“Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”

— Jesus of Nazareth

THE JESUS MINDSET

Faith, Contradiction, and the Depth Beyond Literalism

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Grounding Consciousness, Meaning, and Morality in Objective Reality

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Preface

On Entering Without Full Understanding

On April 5, 2026, I was baptized at the age of fifty — fully submerged in a baptismal tank by my pastor. I came up without complete theological resolution. I want to say that plainly, without apology, and without embarrassment. Because what happened in that act — and in the hours of writing that followed it — is precisely what this manuscript is about.

I had spent years with the questions. Decades, really, moving through philosophy, cognitive science, comparative religion, mysticism, and the relentless pressure of lived experience. I had written about contradiction as a mark of depth rather than a sign of failure. I had written about meaning as discovered rather than invented. I had argued, at length, that consciousness is not a by-product of matter but a participant in the disclosure of structured reality. I had engaged Spinoza, Frankl, Nagel, Aristotle, and the great traditions of both East and West. And yet something remained unresolved — not as an obstacle to faith, but as its very texture.

The baptism did not resolve my questions. It transformed my relationship to them. Something I could only describe as *sight* arrived after the act of stepping in. Not despite the incompleteness — because of it. Faith, it turned out, was not the end of inquiry. It was the atmosphere in which deeper inquiry became possible.

This manuscript is the record of what that sight disclosed.

What follows is not a work of systematic theology, though it engages theology seriously. It is not a work of biblical criticism, though it handles Scripture with precision. It is a philosophical investigation into the *mode of consciousness* through which Jesus taught — and the mode of consciousness through which He must be heard. I am calling that mode the Jesus Mindset.

This work does not ask the reader to abandon critical intelligence. On the contrary, it asks for its fullest activation. It does not ask the believer to suspend their faith. It asks them to understand what faith, in the deepest sense, actually is. It is written for those who have found that the simplest certainties have already cracked — and who suspect that the cracking is not a loss, but the beginning of something larger.

It is also connected, by design, to the broader philosophical work I have been developing over several years. *The Teleological Imperative* established that reality is structured and intelligible — that meaning is not projected onto an indifferent void but disclosed within a layered order. *The Architecture of Contradiction* argued that mature intelligence is characterized not by the elimination of tension but by the capacity to carry it productively. *Deus Sive Natura* explored the identification of God and Nature through Spinoza's lens, and *The Sovereign Within* grounded the possibility of genuine inner transformation against the backdrop of ancient and modern wisdom traditions. The present work does not merely supplement those manuscripts. It fulfills them. It is the point toward which the larger arc was always moving.

On the day of my baptism, I said publicly: "Jesus reveals a living truth that transforms the human heart. I have experienced that change. He has carried the full weight of my difficult past, and provided me with the most strength, guidance, and wisdom to move on in the presence and grace of God. I surrender my life to follow Him as I continue to grow in understanding."

That statement was not a terminus. It was a beginning. What follows is the first sustained philosophical account of what that growing understanding looks like when brought to full articulation.

This manuscript is not written for the impatient, the dogmatic, or the merely oppositional. It is written for those who have discovered that the deepest truths do not yield themselves to a flat reading of reality, and that spiritual maturity often begins precisely where simplistic certainty ends.

Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.

Dr. Gabriel Antonio Suárez
Chapel Hill, North Carolina — April 2026

Chapter I

Jesus Speaks in Layers

The Hermeneutic Command at the Heart of His Method

Jesus was not a journalist. He was not a professor delivering propositions for passive consumption. He was not a theologian constructing doctrines for institutional endorsement. He was something far more demanding and far more rare: a teacher whose very method of speaking required the hearer to undergo a transformation of perception simply in order to hear. This is not incidental to Jesus. It is constitutive of him.

In Matthew 13:13 he says, plainly and without embarrassment: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." In Mark 4:11 the distinction sharpens: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." The division is not accidental. It is deliberate. Jesus structures his speech so that what is said is not identical to what is heard — and whether one hears depends not on auditory capacity but on interior orientation.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15; 13:9; Mark 4:23) is not a rhetorical decoration. It is a hermeneutic command. It announces, with each repetition, that the words just spoken have a surface that conceals a depth, and that access to the depth requires something beyond mere exposure to the syllables. This is not occasional in Jesus. It is characteristic. It is his method.

The Two Modes of Hearing

The Gospel of John provides the sharpest illustration. When Jesus tells Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), Nicodemus responds with a literalist's objection: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" The objection is not stupid. It is, in fact, the most obvious response available to a surface reader. And yet it completely misses the point. Nicodemus has heard the words and not heard the meaning. He has engaged the letter and missed the life.

The same dynamic unfolds in John 6. Jesus says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Many hear materially and stumble. "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Jesus does not retract the claim. Instead, he offers the interpretive key in verse 63 — one of the most philosophically important sentences in the entire gospel record:

> *"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*
>
> — John 6:63

This sentence opens an entire field of inquiry. If the words of Jesus are spirit and life, they cannot be exhausted by their surface form. Their truth is not always accessible to the unreconstructed mind operating within its default assumptions. They must be spiritually received. The mode of hearing is not passive or mechanical but participatory and transformative.

