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Does God Really Love This World?

Genesis 6:13: (NKJV) *And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*



We as Christians cling to the truth that God is Love. We cling to its stability, its longevity and its unchangeableness. God is Love. So, what does that mean and how far does that extend? Does God love all things? Does God love this world and all in it - the evil included? Does God hate, and if He does, wouldn't He be hating that which He created? What about the earth? Does God love this earth, I mean, is God "green?" If He does love the earth then will He destroy it? Stay with us as we look into the book that reveals the mind of God on such matters!

Really we have two parts here: First, does God love the earth and second, does God love the world? Was the earth created for longevity or for a temporary stopping point?

Let's start with the earth: Genesis 1:1-5: A recurring theme through the creative process was that "God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:26-31: Mankind was created in a different way than the rest of the creation.



Observations:

- Man was created *in His image* from His hand. All other earthly creations were described as being brought forth from the earth.
- Man was to be the ruler of this world and this earth, a sure sign that God cared for it.
- Man and woman were blessed, further indicating God's investment into this creation.
- Man and woman were given rules - more indication of His care for His creation.
- *Very good* means just what it says - God had great satisfaction in His work!

So, by all appearances, God truly does love the earth...

Psalms 104:5: ...and it seems as though He will love it forever...It appears so far that His creation of the earth and everything in it was for a long-term purpose. Mankind has been on the earth about 6,000 years. That is nothing in comparison to a God of eternity.

So, if God loves the earth so much, why did He say that He would destroy it?

Genesis 6:1-8



Observations:

- Sin had overcome the earth on both physical and spiritual levels.
- The hybrid ruling race was NOT in accordance with the will of God.
- The contamination was so thorough that destruction loomed.
- Amidst all of this, Noah and his family remained uncontaminated and faithful.

We see **Genesis 1** as a summary of God creating a man and a woman. **Genesis 2** explains the process by which that happened, not describing two different creations. We see these as two different accounts of the same event.

Genesis 6:11-13: All was to be destroyed - the earth included. Does this destruction proclamation negate God's love for the earth?

After the flood: Genesis 8:20-22



Observations:

- Noah reaffirms his humility before God - God sees this as a good beginning.
- God's promise of life everlasting begins to unfold, yet He does not speak of removing sin.
- *As I have done* implies that this promise is specifically centered on the earth.

Genesis 9:8-15: God's promise takes a more precise shape.



Observations:

- Never again would there be a flood to "destroy" the earth and all living things.



- The rainbow would be the symbol of the fact that the earth would not be “destroyed” by water again.
- Even though God promised to never again destroy *all flesh* - technically all flesh was not destroyed because He was still talking to Noah. Noah was still on the physical earth, so it was not “destroyed” either.

It is important to keep God’s statements in context.

Let’s make up our minds - would God destroy the earth or not?

God’s meaning regarding the earth and its destruction: Psalms 102:24-28



Observations:

- Again, the foundations of the earth are referenced in the context of the lasting heavens.
- God’s meaning is better defined here - *perish* is compared to God’s everlasting and unchangeable character.
- *Perish* from the standpoint of God showing His ability to completely overhaul - ending or perishing the *old order* of the heavens and earth but not ending them!

So, when speaking of the earth, God MUST love it for *perish* seems to mean “overhaul” and that is a good thing!

Psalms 119:90-91: Literally the earth stands - God built the foundation upon which it stands.

Isaiah 45:18-19: Here is a clear purpose for the earth - but for how long? It appears that it will be a part of God’s eternal purpose.

Ecclesiastes 1:3-4: The word *forever* used here literally means “perpetually.”

But how do we know that this will not change? Psalms 89:34: Okay, so God promised. He loves the earth and created it for a specific reason.

Then, how do we explain the following? Luke 21:33 Matthew 5:18: Now, either this is a massive contradiction or there is another explanation.

Although we have messed up this planet considerably, it is not ruined to the degree where God could not repair it. That is an important point to understand. We should have respect for the home our Heavenly Father gave us. Is there a difference between the earth abiding forever and the world abiding forever?

So, does God love the world?

John 3:16-17: Nice, but what does this mean? Does God love things as they are?

Let’s take a closer look at this Scripture:

Luke 21:33: Are heaven and earth really toast?

