

– TEACHER’S MANUAL –

Faith and Revelation

Knowing God Through Sacred Scripture



Author: Rev. Peter V. Armenio
General Editor: Rev. James Socias



MIDWEST THEOLOGICAL FORUM

Woodridge, Illinois

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Faith and Revelation

CHAPTER 1



Knowing God Through Natural Revelation, Reason, and Faith

God has created us with both the desire and the capacity to know him.

CHAPTER PLANNING GUIDE

LESSON	OBJECTIVES	OPENING & CLOSING ACTIVITIES	GUIDED EXERCISES	HOMEWORK
Introductory Lesson	Learning Experience <input type="checkbox"/> Course goals and instructional procedures			Reading <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Knowing God through Natural Revelation, Reason, and Faith</i> (pp. 2–3) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Knowing God through Reason</i> (p. 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Sidebar: <i>Wisdom 13: 1–9</i> (p. 5)
Knowing God Through Reason (pp. 2–5)	Learning Experience <input type="checkbox"/> Natural religion <input type="checkbox"/> The fundamental ways of knowing God	Anticipatory Set <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Class Discussion:</i> Natural knowledge of God in <i>Wisdom</i> (p. 3) Closure <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Write</i> about the natural desire for God (p. 5) Alternative Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Class Discussion:</i> Natural ability to know God (p. 5)	Partner Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing God through reason (p. 2) Graphic Organizer <input type="checkbox"/> Four characteristics of the knowledge of God (p. 5) Free Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Themes of the chapter (p. 5)	Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Study Questions 1–5 (p. 28) Workbook <input type="checkbox"/> Questions 1–8 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Knowing God through Natural Revelation</i> (pp. 6–9) <input type="checkbox"/> Sidebar: <i>St. Thomas Aquinas and the Five Ways</i> (pp. 7–8)
Knowing God Through Natural Revelation (pp. 6–9)	Learning Experience <input type="checkbox"/> The natural knowledge of God <input type="checkbox"/> The Five Ways	Anticipatory Set <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Think/Pair/Share:</i> Reflecting the human creator (p. 6) Closure <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Write</i> about belief in God's existence (p. 8) Alternative Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Nature leads of knowledge of a Creator (p. 8)	Focused Reading <input type="checkbox"/> St. Thomas and the modern understanding of the universe (p. 8) Graphic Organizer <input type="checkbox"/> St. Thomas' Five Ways (p. 30b)	Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Study Questions 7–8 (p. 28) <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Exercise 2 (p. 29) Workbook <input type="checkbox"/> Questions 9–13 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Science and Reason</i> (pp. 9–10) <input type="checkbox"/> Sidebar: <i>Principal Errors regarding the Existence of God</i> (p. 11)
Science and Reason (pp. 9–11)	Learning Experience <input type="checkbox"/> Science as a restriction of reason <input type="checkbox"/> Scientism <input type="checkbox"/> Modern science and God <input type="checkbox"/> Principal errors regarding the existence of God	Anticipatory Set <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Class Discussion:</i> Science and reason (p. 9) Closure <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Write</i> about being a scientist and believing in God (p. 11) Alternative Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Class Discussion:</i> Why atheism is on the increase (p. 11)	Think/Pair/Share <input type="checkbox"/> Limitation of science (p. 9) <input type="checkbox"/> Reason contains science (p. 9) Graphic Organizer <input type="checkbox"/> Principal errors regarding God's existence (p. 30a)	Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Study Questions 9–12, 24 (p. 28) <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Exercises 1, 3, 5–7 (p. 29) Workbook <input type="checkbox"/> Questions 14–18 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> <i>God Makes Himself Known to Man</i> (pp. 12–17) <input type="checkbox"/> Sidebar: <i>The Dialogue between Faith and Culture</i> (p. 17)

Introductory Lesson (for first day of class)

INSTRUCTION

- ❑ Give each student a *syllabus* for the course and review it with the class. This should include the overall goals of the course and the breakdown of the content by semester, quarter, and week of instruction. It should include major projects and tests.
- ❑ Explain how the lessons of this text will be taught. Explain to the students the cycle of instructional lessons, review lesson, and test day.
- ❑ Give each student an *instructional policy* for this class and go over it with them. The instructional policies are your classroom behavior and academic policies, including policies for late work, missing work, academic honesty, neatness, and so on.
- ❑ Pass out student texts and Bibles, and any other materials you are providing.
- ❑ If you wish students to read ahead, present the *Objectives* of tomorrow's first instructional lesson, and let them begin the *Homework Assignment* if any time remains.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- ❑ Read Chapter 1 through "Wisdom 13: 1–9" (p. 5)

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ❑ According to the *Catechism*, no. 33, what are some of the signs by which a person can perceive he or she possesses a spiritual soul?

