

THE WRATH OF GOD REVEALED AT THE FLOOD

In our study "The Bible Interprets Itself" as posted on propheciesoflove.com and on my YouTube channel "Prophecies of Love," in a three part series we explored many biblical statements that if interpreted at face value using popular definitions would prove the Bible self-contradictory, internally inconsistent, and hence not a book whose God should be regarded as anything less than highly suspect if not a pure fabrication.

We observed there however that by cross-referencing Bible word usage and the defining events and principles with which they are associated, we can discover how to understand biblical terminology by deriving definitions from multiple instances of usage, thereby resolving the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in defense of God's character and the loving principles by which He governs.

In this study we begin by observing several manners of speech related to the flood which similarly, if taken at face value, leave the reader at best puzzled at God, and at worst leads them to reject Him as a loveless tyrant. We sympathize with those who look at the simple language and have difficulty concluding that it does not entirely mean what it says. Of those who take it literally in the popular vernacular two groups emerge. One group reasons that if God acts as they infer, He is not to be respected as a God of love, but should be rejected as either a phantom invention of religion or a Creator worthy of the rebellion of His creatures. The other group of literalists believe that regardless of what they infer God does, it must be classified as loving because by definition "God is love." They therefore make little effort to defend their interpretation of God's behavior, although, were it any human, it would subject them to imprisonment or execution. This raises a question about how well those who are comfortable with the face value of biblical language can vindicate the God of love? In defense of His worthiness to be worshiped and trusted as a God of love do they want not only to understand His love language but also to convincingly explain to a skeptical world that God is not the destroyer misconstrued Bible language at times makes Him appear?

Below we've listed four verses containing perplexing manners of speech related to the flood.

1. And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. Genesis 6:6
2. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Genesis 6:13
3. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. Genesis 6:3
4. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. Genesis 9:16

In this study, The Wrath of God Revealed at the Flood, we develop answers to four questions to which the above four perplexing verses give rise:

1. Why would a sinless God repent?
2. What does "is come before me" mean and what is God's solution to the end of all flesh?
3. Why wouldn't a loving God "always strive with man?"
4. Does God need to be reminded of His promise?

Question 1. Why would a sinless God repent?

And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.
Genesis 6:6

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

Since God does not sin, then His repentance must differ from ours.

Question 2. What does “is come before me” mean and what is God’s solution to the end of all flesh?

Because man inhabits mortal flesh God determined He must save whom He could save within the next 120 years. He knew if He did not intervene to protect those obedient few who could be trusted with the continuation of the human race, the continual evil imagination of man would lead to the entire self-destruction of the human race as surely as death follows sin.

Genesis 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

What does “The end of all flesh is come before me” mean? Was God seeing that the earth was so filled with violence that it would lead to the end of all humanity if He didn’t intervene, or is God saying, “it has come to my attention that I should put an end to all flesh because of their wickedness?”

Is it possible that without divine intervention humanity is capable of destroying the earth? Revelation tells us that it is possible for humanity to destroy the earth.

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

The Bible seems to say that God’s solution is to destroy the earth.

Genesis 6:13 The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Just what does it mean that He “will destroy them with the earth?” I’m reminded of the verse that says, “the curse causeless shall not come.” Proverbs 26:2

Is it logical to suppose that God’s solution to “the end of all flesh” was to destroy them? It may help at this time to remember the bigger picture presented in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15) And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.

The seed the serpent would bruise was Christ.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

The controversy was then ultimately between the serpent and Christ. What better way for Satan to win the battle than to prevent the “seed” from manifesting. If he could destroy all the righteous seed, Christ would never be born and would not be able to bruise his head.

God found a way to prevent “the end of all flesh.” He commissioned Noah to build an ark and to “strive with all flesh” (Genesis 6:3) starting 120 years before the impending flood in order to save as many as would be saved from the coming destruction, thereby preserving the righteous seed and assuring the birth of Christ and the bruising of the serpents head and ultimately winning the great controversy.