A caller suggests 2 Chronicles 7:14 speaking of Israel as a metaphor for the earth: *If my people, which are called by My name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

We need to understand the symbols God uses as they relate to the prophecy being given. **God pronounces the verdict upon the world:** Isaiah 13:11: God carries out that same verdict via symbolic meaning. Isaiah 13:13: So, heavens and earth can be symbols for humanity in two different positions - the heavens, perhaps meaning the spiritual rule in the world; the earth, perhaps meaning the stable society of earth...does this hold true in other texts of prophecy? Haggai 2:6-7: Here we have the defining of the symbols:

Earth = nations, stable society

Heavens = spiritual rulership

The context of this text is the building of the second Temple - the spiritual house of God to which the glory of the heavens will go. The spiritual rulership of the world will go back to where it belongs. There will be a shakeup of the nations and spiritual rulership of the earth - they are worthy of the wrath of God so it will be brought upon them for their own good. God works for the good of His creation.



So, what do we know so far? God does love the world - BUT - it needs to be shaken up for righteousness! We know that many Scriptures speaking of the earth are symbolic.

Revelation 21:1: Does this mean that the earth we know gets pushed out of the way and is replaced with another physical earth? Coming from the highly symbolic book of Revelation, we can reasonably surmise that this is a symbolic expression. The word *new* here really means "renewed." Not only do the symbols fit, but this text clearly shows God ruling men on earth under a different government. This new earth no longer has a *sea*, symbolic in Scripture for restless masses. This is a very broad based prophecy. The new earth is not just an overhaul in Israel but for the entire planet.

Now this next text makes so much more sense: Isaiah 51:4:6: So, we have the earth not only being spared from utter destruction but being shown as an eternal dwelling place for mankind. How do we get there from here?

What do airplanes, sailboats and God's plan all have in common?

"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.*" - *Dr. Robert Anthony*

Here is how we can trace God's plan through the Scriptures and through history:

The rules of the Plan:

The apparently "off course directions"

- Allow for sin to enter...
- Allow Satan's influence to rule...
- Allow man to make selfish choices...
- Allow degradation to dominate man...
- Allow death and suffering to rule...

The actual planned progress

- But not without consequence
- But not to the point of permanent damage
- But not choices that destroy permanently
- But not without prophecies of hope
- But only for a time – then end it

God did not intervene in the entrance of sin: Genesis 3:6-7

- Allow Satan's influence to rule
- But not to the point of permanent damage

But He did not allow sinners to remain in the garden: Genesis 3:22-24: God allowed sin but also allowed the consequences. We need to think of these valuable lessons in the perspective of eternity. What is the level of allowable damage during this lifetime?

God did not intervene in the mixing of angelic and human races: Genesis 6:3,5: There had to be a destructive process because it was not the original creation. The Nephilim (the progeny of the fallen angels and earthly women) were not part of God's eternal plan. They were allowed to live for a short period of time only.

Though He did destroy that corrupted world: Genesis 6:7-8: (NRSV) *⁷So the LORD said, I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created--people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am **sorry <5162>** that I have made them. ⁸But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.*

Sorry: Strong's #5162. Mxn nacham *naw-kham'*; properly, to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue

- Allow man to make selfish choices
- But not choices that destroy permanently

There can be great hope in destruction. Sometimes it is necessary so that which is stable and meant to be can be built. That is how God loves the world. Sin is allowed to teach man lessons for all of eternity. Things may seem to be terribly off course, but ultimately they are not.



God did not intervene in the desires of Israel to have a king: 1 Samuel 8:4-7: Israel originally had God-sanctioned judges, unlike the nations around them. Why would God allow it? His will could still be done through the king. It took only one generation for the king to mess up!

Though He did monitor and guide their kings: 1 Samuel 15:22-23: God allows man to make selfish choices, but not choices that will destroy permanently or that He does not oversee. God has this in His hands!

- **Allow degradation to dominate man** **But not without prophecies of hope**

God did not intervene in the death of Jesus: Mark 15:12-15: God's way of reconciliation is not to burn everyone up, but to bring all into harmony through the ransom. He is working with those few who are trying to follow His plan now. We need to become *ministers of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:18) to be prepared for work in the future.

Though he did precede it with prophecies to show what it would accomplish: Daniel 2:44-45: Where is the kingdom being set up? On earth. *The earth abides forever*. The earth was meant to be inhabited. Through damage and destruction comes everlasting peace - these Daniel Scriptures speak of destroying an evil society including governments, nations and false religions that are to be replaced with righteousness.

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

Mark 13:19-20 Revelation 20:12-14: Jesus came as a ransom for all men who died in Adam. This was a pivot point in the plan of God! All men who died in Adam qualify for a resurrection because of Jesus. We have that promise. The plan seemed to zig and zag, but it all leads to God loving the world. Death is eventually thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed.

The earth was created as a place for humanity to live. Those who follow after Christ now will receive a heavenly reward as promised. The rest are given opportunity on earth because of God's love. That is our God of heaven that we worship!

*So, does God really love this world...?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*