In *The Architecture of Contradiction*, I argued at length that mature intelligence is not characterized by the speed with which it reaches closure, but by the capacity to remain inside complexity and carry genuine tension productively. The low-resolution mind demands premature binary resolution. It cannot abide layered truth. It collapses ambiguity not because it has understood the situation but because it cannot tolerate remaining inside the uncertainty that genuine understanding requires. Jesus speaks, again and again, directly to this limitation. His method is a continuous education in higher-resolution perception.

Layers as Ontological Structure, Not Rhetorical Strategy

It would be a mistake to interpret Jesus's layered speech as a merely pedagogical choice — as though he could have said the same things plainly, but preferred the drama of parables. The evidence suggests something more radical: that the layered form is necessitated by the layered nature of what he is communicating. Reality itself, in Jesus's disclosure of it, is structured in depth. The surface is real but not the whole. The visible is meaningful but not self-sufficient. The event carries significance that exceeds the event.

This aligns precisely with the central argument of *The Teleological Imperative*: that we inhabit a layered reality whose structure is progressively disclosed through reason, experience, and convergent inquiry — and that the human being has access to deeper strata of this reality through transformation of perception, not merely through accumulation of surface data. Jesus is not introducing a literary device. He is operating within, and revealing the contours of, a reality that is genuinely stratified.

The "Jesus mindset" begins here: with the recognition that his speech is structured as it is because reality is structured as it is. To hear him rightly is not merely to parse his sentences accurately. It is to undergo the transformation of perception that his sentences are designed to provoke.

Chapter II

The Kingdom Is Within

Divine Encounter as Interior Event

Among the most philosophically consequential things Jesus ever says is contained in Luke 17:20-21. The Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God will come. He answers: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

> *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation... the kingdom of God is within you."*
>
> — Luke 17:20-21

This statement is so radical in its implications that it has been systematically underread throughout Christian history. The dominant institutional reflex has been to soften it — to interpret "within you" as "among you," as a reference to the collective community rather than the individual interior. That reading is grammatically possible but philosophically evasive. It drains the sentence of its most disturbing force.

The more honest reading — consistent with the full texture of Jesus's teaching — is the interior one. The kingdom is not primarily an external spectacle arriving on a calendar date. It is not first an institutional structure requiring external mediation. It does not depend on geography, temple, or nation. It is accessed inwardly. Its primary locus of disclosure is the human interior — the depth of the self that has been sufficiently prepared to receive it.

Inwardness Without Subjectivism

This must be carefully distinguished from mere psychological subjectivism. Jesus is not saying that the kingdom is whatever you feel it to be — that it is a projection of the inner life with no objective correlate. He is saying something more precise and more philosophically challenging: that divine reality discloses itself primarily through interior encounter, not primarily through external spectacle.

The kingdom is something one enters, not merely observes. This is why faith is so central in Jesus's language. Faith is not mere intellectual assent to propositions. It is the inner posture, the quality of

receptivity and orientation, that allows reality to disclose more of itself. One cannot stand outside the kingdom at a critical distance and verify it empirically. One enters it — through trust, through surrender, through the transformation of the perceptual apparatus itself — and then one sees what was always already there.

In *The Teleological Imperative*, I argued that consciousness is not merely a passive mirror of external events but a participant in the disclosure of structured meaning. The "kingdom within" saying is profoundly consonant with that claim. If reality is layered, and if deeper layers require a transformed mode of access, then the kingdom's interiority is not a retreat from objectivity. It is the indication that the deepest objectivity requires subjective preparation — that the observer must be changed before certain dimensions of what is real become visible.

This is also why Spinoza's insight, explored in *Deus Sive Natura*, resonates so powerfully here. Spinoza argued that the universe is one substance — infinite, self-causing, expressing itself through both extension and thought — and that the movement toward adequate ideas is the movement toward participation in that substance's self-knowledge. Jesus says the kingdom is within. Spinoza says God is immanent in all things, including the human mind. Both are pointing to the same structural truth: that the deepest encounter with the real happens at the intersection of the interior life and the ground of being.

The Displacement of External Spectacle

The radical implication of Luke 17:21 is that the primary error in approaching divine reality is the expectation of external spectacle — the demand that the kingdom announce itself through visible, undeniable, publicly observable demonstration before one will consent to take it seriously. Jesus explicitly refuses this expectation. "The kingdom cometh not with observation." The ones who wait for the unambiguous external sign — the irrefutable cosmic event, the empirically verifiable miracle that will finally compel assent — are waiting for something that, precisely because of the mode of their waiting, they will not be able to see.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Purity of heart is not moral perfectionism. It is the clearing of the interior of the competing noise that prevents deeper perception. It is the condition of genuine spiritual seeing. The Jesus mindset begins with this inward turn: not toward narcissism, but toward the serious preparation of the interior by which the deeper structure of reality becomes accessible.

