

1 WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE WORLD?

In This Lesson

- How Can You Know the Truth?
- How Did the World Begin?
- What Went Wrong With the World?
- Is There Any Hope for the World?

PART 1: How Can You Know the Truth?

Science, History, and Observation

You can learn many wonderful things about the world and its people through science, history, and observation. However, you cannot learn the answers to many of the great questions of life from these sources. They do not tell how life began, what its purpose is, and what the future holds.

The Bible

Only the One who made the world can tell you how He did it and why. He tells us the truth about these things in His book, the Holy Bible. It is a book of instructions for living in this world.

This Course—The Great Questions of Life

These lessons are based on the Bible. They quote from it some of the many verses that answer your questions. With each quotation is the reference: the name of the book, chapter, and verse where the words are found in the Bible.

There are many different translations of the Bible from the languages in which it was first written. The words here may be different from those in your Bible. They are from the New International Version (NIV).

PART 2: How Did the World Begin?

Did It Just Happen?

Do you ever ask yourself, “Where did the world come from? Did it just happen? Or did a great mind plan it and a great power make it?”

When you see a bicycle, a car, or an airplane, you know that it couldn’t have just happened. Someone planned it and made it so that it would operate according to fixed rules.

The World Was Made According to a Plan

The world and everything in it functions according to fixed patterns that we call the “laws of nature”. The more science discovers about these laws, the more sure we are that Someone planned every detail of the universe, made it, and keeps it functioning according to His plan. That Someone is God, the all-powerful and all-wise Creator. He is the Lord, or Ruler, of the Universe.

Memorize

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (John 1:3)

God Made a Perfect World

God created the sun, moon, stars, and earth. He fixed their orbits so they would not crash into one another. He ordered the exact distance of the earth from the sun—not too close, or everything would burn up; not too far away, or we would freeze. Ocean and land were in perfect proportions, and the atmosphere was just right. Then God made the living things. Last of all He created the first man and woman and put them in a beautiful, wonderful world.

Memorize

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

Why God Made the World

God made the world for His own enjoyment. He created the human family to be His children that He would love and enjoy. He

made the earth for their home. God would enjoy the beauty and the orderliness of His universe, but most of all He would take pleasure in the love of His children. The Bible states in Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” And Psalm 149:4 says, “The Lord takes delight in his people.”

God wanted His children to be like himself and to share in His work. So He gave Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, a nature like His own in many ways. God would teach them. With His help, humankind would rule over the earth:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.
(Genesis 1:26)

For You to Do

- 1 What book tells us how and why the world was made?
- 2 Who set the patterns for life that we call the laws of nature?
- 3 For whose pleasure was the world created?
- 4 Was the world good or bad?
- 5 God gave Adam and Eve a nature that is like.
- 6 God wanted human beings to enjoy His love and be His
- 7 With. help, humankind was to rule over the

Check your answers by looking back over the section you just studied and correct any that are wrong.

PART 3: What Went Wrong With the World?

Something Went Wrong

Look around and you will see suffering, sorrow, quarrels, violence, war, hunger, and death. The world is not perfect now. What

went wrong? This once-perfect world has been spoiled by an enemy of God and by people themselves.

God's Enemy

God has an enemy called Satan, or the devil. He was made by God, but he became proud and rebellious. Now Satan is against everything that God is for . . . God is good; Satan fights good with evil. God wants to help us; Satan tries to destroy us. God wants to enjoy our love and fellowship, but the devil tries to separate us from God. Satan tries to make us follow him instead of God.

Man's Sin

Satan told Adam and Eve lies about God. He persuaded them to sin; that is, to disobey God. God had warned Adam that sin would bring death, because sin separates a person from God. Life comes from God, so separation from Him ends in death. Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan instead of God. They broke God's rules and went their own way with tragic results for the world.

The Effects of Sin

Sin brought disease and death into the world. Romans 5:12 says, "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

Sin has broken the fellowship between God and humankind. As long as we are rebellious, disobedient, and sinful, we cannot have fellowship with God. Instead of being a servant of God, we are servants of sin.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

Your Choice—God's Way or Satan's Way

By choosing to disobey God, we join Satan's rebellion and accept his rule. The earth has become a battlefield between God and Satan. You must choose on which side to be. Scripture instructs us: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

	GOD OFFERS US	SATAN OFFERS US
<i>In Nature</i>	A Perfect Creation Abundant Provision Balance Order	A Corrupt Nature Poverty, Hunger Chaos Disorder
<i>In Our Body</i>	Life and Health Wholesome Appetites	Disease and Death Vices, Lust, Gluttony
<i>In Our Thinking, Feeling, and Acting</i>	Wholesome Love Good Thoughts Freedom of Choice Fellowship with God Obedience Helpfulness Justice Confidence Peace Humility Trust Purpose Wisdom Truth Creativity Faith Joy	Hatred Bad Thoughts Enslavement to Sin Separation from God Rebelliousness Selfishness Injustice Fears Conflict Pride Suspicion Aimlessness Folly Deceit Destruction Unbelief Sadness

For You to Do

8 Underline the things you want in the chart above.

Would you rather be on the side of God or Satan?

PART 4: Is There Any Hope for the World?

God Still Cares for the World

God still loves us in spite of our sin. He has made a way to save us from sin, Satan, and eternal death. God still rules the universe and will one day bring the earth back into obedience again.

The Son of God Took Our Punishment

Every person on earth has sinned and has been sentenced to die. We had no way to save ourselves. God loved us so much that He sent His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to take our punishment.

Nearly 2,000 years ago Jesus came to earth and was supernaturally born of a virgin in the land of Palestine. He taught people the truth about God and His love. He did nothing wrong in life. He treated everyone with respect and kindness. Yet he was treated as a criminal, nailed to a cross, and put to death. He died for our sins.

God showed the world that Jesus was His Son by bringing Him back to life after three days. Forty days later Jesus went back to heaven. Friends of Jesus who saw Him after His resurrection and watched Him go up to heaven have told us about it in the Gospels.

Accepting Jesus Makes Us God's Children

Since Jesus has taken our punishment, those who accept Him as their Savior are freed from the power of Satan. When we turn away from our sins, God makes us His children and gives us His life. God urges us to believe in His Son and be saved from sin, but He will not force us to do it.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! (Romans 5:17)

Memorize

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

You Can Live in a Perfect World

One day Jesus is coming back to the world to free it from sin and make everything new. If you accept Him as your Savior now, you will live with Him in complete happiness then. Even now, your life will be better because Jesus will come to live in you so you can

do what pleases God. You can begin to enjoy today the blessings that belong to the children of God.

For You to Do

Write your name in the blanks:

For God so loved
that He gave His one and only Son, that
who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

If you believe the truth above and want to accept Jesus as your Savior now, pray the following prayer.

Prayer

Thank You, God, for loving me and sending Your Son to die for my sins. I accept Jesus now as my Savior. All the rest of my life, I want to be on Your side and not Satan's. Please make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen.

Check Your Answers

- 1 the Bible
- 2 God
- 3 God's
- 4 Good
- 5 His
- 6 children
- 7 God's, earth
- 8 Hopefully, you underlined the things God offers you, and would rather be on His side.

Now that you have completed Lesson One, please turn to the Lesson Review Questions in the back of this book and answer those for Lesson One.