

Who Is This Destructive God?

By B. D. Tate

The following verses are presented in order to establish the witness, that the scriptures reveal the God of the Bible, as being destructive.

Noah's Flood:

Gen 6:5 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.

6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

7 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."

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Upon Entering The Promise Land When God Spoke to Moses:

De. 7:2 "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

3 "Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

De 7:16 "And you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.

De 7:24 "And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them."

De 20:1 "but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you..."

When God was Going to Destroy the Children of Israel (golden calf worship):

De 9:14 "'Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'"

Specifically About Amalek:

Ex 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;

16 for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

1 Sa 15:2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

As God Spoke to Joshua Concerning the Land:

Ex 34:12 "Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst."

Ex 34:15 "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice..."

Le 14:34 "When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession..."

Le 18:3 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

Le 18:24 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

25 'For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

26 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you

27 '(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled),

28 'lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you.

29 'For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.

30 'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that *you* do not commit *any* of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I *am* the LORD your God.'"

Opening Statements

I'm going to list some preliminary statements in regards to this destructive God. These statements will be unpacked to explain in depth, why God acted, ordered, and brought about destruction in this world.

- 1) God had to deal with humanity according to their deeds due to the fall from grace...
- 2) God had to mercifully end the generational curse that was continuing unending...

- 3) God had to coral, separate, and maintain the identity and lineage of the Children of Israel to bring in the Messiah...
- 4) God had to punish, and repay, Amalek for attacking Israel on their way through the land...
- 5) The land was vomiting out the abdominal practices of the people inhabiting it...
- 6) The law ruled, eye for eye, life for life, until Christ; now, God can deal with us according to His deeds and love, who He is, not who we are...
- 7) We Should Fear God!

Introduction

How can a loving God order the destruction of whole peoples? We call this genocide. This question is asked by just about everyone who ever reads the Old Testament. Some scholars have argued that the God of the Old Testament is not the same God of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God is wrathful, vengeful, angry, strict, unforgiving, very legalistic, and to be feared! This God of the Old Testament seems to pick favorites, is distant, and is blood thirsty. There appears to be no grace, but a vindictive, overbearing, harsh, and punitive God.

The Old Testament itself seems to be a collection of patriarchal stories of what men of that day thought God was like. Some scholars have postulated that the men of old used God to justify, convince, and exploit others, to believe they were called or led to do the things that were done. A modern era example may be Hitler, who claimed a God calling to take Germany in the direction of Nazism. We'd say today he was delusional, deceived, and demonic.

What about the verses like the ones above? These are verses that directly attribute to God the destruction of whole peoples? While we are at it, we must include the most destructive event recorded in the Old Testament, Noah's flood. The flood not only destroyed all the peoples of the earth, but everything that had breath. Why would a loving God command Noah to save his family, but destroy everyone else? Why would God send such a destructive event? When it comes to the animals, how can they be condemned? Animals are unaware; therefore, they are innocent.

These questions have made many stop believing, stumble, and reject the testimony of the Old Testament, and consequently, question at best, the New Testament God. These questions about the God who would destroy the life of men, women, children, and beasts, seems wrong, over the top, unloving, unjust, and a God not worth believing in, much less serving.

Many have indicted, convicted, and judged this God as unjust. Many have concluded that there is no way they could agree with a God like this who has reportedly done these things. What is going on? Who is this destructive God? Are the testimonies true that record this God to have ordered or done such things?

It Is Easier

It is easy to be put off by these events and verses that purport that God called for these destructive actions. It is also easy to dismiss these stories as manmade. As human beings, we often feel that our perspectives are the right ones. We often feel that we are owed an explanation too. We want answers before we'll agree, submit, surrender, or follow. We can also easily justify our rejection of this God, the teachings surrounding this God, by declaring all of these destructive decrees as unholy. We'll decide, we'll make the final judgment, and if we don't like the answers we're getting, all the more.

I say it is easier to dismiss, reject, and consider the testimony as tainted, false, or just man's opinion. The problem of course, is that the scripture testifies of itself over and over again, that God inspired every word. Jesus Himself testifies to this:

John 5: 46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.
47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

This becomes a point of tension, pressure, and a binding issue. We just can't arbitrarily decide which parts of the Old Testament Jesus was referring to. Jesus said we are to believe Moses' writings. In another New Testament passage Paul, the apostle, wrote:

"All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2Tim. 3:16)

The term "all scripture" refers especially to the Old Testament. In Christianity, it also includes the New Testament. So we have this problem. In our God consciousness, we can't just dismiss the parts we don't agree with. We have to stay in the tension the witness of the Spirit gives us through the Old and New Testament verses.

Our Perspectives

We must realize that our human perspectives are subject to corruption. We are blinded by pride, deceived by sin nature, and often we jump to conclusions without all the information, facts, or issues being revealed. At the same time, God has given us dominion, choice, and authority to make judgments.