They include openness to truth and beauty, a sense of moral goodness, freedom, the voice of conscience, and longing for the infinite and for happiness.

Faith and Revelation

PART I – CHAPTER 1

Knowing God Through Natural Revelation, Reason, and Faith



very human person has a natural desire for God. This desire is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God. Only in God will we find the truth and happiness for which we never stop searching.

The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God.

This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being.

For if man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.¹ (CCC 27)

All of us want to know God. The human heart desires to know what is true, good, and beautiful; above all, it yearns for God. God himself put this desire in us when he created us, and no matter how much we rebel or how distant from God we feel or become, he still draws us toward himself. This is what makes us unique among all of material creation. Only human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and have the inborn capacity to know God and to be in communion with him.

Pope Benedict XVI explains how Plato recognized this universal "longing" of the human soul for God four hundred years before Christ.

Nostalgia and longing impel [man] to pursue the quest; beauty prevents him from being content with just daily life. It causes him to suffer. In a Platonic sense, we could say that the arrow of nostalgia pierces man, wounds him and in this way gives him wings, lifts him upwards toward the transcendent.²

We can forget or try to suppress our desire to know God, but it is always there, whether we recognize it or not. As St. Augustine proclaimed, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."³ Only God can give us lasting joy and peace.

The human person: With his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity" we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material,⁴ can have its origin only in God. (CCC 33)

Our natural desire for God reflects an aspect of the image of God in which all human beings were created — not only do we desire God, but God also desires us, and infinitely more so than we desire him. Our desire for God is *natural*; it is part of what it means to be human. God's desire for us, however, is *supernatural*. God wants us to live in communion with him, and so he reaches out to us and enables us to find him.

God has created us with both the desire and the capacity to know him. We come to know God in two ways: through revelation and through human reason. This book discusses how faith and reason work together to help us understand God's Revelation to man in Sacred Scripture. Reasoning on the basis of faith and guided by the message of Christ as transmitted by his Church, we are given the means to understand the message of the Bible as God intended.

GUIDED EXERCISE

Have each student work with a **partner** to read *Supplementary Reading 1* (p. 23) and then write a bullet point summary of what St. Paul teaches in regard to (1) a person's ability to know God through reason and (2) the consequences of his or her refusal to see God.

- Since the creation of the world, God's invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, can be clearly perceived in the things that have been made.
- Because they did not acknowledge God, people became futile in their thinking, worshiped idols, and lived lives of sexual impurity.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ❑ What inborn capacity do human beings possess that no other creature in material creation has?

They have an inborn capacity to know God and to be in communion with him.



Creation of Adam, Byzantine Mosaic.
The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God.

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL DISCUSS:

- ✦ How the desire to find God is written on the human heart.
- ✦ How God draws each person to himself.
- ✦ How we can come to a certain level of knowledge of God through the use of human reason.
- ✦ The difference between knowledge gained through science and knowledge gained through reason.
- ✦ The limitations on knowing God from the use of reason alone.
- ✦ Why we need God to reveal himself in order to know him fully.

Chapter One 3

Knowing God through Reason

(pp. 2–5)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Natural religion
- ☐ Fundamental ways of knowing God

BASIC QUESTIONS

- ☐ What is natural religion?
- ☐ What are the two fundamental ways of knowing God?

KEY IDEAS

- ☐ Each human being is born with a natural desire for God, which is answered in the natural capacity to know God through reason.
- ☐ The fundamental ways to know God are through reason and Revelation.

ANTICIPATORY SET

Incorporate the passage from the Book of Wisdom (p.5) into the class's **opening prayer**, and then lead a **class discussion** using the following question:

- ☐ What does this passage reveal about natural knowledge of God, that is, knowledge anyone can obtain through reason and experience?

