

Belgic Confession 2—I Know God because he reveals himself to me

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, the last time you learned about God: Who he is, what his nature is, and what that means for you. But how did I get to know the things I told you about? Was it a dream? Did I look at the readings from the stars? Did an angel tell them to me? Did I go praying in the mountains and God spoke to me? Did I find them written on buried tablets? This is the question you will hear answered today: How do we come to know God and know about God?

Our headings are:

Revelation of God – Natural

Revelation of God – Special

Revelation of God - Responsibility

Our goals are: That you **know that God reveals who he is through natural and special revelation**(自然和特殊启示), that you **learn what God says about himself naturally and specially**, and that you will then be moved to **obey and worship him as you should**.

Revelation of God - Natural

We know Him by two means: First, **by the creation**, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a **most elegant book**, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and **leave them without excuse**. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us **by His holy and divine Word**, that is to say, as **far as is necessary for us to know in this life**, to His glory and our salvation.

我们用两种方法认识神：第一是借着神的创造、保护并管理宇宙 1；就是在我们眼前一本佳作，在其中的一切受造之物，无论大小，都引导我们观摩神不可见的事，即他的永能和神性，正如使徒保罗在罗马书一章 20 节中所说的。凡事足以叫人知道，心服口服，无可推诿。第二，就是借着他的圣言，就是圣经将他自己更清楚、更完全地启示给我们 2，那就是说在今生，对于他的荣耀，以及我们的救恩所应了解的事，都在圣经中记载了。（Translated by Rev. Charles Chao D.D.）

1. There are 2 ways of knowing God – Jehovah. Both ways of knowing God begin with God...he is the source of knowledge.

2. You know God by what you see and experience naturally. This is called natural revelation.

You see God in Creation

Consider what the Psalmist said 3000 years ago:

Psalm 19:1 - ...The heavens declare the glory of God; And the **firmament shows** His handiwork.（诸天述说神的荣耀，穹苍传扬他的手段。）

It was as if nature had a voice. And you can read further for more details.

Psalm 75:1 - ...We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! **For Your wondrous works declare** that Your name is near.

Psalm 97:6 - The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples see His glory.

When you see a wonderful sunset you are left speechless because the beauty says so much about the Creator.

You see God in the Preservation（护理）of Creation

The way God keeps all things...that the world does not spin out of circuit...etc. is evidence of his preservation. God lets things reproduce ...so the species continue. God provides for the flowers...and for the birds so life continues.

Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet **your heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they?"

You see God in the Governance of Creation

Romans 1:20 - For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,（自从造天地以来，神的永能和神性是明明可知的，虽是眼不能见，但藉着所造之物，就可以晓得，叫人无可推诿；）

God controls the movements for earthquakes...he raises the tides...he controls when volcanoes and sunspots（太阳耀斑）erupt.

He **brings famines（饥荒）** to show his justice, and he **gives food** to show his mercy.

It is a beautiful thing to see how God provides rain in different ways so the world is properly watered.

3. These things speak loud and clear about God. While most of these things do not have a physical voice, they yet speak loudly. You can say a lot of things without speaking! A picture says “a thousand words.” And the voice is clear enough for the deafest person to understand. Nature – God’s creation - speaks every language. So the Japanese can understand it as well.

4. These things not only speak loudly about God, but they speak much about God.

They speak of God’s power. They speak of God’s wisdom. They speak of God’s love and generosity. So no one can honestly say that he doesn’t believe in God. He may deny it, but he believes it.

5. These things speak so much about God that man is without excuse for not believing in God. In fact, God condemns men to hell because they do not accept what he says about himself in natural revelation.

Romans 1: 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse,**

Revelation of God - Special

1. You know about God through special Revelation. This is when God’s message was communicated directly to man.

This special message completes what natural revelation could not. Yes, you can learn of God’s power, glory, and wisdom from natural revelation, but special revelation is the only glasses through which you can properly see how sinful you are and how you may be saved from your sins!

2. Earlier in history, before the Bible was completed, God gave special revelation through dreams, visions (异象), angels, prophets, and providential circumstances, but now, which the perfect revelation of God completed, he specially speaks through his Word. This is much better than before...and complete...and fuller. No one can add to what is complete. No one can fill a full barrel. To believe that you can is foolish. To attempt to do so is illogical.