The scriptures often use the perspective of our world, the circumstances, the laws and viewpoints of human beings to reason with us. God tries to help us understand eternal truths such as: holiness and justice, judgments, and wisdom, sin, evil, and forgiveness, from human experiences. It is God's desire for us to learn, grasp, and stand in the truth by often using human realities to communicate it. For example:

"If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (Joh 3:12)

When God speaks to us about reasoning together (Isa. 1:18), He uses references of this world to help us understand.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Mt 7:11)

When it comes to justice:

"Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." (De 19:21)

We can understand the justice of the law because we understand someone's life, eye, tooth, etc. We understand the equivalence of true justice by these measurements.

When it comes to love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, God does the same things; but, we must remember that our world is fallen, sin-cursed, and our ability to perceive spiritual truth has been greatly affected by sin nature:

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14)

Our perspectives are vulnerable to poor judgment, understanding, and reasoning. What this means is that we can come to conclusions about God that are misled, misinformed, and misunderstood—we can be deceived. We can simply have the wrong perspective or none at all, of the overall scheme of God’s involvement or intervention, with the human race.

God’s testimony about our hearts is this:

"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer 17:9)

We all have this propensity to believe that our judgment is best. We believe that the way we see it is the way that it is. The bible describes it this way:

“All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own eyes; But the LORD weighs the spirits.” (Pr 16:2)

We’ve been called to judge, but to judge with righteous judgment. We are given dominion to exercise judgment, but it was meant to be according to truth and righteousness in God. We have become our own gods, we decide, we judge, and when we do, invariably we get it wrong. Especially when it comes to our judgment of God, it is often skewed. It is a strange thing, we all know we are going to be judged or held accountable for our lives; however, we often spend it judging others, God, and how unfair it all is. Can we come to the simple truth that the reason this world is unfair is because God’s will is not being done here?

Will we recognize that our ability to grasp the truth is hindered greatly by our sin nature and those around us? Even in the church, where truth is being handled, interpreted, and explained, we have these problems. Our perspectives are warped, influenced, biased, and sometimes intimidated by others. The scriptures are deep, involved, expansive, and sometimes complicated if not difficult to understand. When it comes to God’s actions, decisions, commands, sometimes it like we are judging from having come into the conversation late, having been born centuries later.

The Bible

The Bible is God’s record for us to understand what we need to know about what happened, what is happening, and what will happen. As we come to discover life, its meaning, our purpose, and what is going on, we need to come to the Bible.

Listen to God’s testimony again about the scriptures:

16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (II Tim. 3:16, 17)

Pages could be written now about the authenticity and proof that the Bible is the Word of God. Suffice it to say, there are many who do not accept it as such, especially when it comes to understanding the destructive aspects revealed in it concerning God. The bottom line, however, is that the Bible contains the true revelation of who God is, what God has done, and what He is going to do. What do we do when its revelations bring to us conflicts?

The Tension

The Bible is filled with tension. This is what happens when finite beings try to comprehend the infinite. God deals with us first as ignorant servants or slaves, children, friends, and then sons and daughters through the progressive revelation of the scriptures. This tension also arises because we are carnal, flesh driven, and sense dependent having fallen from His grace into sin nature. When carnal beings try to understand the divine nature, we get into trouble. Tremendous errors in judgment take place because we base our judgment upon naturalism—the way of the world.

Jesus said this:

"God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Joh 4:24)

It is impossible for carnal beings to understand the Spirit. Here is another witness to this issue:

5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." (Rom. 8:5-9)

The tension occurs in us because we are trying to figure things out based on our human perspectives, which are dependent upon "seeing, is believing." Have you heard someone say, or said yourself, "I won't believe it, unless I can see it!" This is carnal reasoning.

The Bible is God's work to reach out to us in our carnal state in order to bring us to salvation in Jesus—thus being born of the Spirit. Without the Spirit to teach, guide, instruct, and reveal, we are hopelessly lost in darkness. In a way, it is like someone calling us a concrete head: all mixed up and thoroughly set.

This is the tension, how do we understand the eternal judgments of God, the divine nature of His holiness and justice, coupled with His mercy and truth? How do we, as carnal beings, grasp Spirit truth, motivation, insight, and fairness?

