



Theme: What Christians Believe and Why

"Doubt and the Existence of God"

Weekly Memory Verse:

**¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.**

¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! – Psalm 139:13-14a

This study guide is designed to allow you to dig deeper into the themes of the sermon. Study these passages with a friend, a Bible study group, or on your own. This week we will examine some of the scriptures related to God's existence and how we "see" God, as well as a few scriptures on how we let others see God in us. We're going to read some wonderful passages from across the full spectrum of biblical literature. Enjoy!

Monday, February 19 – Read **Genesis 1**. As we consider the question of the existence of God, we remember that throughout recorded history human beings looked at the created order, the beauty of creation, and our own existence as logically pointing toward a Creator.




Evolution and the Big Bang theory are both attempts at describing the processes and mechanics of the origin of the universe and the existence of a multitude of life forms on our planet. For many, neither of these theories is adequate to explain ultimate origins (where did the "stuff" of the Big Bang come from? How did the fuse get lit? How did life spring from mud? etc.) How do you view Evolution and the Big Bang? Are they compatible or not? Why or why not? How does this impact what you believe?




Interestingly, the creation account in Genesis, though poetic and designed to teach theology not science, is amazingly in synch with both the Big Bang and the general order that biologists tell us life developed on earth. As you read Genesis 1 look at the richness of this story and the power of it. What are the major points of this story? How does this story apply to your life and how you see the world?

Prayer: *Gracious God, help to see you in all of creation. When my belief wanes, remind me again of your presence through the very air that I breathe. Amen.*


Tuesday, February 20 – Read **Psalms 30 and 46**. The Book of Psalms is filled with the prayers and hymns human beings wrote about their experiences with God. In this weekend's sermon, we noted that we see God not with our normal eyesight, but by sensing him in relationship with us and seeing his work in our lives.


 As you read these Psalms, look for how the Psalmist experienced God. How did the writer express their experience of God? There was no doubt in the mind of the author of these Psalms that God exists. Have you ever experienced God in these ways?

 Notice the profound gratitude and joy as you read *Psalms 30 and 46*. What do these Psalms teach you about God and how God is seen? What would the authors of these Psalms have said if you asked them, "Tell me, how do you know there is a God?"

Prayer: *God, you have made yourself known in many ways that I sometimes miss. I thank you for making me to love me. Help me to experience a joy in your presence in the days ahead. Amen.*


Wednesday, February 21 – Read **Exodus 33:18-23**. Today we are going to consider the nature of God.

 If we were to observe the actual "stuff" of which God is made, what would we observe? We turn first to an interesting story where Moses asked to see God. This weekend we talked about God's glory and radiance. If God is the source of all the power in the universe, what level of radiance would God have? We could not look upon him and live.

 Read *Exodus 34:29-35* where we find Moses coming down the mountain after being with God in prayer. Notice what impact being with God had on Moses. Read *Exodus 13:21-22* where we see that God appeared as a pillar of fire to the Israelites. Read *John 4:24* where Jesus describes the nature of God. Read *John 1:1-9* where Jesus is now described as God's light coming into the world. Finally, Read *Revelation 21:22-24* where we read of John's vision of heaven where God is the light for the nations. Which of these images do you find most compelling and meaningful? Why?

Prayer: *Lord God, you came in light and spirit to the people of the Bible. Do that in my life to assure me in my moments of doubt. Remind me of your faithfulness through the generations so that can separate me from your love for me. Amen.*

Thursday, February 22 – Read **Isaiah 40**. You are in for a treat today! This chapter from Isaiah is one of the most beautiful in the entire Bible!

 The chapter begins with verses that Handel popularized in his Messiah. (You can listen to that [here](#).) In its original context, God was speaking to

the Israelites who were living in captivity in Babylon, promising that God would deliver them and bring them through the wilderness back to the land of Canaan. Read this chapter carefully and see what it says about God. What do you see, or hear?



Isaiah points out the superiority of God over the idols that the ancient people fashioned out of metal or wood or stone and worshiped. In verse 25 God speaks directly to the reader. What would we compare to God? What is God's promise in verses 28-32? You can listen to those verses in [this classic song](#), "On Eagle's Wings," by Michael Joncas.

Prayer: *Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Amen.*

Friday, February 23 – Read **Acts 17**. Today we turn to the Book of Acts where we read one of the Apostle Paul's sermons that he preached to the philosophers in Athens. You can visit the ruins of the place he preached to this day in Athens. ([See video footage here.](#))



Read Acts 17:16-34 while watching the video footage link above if you can with the volume turned down. Notice how Paul approached these philosophers. He did not put them down for worshiping a host of false gods, but he commended them for worshiping the "unknown God," and used this as a point of connection and contact to present the good news of Jesus. He even quotes some of their own poets and philosophers to point to Christ. What do you think Paul meant, and in what sense is it true in verse 28 that, "In Him [God] we live, and move, and have our being"?



Notice, some believed Paul's preaching, and some rejected it. We also see that the Greeks thought the idea of the resurrection of the body was absurd, though they believed in the immortality of the soul. Yet Paul's own teaching is that we receive a new body at the resurrection, not our existing body reconstituted. Read **II Corinthians 4:1-18**. Here Paul describes the impact that God had on his life. Describe how God affected Paul. Notice the theme of light again in verse 6. How has God affected you?

Prayer: *God, you revealed yourself to Paul in dramatic ways. Help me to see how you might reveal yourself to me as I read his story. While at times it may feel as if you are unknown God, make yourself known in my prayer. Amen.*

Saturday, April 25 – Read **James 1:2-5, Romans 5:1-5**. Every life has challenges. Some are minor; others like illness, abuse, a deadly virus, or traumatic accident, test the very fiber of our being. Jesus' brother James urged Christians to meet life's tests as, "occasions for joy." And the apostle Paul sketched the spiritual growth process through which every Christ-follower can develop a character

that meets challenges, not with despair, but with hopeful awareness of the holy moments they might lead to. God, both apostles said, has the power to bend even bad things to good purposes in our lives. God can give us the wisdom to bring endurance and hope out of our hardest experiences.



Neither apostle wrote through naive, rose-colored glasses. Human nature is not at all inclined to view tests as “occasions for joy,” as something to “take pride” in. That’s why they focused on God’s wisdom and love as the divine gifts that can turn our hard times into occasions for growth. When has God given you wisdom to face a tough challenge, or surrounded you with love and support for the strength you needed? In what ways does God’s ability to “grow you” through life’s challenges help you view hard times differently?

Prayer: *Lord God, keep teaching me to view life your way. Help me learn more and more how to value even the tough, painful times you can use to help me grow in endurance, character and trust. Amen.*