



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

Jan. 4, 2015

“The Wrath Of God”

Bryan Garlock

The Scriptures have much to say about the Wrath of God. In fact, the word “wrath” is used 212 times in the English Standard Version. While not all of these passages apply to God per se, many of them do.

For instance, Paul penned, “[b]ut because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.” Further, “...for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.” (Rom. 2.5, 8).

Yes indeed, God is a God of wrath. While this may be true, this does not make God an evil being as some espouse. Paul challenged the Romans, “[b]ut if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us?” (3.5). Undoubtedly, the Scriptures teach, “...the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5.6).

One reason why God is a God of wrath is because God is a God of love (cf. 1 John 4.8). How can it be said that the same God who is portrayed as an avenger (cf. Rom. 12.19) is also paralleled with an array of love?

We have to understand the *nature* of God. John revealed, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1.5). God’s nature does not allow Him to fellowship with darkness. It’s contrary to everything God is. He would not be a just God to unconditionally forgive sinners either. Hence, His words will judge us and “...each of us will give an account...” of our sins (John 12.48; Rom. 14.12). Thankfully, however, we can be sure He will be just and merciful in His judgment (2 Tim. 1.18).

Since these things are a part of who God is, it is not unjust for Him to punish, forsake and even “...in flaming fire, [inflict] vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction...” (2 Thess. 1.8-9).

Concerning the obedient and disobedient, Paul penned, “[n]ote then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off” (Rom. 11.22). Notice too, “...the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment” or “the day of wrath” (2 Peter 2.9; cf. Rom. 2.5).

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Announcements

Private

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Jan 4 Job 1-5
Jan 5 Job 6-9
Jan 6 Job 10-13
Jan 7 Job 14-16
Jan 8 Job 17-20
Jan 9 Job 21-23
Jan 10 Job 24-28

Taking the totality of Scripture, we learn God does not forsake the righteous, nor does He turn His back on them (Deut. 31.6, 8; Josh 1.5; 1 Sam. 12.22; 1 Kings 6.13; 8.57; Psalm 37.25; Heb. 13.5). In contrast, those who are unfaithful, do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, forsake Him and turn away from serving Him will be forsaken and destroyed by Him (cf. Deut. 31.18; Josh. 24.20; Judges 6.13; 10.10, 13; 1 Kings 11.33; 19.14; 2 Kings 22.17; 1 Chron. 28.9; 2 Chron. 29.6). We can glean from these passages that the *only time God turns his face/back on us is when we first forsake Him*. Notice, “[b]ehold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear” (Isaiah 59.1-2; cf. Deut. 31.16-17). When we return to the Lord, however, He returns to us (cf. 1 Sam. 12.10; 2 Chron. 30.9; Psalm 27.9; Isaiah 54.7-8). If you will take the time to read these passages, you'll clearly see these truths rooted in Scripture.

We must understand God's love *requires* Him to punish us for sin. Further, His love *requires* Him to provide a “motivational boost” for us to return such a love; that is, a love manifested through obedience (John 14.15). He accomplished this in the death of His Son. Indeed, “[t]his is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us...” (1 John 3.16).

God's sacrifice for us demonstrated His love, goodness and mercy. It provided a focal point for man's faith and it revealed the enormity of sin; that is, our sin put our Savior on that tree. In regard to the love God has shown, Paul affirmed, “...that [His] kindness is meant to lead you to repentance” (Rom. 2.4).

Clearly we can understand that God's wrath and love go hand in hand. In fact, a father disciplines his children for their good, as our Father in heaven disciplines his children (Heb. 12.5-11). Of this discipline God enacts, does it not show His love (Prov. 3.11-12)? *Is this not what God does to save us from His wrath?*

Paul wrote, “[s]ince, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood [this indicates God's love – BG], much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God” (Rom. 5.9). To the church at Thessalonica, Paul taught that Jesus “...delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1.10). Praise God for this salvation from wrath! However, Peter questioned, “...what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4.17). Notice the words of Christ, “... the wrath of God remains on [them]” (John 3.36).

There are some, even among our own brethren, who teach that God has destined us to hell from the time we are born. I reject such nonsense! On the contrary, “God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5.9). Let us therefore show our gratitude through our praise and obedience of our heavenly Father! BG