Jesus said it is the word of God that brings light, understanding, truth, revelation, and meaning (Mr. 4:4). It is our need to grasp the word that brings enlightenment. Paul, the apostle, wrote:

17 "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints..." (Eph. 1:17, 18, emphasis added)

This is the tension that our eyes need to be enlightened; but that won't happen, if we live to the carnal nature and mind. Our very nature, natural thinking, and perspectives, are in rebellion towards God's Spirit. We've been born into the world, because of sin nature, at odds with God. We've been born later in life; we're coming into the conversation in the middle of it. Much has happened, much has been decided, much has been accomplished in the cross, but we need to catch up. For us to catch up, we need to start trusting God's word is truth, God's love is faithful, **and that all of it really does make sense to the spiritual mind.**

I know it can be hard to readjust our attitude towards God's word if we've been told, or convinced, that it doesn't add up. I know it can be hard if people, influential people in authority, are claiming it is filled with contradictions, is out of touch with reality, and simply wrong in so many places.

At some point, we are going to have to trust God's word over against our natural inclinations, what the world says about it, and maybe even against our personal judgments.

What is the result of not making this effort? It means we remain frustrated, confused, dismayed, and even angry, at God. We'll find no peace denying revelations to find the truth.

God Really Did!

This God, we all believe in, really did command the destruction of peoples. He really did judge the world of Noah's day. He really did warn all of us that we must be born again to even enter into the kingdom of heaven. This same God commands us all to repent, turn to His Christ, and be reconciled to Him. And one more final warning...this same God is the one Jesus said:

"But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!" (Lu 12:5)

The ultimate truth is that God is sovereign, He created us for Himself, and if we don't respond to His salvation in Jesus, He will cast us out into outer darkness prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). We may not like the way God does business. We may not agree or understand it; however, we have no say, power, or influence, to change it. God's sovereignty remains despite what we acknowledge, agree, or cooperate with. So, it is best to at least try to understand what I'm about to share with you concerning this destructive God we are ready to condemn, reject, or deny.

What I'm about to share with you is not from being smarter than anyone else, or being more spiritual, but it does come from remaining faithful to the testimony found in scripture. By remaining in the tension the scriptures reveal, we acknowledge and affirm the truth found in it. We may not at first comprehend it, but through the work of the Spirit, using the revelations found in scripture, we come to understand. In essence, we come to understand by trusting and believing the testimonies, despite how counter intuitive they may appear to be to our carnal mind. In other words, because we believe, we see.

There are two other subtle, but real, aspects involved with this journey to understand the destructive God of the Bible. First, there is this verse from proverbs:

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter." (Pr 25:2)

There is an assignment within all of us to seek, ask questions, to discover, we were born with this inquiring nature. We were meant to understand, comprehend, and grow aware of what is going on, and the truth of God. In a way, it is little bit like “hide and seek.” God is the one hidden; we are supposed to find Him. Our hearts are filled with awe, wonder, and even joy when we do discover the truth in Jesus, and many other truths in scripture.

The second aspect is this: there is a test being presented. The test is our willingness to believe God. When the world is filled with deceptions, lies, and misinformation, will we trust God’s word? We are tempted to jump to conclusions based on partial information, the condemnation of others, or what the experts say. Will we remain faithful to the God we believe in, even when the circumstances seem overwhelmingly against Him? There has been more than one case in this world, of people being falsely judged, condemned, and even put to death, only to find out they were innocent.

When the scriptures seem to conflict, present contradictory messages about God in this case, if we remain faithful to trust that both sides of the revelations are true, answers come. God is love; God is also just. God goes to great lengths to save, preserve, defend, and to great lengths to destroy (Noah’s flood). It is in keeping this saving and destroying God in balance that we find Him. God is to be feared, yet, He is also the greatest comfort there is. The real danger is when we let go of scripture, and its witness, because we don’t understand. The axiom is this: don’t let go of what we do understand because of the things we don’t understand yet.

Why Did God Order Saul to Destroy Amalek?

“Now go and attack Amalek, *and utterly destroy all that they have*, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.” (1Sa 15:3, emphasis added)

We have some insight into this event because it is recorded about Amalek in this way:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.’” (I Sam. 15:2)

This is the battle that, according to scripture, depended upon Moses holding up the rod of God. When he held it up, Israel prevailed, when he lowered it, Amalek prevailed. So, Aaron and Hur helped to hold up Moses’ arm to keep the rod of God lifted up. It was a supernatural deliverance that day. It appears that if Moses had not held up the rod, Israel would have been defeated. After this encounter, God told Moses:

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” (Ex. 17:14)

Several generations later, after Israel had inhabited the land of promise, God followed through on His judgment against Amalek. Saul, the new and first king of Israel, was tasked by God through the prophet Samuel, to utterly destroy Amalek “from under heaven.” We can at least grasp that God was following through against Amalek for their attack on Israel while immigrating to the promise land. In the battle that Moses fought against Amalek, this was also revealed:

17 “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,
18 “how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear,
when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God.” (Deut. 25:17,18)

It appears that Amalek acted like wild animals do seeking to devour the weak, tired, and possibly elderly. They were ambushing the unprotected. They were seeking to destroy God’s people, having no fear of God. Isn’t it true that many of us would have righteous indignation towards any foe that would sneak behind us, look to take advantage of the weak, and act deceitfully in regards to their intentions? Take a moment to realize that Amalek waited until the stronger portions of the people were past. Possibly they feigned the idea that they were going to allow Israel safe passage? Only when those who could defend themselves had passed, then they attacked. Many of us would consider that cowardice, deceitful, even evil.

