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The Haitian Earthquake - Could God have Stopped It?

Psalms 46:2-3: (NKJV) *"²Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ³Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah."*

Haiti is a small country, with 8-9 million as their population. It shares a small island with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is a poor nation, as a matter of fact, it is the poorest nation in the entire Western Hemisphere. This small and poor nation happens to sit atop a major fault line in the Earth's crust. The recent earthquake in that small and poor nation caused death, destruction and horror the magnitude of which has not even become clear as of yet. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands died and countless hundreds of thousands are homeless, hungry and now subject to the next disasters of the aftermath - disease and starvation. Why? Did this have to happen? Could not the Almighty God, Creator of the Universe, have stopped this disaster and saved all those innocent lives?

Questions for consideration:

1. What caused this earthquake?
2. Did Haiti "deserve" this as some have said?
3. Why didn't God stop it?

1. What caused this earthquake?

Anatomy of Haitian Earthquake Explains Rare 7.0

(Source: Christina Loren CBS4, Miami, Florida) "The Caribbean is no stranger to seismic activity, but according to Scientists at the University of Miami, devastatingly powerful earthquakes on the Island of Hispaniola are extremely rare. That is why millions of Haitian people were caught off guard when the catastrophic 7.0 earthquake violently shook the earth's crust beneath Haiti. Dr. Christopher Harrison, a UM Professor who studies earthquakes told CBS4, "The frequency of large earthquakes in this particular region will only occur every 100-200 years, the fault that triggered the quake goes through the southern part of Hispaniola and also through Jamaica. It is caused by North America moving to the left with respect to the Caribbean. After the massive quake, the strike slip fault itself shifted. In just weeks UM scientists will have data which will reveal exactly how much the shift changed this fault during the quake. This will help scientists define where earthquakes would likely be triggered on Hispaniola, in the future."

Other points gathered from other articles:

- This particular area is the plate boundary between North America and the Caribbean
- These plates generally only move about an inch each year
- They are moving in opposite directions
- When plate edges lock they build extreme stress
- When they finally let go the ground shook for ten seconds
- Poor building construction and the mountainous region exacerbated the tragedy

Currently the death toll is estimated at 200,000 with 2 million homeless and 250,000 in need of urgent aid.

2. Did Haiti "deserve" this as some have said?

First, a look at the primary religion of Haiti:

Haitian Vodou or Vaudou (Anglicised as Voodoo) is a religion with an infusion of different beliefs originating from Haiti. It is based upon a merging of the beliefs and practices of West African peoples with Roman Catholic Christianity, brought about as African slaves were brought to Haiti in the 16th century and forced to convert to the religion of their owners, while they largely still followed their traditional African beliefs. The principal belief is that there are various deities, or Lwa (commonly spelled Loa), who are subordinate to a greater God, known as Bondyè, who does not interfere with human affairs. Therefore it is to the Lwa that Vodou worship is directed. Other characteristics of Vodou include veneration of the dead and protection against evil witchcraft.

(Source: "God, Satan, and the Birth of Haiti," Jean R. Gelin, Ph.D., Excerpts from Part One and Part Two)
"The satanic pact allegedly took place at Bois-Caïman near Cap-Haïtien on August 14, 1791 during a meeting organized by several slave leaders, under [Dutty] Boukman's leadership, before launching what would become Haiti's Independence War. This brutal period lasted 13 years until the last survivors of the French



expeditionary forces, dispatched to Saint-Domingue with the sole purpose to re-establish slavery, were allowed by Dessalines to leave the island and return to Napoleon. Those who made it safely to France wrote and reported about the utmost bravery and supreme courage of Haiti's indigenous army. A Closer Look At Bois-Caïman: The proponents of the supposed pact continuously refer to the Bois-Caïman gathering as the place where the satanic contract supposedly took place, even in the absence of solid historical evidence save their own prolific imagination. After extensive research on Haiti and several visits to the country, American writer Robert Heintz and his wife Nancy Heintz published in 1978 a volume on the Haitian revolution that deals with several aspects of Haiti's painful history including the Bois-Caïman meeting. According to these authors, Bookman sought the help of the God of heaven in his prayer, and made no mention whatsoever of a spiritual agreement with Satan. Even though the text shows Bookman was talking to the creator and not the devil, some would still contend that he could not have been really talking to God because - the way they see it - Bookman did not know God as they think they know Him."

Another, much more sensible view, yet with an oversized and nagging question...

(Source: Dr. Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, for Newsweek)

"God is ultimately responsible for the earthquake in Haiti and has a reason that is beyond our ability, trapped in time, to understand or comprehend. But it would be theological ignorance coupled with absolute arrogance to try and interpret God's actions as a judgment against a particular person or nation."

