

## Wrath of God

*“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, if sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. – Deut 32:39-41*

**Introduction** - *“It is sad indeed to find so many professing Christians who appear to regard the wrath of God as something for which they need to apologize for” – A.W Pink.*

In an effort to not offend people and save God from accusations of vindictiveness some Christians would rather ignore the subject or reduce the wrath of Almighty God to that of a golden calf. As we look at God’s wrath through the sphere of His Holiness and Omnipotence we will see that it’s an attribute which is part of the very essence of who God is.

**Wrath - an Attribute of God** - *“Wrath is the judicial natural expression of God's holiness and righteousness in the face of wrong and evil” – J. Ligon Duncan*

- Wrath is an expression of His Holiness and also reflects His Love, Justice, Mercy, Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Immutability.
  - God’s Holiness demands wrath because He is perfect, infinitely pure, and without blemish. It is against Him only that we sin because He alone is Holy – **Psalm 51:4**
  - God’s infinite Love and Mercy is the opposite of His infinite Wrath yet he is both all loving and all wrath.
  - God’s omniscience or infinite knowledge of the past, present, and future along with His omnipotence, or infinite power demand wrath for He is not ignorant of sin and has the power and authority to punish it - **Hebrews 4:13**
  - God’s infinite and perfect Justice demands consequences for sin and evil
  - Because God is immutable or never changing; the absence of wrath would violate His very character. God never changes or evolves; He is never less just or less powerful or less omniscient so His character never demands less wrath
- God glories in His wrath. He allowed sin to enter the world for His Glory and so His power, justice, and wrath would be on display – **Romans 9:22**
- Wrath is the legal remedy for breaking God’s Law and His demands for justice

**Wrath on Display** – *“The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.” - Nahum 1:2*

**Old Testament** - *“In the midst of judgement there is always grace” – George Grant*

The Flood of Noah’s time – **Genesis 7:20-23**

Sodom and Gomorrah – **Genesis 9:24-25**

Nadab and Abihu – **Leviticus 10:1-3**

God uses Assyria to punish Israel then punishes their king for his arrogance and not giving God the Glory in victory – **Isaiah 10**

### New Testament

Jesus mentions wrath and punishment more than love and mercy

- Repent or you likewise will perish- **Luke 13:3**
- Destruction of Jerusalem – **Matthew 24**
- “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” - **Matthew 25:41**
- And these will go away into eternal punishment, - **Matthew 25:46**

- Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ <sup>28</sup>In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth – **Luke 13:22-30**
- Ananias and Sapphira punished – **Acts 5:1-11**
- Jesus comes riding on a white horse in judgement - **Revelation 19:11-16**

*“The greatest miracle in the world is God’s patience and bounty to an ungrateful world” – A.W. Pink*

### **The Cross**

Nowhere in human history is God’s wrath more on display and evident than upon His Beloved Son;

When Christ viewed the cup is when he saw the wrath that was to come on Calvary.

*“The agony was caused by a vivid, bright, full, immediate view of the wrath of God. The Father, as it were, set the cup down before him... he now had a near view of that furnace into which he was about to be cast. He stood and viewed its raging flames and the glowing of its heat, that he might know where he was going and what he was about to suffer.” – Jonathan Edwards*

And yet both He and the Father knew from eternity past that the Son would take on the form of man and experience wrath for a people chosen from all eternity. After 3 hours on the Cross darkness overcomes the light at Noon and Christ cries “My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?” It is the most extreme suffering ever experienced – beyond human comprehension.

The full unbridled infinite wrath of a Holy and Just God compacted in a period of time by the God unbound by time; horrendous wrath poured out as punishment and as a propitiation for the sins of those who would believe on His name. The seemingly unsustainable wrath that Christ experienced was the just punishment for the sin of Christ’s people; and is what the unrepentant receives to satisfy the demands of the Just Judge.

Wrath vindicates the cross. If Jesus, though innocent suffered for the elect and absorbed the wrath we deserve how could God not punish those who reject Him?

**Romans 1:18-21,24,25** – *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

The word wrath used here in the original Greek is *orge*. The word here is not speaking of being a little ticked off or upset but instead an emotional passionate unbridled rage or anger. What is it that God is angry about?

The word ‘suppress’ used here is much like a spring that you suppress yet it pushes against you so it takes effort on their part to deny who God is and that He exists. They aren’t ignorant but instead know who God is and deny it; exchanging the truth for a lie.

And so, God gives them up to their sinful desires yet because of their stubbornness and unrepentant heart they are storing up wrath for the day of wrath – same verb used here *orge*. **Romans 2:5**

*God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. - Psalm 7:11*

Though God will vindicate His Sovereignty over His creation He will NOT be vindictive. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is the Sovereign Lord of all but He won’t exert His wrath in an unrighteousness. We need to guard against devising an image of God in our thoughts that is patterned after our own evil inclinations.

**Psalms 50:21** - *These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.*

**Eschatological (Future) Wrath** – *“It is appointed to man once to die, and after this the judgement”* - **Hebrews 9:27**  
There will come a day when God says “No more” – No more idolatry, no more murdering, no more lying, no more sexual immorality, no more adultery, NO MORE restraining grace. The sun will no longer rise for the wicked. The Day of Judgement is the day God’s benevolent love is removed and His wrath is applied in full force without restraint for all eternity for the sins of the unrepentant.