Question 3. Why wouldn't a loving God “always strive with man?”

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

What does God mean when He says, my spirit will not always strive with man? Does it suggest 1) that God is warning that His Spirit will eventually reach the reasonable limits of patience and abandon striving in man's behalf, or 2) that God decided to appoint an arbitrary date after which He'd cease to strive with man, or 3) that God foresaw there would come a time when universally mankind would become so hardened against His Spirit that continuing to strive with man would be useless in that mankind would be non-responsive to His Spirit?

Let's gather biblical passages which when integrated provide an answer to question three, Why wouldn't a loving God “always strive with man?”

First, we'll explore the circumstances under which God's spirit *can* strive with man? Many suppose that God's sovereignty over the earth is absolute. In a sense that is true because He made it.

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. 2) For He hath founded it upon the seas...

However, we find an absolute principle revealed in the Bible that the Sovereign does not have it in His character to force on man what is in man's best interest, but truly extends to us the dignity of willfully governing our own behaviour. On close examination it appears that what could be termed the law of liberty, the precious gift of free will to accept or reject God's counsel, is a freedom He will not violate.

Zechariah 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

1 Corinthians 13:5 Charity ... seeketh not her own...

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

That liberty includes the freedom not to listen but to harden our hearts and thus cause our own destruction by rejecting saving knowledge from the Sovereign of the universe. As Psalm 81:11 below indicates, His respect for mankind's liberty not to hear obligates Him to give “them up unto their own hearts' lust,” or as Hosea 4:6 puts it, “I will also reject thee...”

Psalm 81:11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12) So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

2 Chronicle 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land . . .

6) My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . .

The three Bible passages above explain part of the flow from cause to effect regarding God's ceasing to strive with man. Logically expressed, if we reject the knowledge of God's truth and mercy, God's law of liberty obligates Him to "reject" us and we "are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Effectively, rejecting a knowledge of God is equivalent to rejecting God. Likewise, that rejection results in God's giving them over to their choice, which is equivalent to God rejecting them, or as stated in Psalm 81:11, giving them "up to their own hearts' lust."

In Romans 1:24, 26, 28 the wrath of God is revealed in the phrases "God also gave them up," and "God gave them over to a reprobate (hardened) mind." For a deeper study see "The Wrath of God, What Is It" posted on our website <http://propheciesoflove.com>.

Notice next the appeals to Christians in Hebrews, indicating that to hear His voice is not to harden your heart. On the other hand, to yield to the deceitfulness of sin is to harden your heart. One negates the other. There is no middle ground.

Hebrews 4:7 Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Not to "hear" that which you have been told, is another way of saying not to obey, as was the condition of virtually the whole of humanity before the flood, as 1 Peter 3:20 establishes.

1 Peter 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

How universally corrupt was the spiritual condition of man 120 years before the flood?

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12) And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

The apostle Paul elaborates further on how not hearing and heeding causes the effect of grieving away God's Spirit when Paul urges Christ's followers to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind," the equivalence of which he contrasts in Ephesians 4 with "grieve not the holy Spirit of God...."

Ephesians 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27) Neither give place to the devil. 28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

By combining Genesis 6:11 and 1 Peter 3:20 we observe that, "all flesh" had rejected a saving knowledge of God's ways having "corrupted his way upon the earth." "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

On what had “God waited in the days of Noah” “when He looked upon the earth, and, behold it was corrupt.” Was He awaiting a date He had set as a God-induced curse on humanity for rejecting Him? Was He waiting out the inevitable effect of sin which had “come before” Him, that is, come to His attention? Was He waiting for permission to intervene to prevent the flood? How does one decide? What is His involvement in the train of cause and effect?

One clue is set forth in Job where one of Job’s friends says of the antediluvians: (those who lived before the flood).

