



NEW BEGINNINGS

Course 1, *Basic Christianity*, Lesson 2

PURPOSE: In our first lesson we discussed the great spiritual need of every human being. We discovered from the Bible that Jesus Christ came to our world so that He could supply all our needs by revealing God's love, forgiving our sins, giving us eternal life and power to become more and more like Him over our lifetimes.

In this lesson we will go back to the beginning of history and discover why our world is as it is today.

The question is often asked, why is our world so filled with confusion, misery, destruction, and death? Why is there so much enmity between races and nations? Why is man so intent upon destroying his fellow man, and maximizing his own status and wealth? Every day we see political, social, economic, and religious conflicts which are rending our world apart and causing heartache and suffering to countless millions of people. Why? It all seems so futile and senseless.

Related to that question is the more personal one. Why are many individuals at war within themselves? Are there inner conflicts between good and evil going on in the mind of every human being? Why do our emotions so often drag us in contrary directions and motivate us to act in ways that are unproductive?

Is there a relationship between each individual's inner struggle and the worldwide conflicts between people of different races, cultures, classes, and ideologies? Is the disunity within the microcosm the basic cause of the confusion in the macrocosm? If man were at peace with himself, could he be at peace with his brother?

These are heavy and very relevant questions. Let us turn to the Scriptures for the answers.

Objectives:

First, what was our universe like as God originally created it?

Second, how did evil first come into our universe?

Third, what was our world like when it was first created?

Fourth, how did evil come into our world?

Fifth, how can everyone be restored to the ideal state that God intends for him?

I. WHAT WAS OUR UNIVERSE LIKE AS GOD ORIGINALLY CREATED IT?

In the Bible we discover some very fascinating answers to our questions. The Bible depicts a universe created by God, which, in its original state, was completely free from evil of any kind. Only love reigned supreme. God ruled the beings He had created with tenderness and concern for the welfare of each. All His subjects served Him with loyalty and devotion, and all were in perfect harmony with one another.

The Word:

1. Did God create only our world? What evidence do we find in the Bible?

God has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. Hebrews 1:2

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. Hebrews 11:3

2. What attitude to God is always manifested by the perfect heavenly host whom He created?

You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, these and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. Nehemiah 9:6

Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Psalm 103:20

3. What kind of spirit reigned among the beings whom God created to inhabit the universe?

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7

Explanation: The Bible teaches that there is only one God who created the entire universe (See also Malachi 2:10). He did not create only one world. The Bible says that “*the worlds were framed by the word of God*” Hebrews 11:3. Within these worlds were perfect beings who worshiped their Creator and lived in a state of perfect harmony.

Relevance: God is the originator of order, harmony, love, and peace. God created everything good, but as we shall see, evil emerged when creation deviated from its intended purpose.

II. HOW DID EVIL FIRST COME INTO OUR UNIVERSE?

The record reveals that one glorious, created being fostered pride and jealousy in his own mind until God had no choice but to expel him and his followers from heaven. This perfect angel created evil in his own nature until he was completely out of harmony with the love and joy of heaven. God created him spiritually and intellectually perfect, but he made himself evil.

The Word:

4. What was the name of this beautiful angel? What did he want most?

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Isaiah 14:12-15

5. According to the prophet Isaiah, what earthly king illustrated the evil characteristics of this fallen angel?

That you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: ‘How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!’ The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers; he who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing. Isaiah 14:4-7

6. To what earthly king does Ezekiel liken this fallen angel?

“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. Ezekiel 28: 12-13

7. What was the original state of this angel?

You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. you were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. Ezekiel 28:14-16

8. What was his sin?

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror and shall be no more forever. Ezekiel 14:17-19

9. What event occurred in heaven? Who was cast out?

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12: 7-9

*His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Revelation 12:4;
Compare Luke 10:18*

Explanation: Lucifer was the anointed cherub or angel living right in the presence of God. In other words, he was a leading angel. He coveted God's position and wanted to be the supreme being in the universe. He managed to convince a third of the angelic hosts that he should be like the most High. There was war in heaven, because God could not have a perfect environment when jealousy and enmity reigned supreme in the hearts of Lucifer and his followers. "Lucifer," or "shining one," or "brilliant one," had made himself "Satan," which means "adversary." God had no choice but to cast him out of heaven with one third of the angels who were following him.

Relevance: Pride and jealousy lead to hatred and conflict. Such attitudes were originated by Satan, not by God. All God's efforts have been directed towards sheltering His created beings from the evil that Satan wants them to experience. If pride and jealousy resulted in sorrow and war in heaven, is it any wonder that we have trouble in our world? Is your heart free from pride and jealousy?

III. WHAT WAS OUR WORLD LIKE WHEN IT WAS FIRST CREATED?

The Bible teaches that God created our world like the rest of the universe, perfect in every way and free from every taint of evil. In a state of purity and holiness, mankind was created to inhabit the lovely world which God had brought forth.