Consider this too, when strong men, fathers, older stronger brothers, all with the noble assignment of protecting the weak, those who cannot protect themselves, when an enemy attacks and takes away those weak and un-defensible, the strong are enraged! There is great grief by those responsible that they could not protect or keep safe, those entrusted to them. There is outrage, incensed anger at the treachery, the conniving, and sneaking to steal, kill, and destroy. These strong men would have laid down their own lives to protect the innocent, but the enemy stole them away.

God’s vengeance upon Amalek seems obvious; God’s judgment against them is complete. He willed them to cease from the face of the earth. Is the creator not allowed to judge that which He has created? He did so in the flood. Listen to His evaluation of the people on the earth prior to that cataclysmic event:

“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.” (Ge 6:5)

Amalek did not have a consciousness towards God, or His people. After several generations has passed since the encounter with Israel, Amalek must have still been acting as their forefathers had acted. They were vessels of evil, acting like their father, the devil (John 8:44). They acted like wild animals preying upon the weak. Certainly, we can all see at least a portion of the reason why God called for their genocide.

Had Amalek prevailed against Israel at the time of their crossing through the land, their intentions would have been to completely annihilate them. They had already killed the weak, weary, and likely elderly, straggling behind the main body. In a way, it can arguably be stated: kill or be killed; it was their existence or Israel’s. God’s wrath was poured out upon them for their hard heartedness and likely more, which I will get to later regarding the land spewing out the people.

Why Was God So Harsh?

It is important to realize that God’s dealing with humanity after the fall and before the atonement is completely different than it is now. Before the atonement, everyone was under the law. More specifically this means that everyone was being treated according to their own behavior. God was dealing with people according to how good or bad they were—this is the result of the fall and rebelling against God’s rule. The judge of all the earth was bound by the rules so to speak, rules He never wanted. Listen to this verse and see the ground rules established in the Old Testament:

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live..." (De 30:19)

In a way, it is like each goes to the plate to take a turn at bat (as in baseball). The pitcher is trying to get all of them out, life set against them—the curse. The umpire behind the plate calls the balls and strikes. The umpire is supposed to be unbiased; however, in God's case, did you notice that He was actually for them? He told them to choose life! The umpire calls strikes to the point of calling them out when it gets to three! He is treating them according to their behavior at the plate.

God is under the same restriction towards Old Testament people. They can only be blessed (get a hit), if they obey; they are cursed (strike out), when they disobey. As most of us know, no one was obedient to the point of being blessed where they could win the game. No one could keep all of the law, so getting out was the norm—everyone was cursed. Even still, as we read the Old Testament, we'll see God intervened, saved, protected, and provided, even when they didn't deserve it. Why did God manage to overcome the curse for some? **I believe what He did for some, ends up being for all of us as the story continues and manifests in the Messiah coming.**

In this life, in the natural realm, in the kingdom of darkness, which is the kingdom ruled by naturalism, we get what we deserve; God's judgments are in all the earth (Ps. 105:7). We often think that God is watching over to judge us, yet, it is not so much God as it is the law of God—the game rules. God may be calling balls and strikes, but the game rules dominate. Listen to this verse from the New Testament affirming this truth:

6 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.
8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Gal. 6:7)

This all changed through the atonement when Jesus died to fulfill the law's judgment against all of us (Col. 2:13, 14). The atonement paid for sin and sin nature. It also provided a new way, a new covenant, and a new kingdom impinging upon and over taking the old one. Now, we no longer have to sow to the flesh, the old kingdom, we can sow to the Spirit—the born again kingdom of God.

In this kingdom, there are new rules of engagement. The new kingdom is a kingdom of grace! We don't get what we deserve; we get what Jesus is to us as we believe. God doesn't have to treat us according to the game rules or according to our behavior anymore. God's love and justice was satisfied in Christ Jesus on our behalf, now God can (is free) treat us according to how good He is!