3. There is a limit to what God has revealed, however. There are some things that are not necessary for your salvation and sanctification that the Lord did not see it fit to pass on to you.

Deuteronomy 29:29 - "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

God revealed the things to tell you how to be saved from your sins and how to live and grow as Christian, but he has not revealed things he doesn’t want you to know.

God revealed the things to tell you how you may properly glorify him.

Responsibility to God

1. You must then trust, love, and worship and obey this true God whom you know from general and special revelation.

Consider what happens when you reject what God says about himself.

Romans 1:21 -23 - although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but **became futile in their thoughts,** and their foolish **hearts were darkened.** 22 Professing to be wise, they **became fools,** 23 and **changed the glory of the incorruptible God** into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. (21 因为他们虽然知道神，却不当作神荣耀他，也不感谢他。他们的思念变为虚妄，无知的心就昏暗了。22 自称为聪明，反成了愚拙；23 将不能朽坏之神的荣耀，变为偶像，仿佛必朽坏的人，和飞禽走兽昆虫的样式。)

When you reject what God says about himself, you become trapped by your futile interpretation of all things. You cannot understand anything properly without the proper knowledge and view of God.

Look at the billions of dollars man spends trying to find out the source of life on earth...or how evolution (进化论) took place...

Think of all the organs that were removed from the human body that were supposedly vestigial (残余的) and now we know have specific functions!

Think of all the sociological errors (社会学的错误) that man has made because they refused to recognize that God made man.

Abortion and Euthanasia (安乐死) are seen as normal things. If life did not come from God, then man could do whatever he wants with his life.

Child rearing: If there is no God...and no Fall...the children are born pure and therefore society is at fault for children's behavior...not children. Discipline of children is affected as well.

Knowledge of God has attendant responsibilities. (**By the way, you are evangelistic when you teach about God!**)

2. Ask God for the help of his Holy Spirit to properly understand what he has revealed about himself

in his Word and his creation. The Bible teaches that the natural thinking of man does not allow him to properly understand God.

This is because man's natural thinking has been corrupted from Adam and Eve.

Both wanted to be like God and sinned.

And remember, God has no obligations to make you believe that he is real. This is grace.

Ask him for help...don't demand.

3. Constantly take time to refresh your knowledge of God from natural revelation and special revelation.

Take time to look at the flowers...the beauty of the things around...the nature of animals...

Look at the way the ant was made – it labors to store food in winter.

Look at how the insect is dependent on the flower and the flower dependent on the insect.

Look at the thinness of the wings of the mosquito, yet it is able to fly.

And just as passionately, and even more so, take time to **look into God's Word to see him.**

Ask him to **let his Holy Spirit open your mind** so you can fully understand the wonderful things God has revealed. By doing these things you will learn to love God more... and you will worship him better.

And knowing man was made by God and did not evolve, you will learn to love your fellow men better as well.

Conclusion:

There is much you can learn about God in nature. You can learn that he is a great God who made things in a most orderly (秩序井然的) and beautiful way. You can learn that he is the preserver and governor of all things. He is a God who is in control. You can see how gracious God is to all men. But you will admit that natural revelation does not explain how sinful man is and how he can be saved from his sinfulness. This is why a gracious God reveals himself to you through special Revelation – which is the Word of God. In God's special revelation you can learn who you are...more details of who God is...and specifically... what God did to save you from your sins. How Jesus was taken on human flesh and was born of a Virgin. How he lived and died for you and your sins were counted as his when he died on the cross. No Bible, no salvation. Know Bible, know salvation.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Are you daily learning God's natural and special revelation so you can learn how to worship him better...and praise him for his greatness and his goodness? This takes effort to do...so work at it. Don't read your Bible on Sunday alone... Read it everyday. Think about it. Meditate on it. And in the business of life, take the time to look at the beauty of the world. Instead of some simple video games...or songs that have no meaning... wouldn't it be better to watch the stars, or a beautiful sunset...or a lovely snowfall...and then praise God for it?

If you are not a Christian, I am afraid you have a perverted (堕落的) view of the world. You view everything in light of what YOU think...not what God thinks. Your glasses are your desire. The result is you might even want to worship nature! Or you might want to destroy the things God has made! Only when you realize that your view has been corrupted by sin that you will begin to appreciate God, as he is revealed in nature and in the Bible.