Chapter III

Faith as Causative Participation

"Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole"

No phrase in the Gospels returns with more insistence than this one. It appears in the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:48; Mark 5:34), in the cleansing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:19), in the restoration of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:52), in the healing at Capernaum (Matthew 8:13), and across a wide range of encounters. Jesus says it so consistently that it cannot be incidental: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

> *"Thy faith hath made thee whole."*
>
> — Luke 8:48; Mark 5:34; Luke 17:19

The conventional reading produces two opposed distortions. The first is the purely supernatural account: God performed a miracle, faith was the required precondition, end of analysis. The second is the merely psychological account: positive expectation triggered placebo responses, and "faith" is a pre-scientific name for a therapeutic mechanism. Both readings miss the philosophical depth of what Jesus is actually doing.

Jesus does not say, "My power has healed you." He does not say, "God's intervention has restored you." He says, with consistent precision: your faith has done this. The operative opening is located within the subject. The person's own interior orientation — their quality of trust, receptivity, alignment, and surrender — is identified as the causative factor. This is not a denial of divine activity. It is a revelation of the mechanism through which divine activity becomes efficacious in lived experience.

Faith as Ontological Posture

Faith, in the Jesus sense, is not first a cognitive state. It is not the intellectual acceptance of a set of propositions about theology. It is a posture of the whole person toward reality — an opening, a quality of trust and alignment that changes what one is capable of receiving. The modern mind tends to think of faith as a mental act — as believing something despite insufficient evidence. Jesus is

describing something quite different: a mode of participation in reality that makes certain dimensions of it available that closed postures cannot access.

This resonates with what I argued in *The Sovereign Within*: that the inner condition of the human being is not a passive reflection of external circumstances but an active participant in the shaping of what becomes possible. The research of Candace Pert on neuropeptides, of Bruce Lipton on epigenetic signaling, of Bessel van der Kolk on trauma and the body — all converge on the same structural insight Jesus expressed without the vocabulary of molecular biology: what one holds inside oneself participates in determining what one can receive from outside oneself. Faith, in this framework, is the inner configuration that maximizes receptivity to deeper reality.

Faith Before Understanding

Jesus does not require conceptual resolution as a precondition of faith. He does not tell the blind man to first develop an adequate theology of healing before he can receive his sight. The movement is consistently from interior disposition to lived transformation — from the quality of trust to the disclosure of what that trust opens.

This is why Mark 9:24 strikes me as one of the most honest verses in the entire New Testament. A man brings his possessed son to Jesus, and Jesus tells him that all things are possible to him that believes. The man's response is not a triumphant declaration of confident certainty:

> *"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."*
>
> — Mark 9:24

This is the structure of authentic faith. Not the elimination of doubt, but the willingness to move toward what is already recognized as true at depth — even while the surface mind continues its objections. Faith is not the absence of tension. It is the decision to inhabit the tension productively rather than fleeing it toward false resolution in either direction.

John 7:17 is precise on this structure: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Willingness and obedience open understanding. Participation discloses what observation alone cannot reach. I entered baptism in exactly this mode. Not with every question answered. But with enough sight to step — trusting that stepping in would yield more sight than standing outside demanding certainty first. It did.

Chapter IV

The Grammar of Paradox

How Contradiction Structures the Kingdom

Jesus does not merely use paradox occasionally as a rhetorical device. Paradox is the grammar of his worldview. The deep structure of what he is disclosing is itself paradoxical — and he teaches in paradox because the reality he is pointing to cannot be communicated any other way without being falsified in the communication.

Consider the consistency of his central reversals:

> *"He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*
>
> — Matthew 10:39

> *"The last shall be first, and the first last."*
>
> — Matthew 20:16

> *"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*
>
> — Luke 14:11

> *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
>
> — John 3:3

> *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."*
>
> — Matthew 5:5

> *"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."*
>
> — Matthew 16:25

These are not contradictions in the logical sense — not the assertion of A and not-A about the same thing at the same time in the same respect. They are paradoxes in the deeper sense: revelations of a

reality whose structure is genuinely antinomial — one in which the expected relation between cause and effect, gain and loss, exaltation and humiliation, is systematically reversed. The kingdom operates under the deeper laws of the surface world — laws invisible to the low-resolution mind because they are only accessible through the transformation of perception.

The Architecture Beneath the Reversal

In *The Architecture of Contradiction*, I proposed that contradiction is not always a defect in thinking but often a signal of depth — that the more fully one understands a genuinely complex domain, the more paradoxes one encounters, because genuine complexity does not reduce to clean binaries. Jesus's paradoxes are not failures of logic. They are disclosures of higher-order structure. The one who loses his life gains it — not because loss and gain are identical, but because there are two modes of life at stake, and the clinging to the lower mode prevents access to the higher.

Once this is understood, a crucial implication follows: any reading of Jesus that insists on resolving his paradoxes — that demands they be translated into clean, non-paradoxical propositions before they can be received — has already misunderstood his method. The paradox is not a presentation problem to be fixed. It is the appropriate form of disclosure for a reality that is genuinely paradox-structured.

