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NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

For more information on Bible study materials contact:
It Is Written
P.O. Box 0
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

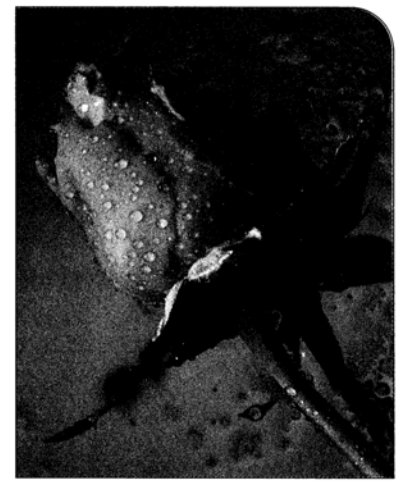
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SFC07

IT IS WRITTEN TELEVISION PRESENTS:
SEARCH FOR Certainty

Good God! Bad World! Why?

Making Sense of Evil in the 21st Century



God has left His fingerprints across our world. The dazzling splendor of a sunset, the majesty of snowcapped mountain peaks, the glory of a starlit night, the beauty of an opening rosebud, and the carefree laughter of children playing speak to us of a loving God who delights in making His people happy.

Another's fingerprints give evidence that someone else stalks our planet. Ours is a world in trouble—a world consumed with war, famine, and poverty; a world writhing in sickness, disease, and sorrow.

Rising from this troubled planet like an incense of doom is the persistent question Why? Why war and suffering and heartache and death?

Doesn't God care? Are we only a forgotten cinder out on the edge of an unimportant galaxy? A world that doesn't matter? If God is a God of love, why is there so much suffering in our world? Why do the good suffer as well as the bad?

The Bible draws aside the curtain on one of life's greatest dramas allowing us to look behind the scenes in the great controversy between good and evil. Today's lesson will provide a clear answer to who is responsible for this world's suffering. It will also reveal God's ultimate solution to the problem of why innocent people suffer.

God has left His fingerprint across the world.

1. Is God the author of human suffering? Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:8

The Bible answer: _____

_____

The essence of God's nature is love. He desires only what is best for us. All of His actions toward us are loving. They are designed to produce lasting happiness. God would never do anything that is not ultimately for our best good. For God to act any other way than loving would be to act contrary to His very nature.

2. If God is not responsible for human suffering, where did it originate? Matthew 13:24-28

The Bible answer: _____

_____

3. Who is the enemy? Matthew 13:39

The Bible answer: _____

_____

4. Since God is not the author of sin and suffering, whom did sin originate with? 1 John 3:8

The Bible answer: _____

_____

5. Where did this diabolical being come from? Luke 10:18

The Bible answer: _____

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14. What will God eventually do with this planet? 2 Peter 3:10, 13

The Bible answer: _____

_____

MY DECISION

❒ *I accept Jesus as my Saviour and surrender my life to Him. I desire Him to rule in the kingdom of my heart. I choose Jesus as master of my life.*

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It is shocking but true. The devil originated in heaven. Oh, he was not a devil when God created him! Many people imagine the devil as dwelling in some hot spot of burning flames deep within the bowels of the earth. On the contrary, the devil fell from heaven.

6. Did God create a devil? Ezekiel 28:12-15

The Bible answer: _____

_____

God created Lucifer a beautiful, glorious angel. He was perfect in his ways. God gave this magnificent angel the capacity to choose. To remove the power of choice is to remove the power to love. Genuine love is not forced or coerced. It springs from divine love. To take away the power of choice is to destroy the ability to love. To destroy the ability to love is to deny the opportunity to be fully happy and completely free. Since God longs for all His creatures to be fully happy and free, He has given them the power of choice.

7. What occurred in Satan's mind to lead to open rebellion? Isaiah 14:12-14

The Bible answer: _____

_____

Lucifer means "light bearer." God created a beautiful light-bearing angel who used his position to challenge God's authority. He wanted God's power, not His loving character. Lucifer defiantly declared, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne; . . . I will ascend above . . . the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14, NKJV). Notice, Lucifer uses the word "I" four times. Pride gradually developed in his heart. Lucifer came to believe God was arbitrary, unfair, and unjust. He concluded that he could run the heavenly government better than God.

8. What did this open rebellion lead to and what ultimately happened to Satan as a result? Revelation 12:7-9

The Bible answer: _____

Every angel chose either the path of loyalty or rebellion. The same option is available to every human being. There are only two ways: the way of loyalty to God or the way of rebellion against God.

9. How did our world become involved in the conflict between good and evil? Romans 5:12

The Bible answer: _____

Through deliberate disobedience Adam, the head of the human family, opened a door God desired forever shut. His conscious choice to disobey separated him from God and resulted in death. Our world was not created as a "dumping-off" place for Satan. It was created perfect (Genesis 1:31). Through sin Adam's dominion was forfeited. But we must not lay all the responsibility for sin upon our first parents. The apostle Paul writes, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, NKJV).* We are sinners by birth. We inherited a sinful nature from Adam. We are also sinners by choice. Through our own deliberate disobedience we have participated in Adam's sin of rebellion against God.

10. As a result of our fall, what does Satan now claim as his? Luke 4:5, 6

The Bible answer: _____

11. What has God done to redeem this planet in rebellion? John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:18, 19

The Bible answer: _____

With a heart of inexhaustible, infinite love God decided to pay the price of sin Himself. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, came to this sin-cursed world. He entered into the arena of human affairs to redeem us from the curse of sin.

12. What promises does God give His children, who are caught in the grip of suffering and injustice? 1 Corinthians 10:13; Isaiah 41:13

The Bible answer: _____

In the midst of our personal suffering, God promises to be with us. He promises never to allow any temptation of the evil one to overwhelm us. He promises to provide strength to meet the temptations of each day. In tones of tenderest love, He encourages us with these simple words, "Fear not, I will help you."

13. What is Satan's ultimate fate? Ezekiel 28:16-19

The Bible answer: _____

Satan is soon to be defeated and destroyed. Through Calvary's cross he has been proven a liar. God is love. The principles of His government will ensure the happiness of His creatures throughout all eternity. You can be on the winning side. Why not tell Jesus, "Lord, I choose to stand with You. I accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I invite You to enter my life as my King"?