

A collage of images including a red carpet, a person, and abstract patterns. The collage is composed of various rectangular and square sections in shades of red, orange, yellow, and purple. Overlaid on the collage are faint, semi-transparent text elements, including the word 'WHAT'S' in large blue letters and 'WITH THE WORLD?' in white letters. The overall effect is a complex, layered visual.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

WHY?

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 04

Possibly the most asked question today is, Why? – Why pain? Why evil? Why death? Why such hatred and cruelty? Why is there a lack of meaning? If there is a God, why is there such suffering in the world?

WHY?

04 – WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?



Young British singer, **Declan Galbraith**, in his song "Tell me Why?" dreams about a beautiful world of peace and harmony. Then he wakes to a destructive world full of needy people. Why do we let the forest burn and the ocean die?

Tell me why, is there something I have missed?

Tell me why, cos I don't understand.

When so many need somebody we don't give a helping hand.

Tell me why?...

Is that what my life is for to waste in a world full of war?

Why terrorism? **September 11, 2001 has changed the world forever.** The threat of terrorism has reduced our freedom, increased our insecurities, made us more suspicious of our neighbours and has led to war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Nancy Gibbs in a special report by *Time* magazine highlights the horror and heroism of the day, "as the U.S. dealt with the bloodiest day on its soil since the Civil War."

The first plane hit the World Trade Center's north tower at 8:45, ripping through the building's skin, setting its upper floors ablaze. The second plane

impaled the south tower at 9:06. It collapsed at 10. The north tower came down 29 minutes later, crushing itself like a piston.

"I know that the rescue people who were helping us didn't get out of the building," said security official Bill Heitman, as he broke down and sobbed. All that was left of the New York skyline was a chalk cloud."

Jim Gartenberg, 35, a real estate broker on the 86th floor kept calling his wife Jill, who is pregnant with their second child, to let her know he was O.K. but trapped. "He called several times until 10. Then nothing. He sounded calm, except for when he

me how much he loved me. He said, 'I don't know if I'll make it.' He sounded like he knew it would be one of the last times he would say he loved me."

Gibbs reports it's a wonder it hadn't happened earlier when the Microsoft flight simulator and Fly! II allow you to pretend to fly between the World Trade Center towers, and into them. Anyone looking to practise can buy the software off the shelf.

What's wrong with the world? On a smaller scale, but no less traumatic, are the increasing number of random shootings.

Columbine High School massacre in the U.S. April 20, 1999 was a wakeup call about violence in society. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold went on a shooting spree that left 15 dead and 23 students wounded. *Time* magazine reported them as laughing excitedly. "Who's next?" "Who's ready to die?" "They told wounded kids to quit crying; it will all be over soon, you'll all be dead. Anyone who cried or moaned was shot again." Survivors said they treated it like a video game.

Cassie Bernall, who was reading her Bible that day, was asked if she believed in God. She replied: "There is a God, and you need to follow along God's path." The shooter looked down at her and said, "There is no God," as he shot her in the head.

The district attorney, Dave Thomas, said "there were SWAT team people ... weeping over what they saw."

The *Washington Post* reported a diary "detailing the year-long plans for the killings, which the teenagers hoped would result in 500 people dead and end with them hijacking a plane and crashing into New York City."

What turned two boys into callous murderers, utterly devoid of pity?

One year later a joint statement by The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Paediatrics, the American Psychological Association and the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry stated:

"At this time, well over 1000 studies ... point overwhelmingly to a causal connection between media violence and aggressive behaviour in some children. The conclusion of the public health community, based on over 30 years of research, is that viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behaviour, particularly in children. Its effects are measurable and long-lasting."

Despite these findings there's been no lessening of violence in entertainment media. One study reports, **by the time a child reaches the age of 18, he or she will have seen 200,000 dramatized acts of violence and 40,000 dramatized murders on television.**

Music often glorifies violence. Many video games are particularly violent. The perpetrator of the **Virginia Tech tragedy that left 33 dead** April 16, 2007, is said, by classmates, to have been a fanatical player of "shooter" video games, especially one called "Counterstrike."





