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# GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

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Topic: **THE WORLD**

Lesson: **GENESIS 3:1-19**

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**Goal:** to understand why the world is the way it is

1) Read Genesis 3:1-5

- If God was going to forbid Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, why did he create it in the first place? What did God's command concerning the fruit of that tree allow Adam and Eve to do?
- Put an asterisks next to verses 4 and 5 and in the margin write, "See John 8:44." What does that passage tell us about the way that the devil tries to get us to fall away from God?
- How do the devil's lies in verses 4 and 5 call God's truthfulness into question? How do those lies call God's love into question? What are some lies the devil tells people today that question God's truthfulness or love?

2) Read Genesis 3:6-13

- List the various emotions that Adam and Eve feel in these verses. What brought about these emotions? Are these emotions prevalent in the world today?

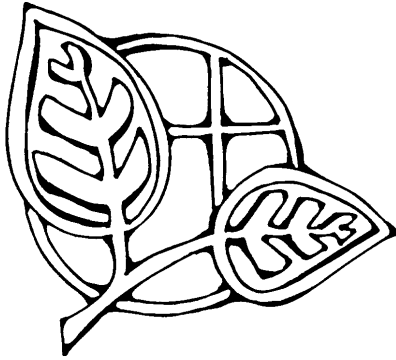
3) Read Genesis 3:14-19

- What was God's punishment upon the serpent? Upon the devil? When did this proclamation against the devil take place?
- What are the punishments that Eve received? What are the punishments that Adam received? Do we see people still suffering from these punishments in the world today? Why is that the case? Are we being punished for Adam and Eve's sin?

3) Applying what you've learned

- Look up James 3:14-16. That portion of Scripture talks about "every evil practice." Suppose someone said to you, "I don't believe there is a God! Or if there is, he certainly isn't a loving God. Look at all the evil and suffering in the world. If a loving God existed, he wouldn't let this happen!"

On the basis of our lesson for today and that portion of Scripture from James, how would you respond to this person?



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Topic: **THE WORLD**

Lesson: **ROMANS 8:18-25**

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**Goal:** to see that sin has ruined creation and learn what God is going to do about it

1) Read Romans 8:18-22

- “... the creation was subjected to frustration.” “... the whole creation has been groaning...” The perfection that existed in the world was lost after the fall into sin. What are some of the “frustrating” consequences of sin that we now see taking place in the world?
- Underline the phrase “creation itself will be liberated from it’s bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” In the margin write, “See 2 Peter 3:6,7,10 and Isaiah 65:17.” How will God liberate the world from all its problems?

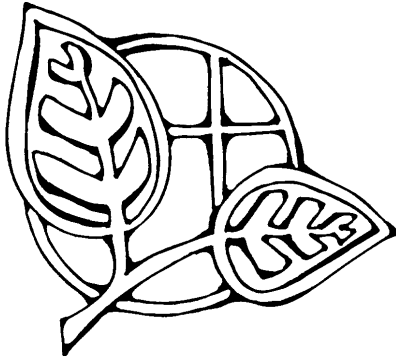
2) Read Romans 8:23-25

- Circle the phrase “our adoption as sons.” Circle the phrase “the redemption of our bodies.” Draw an arrow from the first circle to the second. God has already adopted us as his sons and daughters. But the full benefit of that adoption will be realized when God raises our bodies from the dead on Judgment Day. In the margin write, “See 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.” What will God do for our bodies on that day?
- There is no denying that sin has taken an awesome toll on this world and on our bodies. And yet Paul tells us that Christians wait patiently and hope for quick deliverance. In the time being, what is it that gives us the strength to go on in this world of suffering? (For help, re-read verse 18.)

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- You have a friend, Tony, who spends a ton of his free time working for various environmental causes. He gets a little upset at you for not being more interested in things like pollution, endangered species, and global warming. One day he says to you, “You claim to be a Christian, but wouldn’t a Christian be more interested in taking care of God’s creation?”

Does our lesson have anything to say to Tony? How would you respond to him?



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Topic: **THE WORLD**

Lesson: **MARK 4:35-41**

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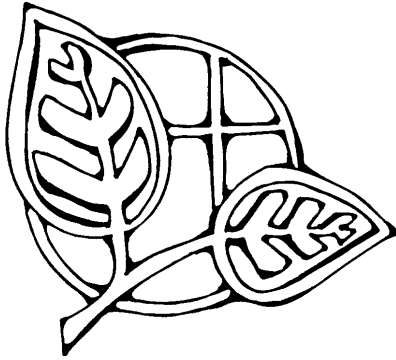
**Goal:** to see that even though the world is ruined, Christ is still in control