Job 21:14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways 15) What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?... 20) His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

Job 22:15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? 16) Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood: 17) Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

Notice it doesn’t read “and what can the Almighty do *to* them” but rather “*for* them.” If you want to do something for another, then at the basic level of language you are indicating that you want to improve on their well-being by doing something positive “for” them, not destroy them. The language suggests that God was deferring to man’s liberty to reject His intervention in their behalf against an existing threat from which He wanted to protect them.

In this context the “wrath of the Almighty” in Job 21:20 would refer to what happens when God is not given permission to moderate the effects of natural laws and satanic manipulation of them. Today we hear a great deal about man’s destructive effects on the global ecosystem, and we know from Revelation 11:18 that it is possible for man to destroy the earth. When we deal with our fourth question in section 4 we make a more detailed inquiry into the mechanisms of destruction both at the flood and the end of the world.

As proposed above, we’ve gathered many verses so far in answer to question 3, “Why wouldn’t a loving God always strive with man?” As we combine the evidence a compelling, consistent explanation emerges:

God governs “not by might nor by power but by [His] Spirit,” and that Spirit “is liberty,” therefore those “on the other side of the flood” were given liberty to choose “whom ye will serve” because God’s “Charity ... seeketh not her own.” When “wicked men” “whose foundation was overthrown with a flood” “would not hearken to [God’s] voice,” “would none of [Him],” “trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers,” wouldn’t “Hear the word of the Lord,” and therefore had “no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land” and subsequently were “destroyed for lack of knowledge” as their “hearts” were “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,” because they refused to “hear His voice, the “Spirit of the Lord,” which “is liberty,” claimed no right to overrule the “gods which [their] fathers served” and thus respecting their God-given liberty ceased to strive with a people in universal rebellion who “say unto God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” Hence after 120 years “when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing,” waiting with hope that some would be willing to “be renewed in the spirit,” He “gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust,” “gave them up to desolation,” and “what can the Almighty do?”

Understanding why God could no longer intervene, given the liberty He extends to humanity, leaves unanswered the question of how the flood came about after God ceased striving with man. Did God cause it? Did Satan cause it? Did man cause it? Or did natural law cause it?

Dare we suggest that while one may not be fully informed of the entire sequence of cause and effect leading to destruction, a better answer would be “All of the above.” Lest you immediately object to the involvement of more than one destructive agency, that is God, consider the attack against Job and his family, one of several biblical examples of the complex flow from cause to destructive effect. Regarding Job’s health, property and children, Satan proposed it, God agreed to it, and the rebellion of Job’s children exposed them to destructive natural law’s manipulated by Satan. Consider two quotes from one commentator who explains harm and destruction in principal resulting from the involvement of all four agencies; natural law, man, God and Satan. Especially notice how Satan misrepresents to man that the consequences of sin are direct initiatives of God, not the effects of sin:

“Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble

succeeding another as in a moment. It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer. But the Christian world have shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would—He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them.” GC 589.2

“It is Satan's constant effort to misrepresent the character of God, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy. His sophistry lessens the obligation of the divine law and gives men license to sin. At the same time he causes them to cherish false conceptions of God so that they regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love. The cruelty inherent in his own character is attributed to the Creator; it is embodied in systems of religion and expressed in modes of worship. Thus the minds of men are blinded, and Satan secures them as his agents to war against God. By perverted conceptions of the divine attributes, heathen nations were led to believe human sacrifices necessary to secure the favor of Deity; and horrible cruelties have been perpetrated under the various forms of idolatry.” GC 569.1

What misrepresentation would cause man to misconceive law, the nature of sin, and God's character all “At the same time...?” One should expect it would not be easily detectable, because the Bible describes Satan, when reasoning through a serpent, as “more subtle than any beast of the field,” hence GC 569.1 above describes that misrepresentation as “sophistry,” that is “subtly deceptive reasoning or argumentation.” (Merriam-Webster). Such reasoning not only “misrepresents the character of God” but cause the deceived “to cherish false conceptions of God.”