What the Low-Resolution Mind Does With Jesus

The low-resolution mind cannot hold genuine paradox without anxiety. Its first move is always toward premature closure: to pick one side of the tension and suppress the other. Applied to Jesus, this produces two characteristic distortions. The first is dogmatic literalism: the insistence that every statement means exactly what it appears to mean at the surface, that the paradoxes are really just colorful ways of saying something perfectly flat and manageable. The second is dismissive demythologization: the insistence that since the surface cannot be taken literally, nothing is really being claimed — that the paradoxes are merely poetic, the events merely legendary.

Both moves are premature closures. Both are flight responses to the genuine complexity of what Jesus is presenting. The Jesus mindset is the capacity to remain inside the paradox — to hold the tension of the literal and the symbolic, the historical and the metaphysical, the event and the meaning — without collapsing prematurely in either direction. It is, to use Keats's phrase as I developed it in *The Architecture of Contradiction*, negative capability applied to the religious domain: the willingness to remain in uncertainty and mystery without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.

Chapter V

The Kernel That Dies

Transformation as the Central Pattern of Reality

In John 12:24, Jesus speaks one of the most philosophically luminous sentences in the entire Gospel record:

> *"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."*
>
> — John 12:24

The biological image is accurate. A seed that is preserved intact, protected from soil and moisture and the process of germination, remains exactly what it is. It does not multiply. It does not transform. But a seed that is planted — that enters the darkness of the soil, that relinquishes its structural integrity, that undergoes the process that to an uninstructed observer looks exactly like destruction — enters a process of radical transformation that results in something incomparably larger, more complex, and more generative than what was planted.

Jesus is not offering agricultural instruction. He is naming a structure of reality. The pattern he identifies — that the form which clings to itself remains singular and enclosed, while the form that relinquishes itself enters multiplication and expansion — is not limited to seeds. It is a law of being.

The Pattern Applied to Consciousness

In *The Teleological Imperative*, I argued that reality has directional structure — that what we observe in the development of complexity, consciousness, and moral awareness is not arbitrary but oriented. Reality moves toward greater depth of experiencing, greater complexity of relation, greater integration of apparent opposites. The kernel image in John 12:24 is a disclosure of this directionality at the level of individual human transformation.

The self that clings to its current form — that insists on its existing categories, its established identities, its current level of understanding — remains exactly what it is. It does not deepen. It does not enlarge. It is, in the precise language of the image, alone: singular, self-contained, enclosed. But

the self that can consent to the dissolution of what it currently is — that can release its grip on the form it inhabits in order to allow a larger form to emerge — enters a process of transformation whose fruit exceeds anything the original structure could have predicted or produced.

This is why the spiritual masters of virtually every tradition have identified some form of ego-dissolution as the threshold of genuine development. The Zen tradition's great death. The Christian mystics' dark night of the soul. The Sufi's annihilation in God. The Stoic's liberation from attachment to outcomes. These are not culturally arbitrary practices. They are variations on the same structural insight that Jesus expresses with a seed: the form that cannot die cannot fully live.

The Method in Miniature

This image is the Jesus method in miniature. A physical process — germination — is used to communicate a metaphysical structure. The visible event is a carrier of depth, not a flat endpoint. The surface meaning is real but not exhaustive. The deeper meaning is not separate from the surface but disclosed through it.

This is decisive for the interpretive question that runs through this entire manuscript. If Jesus regularly and consistently uses visible events and physical processes to communicate deeper metaphysical truths — and he does, repeatedly, across the entire Gospel record — then the mature hearer must remain permanently open to the possibility that many things associated with him, including the most central events, are intelligible most fully through the same kind of layered apprehension. To read Jesus at the surface only is not fidelity to him. It is a failure to hear him as he required.

Chapter VI

Why Literalism Is Not the Deepest Fidelity

The Hermeneutic Stakes of Getting This Wrong

The most important clarification this manuscript must make is this: the argument against naive literalism is not an argument for the diminishment of Scripture. It is an argument for its deepest possible reading.

Literalism presents itself as fidelity. It claims to take Scripture seriously by refusing to "explain away" the miraculous. But this self-presentation contains a hidden assumption that, once exposed, undermines the claim entirely: the assumption that the most "serious" reading of a text is always the most surface-level reading. That assumption is demonstrably false even in secular contexts. No serious literary scholar claims that the deepest reading of Hamlet is the one that takes every line at its most immediate referential meaning. No serious jurist believes the deepest reading of a legal text is the one that refuses to ask what the words were meant to accomplish. Depth of reading is not the enemy of fidelity. It is its fullest expression.

The Genre Problem Jesus Himself Creates

The literalist faces a problem created not by skeptical interpreters but by Jesus himself. Jesus consistently teaches through metaphor, parable, symbol, and paradox. He explicitly says his words are spirit and life, not merely material propositions. He explicitly distinguishes between those who hear only the surface and those who hear the depth. He explicitly teaches that the kingdom is within, not primarily external. He explicitly says that the seed must die to multiply.