The harshness of God recorded in the Old Testament centers on this truth: He treated them according to what they deserved, did, or sowed. The kindness and grace of the New Testament centers on this update: grace rules; therefore, God treats us according to faith based on what Jesus did. When someone operates strictly by the rules, laws, statues, or regulations, we call that person legalistic and harsh. Why? It is because we all know that to live by the law is too hard. No one can live by keeping it. We are all in need of compassion. When someone is harsh, it is because they have no mercy. Yet, strangely enough, we'll find many times in the Old Testament when God's mercy manifested. Why did He do it? **I believe that when He did it for anyone in the Old Testament situation, He was doing it for all of us, so that Christ could come.**

The Old Testament Situation

God was on the outside looking in. He could not communicate with people from their hearts. They were not born again, they were completely natural. In this fallen state, sin nature dominated. They were sense driven, natural minded, and could not grasp nor understand spiritual things. Paul, the apostle, affirms this (repeated here):

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14)

From this position, God could not reason within them, convict and convince them according to His divine nature. They had to be corralled, herded like cattle, restricted with fencing, kept in bounds by boundaries. In fact, God had to contend with many other voices, some of them from their own people. God called and sent prophets, kings, and priests to help direct the people. Did you notice that many of them were rejected, imprisoned, beaten, and even killed?

The noise and distraction that rule then came from within—sin nature. It meant that God had to use the curse to discipline and correct from the outside. He had to use other peoples, nations, and physical calamities to get their attention. Sin nature doesn't listen to love; it respects power out of fear.

The relationship between God and His people were like servants. The primary way of keeping the people from becoming utterly corrupt became the law. The Law of Moses was supposed to help fence them in, coral them to keep them separate from the world. However, sin nature often by the power of law, became even more corrupt (Rom. 7:8).

In truth, God had to deal harshly with their sin nature! Some of this took on drastic measures, such as crushing rebellions that occasionally manifested in the camp while Moses led them. Korah's rebellion for example, ended in whole families being swallowed up by the earth!

“So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.” (Nu 16:27)

This was God's command to gather together and then separate those who were with Korah. Then this is what the scripture records:

“And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods.” (Nu 16:32)

Korah was directly challenging Moses' leadership and direction. The people were like sheep and Moses had become their shepherd. However, this challenge brought discord and threatened a deep rebellion against Moses. God intervened.

Why did He do this? Moses was called by God; Korah was of his own heart and mind (maybe even of the devil?). Moses was called to bring in the law (fencing), to bring the people out of slavery to Egypt, and then plant them in the Promised Land. This land is where the Messiah was to be born (Bethlehem), minister, suffer, die, and rise from the dead (Jerusalem).

All of this was to keep Israel's identity, keep the lineage of the Messiah intact so that the whole world could be saved (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, David, Solomon, etc.). If Korah's effort had succeeded, Moses being toppled, the children of Israel would have eventually been scattered, lost, and enmeshed with all the peoples of the land they were going to. This would have corrupted the lineage, the prophetic line would have ceased, and ultimately thwarted God's salvation plan.

God intervened, not just for Moses, the children of Israel, but for all of us too. We must understand something, every act of God recorded in the Old Testament may have had a specific reason

at the time, but the ultimate reason would always connect to God's salvation plan in Jesus for the world. There was the constant issue of the children of Israel rebelling and losing their way, their identity, and chosen calling. Moses lamented in his final discourse to the people:

"For I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?" (De 31:27)

The truth about sin nature is that it is contrary, rebellious, and cannot be subject to God's ways. God wasn't trying to save people as we are, to save us from evil, oppression, or slavery, just in this life, but to save us from ourselves, self centeredness, and evil hearts for eternity through Christ. The Spiritual battle was waging from the very start of the fall, it culminated in the cross, and is playing out until Christ's return.

The Land Was Vomiting Them Out!

According to several verses and passages, the land itself was vomiting out the inhabitants due to the abominable practices they were committing. The passage below was taken from a chapter listing those abominations, they included: homosexuality, bestiality, incest, fornications, lewdness, carousing, orgies, worship of false gods, offering of human sacrifices—especially infant sacrifice (closely relating to abortion), and other ungodly practices. The lack of conscience for the value of human life was pervasive.

24 "Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

25 'For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

26 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you

27 '(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled),

28 'lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you.

29 'For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.

30 'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that *you* do not commit *any* of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: *I am* the LORD your God.'" (Le 18:24-30)

It is interesting that the scripture declares that "the land" vomits out its inhabitants. It is similar to the testimony written in Genesis concerning the blood of Abel crying out from the ground (Gen. 3:10)! It reminds me of how a computer keeps records of every website we've visited. The history cries out in witness! The land somehow experiences the acts whether good or bad, committed upon it.

When it comes to Amalek, this too bears witness against them of the abominable things they practiced. When it comes to the children of Israel inheriting the Promised Land, they were not being made special over the peoples already there. They were being warned that if they took on, became party to, practiced the same abominations, the land would spew them out as well.

The children of Israel were not special or unique as over and above all other people, as in being God's favorites; they were special and unique because God had made a covenant with Abraham. The

covenant centered on the sacrifice of Abraham's son, Isaac. This all foreshadowed God sending His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

This covenant upon the children of Israel in essence, was the call upon them to practice and keep the Law of Moses. More important however, was the call upon this nation to bring in the Messiah and maintain the scriptures.