What connections do the above paragraphs make in tracking the sequence of consequences from original cause to final effect, the misrepresentation of which motivates “Satan's constant effort.” Anciently Sophists were philosophical teachers who made plausible logical arguments from wrong assumptions that were nevertheless often successful in leading people into deceptions. As chief sophist what are the logical structures by which Satan “lessens the obligation of the divine law and gives men license to sin,” while “At the same time he causes them to cherish false conceptions of God so that they regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love.” “At the same time” suggests that whatever logical misrepresentation Satan persuades man to adopt, it efficiently results in multiple false inferences being concurrently drawn about “the character of God, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy.”

Two opposing conclusions: God killed Adam for disobedience or sin killed Adam

Why does humanity generally perceive the flood as an act of God without seriously considering the possibility that sin, not God is the initial cause? Just as the genealogy of Christ's male predecessors can be traced all the way back to Adam in Matthew, is it unreasonable to suspect that the effect of sin upon our perception today traces all the way back to Adam and Eve? The inferences they passed down when they realized something terribly wrong resulted from their eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are with us today. How can we objectively reflect on the character of God, the nature of sin, and the obligation of the divine law when our ancestors have predisposed us to be afraid of the all-powerful God? As developed in the study “In The Beginning” (See propheciesoflove.com) the original pair were immediately afraid of God after sin. If their perception of God was distorted by one sin, why wouldn't ours be even more distorted after 6000 years of sin? What exempts us from the logical but false conclusions that Satan by his subtle insinuations predisposed Adam and Eve to reach? Within 24 hours they feared God though He had done nothing but walk and talk with them in the garden where He had warned them of the death associated with one particular tree of which He advised them not to partake, a tree attended by Satan. To this day a deeply rooted, generational, cognitive bias has driven humanity world-wide to classify all natural disaster as “acts of God.”

In rising to the challenge to neutralize our deeply rooted bias let us freshly reexamine the scriptural evidence, as we consider the following passages, which argue in favor of tracing effects back to their causes, causes which *sin*, not God, initiated.

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16) Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Romans 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

What is the Wrath of God?

Consider below how casual reference to such passages as Romans 1:18 and 2:5, which address the wrath of God without describing it, are popularly regarded as punishment God initiates in response to man's misapplication of His laws, rather than the natural effect caused by transgression of God's law.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Let's look beyond these verses to their context. Romans chapters one and two reference the wrath of God revealed from heaven. Contextually they speak of those with an "impenitent heart," who "became vain in their imaginations regarding the gospel of God." "Wherefore God also ***gave them up*** to uncleanness, . . ."***gave them up*** unto vile affections, " . . ."***gave them over*** to a reprobate mind . . . receiving in themselves that recompence of their ***error*** which was meet." "Meet" is translated from "necessary (as binding)." [See Strong's] Is an "error" binding because God will take a fresh initiative to punish you for it, or binding as a natural effect of law? Romans 7:5 above answers that the "motions of sins, which were *by the law*, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

These passage describe those who "held the truth in unrighteousness" "changing the truth of God into a lie" and "changed the glory of God" like unto themselves. The truth of God is meant to show us our need and thus bring us to repentance, but because we are attached to our sins, rejecting truth causes us to be unable to see the truth,

and therefore we are left to the natural consequences of our sinful choices. The working mechanism of “the wrath of God” in Romans 1:18 is well explained by “Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.” James 1:15b It is not directed at the ungodly and unrighteous but at “all ungodliness and unrighteousness,” which produce their natural, lawful effect—death.

2 Chronicles 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Psalms 81:12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

Acts 7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets . . .

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Psalms 62:1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.... 5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

The Lord speaking to Moses regarding the future of Israel said,

Deuteronomy 31:17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? 18) And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. 36) For the LORD shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 37) And He shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, 38) Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.

