

Greater than - part 2

This series is to help us think about what people believe – whether consciously or not and how we can understand the basis of these views. It may seem a bit intellectual but it can help us to connect with people.

Items in italics are there to help leaders – they should be removed if sending notes to everyone.

Week 1 - Origins

To discuss: How do you feel when you see the pictures of the universe such as Sam showed on Sunday? Does it make you feel more in awe of God or does it make it more difficult to believe in a personal God? Do you feel small and insignificant in the universe?

People have always been curious about where they came from and how to understand our place in the universe. As we grow up, we become aware of our self then other people in our world and then of our surroundings. We want to know more. Curiosity and wonder about our origins led to multiple discoveries. But the more we know, the more we see the great mystery of our own existence. Where did we come from and more importantly why are we here?

Aside – Andrew gave us a bit of probability. Sir Roger Penrose estimated that the probability of our type of human life in the universe is 1 in 10 billion to the power of 123. That is 1 in 10 billion times 10 billion times 10 billion for 123 times.

WHAT DOES NATURALISM BELIEVE?

Some people have attempted to answer the existence question without God – this is naturalism. They replace God with natural laws and believe that science will eventually solve all issues. So, they rule out all supernatural things and believe in pure reason or logic.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalism_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalism_(philosophy))

Q1: Pastor Andrew said that naturalism is limiting. It limits imagination, creativity and curiosity. Why do you think this is so?

(LEADER Guide: Their approach to life's questions is limited by their adherence to physical laws, they do not think outside their box. They do not permit thoughts about whether there is a spiritual world or things we cannot comprehend with our minds)

Q2: Why do you think that naturalism has appeal to many people?

(LEADER Guide: Think about what it requires from them – almost nothing. It also gives certainty in that they do not need to think about the mystery of life)

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

(Leader guide: Suggest you get people to read the verses so that they are all clear on why Christianity is different).

1. God created the universe, our world and us. Genesis 1:1. He is the first cause because He is the ever existing one.
2. The creation stands as a witness to God. Romans 1:20-21, 25.
3. God created people in His own image. Gen 1:26-27.

Q3: What does this mean – to be created in God's image? How does that differ from what naturalism says?

4. Jesus was the agent of creation and one day will come back to create a new heaven and a new earth. Heb 1:1-4. Colossians 1:15-17.
5. This world is not moving towards a utopia but is, in fact, under a curse and decaying. The curse is caused by sin and rebellion against God. Romans 8:20-22.
6. The Bible tells us that we have all sinned. But it also tells us that Jesus paid the penalty for sin. Through Him we can be righteous and connected to God. What do people need to do? Romans 3:22-25
7. God is a Spirit and we, who become His family, are supernatural beings. John 4:24. Romans 8:15-17.

Q4: Why is it important that we are supernatural beings? How does that affect how you live day by day?

CONCLUSION

Q5: How would you respond to a naturalist?

- What witness can you give to the supernatural power of God in your life? Share this with the rest of the group).

(Leader guide: Naturalists can be questioned on whether they think we have a soul and whether they think there is anything beyond this life. What if they are wrong?)

- Why do you think that naturalists reject Jesus – how would you point them to the historical Jesus?