

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

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: For 10 weeks we looked at 10 main attributes (属性) of God, communicable and incommunicable attributes 神可传达的与不可传达的属性. It was important to spend time on these attributes of God because **they show how bad we were, how much we needed a Savior, and how we are to live now.**

**But how did we get to know the things we heard about in those sermons?** Was it a dream? Did we look at the readings from the stars? Did an angel tell them to us? Did we go praying in the mountains and God spoke to us? Did we 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**, that you **learn what God says about himself**, and that you will then be moved to **obey and worship him as you should.**

## **Revelation of God - Natural**

BC2 - We know Him by two means: First, **by the creation**, preservation 保守, and government 治理 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 神性, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince 使信服 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.

### **1. There are 2 ways to learn about God – Jehovah God: In nature and by special revelation.**

#### **2. First, let us look at natural revelation.** 自然启示, 即普遍启示

**You know God by what you see and experience naturally.**

**a. You see God in Creation.** Consider what the Psalmist said 3000 years ago about seeing God in creation:

Psalm 19:1 - ...**The heavens declare** the glory of God; And the **firmament 穹苍 shows** His handiwork 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.**

The “name” of God represents his person. So God’s works speak of him.

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

In nature you see God’s righteousness and his glory. Even in a fallen state, nature shows order, not confusion. And the wonder of God is evident every single day, if you take the time to look. When you see a wonderful sunset you are left speechless because the beauty says so much about the Creator’s glory and power.

#### **b. You see God in the Preservation of Creation**

God keeps all things. The world does not spin out of circuit 旋转轨道 This is evidence of God’s power of preservation. God lets things reproduce 生育繁殖 – so the species are preserved. 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 收割 nor gather into barns; yet **your heavenly Father feeds 养活 them.** Are you not of more value than they?

Even the juices that man gets from plants...tasty lychee juice...speaks of the way God preserves creation for man.

#### **c. 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 ( 永能 ) and Godhead ( 神性, ) so that they are without excuse ( 无可推诿 ),**

God controls the movements for earthquakes...he raises the tides – telling them how far they can go...he controls when volcanoes and sunspots ( 太阳黑子 ) erupt ( 喷发, 爆发 ) . 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 in nature speak loudly and clearly about God and they speak much 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 speaks every language. So the Japanese can understand it as well.

**And how much do they speak of God?** They speak of God’s power. They speak of God’s wisdom. They speak of God’s love. They speak of God’s generosity. So no one can honestly say that he doesn’t believe in God. He may deny it, but he believes it.

#### **4. These things speak so much about God that man is without excuse for not believing in God.**

God can properly and justly send someone to hell who does not glorify him based on what God shows him in 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,**

### **Revelation of God - Special**

#### **1. You know about God through special Revelation.**

This is when God’s message is 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 (眼镜) through which you can properly see how sinful you are and how you may be saved from your sins!**

#### **2. What are ways that we have received special revelation from God?**

Before the Bible was completed, God gave special revelation through dreams, visions (异象), angels, prophets, and providential (神护理之下的) circumstances, theophanies (神的显现), etc. but now, with the perfect revelation of God completed, he speaks through his completed, perfected Word. The Word of God is much better than before and fuller. No one can add to it. It is complete. **No one can fill a full barrel.** To believe that you can is foolish. To attempt to do so is illogical不合逻辑的.

2Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration (默示) of God, and is profitable for doctrine (教训), for reproof (责备), for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 **that the man of God may be complete,** thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Everything you need for your salvation and sanctification (成圣) is included in God’s completed Word.

#### **3. There is a limit to what God has specially 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 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, 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 (虚妄) 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 (不朽坏的) God** into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

**When you reject what God says about himself, you become trapped by your own futile interpretation of all things.** You cannot understand anything properly without the proper knowledge and view of God. You will have a floating 漂浮的, 易变的 view of what is right and wrong.

**When you have your own futile interpretations you will worship yourself and continually make bad judgments:**

Look at the billions of dollars man spends trying to find the source of life or to find out how evolution took place.

Look at all the organs 器官 that were removed from the human body that were supposedly vestigial 退化的 and now we know have specific functions!

Look at the sociological 社会学的 errors that man has made because he refuses to recognize that God made man.

Look how we are killing babies (abortions 堕胎), the elderly, and the sick (euthanasia 安乐死). If life did not come from God, then man could do whatever he wants with his life.

Look how many genders we have!

Look at how we are rearing 抚养 children, refusing to discipline 管教 them to raise them in the fear of the Lord. We act as if children were born pure and therefore society is at the main fault for children’s behavior...not children.

Look how we are celebrating perversion 变态, 堕落 on our money. (Our money is a fraud 骗局 as well.) Look at how foolishly some people invest their money... Many hoard (积攒, not trusting in God. Many waste it, forgetting that they have to give account to 向...交账 God for how they use God's money.

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

The Bible teaches that the natural thinking of man does not allow him to properly understand God so man needs the Holy Spirit's help. (Man lost the ability to properly understand God because he became corrupted in the Fall 堕落.) God has no obligations to make you believe that he is real. This is grace. So pray for it.

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

Take time to look at the flowers...how they grow and multiply...the beauty of the things around...the nature of animals...Look at the way the ant was made – it labors to store food for winter. Look at how the insect (昆虫) is dependent on the flower and the flower dependent on the insect. Look how predictable the seasons change. Consider the millions of colors in the universe. Look at the thinness of the wings of the mosquito, yet it is able to fly. (This is why you study science in school!)

**4. Constantly take time to refresh your knowledge of God from special revelation.**

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 you will learn to love you fellow men better. You will realize that **your neighbor was did not come by time, chance, and matter**, but he was made in the image of Almighty God, and you must treat him well.

**5. Teach other about God – what you learn from nature and from the Bible.**

Teaching about God is evangelistic (传福音的)! Man will see his sin and learn of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

**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 and beautiful way. (And you can enjoy them.) You can learn that he is the preserver and governor of all things. He is a God who is in control of all things. 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 gracious **God revealed himself to you through special Revelation** – the Word of God. In God's special revelation you learn who you are...details of who God is...and what God did to save you from your sins...how Jesus took on human flesh and was born of a Virgin...and 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:

**1. You are saved. You learned about salvation through Jesus Christ in the Bible, but 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 every day. Think about it. Meditate on it.

**2. And in the busy-ness of life, take the time to look at the beauty of the world.** Instead of playing video games... or singing 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?

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you have a perverted 被扭曲的 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 want to worship nature! 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. And then you will ask God to save you. So dig into God's Word today!