

# **IS THERE A GOD?**

**John 1:43-51: 5:1-15**

**Theme: Jesus is the answer to life's hard issues**

**Purpose:**

- **To provide biblical insight on questions that are hard and universal to every culture.**
- **To point the listener to Jesus as the ultimate answer to these questions.**

**Episode 1 of 7  
HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD SERIES  
(15 MIN. FORMAT)  
CHRISTIAN RADIO DRAMA  
“THE STORY WITHIN”**

**001**



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**Hard Questions About God Series**  
**Episode 1 of 7: Is There a God?**  
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## **DIRECTORIAL INFORMATION**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:** (note voice quality required)

- **Each voice should be recognizably different from any other character.**
- **Some characters appear in multiple episodes of this series. Use the same voice for the same character.**

**Thomas:**            **Narrator, a disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)  
**Philip:**           **Disciple of Jesus** (voice of a mature man)  
**Simeon:**          **Old man in the crowd** (voice of an old man)  
**Jesus:**            **The Son of God** (warm voice of a mature man)

### **Director's notes to all readers:**

- These are radio **dramas**. The action and emotions are in the words. Take your time in reading the story. Remember that the listener will hear these words only once; speak distinctly with appropriate emotion; carefully observe all punctuation (i.e., pause at commas, stop at periods, intensify at exclamation points, and give special emphasis to words in **bold** type).
- Observe all **music** cues (bold/small print) throughout the script.
- Observe **sound effects** directions (bold print) throughout the script.
- Observe all **voice** instructions (bold print) in parentheses throughout the script.

**Note to translators:** When Scripture is used, the print is in italics, and it is the NIV (1984). Scripture references are given to aid the translators and should not be read as part of the script.

**IS THERE A GOD?**

**Scripture references: John 1:43-51; 5:1-15**

**Music: Theme music begins, then gradually fades to underscoring during comments by Program Host)**

**Program Host**

Welcome to “The Story Within.”

If you have ever suffered a crippling disease, if you have ever been abused by someone else, if you have gone without food, or shelter, or clothing, you have probably asked a question that has crossed the lips of many others: in a world of so much pain and suffering, can there really be a God overseeing it all?

Be assured, if you have ever asked a question like this, you are not alone. From the very beginning, mankind has wrestled with hard questions, and this one is perhaps at the top of the list. To be sure, there are many other perplexing questions that we ask, such as: “Why is there so much evil in the world?” and “Why do people kill each other?” and “What happens to me when I die?” No, we do not have a shortage of hard questions; what most of us lack is helpful answers that can make a difference in our lives.

If this is where you are today, I have good news for you, my friend. There is indeed a God, and He has revealed himself to us in a way that is clear and understandable. In his written Word, it says of God that in the past, He “*spoke*

*to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1-2).*

Join us now as we listen to the first episode in our series on Hard Questions About God, asking this first, most basic question, “Is there a God?” based on events and people found in God’s Word.

**(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Notice that scene changes are depicted with music.**

### **Scene 1**

**INSERT: (Sound effects: nighttime; a soft breeze and crickets chirping in the background)**

**Thomas (narrator):** I was probably the last man on the face of the earth who should have been chosen to be a disciple of the Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth. I had no religious training, no friends or relatives among His disciples, no special talents or gifts that would be helpful in such a position, and most of all, I had no desire whatsoever to become a disciple.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: add a softly crackling campfire)**

**Thomas (narrator):** I was a merchant; well, at least I was the son of a merchant, and not a very good one at that. My father was a dealer in leather, which was used primarily to make sandals for the wealthy; but whereas my father was at least able to run his business in a way that eked out just enough money for him to raise his family, I instead had only the ability to run it into the

ground. **(sighs)** I simply do not have a mind for business. I was, in fact, a miserable failure.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: add soft voices murmuring in the background)**

**Thomas (narrator):** So when Jesus stopped at our little shop one day and asked me to follow Him, I did not hesitate. To my father's great relief, I left his trade without looking back, taking with me nothing but the clothes on my back. But even as I took those first few steps to catch up with Jesus and His followers, an uneasiness settled over me almost at once, and it could be expressed in this one simple question: how could someone become a disciple of a religious teacher when that someone did not even believe in God?

**INSERT: (Sound effects: someone laughs, and the murmuring grows louder)**

**Philip:** Here, Thomas – come sit over by the fire.

**Thomas:** Thank you . . . um . . .

**Philip:** Philip; my name is Philip. Sit down, Thomas.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: Thomas sits down)**

**Thomas:** Thank you, Philip.

**Philip:** So, Thomas – I understand that you are a wealthy merchant.

**Thomas: (laughing)** Ha! Whatever gave you that impression?

**Philip:** See that big man over there, speaking with Jesus? Simon Peter. He said that you are one of the best tanners in all of Jerusalem, and as you will soon find out, Peter knows everything. Just ask him.

**Thomas: (chuckling)** Well, Simon Peter is wrong in this case. I am a terrible merchant, and know nothing at all about tanning.

