



Martin Chemnitz
(1522-1586)

In **Acts 17:27** Paul says that God can almost be contacted through these evidences.

Nine proofs are listed (Melancton) (1) the very order of nature itself, (2) the nature of the human mind, (3) the difference between the honorable and the shameful, (4) the truthfulness of natural knowledge, (5) the terrors of conscience, (6) the structure of human society, (7) the orderly process of cause and effect, (8) the signs of future events, (9) the ultimate purpose of things.... These proofs of the natural knowledge of God can be quite favorably compared with the arguments of Paul by which in his preaching to the gentiles he marshals his argument concerning the natural knowledge of God"

Loci Theologici
Martin Chemnitz
(p.52)

Introduction:

- ⑥ If there is a God, how can we prove He exists? If God exists, how do we speak about Him? How do we know God? If God is almighty, then why is there suffering evil in the world? Many questions about God have been asked throughout the history of mankind. Do we have all the answers to questions about God? Where do we go for the answers and how do we know what's true?

Q: Can you prove that God exists? Is it necessary for true faith?

Read Augsburg Confession – Article I - God

- ⑥ Luther's Small Catechism question 105, p. 129.
- ⑥ As Lutheran Christians our confession of God isn't founded on human reason or understanding. We believe the Bible is God's revelation of Himself, this belief is only through faith worked by the Holy Spirit with God's word. As Lutherans we also have the Catechism, and The Book of Concord that we use to help us speak rightly about God.
- ⑥ **Theology** - θεός (theos) – God + λόγος (logos) – word, utterance. **Literally** - *Words about God* - The study of God.
- ⑥ As Lutherans we believe the only source of man's knowledge of God is God's own revelation. We can only speak about God as He's revealed Himself to us in Scripture. *"There is no absolute knowledge of God independent of God's self-revelation (Pieper, vol 1, p.369)."*
- ✠ **1 Timothy 6:16**
- ✠ **Job 37:23**
- ✠ **John 1:18**
- ⑥ Unbelievers would say there is no empirical (concrete, verifiable, observable) evidence of God, and the Bible is just a book written by men.
- ✠ **Psalms 14:1**

Q: How do we confess our faith/belief about God to others?

Revealed and Natural Knowledge of God:

- ⑥ *"The knowledge of God is twofold: the natural knowledge of God and the revealed knowledge of God. Between these two aspects of the knowledge of God there is a vast difference, an understanding of which is necessary in order to answer certain troublesome questions (Chemnitz, Loci Theologici, p. 51)."*

Natural Knowledge of God:

- ⑥ *A certain knowledge of God is inborn, and this can be expanded and further confirmed by the contemplation of the works and ways of God in nature and history. [4] The knowledge thus arising, though in itself true, may nevertheless be corrupted and changed into error through the moral depravity existing in man; [5] it is at best very imperfect, making known indeed something concerning God, e.g., his existence and somewhat of his attributes and will, but this never in its entire extent, and never in such manner as to give to man an absolute certainty, so as to furnish a trustworthy guide for his faith and life; [6] much less does it suffice to secure his salvation (Schmid, p.114)."*
- ⑥ *What can be known of God if he has not spoken directly to us? When people speak about "knowing God," they often base their claims on some personal experience or overpowering feeling. They "know God" through the beauty of a sunset, the majesty of the mountain peaks or the incredible order of the universe. They "know God" through the moral order of society or the uniqueness of human reason and love. In Christian theology, this is called the natural knowledge of God. It is information that is revealed through God's "fingerprints" in creation (Mueller, p.28).*



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“The human race has been so created and then so redeemed that we as the image and temple of God might celebrate the praises of God. For God wills to be known and worshiped. A clear (with regard to the knowledge of God) and firm (pertaining to our assent) knowledge of God would have continued in the minds of men if our nature had remained unimpaired. And afterward, after Adam and Eve had been received back into grace, there is no greater or better work of man than to have true knowledge of God, to pray to Him, and to proclaim Him, as it says in Ps. 149:1 and Ps. 118:17.”
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The Natural Knowledge of God is derived:

- ⑥ From the Divine Works of Creation.
 - † **Romans 1:20**
 - † **Psalms 19:1**
- ⑥ God’s operation in nature and in human history.
 - † **Acts 14:15-17**
 - † **Acts 17:26-28 (Matt 5:45)**
- ⑥ Scripture speaks of the natural knowledge written into the minds and hearts of men. *“In the realm of nature and in history God approaches man through things outside man. By writing His Law in the heart of man, however, God confronts man directly from within man’s nature. He manifests Himself as the holy and righteous God, who demands and rewards the good and condemns and punishes the evil (Pieper, vol 1, p.372).”*
 - † **Romans 1:19; 2:14-15**
 - † **Jeremiah 31:33**
- ⑥ *It is evident therefore that atheism of all shades—crass atheism, or pantheism, or polytheism, or agnosticism—is neither rational nor scientific. On the contrary, atheism springs from the suppression and denial of the natural knowledge of God. And this suppression has its source in man’s love of immorality (Pieper, vol 1, p. 373).”*

Q: What is the value of the natural knowledge of God?

- ⑥ That we might seek God (Acts 17)

Conclusion:

- ⑥ *Some knowledge of God may be found through these and other sources, but what does it ultimately explain? There is beauty and order in the world, but there is also nature’s seemingly indiscriminate destructive power. For every blessing in life there seems to be judgment and sorrow. The knowledge of God gained through observation and contemplation of the world and oneself can indicate the existence of a God, but it cannot tell us with any certainty how this God feels about us nor how we stand before him (Mueller, p.30).*
- ⑥ Natural knowledge of God is not sufficient to lead one to salvation. It shows us there is a God and there is a Law, but not the ability to keep the Law or to please God. Natural knowledge of God does not reveal the Gospel.
 - † **Ephesians 1:17; 2:12**

Revealed or Christian Knowledge of God:

- ⑥ Because human beings are constantly looking in the wrong places and listening to the wrong voices, God must speak clearly if sinners are to hear him, know him and believe. Revealed Knowledge isn’t extra knowledge so we can make sense of the natural knowledge, revealed knowledge is the only way to truly know God and be saved. Revealed knowledge is God speaking to us with His words in order to reveal who He is and create saving faith in Jesus.
 - † **John 20:31**

Scripture Reveals - The Triune God

Our churches teach with common consent that the decree of the Council of Nicaea about the unity of the divine essence and the three persons is true. ² It is to be believed without any doubt. God is one divine essence who is eternal, without a body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. He is the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible [Nehemiah 9:6]. ³ Yet there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]. These three persons are of the same essence and power. ⁴ Our churches use the term person as the Fathers have used it. We use it to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself (Book of Concord Article I).

- **Small Catechism – Questions 110-112 (p.130-131).**