

**Question 3.** *How may we know there is a God?*

**Answer.** *The light of nature in man, and the works of God; plainly declare there is a God, but His Word and Spirit only, do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.*

I. The Sureness of Theism

A. If everyone is to believe there is a God (*Question & Answer 2*), we must then ask the question, “*How then may we know there is a God for us to believe in?*” The answer to this question is twofold. At the beginning of the answer, we will appeal to what is revealed of God in nature. In the last section of the answer, we will appeal to what is revealed of God supernaturally. One condemns and one saves, but both reveal there is a God.

II. Natural Revelation

A. **“The light of nature in man...plainly declare there is a God...”**

1. This “light” that is in man is deposited there by God in nature. All mankind has been given enough light to know that there is a God by their very being; their very existence. Man was created for God and designed in such a unique way over all other creatures to worship and commune with Him. This refers to both mankind’s ability to reason and the conscience that resides in man's soul. Both of these declare the existence of God.

a) Reason

(1) Human beings have a rational nature. God, making man in His own image, made man with “*knowledge*” (see *Question & Answer 13*), meaning mankind can exercise reason.

(2) Because human beings can reason, they are personal and can attain and retain knowledge. All mankind is faced with the wonder of where this comes from; it comes from God.

b) Conscience

(1) God also created a soul for man; therefore, that knowledge has a spiritual effect on man. This is referred to as the “*conscience*.”

(2) Every human being has a vested interest in ethics and morality. No one likes to be robbed, abused, lied to, or murdered. Knowledge of the natural law (moral law) of God is discernible because of the conscience He endowed in man.

(a) **Romans 2:14-15 (LSB):** *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law naturally do the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they demonstrate the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them*

(3) All mankind knows they ought not do certain things because of the conscience God imprinted on their soul.

2. The reality of God’s existence is intrinsic to all mankind. Everyone knows there is a God, and everyone knows they ought to believe in Him.

**B. “...And the works of God plainly declare there is a God...”**

1. There is even more light afforded to man than that which is deposited inside of him. There is the light of nature in God’s works of creation. This created universe

plainly declares that there is a God, and this is another testimony to the existence of God (Rom. 1:18-21).

- a) We spent much time looking at this back in *Question & Answer 2* (see previous notes, pages 8–12).

### III. Special Revelation

#### A. **“...but His Word and Spirit only, do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.”**

##### 1. **“Fully and Effectually for the Salvation of Sinners”**

- a) Only what we call *Special Revelation* can be enough to save fallen sinners. Though man has a rational nature, it is fallen. Man’s ability to reason will never be enough to save himself. Man, though endowed with a conscience, can never morally lead himself to a saving knowledge of God. Nothing naturally afforded to fallen man can lead to his salvation.

(1) Because of sin (see *Questions & Answers 17 – 22*), man needs to be delivered from his fallen estate and brought back into relation with God (see *Questions & Answers 34 – 35*). This work of truly revealing Him to us is done “fully” and “effectually” by God’s Word and Spirit.

##### 2. **“His Word”**

- a) Unless God speaks to us and reveals Himself and the way of salvation, mankind is utterly hopeless. *Natural Revelation* only provides enough knowledge to condemn, but *Special Revelation*, as seen in the Holy Scriptures, can make man wise unto salvation.

(1) **2 Timothy 3:14-16 (LSB):** *But you, continue in the things you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*

### 3. “His Spirit”

a) The Word of God alone, however, is not enough to save sinners

(1) **John 5:39-40 (LSB):** *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness about Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*

b) The Scriptures are not God; they are divinely inspired, but they are not divine in and of themselves. Only God can save; therefore, the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the answer, rightly so.

(1) **1 Corinthians 2:10 (LSB):** *But to us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*

(2) **Titus 3:5 (LSB):** *He saved us, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit*

(3) See also John 3:5-8.

- c) The Holy Spirit, who is known as “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17), must come and teach us in the Word of God (John 14:26).

#### IV. Application

A. Some may genuinely ask the question, “*How may we know there is a God?*” while others may ask in jest. We, however, can give a twofold answer for the two types of inquisitors. It is clear that there is a God, and it is plainly revealed in nature. It is also evident that what is naturally revealed does not communicate to us that God is Savior.

1. Mankind, in his fallen estate, needs God to intervene and specially reveal Himself through His Word and by the power of the Holy Spirit, before man can know Him.

B. We would do well to remember that we did not become Christians by our own intellect and power. We only possessed enough revelation in nature to condemn us. But, because of the kindness and power of God, He opened our eyes to His gospel and Scriptures that we may know Him, and this was done by the Holy Spirit working in us.

1. We have come to know God by God and through God. No one can come to know God, a part of God’s supernatural work of His Word and His Spirit.

#### C. Reflection Questions

1. **Question 1.** “*When was the last time you found yourself giving God praise for His Creation?*”
2. **Question 2.** “*Do you think you need God’s Word today just as much as you did before you were saved?*”
3. **Question 3.** “*Do remember that you still need God’s Spirit when reading and hearing His Word?*”

V. Repeat / Sing Question & Answer 1 – 3

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.*

C. **Question 3.** *How may we know there is a God?*

1. **Answer.** *The light of nature in man, and the works of God; plainly declare there is a God, but His Word and Spirit only, do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.*