Notice that God “will surely hide [His] face” because “they are turned unto other gods.” Is He miffed or does He regretfully defer to the gods we place above Him, even our self-trust? Is God so forceful and controlling a Creator that despite His claim that, “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17) He will continue to intervene uninvited, even when we have “turned unto other gods?” Does He demand He must “direct [our] path” whether or not we “Trust in the Lord with all [our] heart and lean not unto [our] own understanding?” Proverbs 3:3-5 How can He protect us if we trust ourselves more than we trust Him by doing what we determine is best? This would be a violation of our God-given liberty and God does not violate His own spirit. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” The logic is explicit in Deuteronomy 31:17 and 18. Because they “turned unto other gods” God says, “I will hide my face.” The result? “Many evils and troubles shall befall them” “because [their] God is not among [them].”

Contextually comparing parallel passages in Deuteronomy 31:17,18 and 32:35-38, the Lord describes a logical sequence of cause and effect. Deuteronomy 31 says God’s “hiding [His] face resulted in “many evils and trials.” In chapter 32 “vengeance and recompence” result in “many calamities” when “their foot shall slide in due time.” Notice specifically in Deuteronomy 32:35-38 that the “vengeance and recompence” is the consequence that shall befall them because they are no longer under His protection but have placed themselves under the “protection” of other gods.

Jeremiah speaks similarly.

Jeremiah 2:28 But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Far from being miffed, verse 36 says he shall “repent Himself for His servants [man].” “Repent” comes from the Hebrew word “nacham” (Strong’s #5162.) Interestingly that word can be applied “in a favorable sense” or “unfavorably.” Which do you think was intended?

Hebrew 5162. nacham, *naw-kham’*; a primitive root; properly, to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself):—comfort (self), ease (one’s self), repent(-er,-ing, self).

If God shall “repent Himself for His servants” is taken in “a favorable sense” it means God’s sorrow is a pitying sorrow that wants to console His servants (mankind), but cannot because of sin-induced separation from God by humans who do not trust Him. If taken “unfavorably,” God wants to avenge Himself on His servants by causing a punishing harm that would not otherwise have naturally occurred from man’s harmful exercise of the liberty God had presumably given them.

Iniquity Separates Man from God’s Merciful Intervention

Let’s look at some passages that describe what happens when God’s Spirit is grieved away and He is obligated by the law of liberty to honor our choice and remove not only His Spirit but His protection.

There is no lack of power on God’s part to save or hear the repentant sinner.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

Is it that God will not hear the prayer of repentance, or is it because the sinner is attached to his sins and therefore has no desire to repent. Just as a court of law cannot hear a case it deems is not under its jurisdiction, neither can God.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Iniquity translates in Strong’s #205 as panting in vain after nothingness, “specifically an idol.” Ironically God cannot give us a hearing because we’ve chosen the jurisdiction of other gods and will not hear Him.

Elsewhere the Scriptures describe the consequences that result from the separation from God as His hiding His face.

Isaiah 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8) In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

God is the judge of all hearts. Only He knows when we are attached to our sins and have grieved away His Spirit. In consequence of His great law of liberty He will respectfully but sorrowfully give us over to the gods whom we have chosen to worship and trust. “**Ephraim** is joined to **idols**: let him alone.” (Hosea 4:17)

Just as God left Ephraim alone because he was “joined to idols,” God also left the antediluvians alone when they said, “depart from us” and “what can the Almighty do for them?” (Job 21:14; 22:15) God was obligated to hide His face at their request to depart from them, ever anxious to return His merciful intervention and protection to those who trust in Him, though there were but eight people.

Isaiah 54:9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

To spare is to protect from harm as we find in the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Exodus 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13) And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over **[margin; spare, protect]** you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Exodus 12:23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer (allow) the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

What can we conclude from these two verses? God could only spare and protect those who put their faith in Him.

We read in Peter that God was not able to spare the world from destruction and could only save the eight who put their faith in Him.