**Philip:** Ha! I have known Simon Peter my whole life. Well said. He is supposed to be the best fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, but I am convinced that he knows nothing about fishing, so welcome to our little group of misfits. I myself fit in nowhere until I met Jesus. What do you think of Him?

**Thomas:** Who, Simon Peter?

**Philip:** No, Jesus; what do you think of Jesus?

**Thomas:** Well, I . . . I hardly know Him, I . . .

**Philip:** Yes, but you followed Him when He called you – why?

**Thomas:** Listen, Philip, can we change the subject?

**Philip:** Certainly. See that man over there, to the left of Simon Peter?

**Thomas:** Yes . . .

**Philip:** That is my neighbor, Nathaniel. He and I are both from Bethsaida, just like Simon and his brother, Andrew.

**Thomas:** Is everyone but me from Galilee?

**Philip:** Most of us are. James and John are also from Galilee. Which reminds me about how I met Jesus. Do you mind if I tell you?

**Thomas:** Well, I . . .

**Philip:** John and I were walking with Jesus to Galilee – John is that young man over there, on the other side of Jesus – we were nearing Bethsaida, when I asked Jesus if we could go find my neighbor, Nathaniel.

**Thomas:** The one sitting over there next to Simon Peter.

**Philip:** Yes. I said to Jesus, “It is already the fourth hour, so by now Nathaniel should be down at the waterfront.” But Jesus stopped me, and replied. “Your friend is sitting under the fig tree behind his father’s house.”

**Thomas: (skeptically)** How could He possibly know that?

**Philip:** Do not interrupt me. I said pretty much the same thing. Jesus told me to go look, and sure enough, there he was, fast asleep under the fig tree. I never would have found him.

**Thomas: (skeptically)** This all sounds a little crazy, Philip . . .

**Philip:** I told Nathaniel, “*We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph*” (John 1:45).

**Thomas:** You think that Jesus is the Messiah? Look, Philip, I do not know much about religion, but I do not think that the Messiah is supposed to come from Nazareth.

**Philip:** That is exactly what my friend said! But I dragged him up on his feet, and took him to see Jesus for himself.

**Thomas:** Philip, I . . .

**Philip:** When Jesus saw us approaching, He said, *“Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”* Nathaniel was astonished, and asked Jesus, *“How do you know me?”* *“I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you,”* (John 1:47, 48) Jesus replied.

**Thomas: (blurting it out)** Why are you making such a big deal out of this, Philip? So Jesus saw your friend under the fig tree!

**Philip:** Because you or I could **not** have seen him, Thomas. We were nearly an hour away from Bethsaida when Jesus told me where Nathaniel would be.

**Thomas: (raising his voice)** Are you telling me you think that Jesus has some kind of special powers, Philip?

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the background murmuring dies out)**

**Philip:** Yes, Thomas. I have seen it with my own eyes. And not just on that one occasion. I have seen many other things that cannot be explained . . .

**Thomas:** I do not believe it.



**Philip:** Oh, but you will, Thomas – when you see for yourself what I have seen.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: rustling fabric as Thomas suddenly rises to his feet)**

**Philip:** Where are you going, Thomas?

**Thomas:** I am sorry, this was all a big mistake. I . . . I am going home.

**Philip:** Do you not wish to be a disciple of Jesus?

**Thomas:** I do not.

**Philip:** But why? Do you not believe that He is a Man sent from God?

**Thomas: (raising his voice)** I do not, Philip! And do you wish to know why?

Because I do not believe that there is a God!

**INSERT: (Sound effects: footsteps as Thomas stomps away into the darkness; the murmuring suddenly returns as the disciples all want to know what just happened)**

**(Music: swells to indicate scene change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

## **INTERMISSION**

**Program Host:** Thank you for tuning in. You are listening to "The Story Within." Today we are following the first episode in our series, "Hard Questions About God," based on events and people found in God's Word. Previously in our story, Thomas had responded to a call from Jesus to follow Him, and found himself among His disciples as they gathered around a campfire at the end of a long day. Having no background in religion, and knowing no one in the group, Thomas did not get off to a very good start with

them. Listen now, as we continue our story.

**(Music: underscoring fades out as sound effects return)**

## **Scene 2**

**INSERT: (Sound effects: daytime; sounds of a busy street in the background; voices calling, many footsteps, children running, and an occasional wagon lumbers by)**

**Thomas: (narrator):** As you might have already suspected, I did not go back home. Philip caught up with me and talked me into giving the whole thing a better chance. So I stayed, and after several very confusing days in Galilee, we followed Jesus back down to Jerusalem.

**Thomas: (above the noise)** Philip, what is this place?

**Philip: (above the noise)** It is an area of town called Bethesda, Thomas. You cannot see it from here, but there is a pool over by the colonnades where the sick and the paralyzed gather.

**Thomas: (above the noise)** Why?

**Philip: (above the noise)** They are watching for the moving of the waters. It is rumored that *“from time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters”* (John 5:4).

**Thomas: (above the noise)** An angel? I do not believe in angels.

**Philip: (above the noise)** According to the rumors, *“the first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had”*

(John 5:4).

