

God is Just 2 - The Wrath of God

Purpose: To understand the wrath of God and how that should affect us.

Objective: By the end of the lesson the students will:

1. Know Scriptural teaching on the wrath of God.
2. Take action based on their knowledge of God's wrath.

Key Verse: 2 Peter 3:9, 10

I. Introduction

In a previous devotional, we looked at the fact that God is just, that is, He is fair and righteous in all His judgments. All people will have to appear before Him to give an account of themselves and why they did what they did. No one will get away with anything.

Here, we will talk about the wrath of God. This is not a popular topic. People would rather hear about God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness. But what about His wrath? The Bible clearly shows God's wrath in a number of passages. Can love and wrath come from the same God? For some, this is hard to believe. For others who do believe that our loving God can also be wrathful, they may tend to think of God as being a bit schizophrenic – when He's loving, he's not wrathful and when He's wrathful, he's not loving – it all depends on what whimsical mood He's in. But is this faithful to the biblical record? If God is not schizophrenic, can He be loving, even as He is wrathful and visa versa? How can this be reconciled and brought together?

II. Examples of God's Wrath

(The instructor can consider two options. The week before this devotional is to be given, the leader can hand out copies of the table on page two and inform the students to fill in the table and be ready to discuss their answers. The second option is to divide the class into groups to discuss the verses together. Each group will look up perhaps four rows of verses and fill in these rows in the table. After some time, the instructor can ask the class what they wrote in the table.)

Verses	Who Experienced God's Wrath?	What Form of Wrath was Experienced?	Why was God's Wrath Experienced?
Genesis 6:5-7, 11-17			
Genesis 18:20; Genesis 19:4, 5, 24, 25 (see also Jude 7, Ezekiel 16:48-50; Isaiah 3:9; 2 Peter 2:6-10)			
Exodus 6:1-8; Exodus chapters 7-14 (plagues)			
Exodus 32:1-8, 35			
Numbers 11:4-6, 31-34			
Numbers 14:1-4, 11, 20-38			
Numbers 16:1-3, 10-14, 31-35			
Numbers 16:41-49			
Numbers 21:4-8			
Numbers 25:1-3, 9			
Isaiah 13:1, 6-13, 19			
Isaiah 24			
Revelation 14:9-11			
Revelation 18:1-8			
Revelation 19:11-21			
Revelation 20:7-15			

III. God of Wrath; God of Love

Wow, looking at the examples of God's wrath, it appears that He looks forward to, and enjoys, meting out retribution.

"You, Yourself, are to be feared; and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry?" Psalm 76:7

"The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries." Psalm 110:5, 6

"I crushed nations in My anger; I made them drunk with My wrath and poured out their blood on the ground." Isaiah 63:6

How does all this reconcile with the Biblical teaching that "God is love"? How does this mix with His attributes of gracious and merciful? To find wrath and love in one person seems as possible as mixing oil and water. It seems possible only in a person of multiple personalities.

But look again at the previous examples in the table. Look at the column "Why Was God's Wrath Experienced." Millard Erickson mentions in Christian Theology that "God's anger should not be thought of as uncontrolled fury or personal spitefulness. Rather, it is more in the nature of righteous indignation" (p. 604). He also says that man "...has violated the law and accordingly, is liable to punishment...Failure to fulfill [God's] standards disrupts the whole economy of the universe. Whenever the creature deprives the Creator of what is rightfully His, the balance is upset for God is not being honored and obeyed...sin and the sinner deserve and even need to be punished" (p. 607).

In Romans 5:10, Paul says **we** were enemies of God before we were reconciled to Him through Christ. **Enemies of God!** In Ephesians 2:3, Paul says **we** were by nature children under wrath. The warning to man in Psalm 7:12, 13 "If anyone does not repent, God will sharpen His sword; He has strung His bow and made it ready. He has prepared His deadly weapons; He tips His arrows with fire." Sin, any sin, is high treason against a perfectly holy and just God. Enemies of God deserve His wrath.

Does God get any pleasure in executing His wrath? (*Perhaps have a student read this...*) Ezekiel 18:23, 32 says, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?' This is the declaration of the Lord God. 'Instead, don't I take pleasure when he turns from his ways and lives'...'For I take no pleasure in anyone's death.' This is the declaration of the Lord God. 'So repent and live!'" (*Ask the class, "What gives God pleasure?" If not mentioned, you could say...*) It gives pleasure to God to give life to those who repent and trust Him.

"The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come..." (2 Peter 3:9, 10). The wrath of God, which we all deserve, can be averted by repentance and faith in

Christ - since divine justice was satisfied at the cross. But judgment is coming, which is why "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

In the days of Noah, mankind had 120 years to hear why the ark was being built, and thus repent and live (Genesis 6:3). God would have spared the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if only 10 righteous could be found (Genesis 18:32). In both cases, only the righteous - those who believed the report of impending wrath - were saved. Similarly, with the Great Tribulation, the righteous will be spared from God's wrath. They may not be spared from persecution. "All who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Christians have been persecuted since the church was born. Christians are still persecuted today in various ways all over the world. Every day, Christians die for their faith in Christ. But persecution is from man, wrath is from God. "Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Conclusion

Some people are amazed and perplexed that a loving God can be wrathful. On the other hand, some are amazed and perplexed that a holy and just God has not yet poured out His wrath on a sinful world.

If you have trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, He is your propitiation, and you are spared from the wrath you deserve. Others can also be saved, but the Day of the Lord is coming when His wrath will be justly poured out. We must work while it is still day (John 9:4). Preach the Gospel which can rescue people from God's wrath. Like the Apostle Paul, don't be afraid to mention the coming judgment (Acts 17:31; 24:24, 25). Bring God pleasure by calling people to repentance so He can give them life!

A contemporary song describes us as it says that I was..."once Your enemy, now seated at Your table, thank you Jesus."

(Close in prayer)