The literalist who accepts all of this — who agrees that these teachings are spiritual rather than merely surface — but then insists that the resurrection must be read as a flat, literal, physical reversal of death, owes us an account of the interpretive principle by which they make that switch. What changes at the boundary between Jesus's teaching and the events associated with him? On what principled basis does the hermeneutic shift from "spirit and life" to "literal biology"?

The strongest answer the literalist can offer is: because the Gospels present the resurrection as a historical event, not as a parable. This is a genuine point. The Gospel accounts do present the resurrection in the mode of historical narration. This distinction carries weight and must not be dismissed. The honest interpreter must acknowledge that biblical Christianity is making a claim about what happened in history, not merely about what is spiritually illuminating.

I do not collapse this distinction. I hold it. And I hold it alongside the equally serious recognition that the deeper question is not merely "did this happen?" but "what did it mean, and what does it still mean?" The event and the meaning are not finally separable in Jesus's framework. To grasp the meaning fully is, in the deepest sense, to grasp the event more completely than a purely surface-historical reading permits.

Holding the Tension Without Attacking It

My position, stated with full honesty, is this: I accept Jesus as a revealer of deep metaphysical truth. I read his words, his signs, and the events associated with him through a symbolic, spiritual, and transformative lens as the primary mode of apprehension. I do not dismiss the historical claims of Scripture. I hold them with appropriate gravity. And I recognize that what biblical Christianity means by the resurrection — the claim that the metaphysical entered history, that the eternal became temporal, that what died was genuinely raised — may be precisely what is required to maintain the full weight of the disclosure.

The capacity to hold this tension — to honor the literal-historical claim and the symbolic-spiritual reading simultaneously, without forcing a premature resolution in either direction — is itself an expression of the Jesus mindset. It is not confusion. It is not evasion. It is the mature soul's refusal to collapse into the comfort of a single, flat, unambiguous answer when the reality being described exceeds the capacity of any single register to contain it.

Those who believe literally nourish themselves on a truth that is real. Those who hear symbolically encounter a depth that is equally real. The deepest fidelity is the willingness to remain in the space where both are honored — to refuse the false comfort of having finally solved the mystery — and to let the unresolved tension continue to be generative.

Chapter VII

Resurrection as Transformative Pattern

The Supreme Instance of the Deepest Law

The resurrection is the center around which everything in Christian faith orbits. Paul says it plainly: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). No honest treatment of the Jesus mindset can avoid this claim. And this manuscript does not try to.

The question I want to press — not to dissolve the claim, but to deepen it — is this: what is the resurrection of? What dies, and what rises, and in what sense, and to what end? The literalist answer is clear: the body of Jesus, which died on the cross, was physically raised and physically appeared to the disciples. I take this claim seriously. I do not mock it. I hold it with the gravity it deserves.

And I press into its deeper dimension — the dimension that Paul himself opens in the same chapter when he writes about the resurrection body:

> *"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."*
>
> — 1 Corinthians 15:44

Paul is not describing a resuscitated corpse. He is describing a transformation that exceeds the categories of ordinary physical restoration. The risen body is related to the buried body the way a plant is related to the seed. The continuity is real. The discontinuity is equally real. The resurrection is not the reversal of death back to the prior state. It is the transformation of death into something that could not have existed without passing through it.

The Seed Pattern at Maximum Amplitude

The resurrection is the supreme instance of the pattern Jesus names in John 12:24. The seed falls into the ground and dies. What rises is not the seed restored to its prior state. What rises is something new — something the seed could not have become without dying. The resurrection is the kernel image operating at its maximum amplitude: the actual enactment, in the person of Jesus, of the deepest law of being.

This is why the resurrection is not reducible to mere symbol — but it is also why it cannot be adequately understood as merely physical restoration. It is the demonstration, in and through a human life, that the structure Jesus had been teaching throughout his ministry is not a consoling metaphor but the actual architecture of reality. Life does emerge through surrender. Truth cannot finally be buried. What is given into God does not simply disappear.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul is not speaking of physical death and return. He is speaking of the death of the self that clings to its own enclosure, and the rising of the self that participates in the larger life. The resurrection pattern is not a one-time event at the periphery of existence. It is the central law of transformation operating at every level of the reality Jesus discloses.

The Honest Position

I do not claim certainty about the physical mechanics of what happened at the resurrection. I am not equipped — and I doubt that any living human being is equipped — to pronounce with confidence on the metaphysics of what occurs when the divine enters history fully. What I can say with confidence is this: the resurrection, read through the Jesus mindset, names something real — something that is not merely a legend of the ancient world but a disclosure of the deepest structure of being.

Whether that structure was enacted once, historically, in the body of Jesus of Nazareth — whether it is the perennial law of transformation that Jesus's life embodies and illustrates — or whether both are true simultaneously — I hold open. What I refuse is the premature closure in either direction. Both refusals are expressions of the same commitment: to take the claim of Jesus seriously enough to resist domesticating it.

Chapter VIII

Baptism Before Comprehension

Participatory Truth and the Structure of Authentic Faith

On the fifth of April, 2026, I was fully submerged in a baptismal tank by my pastor, at the age of fifty. I want to say something precise about what that act was, and was not, because it is directly relevant to the argument of this manuscript.