**Revelations 20:13-15** - And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (**also Revelations 19:17-20**)

**Objects of Eternal Wrath** – *“Those wicked men who lived before the flood, and went to Hell in Noah’s time, are there still.”* – **Jonathan Edwards Sermon – “Wicked Men of the Past are Still in Hell”**

Hell is eternal. There is no Gospel preached in Hell; there are no conversions. Those who suffer there will suffer in the presence of Almighty God but only experience the attribute of wrath for all eternity. The place and state they are in was never designed for the exercise of mercy. They will not forget things that were so long ago, when they were on earth. They will remember the comforts of life on earth and that their lives were long. They will also remember their wicked deeds and the sins they committed along with the opportunities they had and the warnings to repent. - **Luke 16:25**. Though they desire it, they can’t return to anything. They “seek death and cannot find it.” They are in extreme torment, but there is no annihilation of the soul **Mark 9:48** – *“where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”*

They are not there because they were weaker or less affluent; many of them were giants here on earth. Yet their souls are immortal; designed for eternity. There is no mercy in Hell; though their pain is extreme and exceedingly intolerable - God does not pity them. Even though their wishes for deliverance are great and their cries are loud and long, God does not hear them. *“Those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.”* - **Isaiah 38:17-19**

Their time of suffering there does not make their misery more tolerable by being there so long but instead every second is as new and horrendous as their arrival to this dreadful place. They don’t adapt to the environment and evolve to withstand their circumstances. Although they know their judgement is deserved yet their hearts are the same. There is no change in their dispositions. God’s wrath exacts a great change; but not a saving change in them.

The prison is strong that holds them as they have been delivered up into the hands of Satan and his cruelty is as strong as his power so they have no defense. And what could be worse but that the devil is God’s devil and Hell is God’s Hell so it is God who confines them with an irreversible sentence which binds them.

They have had no time of rest from their suffering all this while. *“No rest day nor night.”* (**Rev. 14:11**) Both day and night are mentioned, because the night in this world is a time of rest. The suffering is constant and unrelenting as fatigue is norm. Think of how much history has passed by since the flood in the Bible and modern time. And yet compared to eternity their time there has not yet even begun.

The constant arrivals of more souls have been no comfort to them. They have had no hope all this time and have none now even though their torments have been so long continued. They will not suffer beyond what God’s justice requires.

**Wrath and the Believer** -And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life - **Matt 25:46**  
The follower of Christ, those who have put their trust in Him alone for salvation have the promise of eternal life in the presence of God's love and mercy and providence and omnipotence. Our hope is based on His immutability in that His promises are true and sure and never change. We will enjoy the splendor of His glory for all eternity and worship at the feet of the Lamb who was slain. We will sing the Hallelujah Choir and see Him as He is! Face to face with our Savior; the faith will become sight (Soli Deo Gloria!) and it is then we will begin to grasp His holiness and purity realizing how justified He is in His wrath. We will appreciate the Gospel like never before knowing we did not get what we deserve but received unmerited grace and mercy. We will sing Amazing Grace and experience how sweet the sight.

But the rest of the world is condemned to an eternity in Hell unless and until they repent and believe. How will they know of Him if they have not heard, and how will they hear unless someone tells them; and how will they be told unless the redeemed share the good news? "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news" – **Romans 10**. Evangelism has been rightly described as "*One beggar telling another beggar where to find food*" the difference is those who feast on the Bread of Life and those who reject it.

**Saved from What? – Romans 5:9** - *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*

We need not sugarcoat the Gospel and reduce it to "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". While that may be true for some it is not the Gospel. **J.I. Packer** has summarized the Gospel in three words "God Saves Sinners" yet it doesn't begin to explain the depths of our sin against a Holy and Just God who sent His Son to save a people unto Himself. Sinners need to understand why they need a Savior and once they are conscious of the weight of sin they need to know that Christ took their deserved punishment upon Himself on the Cross. They need to understand the eternal destruction they face on Judgment Day in order to understand what's so amazing about grace in the beauty and sweetness of the Gospel.

Our lack of zeal in sharing the Gospel is rooted in our unbelief. - "*If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not get eternal life.....how much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?*" – **Penn Juliette, Atheist**

We need to have a sense of urgency in sharing the Gospel. Today is the day of salvation! We must be willing to implore sinners to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ conveying that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and the wages of sin are death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Think upon this:

*"in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.<sup>9</sup> They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,"* - **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**

***"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for."*** - **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

**Objections to Wrath** – "*A God without wrath brought a man without sin into a kingdom without Justice through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross*" - **Helmut Richard Niebuhr**

1. Object because it indicates a lack of control which is incompatible with a Christian view of God
2. My God is too loving to send someone to hell.
3. It's an Old Testament Doctrine.
4. Talking about wrath will turn away Seekers
5. God hates the sinner but loves the sinner

*"Take away wrath, we take away the Cross"* – **J.I Packer**