

February 14th, This is our Father's House
Part 1 in the series What in the World?

Why do you think people intuitively know that this world is not as it should be?

Do you often take time to marvel at the beauty in the world? What in particular in nature causes you to be in awe of creation?

READ Romans 1:20 (ESV)

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

What, according to Paul, can be understood about God by looking at the natural world?

READ Genesis 1:26-28

26 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."

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

How does God's role in creation mirror the role he has in mind for humans?

What does it mean to be created in God's image?

How are humans uniquely designed to express God's love?

READ Genesis 3:2-4

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Why do you think the serpent in Genesis 3 urges Eve to eat the fruit by saying "you will be like God"?

Can you think of any metaphorical fruit that the enemy urges humans to eat ("do *this* and you will be like God or, do *this* and things will be better for you")?

READ Genesis 11:1-9

11 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. **2** As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

3 They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. **4** Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. **6** The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

8 So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. **9** That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Why do the people want to build the tower?

A: They want to reach the heavens, they want to be like God

What does the ability to make bricks and build cities say about humans?

A: that we are creative, innovative

Is the ability to build a tower an inherently bad thing?

What happens when humans decide *not* to be an expression of God’s love?

Why is the world not as it should be, according to Scripture?

READ John 12:31

31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

If this is God’s world, why is Satan referred to as the prince of this world?

A: this world has become a battleground. Humans listen to the lying snake, effectively ceding the world over to him. Quite literally, he is contesting God’s rule and authority over the world based on humanity’s refusal to bend its knees to God.

READ Romans 12:2

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

What would you say are “the patterns of this world”?

A: do not live the way the people of this world live e.g. hatred, racism etc.

How does God want his children to live?

READ John 3:16 (NIV)

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.

Jesus has set those who believe free from the domain of death that this world has become.

As ambassadors of Christ, what vision do we carry into this world?

A: A vision of the reality of the wonderful world God intended this world to be.

In light of this, how should we view others?

A: We see the created image of God in every person. We see the treasure God has placed in every person.

How did Jesus approach others during His earthly ministry? What 'patterns' did *He* exemplify?

A: As an agent of love and redemption, a healer, a servant, one who would point people to the Father, the author and the creator

How are we, as Jesus' followers, to follow His example? Who helps us do this? (A: The Holy Spirit)

How does choosing to follow God's will instead of the patterns of this world affect the world?