I did not enter baptism in a state of resolved doctrinal certainty. I did not enter it as one who had worked through every tension and arrived at a comfortable theological equilibrium. I entered it as one who had seen enough — who had traced enough of the pattern, in Scripture and in lived experience, to recognize that the reality Jesus was pointing to was real, and that the appropriate response to recognized reality is not continued observation from a critical distance but committed participation.

This is not, as I have argued, an irrational move. It is the move that Jesus consistently commends. John 7:17: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Understanding comes through willingness. The full disclosure of the teaching is available only to the one who enters the practice of it. The spectator position — the demand for complete theoretical clarity before any practical commitment — is not the position from which the reality Jesus describes becomes fully visible.

The Disciples Did Not Understand Either

Scripture is clear on this point, and the clarity is rarely given the weight it deserves. The twelve disciples did not follow Jesus because they had first constructed an adequate Christology. They followed because something in the encounter compelled them — something they could not yet articulate or defend, but could not responsibly ignore. Their understanding deepened precisely through the practice of following. Understanding was the fruit of participation, not its precondition.

The man born blind in John 9 provides the sharpest version of this pattern. The religious authorities demand an account from him — a full theological explanation of what happened and by whose

authority it was done. He cannot provide it. He says, simply:

> *"Whereas I was blind, now I see."*
>
> — John 9:25

This is not intellectual evasion. It is the most honest testimony available. The transformation is real. Its mechanism exceeds his conceptual resources. The correct response to genuine transformation is not to withhold acknowledgment of it until a satisfactory explanation is available. It is to testify truthfully to what has occurred and trust that the explanation will arrive in its own time.

After my baptism, as I sat with what had happened and allowed it to integrate, the clarity of this manuscript began to emerge. The arguments I had been working toward for years — about layered reality, about contradiction as a mark of depth, about consciousness as participant in the disclosure of being, about faith as causative posture — all of them suddenly cohered around the person and method of Jesus in a way they had not before the act of stepping in. The post-baptismal insight confirms the structure I am describing: one sees more clearly after stepping into alignment than before.

On Stewardship of Understanding

I hold this understanding with a particular kind of stewardship. It is not identical to standard biblical Christianity. It does not pretend to be. And yet it is coherent, honest, intellectually serious, and — I believe — in genuine continuity with the deepest thrust of what Jesus was doing. Not everyone is in a position to receive it in the form in which it appears here. Many people are nourished by a more literal faith, and that nourishment is real. I have no interest in disturbing it unnecessarily.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). There is a time for this kind of understanding to be shared, and a time for it to be held quietly while it deepens. Stewardship of understanding is not concealment out of fear. It is fidelity to the pedagogical wisdom embedded in the very method of the one being followed.

Chapter IX

The Mature Soul Holds Tension

Spiritual Maturity as the Refusal of Premature Closure

One of the great failures of modern religious culture — and of modern secular culture with equal completeness — is the terror of unresolved tension. Both demand premature closure. Both treat the persistence of contradiction as a sign of failure rather than a mark of sufficient depth. Both prefer the comfort of a settled answer to the generativity of a genuinely open question.

Traditional religion often flees into dogmatic flattening: the authoritative text is interpreted in the one approved way, dissent is treated as betrayal, and the living tension of genuine inquiry is suppressed in favor of the comfort of collective certainty. Secular skepticism often flees into reductionistic flattening: the miraculous is automatically impossible, the spiritual is always merely psychological, and the persistent longing for transcendence is always a cognitive bias to be overcome. Both are sophisticated forms of the same underlying problem: the inability to remain inside genuine complexity without panic.

What Spiritual Maturity Actually Requires

The mature soul — in the sense I am developing across this series of manuscripts — is not the one who has finally resolved all tensions. It is the one who has developed the capacity to inhabit them productively. Who can hold the literal and the symbolic without collapsing either. Who can maintain genuine faith and genuine questioning simultaneously. Who can be transformed by an encounter with the living reality of Jesus while continuing to press the intellectual questions that encounter generates.

The Fitzgerald standard, developed in *The Architecture of Contradiction*, applies here with full force: the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function. Applied to the spiritual domain: the test of a mature faith is the ability to hold the full weight of the supernatural claim and the full weight of the symbolic reading simultaneously — and to go on living, and growing, and following, from within that held tension.

This is precisely the position of Mark 9:24. "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The man is not pretending certainty he does not possess. He is bringing the full reality of his inner state — the genuine faith and the genuine doubt — into the encounter with Jesus, and asking for both to be engaged. This is more honest, and more deeply faithful, than either the confident literalist or the confident skeptic.

The Productive Tension as Spiritual Discipline

The capacity to hold tension is not merely a cognitive achievement. It is a spiritual discipline — one that requires active cultivation and sustained practice. What is uncomfortable — and what is also, as I have argued at length, the mark of genuine intellectual and spiritual development — is the willingness to remain in the space where the question has not yet fully resolved, and to let that unresolved tension continue to generate insight.