The Word:

10. In how many days did God create our world? What was the world like as it came forth from God's hand?

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So, the evening and the morning were the first day. Genesis 1:5; Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So, the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31; See also Genesis 2:1

11. On which day did God create man?

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He

created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26-27; So, the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

12. How did God create woman?

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. Genesis 2:18, 21-22

13. What did God do on the seventh day?

Thus, the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ² And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. Genesis 2:1-3

Explanation: The Genesis record is that God created our world and our first parents in six literal days. There was no sin in this perfect world. Man had no spiritual, moral, intellectual, or physical weaknesses. *"You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Your hands"* Hebrews 2:7-8.

Relevance: Here is God's ideal for our world. If God created it full of harmony and love, these are the principles that should rule within our hearts and should motivate our relationships with our fellow human beings. Is love for God and your fellow man the ruling principle in your life?

III. HOW DID EVIL COME INTO OUR WORLD?

Scripture indicates that sin, sorrow, and death came into our world because our first parents responded to Satan's temptations by disobeying a specific command of God.

The Word:

14. Of the fruit of that tree was man not to eat? Why?

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2: 16-17

15. What were Satan's lies when he tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God?

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Genesis 3:1-6*

16. What were the results of their disobedience?

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So, the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. Genesis 3: 7-14; 16-19; compare Romans 5: 17-19; Ephesians 2:3

Explanation: The first sin committed on this earth resulted from distrust of God. Adam and Eve accepted Satan's lie. After being cast out of heaven, Satan was determined to win the allegiance of these newly created humans. He wanted the world as his kingdom, and he tried to take it from God by leading our first parents to follow him instead of God. Thus, enmity against God was introduced into our world. Adam and Eve condemned one another and, by implication, blamed God. This has been the pattern among mankind ever since. Man at enmity with himself and his Creator cannot have peace with his fellow man. When Adam and Eve sinned, they earned for themselves fallen natures and introduced sin, disharmony, and death to the earth.

Relevance: You can only have peace as you choose to serve God and reject Satan's temptations. You are either ruled by God or by self. Is God ruling in your life?

V. HOW CAN EACH INDIVIDUAL BE RESTORED TO THE IDEAL STATE THAT GOD INTENDS FOR THEM?

The only way God could win mankind back from Satan was for Him to send His Son to die in man's place. The Messiah was to be our Substitute. He was to suffer the penalty for our sin so that we could be forgiven and could receive the power from God to live in accordance with His will. Only in Christ can our lives be ultimately restored to the state of spiritual purity in which man was created.

The Word:

7. What was promised in the Bible's first prophecy?

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. Genesis 3:15

8. Who did God send to die? What does He give us if we believe?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

9. Who is our Savior from sin and death?

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12; See also John 11:25; 12:46

20. What kind of world will this be after Gd has recreated it? What will be the privilege of those who are saved?

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:1-5

21. Who will not be admitted to that perfect world? Who will be admitted?

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Revelation 21:27

Explanation: Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. He was God in the fullest sense. See Colossians 2:9. Our one God mysteriously comprises the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Future studies will explain that truth more fully. Jesus accepted all our punishment for sin. "He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" 1 Peter 2:24. When we accept Him as Savior and Lord, He comes into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and we are saved from sin. See Romans 8. When He reigns in our minds and hearts, Satan cannot overcome us, and we have peace within.

It is tragic that most people turn away from Jesus and His love. Satan convinces them to reject God, as he convinced one-third of the heavenly angels. Because of this, the Bible predicts that we will not have a perfect, sinless world again until after the second coming of Jesus. Only then will universal love for God and for one another reign in people's hearts because Satan and his followers will be no more.

Jesus loves all people infinitely (John 3:16). He is "*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" 2 Peter 3:9. If you accept Him as your Savior and Lord, He will give you eternal life (John 3:36), and you will inherit the perfect new world He is planning to create.

Relevance: The answer to the problems we spoke of in the introduction is in our accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior. His presence in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the only means by which we can have victory over sin and peace with God. When people find Christ and His love, they love one another. Only in that way are political, social, racial, and cultural conflicts solved. Jesus is the only answer to our need and the problems of this world.

Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Savior from sin? Are you allowing His love in your heart to motivate you to love your fellow human beings, whatever their race, class, or creed?

Review Questions

1. True or False:

- a. The Bible teaches that life on our world evolved over many centuries.
- b. Satan and his demons are primarily responsible for the evil in the world.
- c. Sin caused Adam and his descendants to earn a fallen nature.
- d. This life is the only one. There is no hope of ever living in a perfect world.

2. Discuss: If God offers mankind the power to resist and overcome Satan's temptation, evil does not have to overcome us because God's power is greater than Satan's.