**Thomas: (above the noise)** But Philip, that is . . . that is just nonsense; it sounds like superstition to me.

**Philip:** Look! Jesus is over there by the pool, speaking with that old fellow!

**Simeon: (from a distance)** Thank you, young Man. My name is Simeon.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps and shuffling cease, and the murmuring subsides as everyone listens in)**

**Jesus:** How long have you been coming to this place, Simeon?

**Simeon:** Since I fell 38 years ago. I have been unable to walk since then.

**Jesus: (softly)** Tell me Simeon; *“Do you want to get well?”* (John 5:6)

**Simeon:** *“Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred.*

*While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me”* (John 5:7).

**Jesus: (aside to Philip)** Philip, give us some room.

**Philip: (raising his voice)** Alright; everyone back up a few steps – we need a little breathing room.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: shuffling as the crowd adjusts and a space is cleared)**

**Philip: (raising his voice)** A little more . . . a little more . . .

**Jesus: (raising His voice)** Simeon – *“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk”*

(John 5:8).

**Simeon:** I . . . I . . .

**INSERT: (Sound effects: a sudden reaction by the crowd as everyone gasps)**

**Simeon: (raising his voice)** I can walk! Look at me; **I can walk!**

**INSERT: (Sound effects: a concussion of voices cheering and crying out in astonishment, as the crowd presses in to get a look)**

**Simeon: (above the crowd, laughing with joy)** I can walk! I have been healed!

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the celebration continues, but slowly fades into the background; after a moment we hear again only the background noise of the city – voices murmuring, merchants calling out, children running and playing, an occasional cart rumbles by)**

**Thomas (narrator):** Needless to say, no angel had stirred the waters that day.

But there was no denying it: when Jesus touched that old man, something . . .

happened. Philip and I discussed the astonishing turn of events later that day.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: two sets of footsteps approach)**

**Philip:** What do you think now, Thomas? Do you still believe that there is no God?

**Thomas:** I am not sure what to believe.

**Philip:** But you saw Jesus heal him! It was clearly a miracle.

**Thomas:** I saw a man who claimed to be crippled . . . walk.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: the footsteps come to a halt)**

**Philip: (surprised)** You are saying that the old man was lying?

**Thomas:** No, I . . . I do not mean that. **(pauses)** I am just saying that it will take more than one miracle to convince me that there is a God out there who cares anything about you or me or the old man.

**Philip:** But you admit that it was a miracle.

**Thomas:** I . . .

**Philip:** And if you see Jesus perform another miracle, you are willing to admit that there is a God who not only exists, but who cares about us?

**Thomas:** I am not ready to say that yet. Let me ask you a question, Philip.

**Philip:** Yes?

**Thomas:** What does Jesus say about these miracles? Does He claim that they come from God?

**Philip:** Come with me.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: brisk footsteps as Philip grabs Thomas by the arm and begins to walk away)**

**Thomas:** Where are we going?

**Philip:** To find Jesus. You are going to ask Him that question.

**INSERT: (Sound effects: their voices and footsteps fade into the crowd)**

**Thomas:** I am? But Philip, I . . .

**Philip:** Not another word! Not until we find Jesus!

**(Music: Dramatic music swells; then begins reprise of Theme music; softly underscoring comments of Program Host during Our Response to God's Word)**

## OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

### Program Host

It seems that Philip is not going to allow his new friend's question about the existence of God go unanswered.

For Philip, you see, had already settled this issue in his own mind. Having spent a great deal of time with Jesus, he had concluded that God is indeed a great God. He is all-powerful. He made the world and all that is in it. He made the heavens, the moon and the stars—the entire universe. God knows all things. He knows more about us than we know about ourselves. He is everywhere present. We can never flee from the presence of God.

God is also a God of kindness and mercy and grace. He is a loving God. He shows His love and mercy and grace to us in many ways.

How should you and I respond to this great God of the entire universe who loves us and shows His mercy and grace to us every day? Jesus said: "*The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength*" (Mark 12:29).

I'm going to pray a brief prayer from my heart to God. Listen to my prayer, and then when I have prayed I will lead you to pray the same prayer.

**Dear God, I thank You that You are a great God of all power. I thank You that You are a God of love and mercy. I love You. Amen.**

Now repeat the prayer aloud after me. We will pray it a portion at a time. Make the prayer your very own to God. Mean it with all your heart as you pray.

**Dear God,** (pause for person to repeat)

**I thank You that You are a great God of all power.** (pause for person to repeat)

**I thank You that You are a God of love and mercy.** (pause for person to repeat)

**I love You. Amen.** (pause for person to repeat)

Thank you for praying that prayer. We will learn more about God and His love for us in the next program.

**(Music: Theme music swells dramatically and fades as broadcast ends)**

### **Note to Broadcaster, Program Host, and Director**

If this drama is to be broadcast as a part of the “Hard Questions About God” series, there should be a “listener tag” at the end of the broadcast, indicating that the next episode will be another drama on a hard question about God.

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