

# What Kind of God is He?

By Al Felder

“Seems almost every day I hear somebody say, ‘God is not real, you know; it’s just an empty hope. See all this suffering and inhumanity; if there’s a God to please, what kind of God is He?’ ‘What kind of God’ they say, ‘would leave a world this way, with plagues and poverty, and crime on every scene?’ They do not understand it is the work of man, instead they ask of me: ‘What kind of God is He?’” (Ivan Costa)

With each new tragedy, people call God into question. There are many who believe that God is not real because of the suffering that exists in the world. Others come to the conclusion that if God is real, they do not want to serve Him. These people cannot reconcile the pain and suffering that exists in the world today with a loving God. Therefore, they ask the question, “What kind of God is He?” By examining the scriptures we want to answer this question.

There is no doubt that there is a tremendous amount of suffering in the world today. Any time you turn on the news, there is always a story of pain and suffering. Innocent people often suffer as a result of the actions of others. Why does this happen? How did the world get this way?

The Bible tells us about the world after God first created it. *“And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”* (Gen. 1:31) In the beginning God created a paradise for man. There was no pain, suffering, disease, or any such thing. Everything was designed perfectly for the man and woman God created. How did the world go from the paradise that God first created, to the world we know today? The answer to that question is sin.

Notice what the text says. The Bible tells us that after God created He looked at His creation and said, “It was very good.” God did not create the pain and suffering that we see today. After God created He acknowledged that everything was good, yet pain and suffering did make it into creation. How?

The answer to that question is sin. *“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.”* (Rom. 5:12). This verse discusses the disobedience of Adam to the command that God had given him. God told Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There is something very important that we do not need to miss hear.

If everything that God created was good, then how did bad things get into the world? The only logical answer to that question is that God created man with the ability to choose. In fact, this is something that is taught in the Bible over and over. *“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”* (Ecclesiastes 7:29) If

God did not create evil, allowing man to have free will is the only logical explanation for its existence.

God told man in the beginning what the consequences of disobedience would be. *“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Genesis 2:17) The original Hebrew actually says, “Dying, you shall die.” In other words, through this one act of disobedience death entered into the world. Now, as was stated in Romans, all men will die a physical death.

Physical death was not the only consequence to this sin, however.

*“<sup>16</sup>Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. <sup>17</sup>And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I command thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; <sup>18</sup>Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; <sup>19</sup>In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”* (Genesis 3:16-19)

Now, as a result of sin, women have increased sorrow or pain in childbirth, the relationship between man and woman is tarnished by sinful attitudes, and the ground itself was cursed making it more difficult for man to survive.

Sometime later, God brought further judgement upon the world due to man’s sin. During the time of Noah, God looked at man and took account of his deeds. *“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”* (Gen. 6:5). The time period between the creation and the flood is believed to be around 1,700 years based upon the genealogies recorded in the Bible. Mathematicians believe that it is possible for there to have been one billion people on the face of the earth by this time based upon the annual population increase of two percent and the longevity of man at the time.<sup>1</sup> While man increased in number, he also increased in wickedness. A wickedness that was so great, God saw fit to destroy every living thing. *“And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them”* (Gen. 6:7). God accomplished this through the flood.

Once again, there were consequences to man’s sin that had a lasting impact upon the world. This event completely destroyed the world as it formerly existed. *“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished”* (2 Peter 3:6). The flood marks the end of a world of transcendent beauty, created by God as a perfect abode for man, and the

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<sup>1</sup> John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris. 1972. *The Genesis Flood*. Grand Rapids, MI : s.n., 1972. pp. 25-27.

beginning of a new world, a world that is a mere shadow of its original glory. Not only do the scriptures indicate this, the fossil record does as well. The fossil records indicate that at one time the earth possessed a warm climate. The African desert and the Gobi Desert of China contain fossils of plants and manmade tools indicating that they were once covered with luxuriant vegetation and inhabited by man. The Arctic Islands, north of Siberia, are densely packed with the remains of elephants and other mammals, along with dense tangles of fossil trees and assorted plants.<sup>2</sup>

With this globally warm climate, there would have been no battle of frontal climates causing violent storms. In fact, the scriptures indicate that until the time of the flood there had not been so much as a rain storm upon the face of the earth. *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house”* (Heb. 11:7). The scriptures further teach that God had a different system at this time for watering the earth. *“<sup>5</sup>And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. <sup>6</sup>But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground”* (Gen. 2:5, 6). This mist from the ground gave all plants the necessary water for survival.