Now, on to the scriptures and the main thrust of our conversation today:

Psalms 46:1-7: We can view the use of "mountains" here in both a physical sense and a spiritual sense. Mountains in Bible symbology represent governments.

3. Why didn't God stop it?

The 4 potential views of God related to our world:



1. God is not able to stop disaster and doesn't care to.
2. God is not able to stop disaster though He would like to.
3. God is able to stop disaster and just doesn't want to.
4. God is able to stop disaster and will absolutely stop it.

What do WE believe??? We believe that God is able and will!

Isaiah 55:7-13: Okay - nice scripture, nice promise and a nice thought, but how does this address the question about God being able but not stopping tragedy? God is not just an uninterested observer of man.

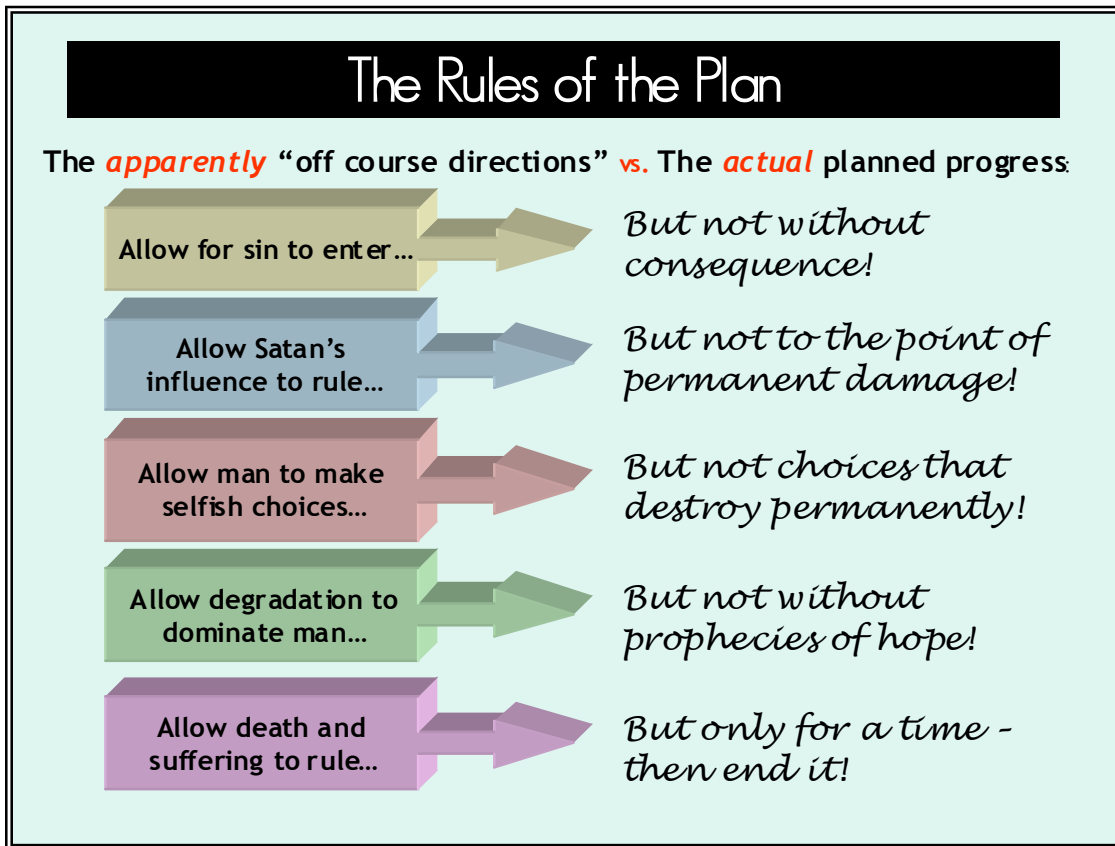
The following quote from a book by Dr. Robert Anthony will give us the primary principle of God's approach to our world: "It helps to realize that an airplane spends 90% of its time in error. We need to take a look at that. If you could see that you could get an airplane from New York to London, even while having been in error ninety percent of the time, maybe you could be less critical of yourself...A sailboat cannot get from where it is to where it wants to be by traveling in a straight line. It has to zigzag. So in terms of true course, it's always in error. What is important about an airplane or a sailboat is that the errors cancel out."

A sailboat makes use of the elements available to get to the destination. An airplane is almost never precisely on target, it takes into consideration wind patterns, the flight plan, etc., but there is a plan that brings it to where it is supposed to go. Getting from Point A to Point B is rarely in a straight line.