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Researchers at **Columbia University**, using *Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging*, found that watching violent programs can cause parts of the brain that suppress aggressive behaviours to become less active. **Repeated exposure to violence diminishes the brain's ability to inhibit violent behaviour.**

In the light of this research, should we be surprised at an increase in violence in society?

The UK group **The Verve** in their "Bitter Sweet Symphony" highlight another factor:

*Cause it's a bitter sweet symphony that's life...
Try to make ends meet ,
You're a slave to the money then you die.
Well I've never prayed, but tonight I'm on
my knees, yeah.
I need to hear some sounds that recognise
the pain in me, yeah.*

A DJ who played the song said, "I like the sentiments of this song. 'Life's a drag – and then we die!' You can't get more bleak and nihilistic than that. But that's what you crazy kids seem to like so much these days?"

We live in what's called a **Postmodern society** where there are no moral absolutes and life is meaningless. Our modern songs are full of this cry of despair and confusion. If life is meaningless and there is no hope, then what we do, doesn't matter.



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The Entrance of Sin

Possibly the most asked question today is, Why? - Why pain? Why evil? Why death? Why such hatred and cruelty? Why is there a lack of meaning? If there is a God, why is there such suffering in the world? **Genesis chapter 3 is the key** that can unlock this mystery for us. It explains what otherwise would be a series of unexplainable riddles. It tells us why a good world has gone bad, and it explains why we need Jesus. God made a perfect world with perfect people, but He didn't make them as robots. He made them with free will so they could choose to love and worship Him, or not (Genesis 2:16-17, page 2).

1. In Eden, Satan, masquerading as a serpent, spoke to Eve. How did he misrepresent what God had said? Genesis 3:1-3 (page 2 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

Did God really say, "You must _____ eat from _____ tree in the garden"?

Jesus' disciple John identified the serpent as Satan or the devil in disguise (Revelation 12:9, page 873). The name "devil" is from the Greek "diabolos", which means "slanderer". That's what he was doing, misrepresenting God. "Satan" means "adversary" or "opponent".

2. What did God actually say to Adam and Eve, which shows they were not robots? Genesis 2:16, 17 (page 2)
You are free to eat from _____ tree in the garden; but you must _____ eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely _____.
3. What two lies did the serpent tell Eve? Genesis 3:2-5 (page 2)

"You will _____ surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like _____, knowing good and evil."

In John 8:44 (page 758) Jesus calls Satan the father of lies. These two lies - "**you will not die**" and "**you will be like God**" - are at the basis of most non-Christian religions. The two main teachings of the New Age movement are that we are "gods" and that we have past lives through the cycle of reincarnation.

4. What were the three temptations presented to Eve? Genesis 3:6 (page 2)

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for _____ and _____ to the eye, and also desirable for gaining _____, she took some and ate it.

The three areas in which Eve was tempted were the **physical, mental and spiritual**. These are the categories of all temptation. The temptations presented to Jesus (Luke 4:1-13, page 727) were in the same areas. He went through a similar experience to Adam and Eve, but He succeeded where they failed. That's why He can save us from the problem of evil. We will say more about this in further guides.

5. How did God respond towards Adam and Eve? How did they react to God? Tick the appropriate boxes.
Genesis 3:7-10 (page 2)

- they came looking for God to confess what they had done
- God said: Good riddance, I didn't like them anyway
- they were afraid of God and hid
- God came looking for them

Sin didn't cause God to turn away from Adam and Eve, rather it caused them to run away in fear from God. God was the One who came looking for them.

6. Whom did Adam and Eve blame for their disobedience? Genesis 3:11-13 (page 2)

The man [Adam] said, "The _____you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

The woman [Eve] said, "The _____deceived me, and I ate."