1) Read Mark 4:35-41

- “A furious squall came up.” Do you think that before the fall into sin there were powerful storms like the one described in our lesson? Before the fall into sin were there any storms that would threaten someone’s safety?
- The disciples turned to Jesus in trouble, and yet Jesus rebukes them. He asks, “Do you still have no faith?” In what way did waking Jesus demonstrate a lack of trust in him?
- In verse 39 underline the word “completely.” In the margin write, “The Creator is still in complete control of his creation.”
- Note that Jesus didn’t do anything but speak. Look up Hebrews 1:3. What does this passage remind us?
- Mark tells us that Jesus was “sleeping on a cushion.” What does this remind us about our Jesus and how does this fact comfort us? Mark also tells us that, “Even the wind and the waves obey him!” What does this remind us about Jesus and how does this fact comfort us?
- Jesus asked his disciples a question, “Why are you so afraid?” They were with the Son of God, and yet they were afraid! How foolish! Now look up Matthew 28:20b. What does this passage have to say to us when “furious squalls” arise in our life?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- It is clear that Jesus is still in complete control of the world. Why, then, do we still suffer problems in this world? If Christ can deal so easily with such problems, why doesn’t he? The following passages give us insight into to the way God uses problems and hardships. What do they tell us: Hebrews 12:7-11 —  
Psalm 50:15 —  
Colossians 3:1-2 —



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Topic: **THE WORLD**

Lesson: **ROMANS 13:1-7**

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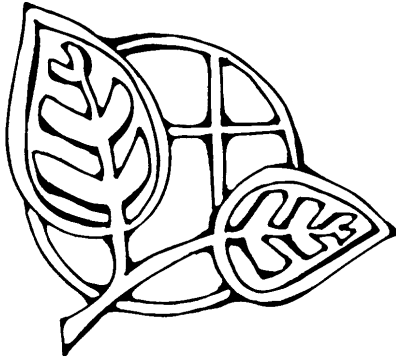
**Goal:** to see how God brings a degree of order into an unbelieving world

1) Read Romans 13:1-7

- Paul's letter to the Romans was written around AD 57. The Roman Emperor from AD 54 to AD 68 was named Nero. He is the one who fed Christians to the lions and had them killed in contests with gladiators. How does that fact broaden your understanding of verses 1 & 2? What type of leaders would we include in the statement, "The authorities that exist have been established by God"?
- Underline the phrases, "free from fear" and "do what is right and he will commend you." In the margin write, "This is civic righteousness." Civic righteousness is when we do good in order to avoid punishment and / or receive commendation from our government. How does this differ from our motivation for doing good works for God? (See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 if you need help.) Why not just preach the Gospel to everyone and motivate people to do good that way, rather than using threats and intimidation?
- Underline the word "sword" and in the margin write, "See 1 Timothy 2:1-2." Look up that passage now. What are some ways that the government use "the sword" to make life "peaceful and quiet"?
- Re-read verse 1 and then re-read verse 5. Why are we conscience bound to obey the government? Therefore, when is the only time we would disobey the government? (See Acts 5:27-29 for help.)
- According to verse 6, what God-given right does the government have in order to carry out its God-given responsibilities?
- In Mark 12:17 we read, "Then Jesus said to them, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.'" The Bible makes it clear that the Church and the state exist for two separate purposes. What is the purpose of the church? What is the purpose of the state?

2) Applying what you've learned

- During World War II you had Americans, many of whom were Christian, going overseas and killing Germans, many of whom were Christian! How is this possible? What does this lesson have to say about this situation.
- Bill wants to join the Army after he graduates from high-school. Tracy, a member of the teen group at church, says to him, "Bill, if you join the army you might have to kill people! That would be sin against the Fifth Commandment." What does this lesson have to say to Bill?



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Topic: **THE WORLD**

Lesson: **ACTS 17:29-31**

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**Goal:** to see what will happen at the end of the world

1) Read Acts 17:29-31

- Underline the phrase “In the past God overlooked such ignorance.” In the margin write, “Our live is a time of grace when God does not treat us as our sins deserve.” During a man’s life God does not punish him immediately for his sin. Rather God gives man a “time of grace” to come to faith and repent.
- Underline the phrase “he will judge the world” and “ by raising him from the dead.” In the margin write, “The end of the world will include: 1) the resurrection, and 2) the judgment.
- The following passages tell us more about the resurrection.
  - a) Acts 24:15 — Who will be raised?
  - b) Philippians 3:20-21 — What will be the condition of believers in the resurrection?
  - c) Revelation 21:4 — What sensations will believers experience?
  - d) Mark 9:43 — What will be the condition of unbelievers in the resurrection?
  - e) 1 Corinthians 15:20 — How can we be sure there will be a bodily resurrection?
- The following passages tell us more about the judgment.
  - a) Mark 13:31-33 — When will this judgment take place?
  - b) Matthew 25:31-33 — Who will do the judging?
  - c) Romans 14:10-12 — Who will be judged?
  - d) Mark 16:16 — On what basis will the judgment be made?
  - e) Luke 23:43 — For those who have died, Judgment Day is simply a public announcement of a judgment that already took place. When?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- On the basis of this lesson, how would you respond to the following two situations?
  - Your friend Tim has visited church with you a couple times. He tells you, “It’s not that I hate church or anything. I just don’t think I need it right now. When I have kids or when I get old, then I’ll worry about church.”
  - Your Uncle James, a struggling alcoholic, confesses to you, “I’m hate thinking about Judgment Day. When you look at my life, it’s obvious that I don’t stand a chance!”