



## Will God Save the Earth? Part 1

**2 Peter 3:10:** (NKJV) *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Have you noticed that the earth is in rough shape? We are presently dealing with an environmental disaster in the Gulf - 200 million plus gallons of oil spilled. There are floods, earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes. We are a consumption based world that produces piles and piles of trash, much of which is of the non-recyclable type. All of this and one can begin to wonder about the earth itself and how long it will last. Is the earth doomed to destruction, by God's will, or does God have other plans for it? Stay with us as we look to find out the destiny of this third rock from the sun as well as the destiny for those who live on it.



### Questions for consideration:

1. Does God tell us what will happen to the Earth?
2. What does God have in store for humanity?

#### 1. Does God tell us what will happen to the Earth?

Is there a precedent in the Scriptures regarding the "destruction" of the earth?"

**Genesis 6:1-8:** (NKJV) *<sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. <sup>3</sup>And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." <sup>4</sup>There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. <sup>5</sup>Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup>So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." <sup>8</sup>But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*



### Observations BEFORE the Flood:

- Sin had overcome the earth on both physical and spiritual levels;
- The hybrid ruling race was taking dominion over the earth - 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;



**Genesis 6:11-13:** (NKJV) <sup>11</sup>The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. <sup>13</sup>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.**

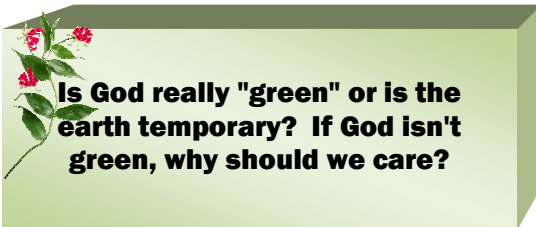
- All was to be destroyed - the humans, the hybrids and the earth included.



### Observations AFTER the Flood:

**Genesis 8:20-22:** (NKJV) <sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; **nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.**" <sup>22</sup>"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease."

- Noah reaffirms his humility before God by building an altar;
- God's promise of life everlasting begins to unfold;
- "as I have done" implies that this promise is for the earth specifically;



**Is God really "green" or is the earth temporary? If God isn't green, why should we care?**

**Genesis 9:8-17:** (NKJV) <sup>8</sup>Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: <sup>9</sup>"And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>Thus I establish My covenant with you: **Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.**" <sup>12</sup>And God said: "This is the sign of the

covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, **for perpetual generations:** <sup>13</sup>I set My **rainbow** in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; <sup>15</sup>and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; **the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.** <sup>16</sup>The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." <sup>17</sup>And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

- God's promise takes a more precise shape;
- No more flood to destroy the earth and all living things - were these things actually destroyed? No, because it still had the ability to maintain life.
- The rainbow would be the symbol of this.

So, what is God's meaning regarding the earth and its destruction?



Psalms 102:24-28: (NKJV) <sup>24</sup>I said, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days; Your years are throughout all generations. <sup>25</sup>Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>26</sup>They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. <sup>27</sup>But You are the same, and Your years will have no end. <sup>28</sup>The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You."

God's meaning is better defined here - "perish" is compared to God's everlasting and unchangeable character. Perish from the standpoint of God shows His ability to completely overhaul - (ending perishing) the old order of the heavens and earth, but not ending them! An old system goes away but can be replaced by something new.

Psalms 104:5: (NKJV) You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever...

It is important to look at the context of a scripture and not look at just one statement. Here are examples of where the earth is made waste or destroyed, and yet there are still inhabitants: Isaiah 24:1,2,21 Haggai 2:6,7,22 (discussed later) Zephaniah 3:8,20.

Isaiah 45:18-19: (NKJV) <sup>18</sup>For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other. <sup>19</sup>I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Psalms 89:34: (NKJV) My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.

Okay - so God promised - then how do we explain Jesus' words?

Luke 21:33: (NKJV) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

Matthew 5:18: (NKJV) For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

We need to understand the symbols God uses as they relate to the prophecy being given. God pronounces the verdict:

Isaiah 13:11: (NKJV) I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

God carries out that same verdict via symbolic meaning...

Isaiah 13:13: (NKJV) Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.

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: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>"For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. <sup>7</sup>'I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.



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.

Ephesians 2:2: (KJV) *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

If Satan is in control of the spiritual guidance of the earth (the air above the earth - the heavens), this becomes very serious.

Revelation 21:1-3: (KJV) *<sup>1</sup>And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

Isaiah 51:4:6: (NKJV) *<sup>4</sup>"Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation: For law will proceed from Me, and I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples. <sup>5</sup>My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust. <sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath for the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished.*

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?

## 2. What does God have in store for humanity?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5: (NKJV) *<sup>1</sup>But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup>You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

First there is trouble - trouble unlike any that had ever been seen until that day. Are we now in this era of trouble?

Matthew 24:32-39: (NKJV) *<sup>32</sup>"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup>So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! <sup>34</sup>Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. <sup>36</sup>"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only. <sup>37</sup>But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup>For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*





Jesus is telling us the conditions that will be at his return. He provides us with a parable about a fig tree. When it blooms, summer is near. That generation that sees that will not pass away until all prophecies are complete.

**The Luke rendering adds another dimension of other trees already budding:**

**Luke 21:29:32:** (NKJV) <sup>29</sup>Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup>So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.

So, what would this fig tree represent?

**Hosea 9:10:** (NRSV) *Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree, in its first season, I saw your ancestors. But they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves to a thing of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved.*

(Source: *Whole Bible Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, Jamisson, Fausett and Brown)  
 Luke 13:6-9: fig tree - Israel, as the visible witness of God in the world...

