

# The Three Paths To Religious Knowledge

## 1. Our meditation on the physical creation

**Psalms 19:1-4** [NIV] *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,”*

The more we consider the form, size and the complexity of the universe, the more we stand in awe of its Creator.

**Proverbs 6:6-8** [NIV] *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”*

The ant is but one of many of God’s created creatures that display a wise way to conduct their lives.

**Matthew 6:25-34** [NIV] *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

All of the living animals created are dependent on God to provide for all their needs to exist.

Will God do less for human beings who are the pinnacle of His creation and the very reason all other physical creation exists?

**Romans 1:20** [NIV] *“For 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.”*

Reasoning and meditating on the data furnished by observation of natural objects tells us a lot about God and spiritual things.

## 2. There is knowledge that is received beyond and above that furnished by observation

Divine revelation through the inspired scriptures, the Christian Bible, offers data which lies altogether outside of and above the power of the human mind to discover.

The human mind can **only** make its deductions after it has received this data by faith, but it cannot find it by itself.

For example:-

No technique is known to humans by which they can learn that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth.

No human can reveal to us and explain, that there are three persons in the One Godhead.

No human revelation can explain how the death of one human, Jesus Christ, can be a substitute death for all humans who deserve eternal death because of their sinful rebellion against their Creator God.

**Nothing** that we can see tells us that the human Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, acting as our High Priest.

We have **no** physical way of verifying the above and many other things about God and Jesus Christ His only Son.

This knowledge **only** comes by faith in the words and promises made by God in the Christian Bible.

### **3. There is yet a higher and purer knowledge than comes other than by sight and faith**

This knowledge is **only** received by a direct spiritual experience.

**1 Corinthians 2:9-14** [NIV] *“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” , but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

As this knowledge is **not** acquired by reason operating on intellectual data, the possibility of error is eliminated.

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the human spirit [see **Job 32:8**] is brought into immediate contact with higher spiritual reality.

The human spirit looks upon, tastes, feels and sees the powers of the spirit world and has a conscious encounter with the invisible Creator God, [**Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**].

**But a word of warning is needed at this point.**

**1 John 4:1-3** [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”*

**Not** every spirit is from God, Satan and his demons also try to deceive us through their human servants.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** [NIV] *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

False prophets working for Satan can be recognised.

John gives us testing points.

- a) Check to see if the words they preach, as Spirit inspired, match what God tells us in His Word, the Christian Bible.
- b) Are they committed to the congregation of believers? [see **1 John 2:19**]
- c) Look at their lifestyle, do they obey Christ's command to "*love one another*" ?
- d) Look at the fruits of their ministry, are these "*fruits*" compatible to those of the Holy Spirit? [see **Galatians 5:22-23**]
- e) Most important, check what they say about the person of Jesus Christ.

Do they acknowledge Jesus as the **only** Son of God, and that He became a human being in order to shed His blood as our only Saviour from eternal death.

### **This Holy Spirit given knowledge is very personal**

Let us understand that such knowledge is experienced rather than acquired.

It does **not** consist of findings about something, it is the knowledge as a thing in itself.

This is **not** a compound of religious truths.

Often such understanding is so personal it is **not** intended to be shared with others, but is part of our personal relationship with our Creator God.

**John 22:21** [Amplified Bible] "*Acquaint now yourself with Him [agree with God and show yourself to be conformed to His will] and be at peace; by that [you will prosper and great] good shall come to you.*"

Such a person has come to know God in the last irreducible meaning of the word know.

It may almost be said that God happened to them, and they have a very intimate relationship with Him.

**John 14:21** [NIV] "*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. **He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.***"

This is the ultimate relationship we can as physical human beings have with our Creator.

What is happening is we are already experiencing an eternal relationship with our Creator.

**John 17:3** [NIV] "*Now **this is eternal life:** that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*"

**This is a relationship we all should seek to have with our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**