

What The Bible Means By All Flesh

'God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come, for through mankind the earth is filled with violence and behold, I will destroy them with the earth"' (Genesis 6:13).

In the Bible, the term, 'all flesh' is used according to the context in which it is placed within the Word of God. Sometimes 'all flesh' means every living thing on earth including what lives in the ground such as insects and grubs, plus all plant life. Other times 'all flesh' means only people and domestic animals. Sometimes 'all flesh' is only people, leaving everything else untouched. On one occasion in the Old Testament, 'all flesh' meant only dedicated Christians that were to arise in the New Testament after the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The opening verse above and the following group of verses mean every living thing on earth, everything that flies, everything in the ground, the land and all plant life. The descriptions are precise. Everything that breaths air would be destroyed, but the creatures living in the oceans and seas were not included. 'Behold I (the Lord), will bring a flood of waters on the earth to destroy all flesh under the heavens in which are the breath of life. Everything on the land will die ... Of every living thing of all flesh (found on land), you will bring two of every species into the ark to keep them alive with you. They will be male and female' (Genesis 6:17 & 19). 'The animals went into the ark with Noah, pairs of all flesh with the breath of life (air-breathing). The animals that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded and the Lord shut Noah in and closed the door ... All flesh ceased to breathe that moved on the earth – domestic fowls, wild birds, livestock, wild beasts, all swarming and creeping things that swarm and creep on the land and all mankind' (Genesis 7:15, 16 & 21). 'Bring forth every living thing with you of all flesh – birds, livestock, beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the ground so they may breed abundantly on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth' (Genesis 8:17). "I (the Lord) will establish My covenant with you. Never again will all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, neither will there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth. I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters will no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the rainbow is in the clouds and I look on it, I will remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh on the earth." God said to Noah, "This rainbow is the token of the covenant I have established between Me and all flesh on the earth" (Genesis 9:11,15 to 17).

In the next group of verses, all flesh means every living creature, including the sea creatures. 'The life of all flesh is its blood, therefore I said to the Israelites, "You will not eat the blood of any kind of flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood"' (Leviticus 17:14). All flesh, every animal, every fish and every bird each has its own meat. 'All flesh is not the same flesh but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish and another of birds' (1 Corinthians 15:39). 'If God gathered to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together and man would turn to dust' (Job 34:14 & 15). 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?' (Jeremiah 32:27). 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory is like a flower. The grass withers, the flower fades because the Lord's breath blows on it. People are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades but the Word of our God stands forever' (Isaiah 40:6 to 8). 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls but the Word of the Lord endures forever' (1 Peter 1:24 & 25). 'All creation (all nature; all flesh) waits expectantly for God's children to be revealed, for creation was subjected to imperfection (after Adam's sin). Not because of its own will, but by the will of Him Who so subjected it, yet with the hope nature (creation) itself will be delivered from its bondage to decay into the freedom of the glory of God's children. We know the whole of creation groans and travails in pain until now' (Romans 8:19 to 22). God provides food for every creature on earth. 'To Him Who gives food to all flesh, His mercy and loving-kindness endure forever (Psalm 136:25).

All flesh in this verse is only for the children of Israel and their domestic animals. 'Everything that first opens the womb in all flesh which they offer to the Lord, mankind or beast, will be yours. Nevertheless the firstborn son you will surely redeem and the firstborn of unclean beasts you will redeem' (Numbers 18:15). These two next verses are referring to the children of Israel. 'Who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and lived?' (Deuteronomy 5:26). 'Should you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not for behold, I (the Lord) will bring evil on all flesh but your life I will give to you as a prize wherever you go' (Jeremiah 45:5).

In this group of verses, all flesh means 'all humanity'. The Lord is God of all living creatures, but congregations are made up of people not animals, nor can animals lie prostrate. 'They fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, will one man sin and will You be angry with the whole

congregation?" (Numbers 16:22). 'Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation' (Numbers 27:16). Only people are able to hear and obey the voice of the Lord. It is pointless preaching to animals and trees, so the following verse would refer to 'all humanity'. 'Jesus said, "Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to all flesh"' (Mark 16:15). Animals do not pray nor do they worship God so the next few verses would be for 'all people'. 'O You Who hears prayer, to You will all flesh come' (Psalm 65:2). 'My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever' (Psalm 145:21). "It will be from one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh will come to worship before Me," says the Lord (Isaiah 66:23). 'Be silent all flesh before the Lord, for He is risen from His holy habitation' (Zechariah 2:13). 'The glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh will see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it' (Isaiah 40:5). Where the Lord is going to execute judgement, can only be for humans because animals do not have the wherewithal to comprehend sin so they cannot be judged. 'By fire and by His sword will the Lord execute judgment on all flesh and the slain of the Lord will be many' (Isaiah 66:16).

The next verse is for people committed to God. Only repentant people receive prophetic visions and dreams from the Lord. God would not pour out His Holy Spirit on animals or unrepentant people so in this case 'all flesh' would be solely for dedicated Christians. The words sons, daughters, old men, young men, servants and handmaidens (young women) can only be used to describe humans. 'I (the Lord) will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions. On the servants (of the Lord) and on the handmaidens in those days (the days after the resurrection of Jesus), I will pour out My Spirit' (Joel 2:28 & 29). This prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord began to pour out His Holy Spirit on new believers in Jesus. 'This is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel: "It will be in the last days," says God, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. On My servants and on My handmaidens in those days, I will pour out My Spirit and they will prophesy"' (Acts 2:16 to 18).

All nations, all peoples

Every scripture that mentions all nations, means every continent with all its different countries, states, territories, all protectorates, all island nations, small principalities, all monarchies and all the people who live in those countries, including every race, ethnic group, tribe, tongue, language, dialect, culture and separate nation within those countries. For example, the Kurds are a nation without their own country. Within the Kurdish nation spread out between Turkey, Iran and Iraq, there are different ethnic groups, tribes, languages and cultures – but they are all from the race of Kurds and consider themselves one nation. For too long, the Jews were a nation without their own country. Because of Abraham's complete obedience to God, his Descendent Jesus our Lord has come and blessed Israel and all Gentile nations with the Gospel of Salvation. 'In your (Abraham's) Descendent will all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed My voice' (Genesis 22:18). 'There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. He was righteous and devout, looking for the Consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Anointed ... He said, "My eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples. A light for revelation to all nations and the glory of Your people, Israel" (Luke 2:25, 26, 30 to 32). 'They (the twenty-four Jewish elders) sang a new song saying, "You (Jesus) are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for You were sacrificed and with Your blood, You purchased us for God from every tribe, language, people and nation"' (Revelation 5:9). 'I (Apostle John) looked and a vast multitude appeared which no one could count, out of all nations, from all tribes and peoples and languages' (Revelation 7:9).

The Gospel is having an impact on every corner of the globe. Countries some of us have never heard of including tiny island nations are hearing the Gospel and their people are coming to know Jesus. Only God knows when (Matthew 24:36), but Jesus did tell us, "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Only after every person in every nation has heard the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, will Jesus return. The Lord has put enormous responsibility on our shoulders to share the Gospel of the Kingdom with every person we can. It does seem by what is written in the Bible, angels will one day come to help us do the Lord's work. 'I (John) saw another angel flying in midair with an eternal Gospel to tell to the inhabitants of the earth, to every race, tribe, language and people. He said with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord and give Him glory for the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water!"' (Revelation 14:6 & 7).

Amen and God bless you.

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