2 Peter 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

God “spared not,” . . . “bringing in the flood...” “Spared not” from what?—from God’s initiative to cause a flood that otherwise could not have occurred or from the separating iniquity of “your sin” which “have hid His face” . . . that, “He will not hear?” (Isaiah 59:2) Mercy is another word for divine intervention and direction. Isaiah 54:7 contrasts “great mercies” with “have I forsaken thee” . . . “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee.”

Let’s put the sequence of cause and effect we’ve discovered from the above-referenced verses together in context. Because of the separation that the iniquities of man have caused, our “sins have hid His face from” us such that by His own law of liberty He cannot “hear,” that is, mercifully intervene when we have chosen to place ourselves under other “gods” by giving ear to our greatest idol, self-trust, in place of trusting “in the Lord with all [our] heart” exercising our liberty to “lean not unto [our] own understanding but in all [our] ways acknowledge Him that He **may** direct our paths.” Our thus compelling God to “depart from us” makes us subject to what happens when He turns away and stops mercifully intervening. “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment...” This defines the wrath of God in an entirely different light than mankind generally defines wrath. So it is written, “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20) The biblical definition of “wrath” is the result of laws we have violated working to our own destruction when God turns away without liberty to mercifully intervene.

With this broad contextual understanding of causal sequence by which “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) we can better understand how God destroys, allowing the wicked to “fall by their own counsels” while He “defendest them” who rejoicingly “put their trust in [Him.]”

Psalms 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. 10) Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. 11) But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. 12) For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

As we conclude Question 3, Why wouldn’t a loving God “always strive with man, you decide. Which of the three possibilities contemplated above in answer to question 3, do you see in these Scriptural principles? 1) that God is warning that His impatient spirit will eventually become exasperated and abandon striving in man’s behalf, or 2)

that God decided to appoint an arbitrary date after which He'd cease to strive with man, or 3) that God foresaw there would come a time when universally mankind would become so hardened against His spirit that continuing to strive with man would be useless in that mankind would be non-responsive to His Spirit of liberty?

Question 4. Does God need to be reminded of His promise?

Genesis 9:16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

Genesis 9:16 is a good example of Bible language not meaning what a surface reading would suggest it means, unless God really is a forgetful being who needs a reminder to remember. So what does it mean?

“And lest man should be terrified with gathering clouds, and falling rains, and should be in continual dread fearing another flood, God graciously encourages the family of Noah by a promise. ‘And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.’” 3SG 73.2

“What a condescension on the part of God. What compassion for erring man, to place the beautiful, variegated rainbow in the clouds, a token of the covenant of the great God with man! This rainbow was to evidence the fact to all generations that God destroyed the inhabitants of the earth by a flood, because of their great wickedness. It was His design that as the children of after generations should see the bow in the cloud, and should inquire the reason of this glorious circle that compasseth the earth, that their parents could explain to them the destruction of the old world by a flood, because the people gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness, and that the hands of the Most High had bended the bow, and placed it in the clouds, as a token that He would never bring again a flood of waters on the earth. This symbol in the clouds was to confirm the belief of all, and establish their confidence in God, for it was a token of divine mercy and goodness to man. That although God had been provoked to destroy the earth by the flood, yet His mercy still encompasseth the earth. God says, when He looketh upon the bow in the cloud He will remember. He would not have us understand that He would ever forget; but He speaks to man in his own language, that man may better understand Him.” 3SG 74.1

Notice that last sentence. “He would not have us understand that He would ever forget; but He speaks to man in his own language, that man may better understand Him.” In divine wisdom He chose, allegorical, reassuring language for all ages—“the hands of the Most High had bended the bow.... I do set my bow in the cloud;... and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.” Does He actually bend the rainbow with His hands? No. Does He need to remember. No. He speaks love to us in our language. What good would it have done if He spoke according to the scientific, mathematical “Word of His power,” (Hebrews 1:3) explaining natural laws we may even now not yet fully comprehended. What reassurance of His love would it have conveyed to man if He attempted to explain “I do set,,,I will look upon it, that I may remember” by instead launching into a scientific explanation of divine laws we have only recently begun to understand a little. How reassuring to a child would it have been if He said something like this?

