

"Is God Dead?"

A philosopher once suggested that God is dead. Is He really dead? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're examining the question whether God is dead.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's way is a way of faith, blessing, love, and hope. The devil's way is a way of lies and deception; the evil one offers no hope and no joy that lasts. The devil ruins everything he touches and doesn't care about you. Give me Jesus, the One who died for my sins, who heals my diseases, who leads me in paths of righteousness. Give me Jesus who loves me and cares. Jesus gives us life, newness of life, spiritual life, abundant life, and eternal life. Jesus is everything to us. Oh thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

In 1882 a German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said, "Where has God gone? I mean to tell you! We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers!" Well Nietzsche believed that God is dead in the hearts of people who once believed in Him. When we examine how many Christians have ceased to practice their faith and worship at church, we can't help but admit God isn't living in their hearts. Sin, materialism, and other things have crowded God out many lives, and they don't realize what they've lost. God isn't dead; He's not even sick. But people who have forsaken Him are spiritually sick and dying.

Paul described the Gentiles of Ephesus before they became Christians in Ephesians 2 and verse 12, he said, "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." And that's the state of people who don't know God. And it's also the state of people who push God out of their lives. They have no promise, no God, and no hope. And I hope that's not you.

Now we offer this study, Is God Dead? Free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Timothy 6:17 to 19, and examine what we can do to keep God alive in our hearts.

Our reading today comes from 1 Timothy chapter 6 verses 17 to 19.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

A good reading from the word of God. Let's pray together. Father we're so thankful that You teach us so many good things in Your word. And we know that we need You and need the life that You can give to us. Father we're thankful that You are able to live within our hearts. And help us to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Despite the decline in faith in Jesus Christ and despite the decline in religious affiliation, there remains a deep need for spiritual fulfillment and a righteous community. Many people live unfulfilled and miserable lives by looking to this world for answers. They see only the bad and disorder rather than looking for God. They notice the wars, the needless suffering, the hypocrisy and abuse of religious

groups, and the many lies of Satan and miss the beauty, grandeur, and harmony in what God has done in this world. It's evident from Scripture and from the order in this world that God exists and cares for us.

It is possible to find some disorder and to magnify disorders so as to overlook the beautiful order and harmony that we see so much in life and that makes life possible. You'll find what you're looking for. Yes you can find dirt and garbage or you can find beauty and flowers. You can find foolishness and immorality or you find grace and godliness. God told the Jews who had forsaken Him for worldly ways in Jeremiah 29:11 to 13, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." God wants you to believe and to serve Him, and He gives us reasons to do so.

Well how do we restore faith in God? Well first we can look at how He has spoken and acted. God has not been silent. There is a God. If there were no God, we would have to ask the question where did life come from? How did life come from something that's not living? How can life be sustained without other things for food? How did one-cell animals become multiple-celled animals? How did animals with no spine develop into animals with a spine? How did cold-blooded animals become warm-blooded animals? How did animals who get their oxygen from water become animals that could breathe air? Where did eyes and ears come from? How did feathers develop so that birds could fly? Such changes as these are not small or trivial. They demand an intelligent and magnificent Creator, because evolution could never explain them.

The theory of evolution came about when people didn't fully understand how complicated the structure of animal bodies and the human body truly are. The discovery of the incredibly complicated DNA molecule in every cell of a living being must not be taken for granted. Time cannot last long enough to account for all the changes that must take place for one kind of animal to transform into another. Genesis 1:25 says that, "God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good." Now while species, of a certain animal, can vary, kinds of animals don't vary. Dogs don't make cats, fish don't make alligators, bears don't make apes, and apes don't make humans. Animals stay within their genus, and mutations don't make new kinds of animals.

We also ask, "How did the environment that supports life come into existence?" There were many things that had to take place all at the same time. The earth that we live on had to have the right amount of heat, not too much or too little. It requires light and water. It had to have oxygen for animal life and carbon dioxide for plant life to exist. How do we have so many kinds of animals and plant life to use for food and medicine? How do we have so many things that provide shelter and clothing? An intelligent Creator explains all this.

How can human life reproduce without a male and female living at the same time? God declares that males and females were made "in His image." Genesis 1:27 to 28 says that, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" This, my friend, is reality! You see it takes both males and females to reproduce. If males and females had not reproduced through the centuries, we wouldn't exist today. Where did males and females get the intelligence to know how to care for infants and small children, so that they could grow up, find a mate, and reproduce? How did the first parents know?

If there is no God, where did our intelligence come from? You have to be intelligent to recognize intelligence. We're living in an intelligent world. We can communicate to one another by mouth, by written words, by telephone, by the internet, by radio, and by television. And all this requires intelligence and education, by which intelligence can grow. And we have to grow. Surely we cannot believe that all this intelligence came from lifeless matter. How did matter become intelligent enough to deny that the universe is governed by intelligence? Many free thinkers haven't thought about how they developed consciousness or the ability to reason. Scientists can't tell us how we became conscious beings.

If there is no God, where did our sense of right and wrong come from? Who gave us this conscience that approves or judges our actions? How did we become so self-aware within? It would be absurd to think some rock or mineral is the source of our ability to feel guilt! We could have no guilt if there were no such thing as right and wrong; and there would be no right and wrong, if God didn't exist and give us His moral laws and His word. Oh we can act like there's no God, but the moral pain we feel from doing something sinful cannot be silenced. No. We can ignore our consciences till we become callous, and many have done so; but we can't rid ourselves of the knowledge of what we have done.