**Fig tree = Israel**

With this base of information, the following parable makes sense:

**Luke 13:6-9:** (NKJV) <sup>6</sup>He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup>And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

3 1/2 years...Length of time of Jesus' preaching	3 years...No fruit on the fig tree
+ 6 months...Length of time after his resurrection until the first Gentile convert	+ 1 year...One extra year to bear fruit before it would be cut down
= 4 Years: Length of time the Jews had to follow Jesus' teachings	= 4 Years: Length of time fig tree had to produce fruit

**The casting off of Jerusalem:**

**Matthew 23:37-38:** (NRSV) <sup>37</sup>Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>38</sup>See, your house is left to you, desolate.



**Observations:**

- Israel is represented in the figure of a fig tree and is God's chosen people;
- Israel was rejected for their rejection of Jesus and would be punished as a result;
- The fig tree would come back to life! Israel became a nation in 1948.



Another view of this period of great trouble is in the statistics. Often we “blame” God for the deaths of many thousands in natural disasters - have we ever stopped to consider the numbers of humanity that have perished by the decision and hand of their fellow man?

(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” It was a phrase used by Margaret Drabble, a British novelist, in an address to the Royal Society of Literature in London, on December 14, 2000. But of course it was no more than a human century. In 1994, the historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that 187 million people were “killed or allowed to die by human decision” in what he called the “short century”-a period of about 75 years from 1914 to 1991. The period chosen by Hobsbawm spanned the beginning of World War I to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Soviet occupation of its Eastern European “allies.” Given that Hobsbawm is a Marxist historian, his choice of the category “by human decision” was particularly significant. However, 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 only 100 years of war is sobering.

Psalms 46:1-3: (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; <sup>3</sup>Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

We already have established the symbolism for the earth (stable society), but what about the restless sea and the mountains?



Isaiah 57:20: (NKJV) *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

**Restless sea = restless masses of humanity**

**Now for the mountains:**

Jeremiah 51:24-25: (NKJV) <sup>24</sup>*“And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight,” says the LORD.* <sup>25</sup>*“Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth,” says the LORD. “And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.*

Babylon, a government of man, was symbolized by a mountain.

Micah 4:1-2: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>*But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.* <sup>2</sup>*And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

**Mountains = governments, whether of man or of God**

**Now, let's go back to that Psalm again:**

Psalms 46:1-3: (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* <sup>2</sup>*Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, (the organized nations of the world will be in serious trouble) and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; (the governments of man swallowed up by the restless masses of humanity)* <sup>3</sup>*Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. (A massive amount of trouble happening) Selah*

.. and yet there is a glimmer of hope in that same Psalm...

Psalms 46:4-7: (NKJV) <sup>4</sup>*There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.* <sup>5</sup>*God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; **God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.*** <sup>6</sup>*The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.* <sup>7</sup>*The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah*

**Water = Truth**

**River = those who carry the Gospel message of hope of salvation**

This glimmer is the very Elect - for the text tells us that they carry the gladness of God - the good news of the Gospel. Further, this is happening at the breaking of a new day! God's hand is overriding these difficult things for all of mankind.

Matthew 24:21-22: (KJV) <sup>21</sup>*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.* <sup>22</sup>*And **except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.***

Jesus warns that it will get very difficult but not to worry, because it means God will put a stop to the overwhelming trouble and give us hope towards something else. God is saving the earth.



## Let's get back to our Theme Scripture:

**2 Peter 3:10:** (NKJV) <sup>10</sup>*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Let's take a closer look at the context of verse 10:

**2 Peter 3:6-7:** (NKJV) <sup>6</sup>*by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup>But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Now there is a Day of Judgment along with a Time of Trouble? We will talk more about this Day of Judgment next week. For now, notice that the heavens and earth were preserved and reserved for this Judgment Day (*after* the Time of Trouble)- so the earth couldn't have been destroyed.

**2 Peter 3:8-9:** (NKJV) <sup>8</sup>*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

God is not willing that any shall perish. God wants all to come to repentance. Is it coincidence that Satan will be bound for 1,000 years in Revelation?

**2 Peter 3:10:** (NKJV) <sup>10</sup>*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it ~~will be burned up~~ (Note that Rotherham and other translations state "will be discovered" instead of "it will be burned up.")*

This scripture implies that if the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night during the time of trouble, we might need to re-examine Jesus' return. When the trouble is happening, he is already returned.



Fire is symbolic - it purifies (refining fire) and it destroys. The old garment of the world - the earth - that needs to be changed, is burned away (deceiving governments, false religions, etc.) and what is left gets purified.

**2 Peter 3:11-12:** (NKJV) <sup>11</sup>*Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup>looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*

If we took this literally, the heavens are on fire. It makes sense to look at this in terms of the symbols that show that God is going to renew the earth.

Now that you know it's coming, what kind of person will you be, even with the prospect of such difficulty?

**2 Peter 3:13-14:** (NKJV) <sup>13</sup>*Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, **looking forward** to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*

Look at that - the earth is again "front and center" and will fulfill its purpose! It is overhauled so that it will be Godly. We look forward to these things.





By the way - the other prophecy in Psalms 46 - you know - the one with destruction and mayhem? Here is how IT ends:

Psalms 46:8-11: (NKJV) <sup>8</sup>Come, behold the works of the LORD, who has made desolations in the earth. <sup>9</sup>He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. <sup>10</sup>Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! <sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

There is recognition of the wars and God makes them to cease - he takes the implements of man and destroys them. God created the earth for a purpose so that it will be inhabited throughout the ages. We are currently going through a time of trouble, but God is going to make wars cease.

*So will God save the earth?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*