“The post-flood presence of rain and the resultant increase in atmospheric humidity at higher elevations, attended by an average adiabatic lapse rate of 3.5°F per 1000 feet, produces humid air which is lifted by thermal activity to heights that reduced ambient temperature to below the dew point at which condensation becomes visible as clouds, which (provided your point of reference is between the light source and the field of moisture on which it is cast) creates a backdrop for diffracted light to split into adjacent arcing bands induced by the disparity of wave lengths across the full spectrum of white light as it passed through millions of curvilinear droplets, producing a **rainbow**. I want to assure you, so that you not suppose I directly induced the flood and fear I may do it again, that the pressures of water beneath the earth's crust was adequately relieved at the flood when enough water burst

onto and above the surface into the atmosphere to preclude a universal flood, which cannot happen again on that scale.

“However in consequence of the post-flood accumulation and decomposition of buried, organic matter adequately compressed over time to produce massive, combustible coal and oil beds, conditions now exist such that if I am again disallowed to intervene, just as I was universally directed, “Depart from us” at the flood (Job 21:14; 22:17), the intense heat of the sub-mantle strata where burning limestone and melted iron ore mixing with subsurface waters will generate such steam pressures as to cause massive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions attended by superheated magmatic extrusions and propulsion of tons of atmospheric particulate matter high into the stratosphere, creating dense global smoke all of which punctuates the cataclysmic destruction of the earth’s ecosystem such that it will remain uninhabited for 1000 years.”

Across millennia of diverse cultures and levels of education could such language have comforted mankind with God’s “compassion for erring man” and His reassuring love? How comforting is it to be reassured that He will never again drown all who will not choose to be saved when we understand that the next time the world will be destroyed will be by fire? We now understand some of the language of His laws, and know He wasn’t directly and arbitrarily handling rainbows and looking at them to remember His promise. Rainbows in the sky were the result of the flood, though God said He caused them. Yet when He says, “I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh” many still insist this language literally represents arbitrary manipulation without a cause traceable to nature and its misuse, and vigorously object to the possibility that antediluvian man caused geophysical disturbances that led to the flood just as modern man has caused global crises through our current global abuses of natural law. Why would the cause of the flood have any different source than the cause of the rainbow—natural law? How was the earth flooded with water, arbitrarily by God or as surely as effect follows cause and as sin causes death?

There is a Bible principle that should help us answer this question.

Proverbs 26:2b. ...So the curse causeless shall not come.

In other words, the curse shall not come unless there is a cause for it. So then what caused the flood? We know the original foundation of the Earth was laid by the Lord and upheld by the Word of His power:

Hebrews 1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

Hebrew 1:3a Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, . . .

What went wrong? Consider the alternatives. Did God intentionally create the Earth with an unstable foundation, with laterally opposing platelets under intense pressure such that if He needed at any future time to destroy its inhabitants by purposely triggering a massive platelet shift that allowed flooding waters to erupt from beneath, He would be prepared to destroy man; or did God destabilize the Earth’s otherwise perfectly stable foundation at a later date than Creation for the purpose of punitively inducing the Flood; or did those who lived before the flood assert their liberty and corporately reject God with a “Depart from us,” (Job 21:14; 22:17) in response to which God ceased from “upholding all things by His power,” (Hebrews 1:3a) allowing the geophysical effects mankind had caused by transgression of those geophysical laws which God upheld “by the Word of His power,” to eventuate in the flood, which He foresaw and about which He mercifully forewarned?

We have been given some clues regarding which of the above explanations is correct.

What does the Word teach us about the original creation of the earth?

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7) And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

Genesis 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10) And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good.

