

God's Wrath in the Old Testament

By Clark Campbell
Veritatem Cum Mica Salis

How could a loving God order His people to kill other people groups entirely, including women and children in the Old Testament?

"Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'" 1 Samuel 15:3

The claim

Verses like this are often criticized by non-Christians who claim that a God who orders what they refer to as "genocide" is not a loving God. What does the Bible say?

Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

As humans, we cannot understand the mind of God, what may at times seem unfair to us, is really a part of God's perfect plan.

Isaiah 55:9

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

This alone may still be quite hard to believe, especially for non-believers, so let's look at it from a different angle.

The Butterfly Effect

Edward Norton Lorenz, a mathematician who came up with the Butterfly Effect, theorized that the flap of a butterfly's wing can cause a hurricane weeks later in another part of the world.

Take this idea of cause and effect, and keep in mind that God works all things together for His purposes.

Also keep in mind that God designed man to have free will. It is in God's nature to give man many chances to freely turn from sin and it is important to point out that this verse and others like it had probably been no exception.

Now imagine for a moment that if the Amalekite people had been allowed to live, perhaps they could have been the soul cause of a future individual more evil and destructive than the world's most evil dictator. Or, what if the Amalekites being allowed to live would have completely destroyed all the Israelites, or perhaps even a large part of the world's population, or even all of humanity itself.

To conclude

We cannot be certain this would have happened but it is a very real possibility and we can be certain that if God had allowed the Amalekites to live, it would have somehow, and in some way, been worse than if He had not done so.