The natural thinking of this nation has taken *this special chosen status* and interpreted it to mean, they were special. To their natural mind, God had worked all of the miracles through Moses, the prophets, even special anointing upon Kings, not to preserve them for the purpose of bringing the Messiah in, but because they were God's favorites. This carnal mind reasoning has made them miss the Messiah; it has made them a curse among the peoples they dwell near or in. They have become a stench, a by-word, and revulsion among the gentiles:

"I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for *their* harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them." (Jer 24:9)

The land is defiled! This meant it was unclean, polluted, and corrupted. The land had absorbed the behavior of the inhabitants and was violently spewing them out. It is interesting that in many pagan religions, the idea that God inhabited nature is strong. If they killed for food, they would pray to the God within the life of the animal. Trees, rocks, hills, and mountains were also seen as inhabited. There appears to be an element of truth to this belief system. That God's nature, divine presence, is revealed in and through nature:

"For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." (Ro 1:20)

The land is not neutral. It, as well as the laws of nature, reflects the very revelation of God. The laws of sowing and reaping include all of nature. Nature itself became bound in the curse when Adam and Eve fell. Paul wrote:

19 "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope;
21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."
(Rom. 8:19-22)

The whole of creation was subjected to man's dominion in the beginning: Let man have dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:28). The earth itself bears witness against our sins. In some cases, the clouds became as iron and did not rain because of the sins of the people. Famines also struck the land in many cases because of the lack of rain and/or being devoured by pestilence. Earthquakes, storms, and other destructive natural forces occurred, all because of disobedience and the curse (Duet. 28).

Ending the Generational Curse!

In the time before the flood, God recorded this witness against the people:

“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.” (Ge 6:5)

It appears that sin nature was dominating and increasing in power and influence so that everyone born during that time period, more or less, were continuously contaminated, corrupted, and defiled (Ex. 34:7). The generations were being trained, purposed, and propagated only to do the same things their parents were doing. It was an endless cycle of corruption. Demonic power and oppression was unrelenting. If the people were captivated and/or possessed, their children had no chance. This would continue unabated.

God’s judgment to bring about the flood meant that He saw no possibility of redemption for them. Christ was not due to come for thousands of years in the future (Gal. 4:4). With this kind of rampant pollution of the character and nature of humanity, there might not be an opportunity to bring the Messiah into the world. However, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He destroyed the then known world and started over with eight souls, and all of the animals brought into the ark (II Pet.3:6).

Sometimes the most merciful thing to do is to cut off and end an endless cycle of evil. Sometimes surgeons cut off limbs, take out body parts, or remove the tumor in order to save the life of the patient. Sometimes God called for peoples to be eliminated because they had become so corrupt—they were unredeemable. This strongly appears to be the case with Sodom and Gomorrah:

13 “But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.” (Gen. 13:14)

The conditions of Sodom and Gomorrah deteriorated continuously. The outcry of the wickedness is written again in another place:

20 “And the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

21 “I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.” (Gen. 18:20, 21)

As the account of this story unfolds, Abraham, knowing his nephew Lot and family dwelled there, appealed to God. He wanted God to spare the cities even if only ten righteous were there (he started at fifty). He said,

23 “And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” (Gen. 18:23)

God sent the two angels that had been with Him into the city. While they were there, the wickedness of the city becomes self evident. God commands the destruction, but will not destroy the cities, as we find out, if *any* righteous are there. The angels must wait until Lot, his wife, and two daughters leave. How corrupt can these cities be? It was corrupt enough for God to call for their complete destruction—fire and brimstone fell from the sky and consumed them (only God can rain fire).

To end the generational curse being past on, God cuts it off. He did it with the flood, again with Sodom and Gomorrah, and again when He called for the peoples in the Promised Land to be destroyed.

Have we looked upon a people, a tribe, a family, and pitied those being born into those situations? Have we ever cried out how unfair? Or thought what chance did those children ever have?

The broken families of today, the generational abuse that often gets past on or the curse of poverty that just seems to reproduce itself over and over, all of these types of things may clue us into what was going on.