Did God see "it was good" because it was "good" from the standpoint of stability and functionality or that it was good that He created it unstable for future destructive purposes if necessary? Did God undo work He had declared good? Notice in the following verses from 2 Peter 3 that it is by "the same word" that, "the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water" that the same "heavens and earth ... are kept in store, reserved unto fire...." If "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," it cannot be argued that the state of the earth has continued unchanged from the beginning, but rather that the laws that govern the earth continue unchanged. In other words "by the same word" refers to God's impartially sustaining His laws, "the Word of His power."

2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4) And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5) For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6) Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7) But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

A connection is being made here between the original creation of the world in the Genesis account, the flood, and the final destruction of the world by fire. Why? What does the condition of the world *since* the flood have to do with the final destruction of the world by fire? Does the geophysical condition of the world that resulted from the flood predispose the world to be destroyed by fire? How much is the earth no longer functioning as it was? Could it be that the current condition of the earth will no longer allow for a world wide flood?

We learn from the following two cited Bible verses that in monumental ways the earth no longer functions as originally created. For example Genesis 2:6 tells us that the earth originally was watered by "a mist from the earth."

Genesis 2:6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

We are also told that there were two great lights created, the sun and the moon. We know that the moon is not a light in itself but only reflects the sun. Whether that remains the case in the Earth's recreation, in Isaiah 30:26 we are promised that again the light of the moon shall be as the sun and the sun shall be seven times brighter.

Genesis 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

Isaiah 30:26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

We can see from the above two examples the condition of the earth and the intensity of light to which it is exposed have drastically changed. When God promised (Gen. 9:11) that He would never destroy the world again with water was He simply saying that He prefers to destroy us with fire the next time or that the condition of the earth, sun and moon will never again make it possible for a flood to take place because the geophysical condition of the earth has been drastically changed by the flood, predisposing it to destruction by fire? Notice in the following quote the detailed sequence of causes and their effect, which reveal how the flood predisposed the earth to a fiery destruction.

“The entire surface of the earth was changed at the Flood. . . .

“At this time immense forests were buried. These have since been changed to coal, forming the extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding large quantities of oil. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. Thus rocks are heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. The action of the water upon the lime adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues. As the fire and water come in contact with ledges of rock and ore, there are heavy explosions underground, which sound like muffled thunder. The air is hot and suffocating. Volcanic eruptions follow; and these often failing to give sufficient vent to the heated elements, the earth itself is convulsed, the ground heaves and swells like the waves of the sea, great fissures appear, and sometimes cities, villages, and burning mountains are swallowed up. These wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction.” PP 107.4, 108.2

The above quote from Patriarchs and Prophets 107.4, 108.2 of the “speedy destruction” of the world “just before the second coming of Christ” provides geophysical evidence of why “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed.” Notice what “causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues.” The cause is not presented as a direct initiative of God to cause cataclysmic events that would not otherwise occur as the result of the interaction of natural laws but rather as the direct result of the outworking of natural laws as geophysical “manifestations” from conditions created by the flood become “more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction.” What does the Bible teach is God’s disposition toward the inhabitants of Earth?

Isaiah 54:9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10) For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

Even at the destruction of the world when “mountains shall depart and hills be removed,” when fire, not water is the destroying agent, Isaiah 54:9 above assures humanity that it will be as true then as it was during “the waters of Noah” that God’s “kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” Think about that. If God directly caused these destructive calamities by flood and fire, and they were not the natural effect of man’s transgressing His laws, how could it be reasonably said that His “kindness shall not depart?” Where is “kindness” and “mercy” to be found in drowning and burning. A more defensible explanation is that God’s kindness is seen by His making a way of escape from those calamities if, in loving, trusting obedience, the faithful place themselves under the everlasting covenant which encompasses but goes far beyond a promise about rainbows.

Isaiah 54:16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work: and I have created the waster to destroy.

If God created the destroyer, how could He *be* the destroyer? The word “waster” is the same word as “destroyer.” (Hebrew #7843) Could this be speaking of the destruction of the world by fire?

Then comes the precious promise that,

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

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