Sin is still our enemy that plagues our hearts and souls. Romans 2 and verse 15 reminds us that even people who don't know God "show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them." Now no matter who you are, you reason about the morality of your behavior. Even when you do well your conscience applauds, you take note of your moral monitor, it's there. A moral God gave us a moral heart and spirit. We didn't get it from a non-living matter or from animals that have no morality. A conscience came from being created in the image of a moral God, who knows right from wrong. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 verse 6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Have you ever wondered where that desire to be good came from? It came from God.

If there is no God, what about Jesus Christ? How do you explain the existence of predictive prophecies made about Him centuries before He was born? Micah 5 and verse 2 says, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." Well, this passage was well known to the people in the first century, even though Micah wrote it in the 8th century B.C. The chief priests and scribes could answer the Wise Men's question to Herod about where the King of the Jews was born. And yes, Jesus was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, where it was prophesied.

The prophet Daniel in the sixth century prophesied to Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar about four great kingdoms that would come about over the centuries. And Daniel said during that during the fourth kingdom in chapter 2 verse 44, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever." Daniel was prophesying about the divine, forever kingdom that would crush all the others. That kingdom was set up by the Lord Jesus in the first century, when the fourth kingdom existed. That kingdom is the church! The church is not an after-thought; Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20 and verse 28).

Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53 prophesy much about the death of Jesus. David wrote in Psalm 22 a thousand years before Jesus was born and Isaiah prophesied in the 8th century B.C. And there are actual copies of these prophecies in the Dead Sea Scrolls dating more than a hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. David tells us that His hands and feet were pierced, that they divided His garments, and cast lots for His clothing. Isaiah mentioned that He was pierced for our transgressions,

that all our iniquity fell upon Him, that He did not open His mouth, that He was violent or deceptive, that He was numbered with the transgressors, that He was a guilt offering, and His days will be prolonged. Such foreknowledge could only belong to God.

There are numerous prophecies of Jesus, and they all came true. The Lord Jesus could say to His disciples about the prophecies of His death and resurrection in Luke 22 and verse 44, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Oh, and they were, just as they were prophesied. There's no other book that gives such specific predictions hundreds of years in advance. The Bible is unique and divinely inspired.

That Jesus arose from the dead is not a myth or fanciful story. Eyewitnesses of His resurrection devoted their lives and endured great persecution and even death in order to tell the truth about His resurrection. The gospel accounts Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have been researched countless times and shown to be credible history. Historians Gary Habermas and Michael Licona in *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* researched thousands of published documents on the matter and said that historians and scholars strongly attest these things: that Jesus existed, that died at the hands of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem, that the disciples believed that He arose again from the dead, and that the church persecutor Paul was converted, and Jesus' skeptic brother James converted. Three fourths strongly attest that the tomb of Jesus was empty! Empty.

The eyewitness apostle John wrote in John 20 verse 30 and 31, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Reading and getting to know the Bible is the first step to developing a strong faith in the Lord Jesus. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (or the word of God) Oh the more you know about God the more you know about Jesus Christ, the more you will believe in them and the more you'll love them.

Find a church home with one of the many godly churches of Christ, there you'll learn the truth, you will worship according to the scriptures with friendly and loving people, and you know what, you'll develop a strong spiritual life. If you'll put God first and be part of His family. Having a church family will help you stand strong against the evil in hard times and grow in faith and love. A church family can strength you when you're weak, comfort you when you hurt, and help you find the way to a heavenly home with the Lord.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your word that teaches us the truth. Help us to know Father that You are real and that You keep Your promises. And that You love and care for us and provided for us a life here and the life hereafter. And Father help us always to do Your will and to love You with all our heart, and soul and mind. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

When I believe in God and in Jesus Christ, I have everything to gain and nothing to lose. I've seen my prayers answered and will one day go and be with my God in glory forever. But even if there is no God, I've had an abundant life of love in Christ and have lost nothing. But if I don't believe in God and Jesus, I've lost every good promise of God and have nothing to gain or look forward to in eternity. If God is real and I don't believe in Jesus, I will lose my soul forever and be eternally out of favor with God. And I lose everything. I won't have a dwelling place in heaven.

Do you want a life without God? If you ignore Him or forsake Him, you will lose your relationship with Him. He's not dead but you don't have His favor. Psalm 66 and verse 18 says that, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." There's no advantage to a life without a relationship

and the favor of God. There's only hopelessness, misery, and death. You can imagine there's no heaven or hell, but you can't change reality. God exists and so do heaven and hell. Choose God and heaven.

If you've never placed your faith in the Lord, do so today. Believe in Jesus Christ, turn from sin to righteousness by repenting, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you're baptized into Christ, God washes away your sins with the sacrificed blood of Jesus, makes you His child, adds you to His church and you have hope, but don't take your salvation for granted. You must stay faithful and remain committed to Christ. Won't you start your journey of faith today? Today is the best day to do what is right and serve the Lord.

We hope that our study asking if God is dead to you has caused you to search for faith. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now SEARCH is also on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and be sure to like the programs. We offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We want to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. Oh you need a church family. So attend, don't neglect. There's a church near you. As always we like to say to people keep studying God's Word with us. And we love you and may God bless you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.