

# Do You Really Believe in God?

## Introduction

**1. Do you really believe that there is a true, living and eternal God?**

**A. Elijah challenged the people of Ahab's reign when the gods of Baal were popular, to try the gods and, "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).**

**B. Balam, the prophet, told Barak:**

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Numbers 24:13 I could not go beyond the word of the LORD, to do good or bad of my own will. What the LORD says, that I must speak'?

**1) Here is a true demonstration of faith; although Balaam stumbled along the way, he stood at this point as a true believer. He believed there was in fact the real, true and living God and demonstrated his faith courageously under severe consequences.**

## **Poll Results concerning God**

- 1. The results of a Gallup poll published in 1990 revealed that 94 percent of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit.**
  - A. It also revealed that only 81 percent of college graduates believe in God as a “heavenly Father who can be reached by prayer.”**
  
- 2. On April 8, 2009, The American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), released several interesting statistics concerning religion and belief in God in a USA Today article.**
  - A. It was stated in their opening statement that “When it comes to religion, the USA is now a land of the freelancers.”**
    - 1) The percentage of people who call themselves in some way Christian has dropped more than 11 percent in a generation.**
  
    - 2) “More than ever before, people are just making up their own stories of who they are.”**
  
    - 3) Many Americans claim no religion at all (15% - up from 8% in 1990).**
  
    - 4) Nearly 2.8 million people now identify with dozens of new religious movements.**

**See PPT Chart “How Americans describe their religious identity, 1990–2008”**

- 3. Since the first ARIS survey was released in 1990, other major national surveys have offered snapshots of the USA's faith and others have commented on these findings:**
- A. 41% of people have switched their religion at some point in life (Pew survey).
  - B. How far is heaven? At least half will make it, Americans say (Baylor University survey).
  - C. "Religion has become more like a fashion statement, not a deep personal commitment for many" (Kosmin).
  - D. "I'm totally disengaged from the church and the Bible, too. Sunday mornings mean playing in a park, not praying in a pew" (Mueller).
  - E. "If religion comes up, everyone at the table will start mocking it. I don't know anyone religious and hardly anyone spiritual" (Rossi).
  - F. "...I see kids today who have no vocabulary of faith, and neither do many of their parents" (Gautier).
  - G. "A couple came into my office once with a yellow pad of their teenage sons's questions. One of them was: 'What is that guy doing hanging up there on the plus sign?'" (Harmon).
  - H. "I am a deeply committed follower of Christ. Rather than aligning with a specific denomination, I attend a non-denominational community church where I like the rock music, but Bible study is the focus of my faith. We just look to Jesus. It happens inside of people's souls" (Haynes).

**4. Here are two comments that two individuals stated in response to the USA Today religious survey:**

- A. "I'm so happy to see the increase in non-believers, agnostics, atheists. As people become more educated and expand their knowledge and experiences, they're more likely to see that religion is about as valid as Mother Goose fairy tales" (sinla - e-mail).
- B. "This is good news. The sooner mankind weans himself from the tyranny of religion the better. Religion is the worst thing ever invented. More misery has been visited upon mankind in the name of religion than anything else" (DC in Dallas - e-mail).

**5. All these statistics just don't make sense do they?**

- A. **What do I mean by that?**
  - 1) **Most say that they believe in God - ask anyone. They will tell you that they believe in God. This leads me to ask: "What do you mean by that?" "What do you mean you believe in God?"**
- B. **Obviously most people do not understand who God really is. They have not truly learned of Him from His inspired Word.**

## The Bible Shows and Proves the Existence of God

1. **The Bible presents unto us a living God who is a person, a divine person, who is very much in touch with His creation, a prayer-hearing God.**

Psalms 65:2 O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come.