Jesus himself modeled this. At Gethsemane he does not suppress the anguish of what is approaching: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me" (Luke 22:42). He does not pretend to feel something other than what he feels. He holds the full weight of his own suffering and his own faith simultaneously, and from within that holding he continues: "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." This is the supreme instance of the mature soul holding tension — not the elimination of the struggle, but its faithful continuation within the embrace of a larger trust.

The Jesus mindset is not the achievement of a state beyond tension. It is the capacity to live faithfully within it. To demand that faith eliminate all tension before it can be genuine is to demand that the seed not enter the ground.

Chapter X

The Jesus Mindset

A Portrait of the Mode of Consciousness He Requires and Embodies

What, then, is the Jesus mindset? I have been building toward this characterization through everything that precedes it. Let me now attempt a full portrait. The Jesus mindset is not first a set of doctrines to be affirmed. It is not a set of behaviors to be performed. It is a mode of consciousness — a way of perceiving, receiving, and inhabiting reality — that Jesus himself both embodies and teaches.

Its Constitutive Elements

It hears beyond surfaces.

The Jesus mindset does not take the first, most obvious reading as exhaustive. It knows that reality is layered, that teaching is layered, that events are layered, and that the deepest meaning is not always available to the surface reading. It brings a second and third hearing to what is encountered, and it resists the temptation to declare the question closed too soon.

It recognizes paradox as a pathway to depth.

When the Jesus mindset encounters contradiction or paradox, it does not flee toward premature resolution. It recognizes that genuine paradox is often a signal that one has arrived at the edge of the flatland — and that the next step requires not a solution but a transformation of the one who is asking.

It understands that faith opens perception.

The Jesus mindset knows that the posture one brings to reality determines what one is capable of receiving from it. It practices faith not as intellectual surrender but as the disciplined opening of the interior by which deeper reality becomes accessible. It knows that the leap precedes the landing, and that the landing confirms the leap.

It privileges meaning over spectacle.

The Jesus mindset is not primarily interested in the dramatic external event. It asks, always, what the event discloses — what it means, what it reveals about the structure of being, what it calls forth in the one who encounters it. The kingdom does not come with observation. It comes with readiness.

It locates divine access inwardly.

Following Luke 17:21, the Jesus mindset takes the interior seriously as the primary location of spiritual encounter, without collapsing into mere subjectivism. It knows that the inner preparation is not a retreat from objectivity but its deepest condition.

It accepts that transformation may precede full explanation.

The Jesus mindset does not require complete theoretical resolution before it acts. It knows that participation opens understanding, that the doing precedes the knowing, and that baptism before full comprehension is not irrational but biblical — even as the comprehension arrives afterward.

It refuses both gullibility and reductionism.

The Jesus mindset is not credulous. It does not accept everything because it is labeled spiritual. But it equally refuses the reductionist move that translates everything real into the merely material. It maintains the full range of what reality might contain and what human consciousness might be capable of encountering.

It can hold tension long enough for higher coherence to emerge.

The Jesus mindset is patient with unresolved questions. It knows that premature closure is a form of violence against the truth. It waits, in faith, for the higher coherence that sustained inhabitation of the question eventually discloses — and it has learned to trust that such coherence does arrive.

It reads all of reality as symbolically saturated.

For the Jesus mindset, the world is not a flat collection of facts. It is a layered disclosure of meaning. Every event, every encounter, every suffering, every joy is potentially a carrier of depth. To inhabit reality with the Jesus mindset is to read the world as Jesus read it — as transparent to the kingdom, shot through with the presence of the one who said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

The Jesus mindset is, in this sense, an awakened way of reading not only Scripture but reality itself. It is what Jesus means when he says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He is not asking for

auditory attention. He is asking for this mode of consciousness — this quality of interior readiness, depth of receptivity, and willingness to inhabit the layered truth without premature collapse.

This mode of consciousness is not the exclusive possession of those who carry the Christian label. Jesus himself seems to know this. The woman at the well, the Centurion, the Syrophoenician woman — some of the most striking examples of spiritual perception in the Gospels come from those outside the official religious community. The Jesus mindset is available wherever genuine interiority meets genuine truth. Its fullest disclosure is in and through Jesus. But its scope is as wide as the human encounter with reality.

Chapter XI

Conclusion

I Was Blind, and Now I See

The man born blind in John 9 does not offer a systematic defense of his healing. He does not construct an apologetic for the mechanism by which it occurred. He does not wait until he can satisfy the demands of those who find the healing theologically inconvenient. He says: "Whereas I was blind, now I see." That sentence is the structure of authentic spiritual testimony. It is not the claim of exhaustive understanding. It is the honest report of genuine transformation.

I entered baptism without full understanding. I emerged with greater sight. That is my testimony, and I offer it with the precision that testimony requires: not as proof of a proposition, but as the report of a reality experienced. Faith did not ask me to betray my intellect. It asked me to trust that reality runs deeper than surface mechanism — and that in stepping toward Jesus sincerely, more would become visible. It did.

