Peter 3:15-16**



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3.2 God gives life and understanding – through ordinary means

¹¹ Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. ¹² It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?" ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?" ¹⁴ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it. **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**

¹⁰ From the room of Gemariah son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple, Baruch read to all the people at the LORD's temple the words of Jeremiah from the scroll. ¹¹ When Micaiah son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll... **Jeremiah 36:10-11**

3.3 Understanding is grounded in personal relationship of trust

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. **Heb 4:12**

4 Implications

4.1 Confidence

4.2 Opportunity