God, of course, knew what Adam and Eve had done, but He wanted them to own up to it. Just as a mother would ask a child who has jam on his or her face, "Have you been into the jam jar that I told you not to touch?" Instead, Adam blamed his wife and Eve blamed the serpent. Indirectly they both blamed God. God had put Eve with Adam, and had made the serpent. When God first brought Eve to Adam he was enraptured. Now she is "*the woman* You put here with me."

The Promise of a Saviour

7. In speaking to the serpent (the devil), what promise did God make? Genesis 3:14, 15 (page 3)

(See also Rev 12:1-11 [873] where this verse is explained).

And I will put _____between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will _____your head, and you will strike his heel.

This is the first promise about Jesus who would come and deal with the devil and the problem of evil. Sin, which is going against God, results in serious consequences (Genesis 3:16-19). One of the greatest lessons about life we can ever learn is that LIFE IS RUN BY LAW NOT BY LUCK. From the atom to the galaxy and from an amoeba to a human there is order and design. We live in a universe not a multiverse. Because of this, what we sow we reap. Just as a car manufacturer gives a manual on how to get the best out of your car, so God, who made us, knows what's best for us.

8. What was the result of sin in Adam and Eve's family? Genesis 4:1-10 (page 3); 1 John 3:12 (page 863)

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one [devil] and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were _____and his brother's were _____.

Cain had the wrong attitude of trusting in his own works, while Abel had an attitude of faith in God. The offerings symbolised the sacrifice and substitution of Jesus in place of the sinner.

The Lamb of God

9. After they sinned, the nakedness of Adam and Eve symbolised their guilt and lost innocence. They tried to cover themselves with fig-leaf garments. With what did God cover them instead? Genesis 3:7, 21-24 (page 2); Romans 13:14 (page 804)

The Lord God made _____ for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Rather, _____ yourselves with the _____, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Genesis chapter 3 tells us what's wrong with the world. It tells us that our first parents misused their free will and chose to distrust and disobey God. They fell from a relationship with God. The results of this fall are seen in four broken relationships. First, with God - the purpose of our existence was to have fellowship with God: that's been broken. **Second**, within ourselves - we now have fear and psychological disharmony. **Third**, with each other - evidenced in social breakdown. Adam blamed Eve for his sin, Cain killed his brother Abel, and so on. And last, with nature - we have polluted our environment, instead of caring for it. (See F A Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, pages 102-5.)

Jesus came to restore those relationships, so that there will be no more emptiness and conflict within, no more September 11 or Columbine High School tragedies, no more environmental destruction.

10. What did John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, say about Jesus? John 1:29 (page 750)

Look, the _____ of God, who takes away the _____ of the world!

11. What did Jesus say to those who, sensing their brokenness, come to Him for help? John 6:37 (page 755)

_____ comes to me I will _____ drive away.



Jesus Paid Our Debt

In the Old Testament the sacrifice of a lamb was symbolic of Jesus, who took our place and died to pay for our sins. The skins were a constant reminder of Adam and Eve's lost innocence, of death as the wages of sin, and of the promised Lamb of God (Jesus), who would by His own death pay the penalty for the sins of the world - thus, wiping out our debt of sin.

Our efforts at covering our sins (that is, paying for them ourselves) can't help us. Only Jesus, who lived a perfect life, can cover us.

Imagine that you are in debt for a hundred million dollars and that there is no way you could pay it in a hundred years, so you are going to be thrown in jail for the rest of your life. But your rich uncle comes along and pays it for you, freely. Now you're no longer in debt, and no judge can sentence you to jail - you are free. That's what Jesus has done for all of us. What He wants from us is our love and gratitude. How do you feel in response to this?



I'm glad for what Jesus has done for me and would like to know more.

I feel relieved that Jesus accepts me for who I am and not for what I do.

In what way does my capacity to make my own choices bring responsibility?

How has this guide helped you to understand what's wrong with the world and why we need Jesus?

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