We weren't there, we don't know. Even with today's situations where we see generation after generation trapped in poverty, abuse, neglect, and rebellion, we don't really know. Yet, there is a great difference in our day versus the Old Testament times. Today, we have the Lord, the atonement, the Holy Spirit, the power and authority of the name of Jesus to overcome the gates of hell. Then, before the cross, there was no power. There was no comforter. The demonic oppressed:

"Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter—On the side of their oppressors *there is* power, But they have no comforter." (Ec. 4:1)

Jesus defeated the power of darkness and took away the oppression through His atonement. The power of the law to curse men had been fulfilled; we now stand in liberty with no condemnation, based on what Jesus accomplished. Jesus' sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God and took away His just response to give us what we deserve (1 Cor. 15:56). Now, in Christ, the forgiveness of sin has brought in a new way. God can deal with ungodliness, corruption, and defilement, through the blood. Now is the day of salvation:

"For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation." (Co 6:2)

God no longer deals with humanity bound by the Old Testament arrangement (He doesn't have to give us what we deserve). Today, God's grace has been poured out. God's love is focused on redeeming even the vilest. This is a faithful saying: under the Old Testament even the best were cursed; under the New Testament even the worst can be saved! Jesus said it this way:

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Mt 16:18)

The power is now in the church, the body of Christ, to bind, cast out and away the oppressors, and redeems all who call upon the name of the Lord. The generational curses of the past held sway until Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13). If we noticed, the New Testament has no such declarations of genocide! God is no longer calling for people to be cut off. God can reach anyone willing to come. God, through the body of Christ, can take authority and change any situation.

Even though we now have the power of heaven through our Lord and savior, God will not override the heart of those who still reject Him. Listen to Peter describe the condition of men's hearts without God:

"But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption..." (2Pe 2:12)

The natural man condition still remains, but through being born again we gain the victory over it. The natural man condition is just as vile today as it was then, but we're on the better side of the cross! Amen.

Removing the Snares?

The fact remained that if God didn't set the children of Israel aside and separates them from all the other nations around them, they would have been integrated and immersed among them. They would have lost their uniqueness and blended into the nations. They would have married and given their daughters into marriage, they would have taken on the practices of those around them. This did happen with Israel through its history, but a remnant remained; a remnant large enough to bring to pass the prophetic lineage of Christ. The enemy would have made sure that Israel no longer exists. It is the enemy's objective throughout history, even to this day.

God warned the people through Moses:

"Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst." (Ex 34:12)

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them..." (De 11:16)

The propensity of the fallen nature is to stray away, to conform to the world, and to follow after other gods. God was in a life or death situation with His plan to bring in the Messiah through the children of Israel. It was life or death, victory or defeat, success or failure, and keeping the identity of Israel was crucial. Whatever it takes to keep the lineage intact, mandated much of what God did for Israel, did to Israel, and tried to keep from Israel.

A snare would be a trap that the enemy was setting for the children of Israel. A trap to lure, tempt, seduce, and entice them into other things, other ways, and other gods. The principal still applies for us today:

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts." (Ro 13:14)

When we make provision for the flesh, we generally lose. For example, sexual immorality only takes place because we provide for it. We watch, look for, and provide the opportunity for such things. When President Bill Clinton had an affair with Monica Lewinski, a Whitehouse intern, it would not have happened if they didn't provide private time together.

Israel was doomed to fail in their mission without God's intervention in so many ways. This is true for every believer. God's intervention in our personal life keeps us, saves us, and empowers us. No one can overcome sin nature unless they are born again.

What we see in Israel's behavior in the Old Testament accounts is in all of us. We can't look back at them and throw one stone. What God did for them, He did for all of us so that Jesus could come. I have repeated this point over and over again to bring it home.

When it came to Israel, the influence and temptations of those nations around them would eventually corrupt them...and it did.

Another more serious problem, however, is that if the nations remained in the Promised Land when Israel came to possess it, it would create unending conflicts. The nations would continuously strive against them, attack and raid them, or worse overpower and dominate, if not, annihilate them.

This is what happened on many occasions. The Philistines are a good example. Israel and the Philistines were in generations of battle, wars, and territorial issues. Samson, a judge God raised up, is likely a familiar name to most of us. His efforts were against the Philistines. God used Samson in a

supernatural way to deliver the people from their oppression. This passage is describing how the inhabitants of the land were a constant snare:

- 13 "They (Israel) forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.
14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.
15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.
16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.
17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.
18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.
19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way." (Judges 2:13-19)

Many are ready to judge and condemn this destructive God of the Bible; however, there are many, almost hidden revelations, of God showing mercy, providing grace, in sustaining Israel when they didn't deserve it. Why did He do for them what He didn't do for the other nations around them? I'll write it again: **He was saving them, to save all of us, through Jesus.**

In light of this problem of constant conflict and plundering, consider what it is like for Israel today. Since their rebirth as a nation in 1948, they have been surrounded by their enemies. The Palestinian issue in particular manifests almost on a daily basis. They are harassed, bombarded, and terrorized by the Arab/Moslem world. They have sought peace with these forces; however, these forces do not want Israel to exist. They have no intention of relenting in their efforts to destroy this tiny nation in the Middle East. These inhabitants in and around Israel hate them, do not acknowledge their right to be a nation, and plot obsessively how to eliminate them.