What became visible is what this manuscript has attempted to articulate: that Jesus consistently teaches through layers; that spiritual hearing outruns surface hearing; that inner transformation is the primary locus of divine encounter; that faith is genuinely causative in lived spiritual life; that contradiction and paradox are not obstacles to the truth but often its most accurate carriers; and that the deepest fidelity to Jesus is not the rigid defense of the surface reading but the committed inhabitation of the depth he himself required.

The Living Truth

On the day of my baptism, I said that Jesus reveals a living truth that transforms the human heart. I meant every word of that. The transformation is real. The truth is living — not because it changes with each interpreter's preference, but because it participates in the life of those who receive it. It is not an inert proposition stored in a doctrinal archive. It is an active reality that continues to disclose itself in and through the lives of those who orient toward it.

This is what I mean by the Jesus mindset. Not a philosophical system that domesticates the wild strangeness of the Gospels into manageable abstractions. Not a skeptical deconstruction that leaves nothing standing. But the living encounter with a mode of reality that the person of Jesus both embodies and discloses — a reality whose depths are available to anyone who develops the ears to hear.

The philosophical work I have done in *The Teleological Imperative*, in *The Architecture of Contradiction*, in *Deus Sive Natura*, and in *The Sovereign Within* has been, in one sense, a long preparation for what this manuscript attempts. All of that work was moving toward the recognition that reality is layered, that consciousness participates in its disclosure, that contradiction is often a mark of depth rather than failure, and that the human being is not a spectator of a meaningless process but a participant in the ongoing self-disclosure of a structured and intelligible reality. The present manuscript names what that reality looks like when its deepest layer is encountered in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

I do not claim finality. I do not claim exhaustive comprehension. I do not claim mastery over mystery. The mystery remains. The questions remain. The tension remains. What has changed is my relationship to the mystery — and that change is, in the language of the one I am following, precisely what resurrection means.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

I have heard.

Not everything. Not finally. But genuinely.

And that is enough to continue.

Dr. Gabriel Antonio Suárez
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
April 5, 2026

Appendix

Scripture Index and Philosophical Cross-References

Core Scripture References

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth — paradox of kingdom values

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God — inwardness as epistemological condition

Matthew 10:39 He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it — the foundational paradox of transformation

Matthew 11:15 "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" — the hermeneutic command

Matthew 13:9-17 Parable of the sower and the distinction between surface and deep hearing

Matthew 16:25 Whoever will save his life shall lose it — paradox as structure of truth

Matthew 20:16 The last shall be first, and the first last — reversal as law of the kingdom

Mark 4:11-12 The mystery given to some, concealed in parables from others

Mark 9:24 "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" — faith before resolution

Mark 10:52 "Thy faith hath made thee whole" — faith as causative posture

Luke 8:48 "Thy faith hath made thee whole" — inner orientation as operative principle

Luke 14:11 Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased — the paradox of humility and exaltation

Luke 17:19-21 The kingdom of God is within you — interiority as primary locus of divine encounter

Luke 22:42 Gethsemane — the mature soul holding tension without suppression

Luke 24:45 "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures"

John 3:3-8 "Born again" — literal misunderstanding corrected by spiritual meaning

John 6:53-63 "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" — the interpretive key

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine — participatory truth

John 9:25 "Whereas I was blind, now I see" — transformation before explanation

John 12:24 The kernel must die to bring forth fruit — transformation as law of being

John 14:26 The Spirit teaches and brings understanding — inner illumination continues

John 16:12 "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" — stewardship of understanding

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit — spiritual discernment required

1 Corinthians 15:14 "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain" — the centrality of resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" — transformation not resuscitation

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live" — the pattern of dying and rising applied

Ephesians 1:18 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened" — inward illumination as the goal

2 Corinthians 4:6 Inner illumination as the pattern of divine disclosure

Cross-References to the Philosophical Series

The Teleological Imperative

Reality as layered, intelligible, and progressively disclosed; consciousness as participant in the disclosure of structured meaning; existential longing as evidence of objective depth; the convergence argument across disciplines as evidence of discovered rather than invented truth.

The Architecture of Contradiction

Contradiction as signal of depth rather than failure; the Fitzgerald standard; negative capability applied to spiritual and intellectual life; the low-resolution mind and premature closure; dialectical thinking as both cognitive and spiritual discipline.

Deus Sive Natura

God as immanent rather than remote; the one substance expressed through extension and thought; the movement toward adequate ideas as participation in being's self-knowledge; joy as increase in power of being; the conatus as the universe's embedded directional Will; resonance with "the kingdom is within you."

The Sovereign Within

The inner condition as participant in the shaping of what becomes possible; the body as responsive to consciousness; healing as disclosure of deeper causality; the ancient convergence on inner transformation across traditions; the scientific confirmation of what Jesus pointed to with "thy faith hath made thee whole."

This manuscript is the fifth in an ongoing series of philosophical investigations into consciousness, meaning, contradiction, and the ground of being by Dr. Gabriel Antonio Suarez. Correspondence and inquiries may be directed to Sciox, LLC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.