- A. **A God before whom we may be well-pleasing or displeasing. The Hebrew writer tells us what we must do in order to be pleasing.**

**Hebrews 11:6**

- B. **God is not just an abstract idea or impersonal creator, but a “living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them” (Acts 14:15).**

2. **God’s Word teaches the absolute necessity of knowing who God really is. Jesus, in His prayer to the Father said:**

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, **that they may know You, the only true God,** and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- A. **In 2 Thessalonians 1:8, that truth is stated in a negative form.**

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on **those who do not know God,** and on **those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.** These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- 1) **In both of these passages, “knowing God” means a great deal more than having some understanding of His existence.**
- 2) **Of necessity it includes all of those concepts, convictions and emotions that lead to action that brings about a right relationship with God.**

## Faith Is Essential in Recognizing the True God

1. **The only way that one can really believe and trust in the true, living, and eternal God is to gain faith in Him.**

**Romans 10:17**

2. **We then must** “hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering ..... provoke unto love and to good works” (**Hebrews 10:22-24**).

- 1) **The judgment of God is sure and vengeance belongs to Him (Hebrews 10:3).**

Hebrews 10:38-39 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, **but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

3. **Many are drawing back, losing their faith and living a life as though they are demanding that God change to keep up with modern times.**

- A. **In a Theologian conference in 2000, these comments were made by two prominent theologians:**

- 1) “God’s image is going to have to change for all faiths if religion is to survive.”
- 2) “We can’t enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the idea of the God we learned in Sunday school” (Eck).
- 3) “The God I grew up with had an image of a stern lawgiver and judge who required obedience within a system of rewards and punishments — a ‘monarchical model’ of God that has turned many people away from the Christian faith” (Borg).
- 4) He went on to say: “I find it literally incredible that the God of the whole universe has chosen to be known by one religious tradition.”

- B. **The tenor of it all is to reject the God of the Bible and make God in the image of their own imaginings.**

## It Does Matter That We Believe in God

1. **Brethren and friends, it does really matter what we believe, teach and practice in the name of religion – contrary to what many in the world are stressing.**
2. **Should our world be different than it is? Should all who claim the name of Christ be united?**
  - A. **Jesus Himself said YES!**  
**John 17:20-23**
3. **Can this be accomplished with such diverse belief, teaching, and practice as we see among people who call themselves Christians today?**
  - A. **Must we believe, teach, and practice the same things in order for unity to be a reality? God’s Word says we MUST do things the same way!**

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **you all speak the same thing**, and that there be no divisions among you, but **that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**.

Ephesians 4:3-6 **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in **one** hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism; **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

#### **4. Jesus' message did not waver depending on His audience. Paul taught the same thing in all the churches**

1 Corinthians 7:17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. **And so I ordain in all the churches.**

##### **A. Consistency in doctrine and practice characterized Jesus, the apostles, and Christians in the first century — and this must be so today!**

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is **obsessed with disputes and arguments over words**, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, **useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth**, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; **because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

#### **5. How can we come to believe, teach and practice the same things today?**

##### **A. We only have to follow the very same standard!**

Jude 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to **contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

##### **1) Everyone MUST forsake human tradition, opinion, and the commandments of men as the standard.**

Matthew 15:9 And in vain they worship Me, **Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**

Matthew 15:13 ....Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted **will be uprooted.**

## There Really Is Only One True God

1. **With God's Word as our complete guide, we truly can believe in the one and only God and we can obtain complete unity!**
  - A. **He is the creator and man is the creature  
(Genesis 1:1, 26-27; John 1:1-5; Acts 17:26-31)**
  - B. **Man is an immortal being and shall live after death.  
(Hebrews 9:27; Ecclesiastes 12:7; James 2:26; John 5:28)**
2. **The moral standard for man is not of his own personal choosing but comes from God.**

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, **we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,**

- A. **YES - There is hope, there is life in Christ Jesus. The more abundant life is in being a true believer in God and Christ.**

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life,** and that they may have it more abundantly.

1 John 5:4-5 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — **our faith.** Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

3. **No matter what anyone else teaches concerning God and Jesus, we know the truth through His inspired Word.**
  - A. **One day, EVERYONE will KNOW the truth!**