While God's plan does not travel a straight line to get to its end result, and while some of the twists and turns in the process seem to be senseless and counterproductive, the fact that it is God's plan assures us that:

It will be accomplished! It will be on time! It will be what He wants! It will bless ALL!

Let’s follow some of those twists and turns in God’s plan and as we do, we will focus on when and how He intervenes and when and how He does *not* intervene.



Allow Sin to Enter... → *But not without consequence!*

God did not intervene in the entrance of sin: Genesis 3:1-7: Note that God did not prevent Satan from being in the garden.

Though he did not allow sinners to remain in the garden:

Genesis 3:22-24: Where was God? He was there - teaching the most valuable lessons of choice and consequences.

Allow Satan’s influence to rule... → *But not to the point of permanent damage!*

God did not intervene in the mixing of angelic and human races:

Genesis 6:1-5: There was a mixing of the races - angelic and human; this was not acceptable to God as it would have interfered with the outcome of His ultimate plan.

The ruler of this world: John 12:31-32

The god of this world: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Another view of this being Satan’s world is in the statistics below:

(Source: “Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20th Century,” Milton Leitenberg, Cornell University, Peace Studies Program, Occasional Paper #29 3rd ed. ©August 2003, 2005, 2006) “A Beastly Century”: “...the sum that he provided was low by just about 44 million people for the full twentieth century, during which approximately 231 million people died in wars and conflict and, in very large numbers, “by human decision.”

When we consider that all of the deaths from all of major natural disasters in all of recorded history add up to somewhere around 10 million people, this view of 100 years of war is sobering.



Allow man to make selfish choices... → *But not choices that destroy permanently!*

God did not intervene in the desires of Israel to have a King: 1 Samuel 8:4-10

God allowed Israel their choice, though he did monitor and guide their kings:

1 Samuel 15:19-26: God gave the rule and the people rejected it and wanted to be like everyone else. God allows man to make the selfish choice and they suffer the consequences. God sometimes intervenes and sometimes he doesn't. The selfishness of man reflects the selfishness of the god of this world - Satan, who sought to be like the Most High himself.

Allow degradation to dominate man... → *But not without prophecies of hope!*

God did not intervene in the death of Jesus: Mark 15:9-15

Though he did intervene in the timing of Jesus death: Luke 4:27-30: God's intervention was such that He didn't stop the death of Jesus, but he did stop it until the proper time. His intervention only went so far to keep the plan exactly and precisely on target.

Not only are there prophecies of hope, there are prophecies of GREAT hope!

1 Timothy 2:3-6: (KJV) ³*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;* ⁴*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the **knowledge** of the truth.* ⁵*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;* ⁶*Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*

Knowledge: Strongs #1922 epignosis (ep-ig'-no-sis); recognition, i.e. (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement:

Consider: 1 Corinthians 15:22, Hebrews 2:9, Daniel 2:44-45

Allow death and suffering to rule... → *But only for a time - then end it!*

Trouble will escalate to unimaginable levels: Mark 13:19-20: The trouble will escalate to almost unimaginable proportions. It is going to get too big, too difficult and seemingly too far off course. **Yet the time is coming when even death is destroyed:** Revelation 20:12-14: God allows free will to exist, which brings us to different end results in our lives. Jesus paying the ransom price allows that all will "die in Adam" but "all will be made alive in Christ." Where's the free will in that? We did not choose to be born in sin. However, we live and have our free will under the auspices of sin. As we didn't choose to be born in sin, we also have the opportunity - choice or not - to be resurrected in Christ. Then Judgment Day puts our experiences to the test to see what we have learned. By the end of Judgment day, those who do not follow through will end up in the position of what the Scriptures refer to as "second death." So the plan is not at the expense of free will, it actually compliments free will.

From trouble comes Peace on Earth: Isaiah 11:1-9: Notice this prophecy states the earth will be filled with knowledge of the Lord and peace.

From trouble comes prosperity: Micah 4:1-5

From trouble, comes perfection: Isaiah 11:9

God does not allow things haphazardly. Tragedies like these are allowed to happen because they are under Satan's permitted rule. God also allows mankind to kill 230 million of our own based on our own "wisdom." Human wisdom doesn't have the ability to look forward as God does.

Specifically to Haiti, God could have stopped the earthquake and chose not to, because it was part of a larger plan in which He will stop these kinds of things forever. He allows sin and degradation and hurt and death to exist and to continue for a time. It is part of the process of the allowing of sin to have its way, so in the resurrection, all can be changed. Each of the Haitian people will be resurrected in the Kingdom.

*So could God have stopped the Haitian earthquake?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*