In fact, as you consider many of the catastrophic natural events that we are used to seeing today, such as volcanic activity, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.; they would not have existed in the world prior to the flood. These natural events are remnants of the judgment that God placed on the world as a result of man’s sin. They are reminders that He will once again judge the world. *“<sup>6</sup>Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: <sup>7</sup>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.”* (2 Peter 3:6, 7) When God brings His final judgment upon the world, will you find grace in the eyes of the Lord like Noah or will you find condemnation like the countless mass destroyed in the flood?

After the flood God gave man the instructions to spread out over the earth and multiply. *“And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein”* (Gen. 9:7). Once again, man did not obey God and sinned. *“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth”* (Gen. 11:4). Rather than submit and obey, man sought to elevate himself to God’s level. God seeing this wickedness took action. *“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand on another’s*

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<sup>2</sup> John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morri. 1972. *The Genesis Flood*. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House, 1972. p. 289.

speech" (Gen. 11:7). Thus, at this very moment, God caused the different languages because of man's sin.

From this we learn several things about the suffering of man. We often suffer as a result of our own actions. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (Galatians 6:7) For every sin there is a consequence. Also, the consequences of sin can have an effect on other people. *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."* (Romans 14:7) Innocent people have always suffered because others choose greed, lust, hate, and selfishness.

As Christians we sometimes become influenced by the thinking of the world, and seek to blame God for the bad things in our life.

*"<sup>13</sup>Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: <sup>14</sup>But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. <sup>16</sup>Do not err, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup>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."* (James 1:13-17)

The idea that it's God's fault when we suffer is a lie. We suffer because of sin and its consequences. When bad things happen in our life, it's not God's fault. It is simply the result of sin and its consequences.

The scriptures tell us that, "every good gift and every perfect gift if from above, and cometh down from the Father." The greatest gift is salvation. God could have easily cast man off due to his rebellion. He could have destroyed man in the garden after the first sin, He could have killed all of mankind in the flood instead of allowing eight souls to live, or He could have destroyed mankind at the Tower of Babel; but He didn't. Instead, no matter how bad things got as a result of man's sin, God kept hope alive.

In fact, the Bible informs us that God loves man so much that He sent His only Son to die for our sins.

*"<sup>6</sup>But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? <sup>7</sup>Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: <sup>8</sup>Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. <sup>9</sup>But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. <sup>10</sup>For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup>For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, <sup>12</sup>Saying, I*

*will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. <sup>13</sup>And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me. <sup>14</sup>Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; <sup>15</sup>And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. <sup>16</sup>For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:6-18)*

What a beautiful passage of scripture that teaches us of God’s love for His creation. He has spared no expense for man. God has given the greatest treasure Heaven had to offer, the precious blood of Jesus, in order to redeem man. He did all of this because of His great love for man, and His desire for man to spend eternity with Him despite our rebellion towards Him. Truly every good gift is from God.

In closing, I want to quote once again the song we started our lesson with, and include the chorus at this time.

“Seems almost every day I hear somebody say, ‘God is not real, you know; it’s just an empty hope. See all this suffering and inhumanity; if there’s a God to please, what kind of God is He?’ ‘What kind of God’ they say, ‘would leave a world this way, with plagues and poverty, and crime on every scene?’ They do not understand it is the work of man, instead they ask of me: ‘What kind of God is He?’ He’d give His only Son, were I the only one in need of royal blood to set me free; and if I feel in sin, He’d pick me up again. What king of God is He? Now you tell me!” (Ivan Costa)

What an awesome God we serve! He loves us, and wants to be with us for all eternity. As it was in the beginning, the choice is ours as to whether or not we will obey Him.