God told Moses (and Joshua through Moses) when they were entering the Promised Land:

"but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you..." (De 20:1)

Which is more merciful? Which is more compassionate? Which provides for more security? If Israel is to survive, bring in the Messiah for the whole world, doesn't it seem a bit more logical, practical, and real to utterly destroy the adversarial nations? If they are left to remain in the land, they will be a constant snare, and a constant threat.

Another way of looking at this might be having someone enter our home. They have come to harass, steal, or strive with us and against us. Instead of removing them, having the police take them away, we decide to do the compassionate thing and let them remain. So, while they are occupying our home, they steal our food, destroy our property, rape our daughters, and kill our sons. Yet, we do not want to be destroyers, so we let them remain. Is this not nonsense? Absolutely.

Listen again for the reason God gave Moses, Joshua, and the children of Israel why they were to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land:

“But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.” (Nu 33:55)

Israel didn't obey God. They didn't utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land. They did what many today would consider to be the compassionate thing, the loving thing to do; yet, it almost derailed the salvation plan of God. It certainly created untold grief, rebellion, sorrow, torment, defeat, and defilement for the children of Israel.

The Old Testament records over and over again what happened because they were unwilling to obey divine decrees. These divine decrees that so many today want to condemn, criticize, and reject.

In fact, because so many stumble, get offended, and actually become self righteous in their rejection of God's destructive activities, they become channels, not of God's love, or love at all, but of the enemy! They don't dig deep enough to understand, or remain faithful to embrace God's true nature, stay in the tension the scriptures create, or stay with God's purposes and salvation plan; they unintentionally in most cases, but in others, openly become tools of the enemy to dissuade many from finding the truth in God's Word.

Concluding

There are instances in the New Testament of this destructive God! Not many, but a few; for example, Ananias and Sapphira, when they lied to the Holy Spirit, dropped dead (Acts 5). Then it is recorded that Herod, after giving an inspiring speech, was worshipped as a god, when he accepted it, his body was consumed with worms and he died (Acts 12).

What is the result of God's destructive, life taking actions? We fear. Shouldn't all of us realize that God is to be feared? It is the fear of the Lord that purges our hearts of sin dominance (Ps. 19:9). It is the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10). A righteous, respect and reverence for God is wholesome, cleansing, and sobering (Pr. 15:33).

Let's not forget how all of this ends according to the Bible! Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom. 14:11). Furthermore, there will be a Great White Throne of judgment (Rev. 20). Anyone's name not found written in the Book of Life, will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). God is not going to allow sin to steal, kill, and destroy forever. There is a time period, an earth-lease, described in scripture that God has provided for every soul to decide (Matt. 21:33). God is not willing that any should perish but that all would come to repentance and be saved (II Pet. 3:9).

God is love; He is also just. God is waiting patiently now for all that are going to accept His Christ and come into the kingdom. He has set a time; then the end.

We may not like the way God does business. This may be because we don't understand, our perspectives are skewed, and we have a perverted sense of what true love is. It may be that we have been misled, misinformed, and jumped to bad or wrong conclusions about this destructive God. We must all realize that much of the information, stories, interpretations, and explanations we hear come from sinful people. Our hearts are deceitful, easily deceived, and often wrong, especially when we try to judge or condemn God for the actions He took to destroy, cities, peoples, nations, and with the flood, the whole population of the earth.

What if God is genuinely holy, just and true; and our understandings are wrong? What if our human judgment is wrong? What if we have been listening to evil explanations from those who are

against God? What if the enemy (Satan and the demonic) have just pull the wool over our eyes to get us offended at this destructive God? Evil is trying to paint a picture that does not tell the whole story.

I can say without any hesitancy, that what I've share in this presentation, works for me. I get this, I understand this, I believe this...and ultimately, I believe the destructive God of the Bible did these things in order to save as many as He could through His salvation plan, His chosen people, and finally the church. Amen.

What a strange truth: The God of Love is also a God that will destroy. Sometimes we must fight to preserve our families, our children, and our freedom from those who would steal, kill, and destroy.

I want to leave this discourse with the following verse and comment:

10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly." (John 10:10, NKJV)

10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly." (John 10:10, NAS)

This passage makes it clear why God created us, came for us in Christ, and which side God is really on. While the testimony of this verse clearly reveals that the thief (Satan and the demonic) came only to steal, kill, and destroy. What I find interesting is this: Jesus spoke these words, and inferred in them is the fact that God comes to destroy too. The thief comes only to take away life; God comes to destroy in order to provide abundant life. What a strange paradox? Yet, if the presentation I'm providing makes any sense, then we can see how the God, who is love, also must destroy in order to take away that which genuinely steals, kills, and destroys—keeping us from God's love.