

Question 2. *Ought everyone to believe there is a God?*

Answer. *Everyone ought to believe there is a God; and it is their great sin and folly who do not.*

I. From Theism to Atheism

A. Question 2 follows question 1 for a reason. Not everyone believes that there is a God, much less that He is the first and chiefest being. The Catechism makes room to address the issue of atheism. Some believe there is a God, and some do not. Polytheism will be addressed in *Question & Answer 8*. All men are expected to believe there is a God, though some will not.

B. Dealing with the existence of God is first and foremost. If God does not exist, then this is all for nothing. But, as we recall from last week, since God is the first and chiefest being, and all “*live and move and exist*” “*through him*” and “*for him*” (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 8:6), all are under obligation to believe that He exists.

II. **“Everyone Ought To Believe There Is A God”**

A. Inward Testimony

1. The first commandment written on the consciences of all image bearers says, “*You shall have no other gods before Me*” (Exod. 20:3). Everyone ought to believe there is a God because that is the reality and the truth. If something is true, then everyone ought to believe it.

a) All human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and should recognize that there is a God who created them in His image and likeness. Inwardly, all mankind knows that there is a Creator God.

B. Outward Testimony

1. Atheism is off the table in the classroom of Creation. All of God's Creation is telling us that there is a God and that He is glorious. When one observes the handiwork of God's Creation, they are hard-pressed with the reality of God's existence.

a) **Psalm 19:1 (LSB):** *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And the expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

(1) As far as Creation is concerned, it has given fallen man enough outward evidence to know that there is a God. Though Adam forfeited man's right to dwell in the presence of God, Creation alone is enough to convince the fallen human that God is real. It is, therefore, man's responsibility to believe there is a God. Whenever proofs are given, whenever truth is revealed, it is our duty and responsibility to accept it, lest we sin and move to folly.

III. "Their Great Sin"

A. Blatant Sin

1. Not believing in God is indeed a sin. One could say that it is the worst kind of sin. On some level, we could say Adam denied God's godhood (that God was indeed really God), as he took and ate the forbidden fruit. To deny that there is a God is, as the Catechism answers, a great sin. God's existence is so overwhelming that if one were to deny it, they have committed a high-handed trespass against God.

a) **Romans 1:18-21 (LSB):** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is*

evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.

(1) It is as if to look right at your own mother, the woman who gave birth to you, and declare to a crowd that your mother does not exist and never existed. It is a great offense to God and His majesty. Paul tells us that several of God's attributes are even communicated to us through Creation, such as his omnipotence and holiness, and that they are clearly seen and comprehensible.

2. To deny there is a God is a wicked sin. Therefore, the only way that we as Christians may make sense of this wickedness is by attributing it to a great folly in the atheist.

IV. **“Their... Folly”**

A. The Folly of Atheism

1. Wickedness and foolishness paired together produce atheism. To say that there is no God is to achieve the highest form of stupidity. We sometimes hear of and see foolishness in our justice system. A jury or a judge could be presented with overwhelming evidence of a person's guilt and yet then declare the person innocent of all charges. We, along with every commonsensical person, would throw our hands up in outrage over the insanity and folly.

2. **Psalm 14:1 (LSB):** *The wicked fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*

- a) To live as if there is no God is an awful thing. God, who is the chiefest Being, will judge every man and woman. To live a life without acknowledging God is pure foolishness.

B. Irresponsible & Immoral

1. Those who deny the existence of God prove to be irresponsible. Atheism is denying plain truth. Therefore, they prove to be untrustworthy of all other ideas and concepts of reality because they mishandle the most basic one.
2. Those who deny the existence of God prove to be most immoral. Atheism is founded on believing a lie. Therefore, they prove to lack any moral sense and should expect to become amoral in all other areas.

V. **Application**

A. Seek God

1. The first step, from our perspective, in salvation is to believe that God exists. This may seem elementary, because it is. This is the first step of many steps. Man must first believe in his heart that there is a God. From there, he will then seek after God and find Him.
 - a) **Hebrews 11:6 (LSB):** *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*
 - b) **Jeremiah 29:13-14 (LSB):** *You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you...*

B. God is Personal

1. God is a personal God who has created man in His own image and likeness that man may commune with Him and know Him. However, God is meant to be found by faith, not by sight or reason. We may see the evidence of God in Creation, but we can not find Him there. The question of how one may know there is a God is for next time in *Question & Answer 3*.

C. Reflection Questions

1. **Question 1:** *“How often do you remember that God is meant to be known and He is a personal being?”*
2. **Question 2:** *“Was there a time when you saw something in Creation and were overwhelmed and felt small?”*
3. **Question 3:** *“Do you pity the unbelievers around you, who are in such a state of foolishness?”*

VI. Repeat / Sing Question & Answer 1 – 2

A. **Question 1.** *Who is the first and chiefest being?*

1. **Answer.** *God is the first and chiefest being.*

B. **Question 2.** *Ought everyone to believe there is a God?*

1. **Answer.** *Everyone ought to believe there is a God; and it is their great sin and folly who do not.*