People ought to be able to see God through the things he made rather than see created things as gods. Idolatry is perhaps understandable because people are distracted by the power and beauty of creation, but idolatry is foolish and inexcusable because, if men can perceive the power and beauty of created things, they should also be able to perceive the much greater power and beauty of the God who created them.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ☐ **What is the natural desire for God?**
Each person has this yearning for God in his or her human nature.
- ☐ **How does Pope Benedict XVI see the natural desire for God evident in Plato?**
Beauty causes a certain kind of suffering — a nostalgia and longing — in each person that keeps him or her from being satisfied with ordinary life.
- ☐ **How does St. Augustine describe man's natural desire for God?**
“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ❑ What is the supernatural counterpart to a person's natural desire for God?
It is God's desire for us.
- ❑ What is God's supernatural desire for each person, and what is the result of this desire?
God wants people to live in communion with him, so he reaches out and enables them to find him.
- ❑ What does it mean to say each person is—by nature and by vocation—a religious being?
People come from God and seek and desire God.
- ❑ What are the two ways one can come to know God?
One can know God through Revelation and human reason.
- ❑ What is the overarching subject of the textbook?
Faith and reason work together to help understand God's Revelation.
- ❑ Even without the help of Divine Revelation, what can human reason lead a person to realize about God?
Human reason can lead one to realize God exists. It can even tell us some about his divine nature.
- ❑ According to the *Catechism*, no. 31, what is the nature of the proofs reason can give in regard to God's existence?
They are proofs for the existence of God not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences but in the sense of "converging and convincing arguments."
- ❑ What did the pagan philosophers Plato and Aristotle conclude about God?
Using reason alone, they concluded there must be one god.

KNOWING GOD THROUGH REASON

Human reason, even without God's Revelation, can lead us to realize that God exists. It can even tell us something about his divine nature.

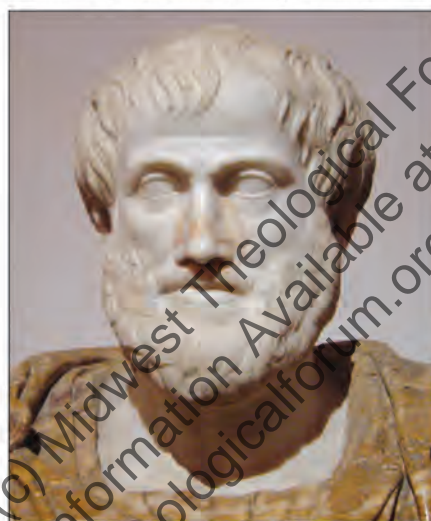
Created in God's image and called to know and love him, the person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know him. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of "converging and convincing arguments," which allow us to attain certainty about the truth. (CCC 31)

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul wrote that creation itself shows us there is a God and that he is all-powerful. "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made."⁵ Even those who have never heard the Gospel or read Scripture can arrive at this knowledge by the use of reason. They can also know something about what God demands of them morally.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. (Rom 1:18-19)

However, even without the Revelation of Scripture and the Church to guide us, everyone can still come to know of God's existence. Throughout history and even before the time of Christ, many of the greatest thinkers of the world were able to reach this conclusion.

Pre-Christian philosophers like Plato and Aristotle argued from reason alone that there must be a god. Aristotle concluded that there must be one single First Cause of everything, and that this First Cause must be perfect and eternal. Although he lived in a *polytheistic* culture—that is, one that believed in many gods—Aristotle argued that there can only be one First Cause.



Bust of Aristotle, Roman copy of Greek bronze 330 BC. Aristotle (384–322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He was the first to create a comprehensive system of Western philosophy, encompassing morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics. By reason, Aristotle had discovered the truth of God's existence... there can only be one First Cause.

By reason, Aristotle had discovered the truth of God's existence. He also knew that God must be eternal and perfect, and that there is only one true God. In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas clarified and extended Aristotle's arguments (see sidebar, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the 'Five Ways'").

Each person, by nature and by vocation, is a *religious being*. We come from God, and we seek and desire God; thus, we will not live a true human life if we do not choose freely to live in this bond with God. Every person has been created to live in communion with God, and ultimate happiness can only be found in him.

One can arrive at the knowledge of the existence of God in two ways: by the light of reason and by the grace of faith. By using reason (natural knowledge), and by listening to the message of creation, and to the promptings of conscience, we can be certain that there is a God.

Sacred Scripture describes four characteristics of our knowledge of God. It is *mediate*, or received through created things or through other persons; *natural*, because it is reached through the light of the intellect; *universal*, in that it is accessible to all people; *certain*, since God's creation clearly leads us to the Creator; and *easy to attain*, because it requires only the natural use of reason.

4 Chapter One

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ❑ What is Aristotle's *First Cause*?
Despite his polytheistic culture, Aristotle reached the philosophical conclusion there is one god.
- ❑ What attributes of God did Aristotle discern by reason?
He reasoned God must be eternal and perfect.
- ❑ What did St. Thomas Aquinas do with Aristotle's arguments about God?
He clarified and extended them in the thirteenth century.