

Subject: *The Wrath of God*

Scripture: *Romans 1:14-25*

This is not a pleasant subject, but it is an important one. This is a side of God we don't want to see. One of the beloved Puritan preachers, Thomas Watson said: "God is the best friend, but He is the worst enemy." On July 8, 1741, Jonathan Edwards preached on the subject, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." You're not likely to hear many sermons like that today. You're not likely to hear much about God's anger or His judgment. Has God changed? No, but people have changed and preaching has changed.

The Bible has a lot to say about God's wrath. Jesus had much to say about judgment. He had more to say about Hell than about Heaven. Why is the doctrine of God's wrath so important? You can't really appreciate salvation unless you know what you are saved from. You won't see the need of being saved unless you understand your need of a Savior. The Bible tells us two basic things about God's wrath:

All unbelievers are under God's wrath

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* God's wrath is a present reality for all unbelievers. ***Ephesians 2:1-3*** ¹ *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;* ² *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:* ³ *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* All unbelievers deserve God's wrath and are exposed to His wrath at any moment. This is the basic truth of Jonathan Edwards' sermon in his own words: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." Every moment of every day the curse of God rests upon the unbeliever. No day is safe. Between the sinner and God's anger is nothing but the beating of his heart.

All believers are saved from God wrath

Romans 5:8-9 ⁸ *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* ⁹ *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 ⁹ *For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;* ¹⁰ *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

GOD'S WRATH IS REVEALED TO ALL PEOPLE IN SCRIPTURE

God's wrath is not an emotional outburst of anger aimed at people He doesn't like. His wrath is the constant and righteous anger He has against sin. In simple terms, God's wrath is His holy hatred of sin. A close look at Scripture shows us what God's wrath is like.

God's wrath is constant

Psalms 7:11 *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

God's wrath is terrifying

Psalms 76:7 *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* No one can stand against His anger.

Nahum 1:6 *Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.*

God's wrath is righteous

Romans 1:17-18¹⁷ *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* ¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. In the Gospel God reveals His righteousness love and forgiveness and in judgment God reveals His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.*

GOD'S WRATH IS RESERVED FOR ALL PEOPLE WITHOUT CHRIST

We are living in a day of grace, but that doesn't mean that God is no longer angry against sin. God is storing up His wrath against all who are without Christ. This is why John the Baptist preached, **Matthew 3:7** *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* This is why Jesus preached, **Matthew 10:28** *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* This is why Paul wrote, **Romans 2:3-5**³ *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* ⁴ *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* ⁵ *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* God's wrath is not only a present reality (Jn. 3:36), but it is a future certainty. The Bible mentions five kinds of wrath:

God's wrath at special times

God sent the worldwide flood, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and killed Korah, Nadab and Abihu, Ananias and Sapphira.

God's wrath of sowing and reaping

Galatians 6:7-8⁷ *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* ⁸ *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* We are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences.

God's wrath of abandonment

This goes beyond the wrath of sowing and reaping. This is when God removes His restraint and allows people to destroy themselves. When people reject God completely then He rejects them. This happened to people in the Bible and it is happening in our world right now. It is described in Romans 1:24-32 (God gave them up...God gave them over).

God's wrath during the time of tribulation

Revelation 6:16-17¹⁶ *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:* ¹⁷ *For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* In Revelation 15-16 we read about the bowls of God's wrath poured out on the earth during the Tribulation period.

God's eternal wrath in hell

Revelation 20:15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* **Revelation 21:8** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and*

murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 ⁷ *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

GOD'S WRATH IS REMOVED FROM ALL PEOPLE IN CHRIST

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* How is it possible to escape God's judgment and punishment for our sins? We must be "in Christ," be spiritually united to Him by repentance and faith. But what would cause us to turn from our sins and trust Christ as Lord and Savior?

We should consider what happened when Jesus died on the cross. We know He suffered physical agony, but He suffered a whole lot more. Christ died for our sins and He died in our place to make atonement for sin. The Bible word is propitiation which means that the death of Christ satisfied the righteous demands of God's justice and turned away His wrath against sin. **Romans 3:24-25** ²⁴ *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;* The safest place to stand is where the fire of God's wrath has already burned. Jesus paid our penalty. He suffered the righteous wrath of God against sin. Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done." What was that cup? Was it the physical suffering? No. Many people have been willing to die as a martyr for their faith in Christ and many faced physical suffering with great courage. No, the cup was far more than physical suffering. Jesus knew that He would endure the wrath of God against sin. This came to the climax when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Galatians 3:13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

All of us have sinned and we all deserve the judgment of God for our sins. Our sin calls for God's justice. Sin makes God angry. Sin is an outrage to Him. Sin offends God and He will not overlook it. Had it not been for Jesus, we would all face God's eternal wrath for our sin. That's why we should be so humble and grateful for our Lord and Savior. He died for all and is willing to save all, but we must come to Him in faith and repentance. If we despise the grace of God we will surely receive the wrath of God. But if we turn from our sins and commit ourselves to Christ we will receive God's grace and we will escape His wrath. All sin will be pardoned in Christ or punished in Hell. Our sins can be pardoned in Christ because they were punished in Christ.