



19 Minutes with Luther

The Knowledge of God

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The Doxology

"Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."
Romans 1:20

1. All people have a natural knowledge of the existence of God. According to the following passages, where do people receive this knowledge?

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1).

"When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them" (Romans 2:14,15).

2. What do we understand about God the Creator by looking at an apple tree? at the Himalayas? at the human body? What do we know about God from our consciences?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 2:9, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him," what can we never know about God from his creation or our consciences?
4. Evaluate: Every time the Gallup Organization polls Americans, it finds that the high majority of people in the United States believe in God.
5. God also reveals himself to people through the Bible. According to the following passage, what is the special value of this revelation?

"From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

6. The Bible has two parts: the Old Testament, which was written before the time of Christ, and the New Testament, which was written after Christ came. Fill in the following chart.

	Old Testament	New Testament
Writers	_____	_____
# of Books	_____	_____
Language	_____	_____
Time	_____	_____

7. What do the following three passages tell us about the Bible?

“When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

“Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

“All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16).

8. Of what can we be assured by the fact that the Bible is the Word of God?
9. Evaluate: Many churches today deny the doctrines of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture. They claim that many of the events recorded in the Bible (for example, many of the miracles) never really happened, but that this fact shouldn't matter to Christians.

Luther said:

“God is everywhere. However, He does not want you to reach out for Him everywhere but only in the Word. Reach out for it, and you will grasp Him aright. Otherwise you are tempting God and setting up idolatry. That is why He has established a certain method for us. This teaches us how and where we are to look for Him and find Him, namely, in the Word.” (*What Luther Says: An Anthology*, Vol. 2, compiled by Ewald M. Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, p. 545.)

Closing Prayer

Without you, Lord, we would surely be lost forever. We praise you for making yourself known, and we praise you especially for the revelation of your Son, Jesus, found in the pages of Scripture. In him we live today, tomorrow, and forever, and in his name we pray. Amen.

At home

Memorize in order the books of the Bible.

Helps

(1) All people have a natural knowledge of God from creation and from their consciences. (2) From the things that he created, we understand that God is wise, kind, almighty, divine, and eternal. Our consciences tell us that God is just and holy and that he punishes sin. (3) Creation and our consciences will never tell us who the true God is or what he has done for our salvation. (4) What the Gallup polls reveal is not surprising since all people have a natural knowledge of God. This natural knowledge, however, is not enough for salvation. (5) The Bible alone reveals God fully and tells us what he has done for our salvation. (6) Moses and the prophets wrote the 39 books of the Old Testament in Hebrew sometime between 1500 and 400 B.C. The apostles and evangelists wrote the 27 books of the New Testament in Greek sometime between A.D. 40 and 100. (7) The Bible is the Word of God. It was verbally inspired, that is, God the Holy Spirit “breathed into” the human writers the very thoughts and words they wrote. (8) Because the Bible is God’s Word, we can trust what it says, being confident that it is true throughout and that it contains no errors. (9) Some time should be spent on this point. A denial of these doctrines is not only sinful, in that it dishonors God and his Word, but it is dangerous as well. In denying these doctrines, a person is claiming that the Bible is a human writing and, as such, is subject to the whims and interpretation of men. Most important, perhaps, a denial of these doctrines means that we can not trust what the Bible says, including what it says about salvation through Jesus Christ alone.