

Romans: The Integrity of God

The Wrath of God

Romans 1:18-21

Since the time of early Greek philosophers, the idea that God would inflict wrath on people has been rejected as incompatible with an enlightened understanding of the deity. The second-century Christian heretic Marcion omitted "*of God*" in verse 18, and many others would also like to do this. C.H. Dodd, a modern theological scholar, calls God's wrath "an archaic concept." However, the Bible is clear that wrath is an attribute of God's person. "*As long as God is God, He cannot behold with indifference that His creation is destroyed and His holy will trodden underfoot. Therefore He meets sin with His mighty and annihilating reaction,*" says theological scholar Dr. Nygren. The study of God's wrath is not a popular one, but to understand God's wrath is to understand God's gospel. Read our text with an open mind and trust God's word.

I. God's wrath makes the gospel "good news."

Notice the parallelism between verse 17 and verse 18. There are two things revealed: God has manifested His righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But you will not appreciate what Jesus Christ has done till you comprehend the wrath of God. "*For*" (unwisely omitted by NIV) connects verse 18 with verse 17. The just one by faith shall live (rather than die) because the wrath of God has been born by Christ's cross.

II. God's wrath makes one's sin "bad news."

Though the Bible teaches that God's wrath will be felt by the "unrighteous" on the day of judgment, the Apostle Paul emphasizes God's present wrath upon the world.

(A). How is God's wrath revealed?

We will look at this in detail, but in essence, God's wrath comes through the "*giving up*" (or "*handing over*") of sinners to their sin (v.24). In other words, God's wrath is not seen so much in the collapse of towers, the ice storm of the century, or the vicious attack of an enemy *but in the deeper plunge into sin.*

(B). Will God's wrath be revealed in the future?

Of course. The Bible is full of comments regarding the day of wrath (Rev. 6:17, Col. 3:6; Matt. 22:7, Rev. 19:15). However, if you feel safe and secure in your Sin, it would do you well to remember that "*as water is deepest where it is the most still, the anger and wrath of God may simply be stored up for that day.*"

III. God's wrath makes any excuse "no news."

There will be those who say, "but I never heard the gospel!" or "I didn't know you existed!" God will simply say to those who offer an excuse for their sin - "Enough!"

(A). You suppressed the truth ---- I revealed to you that I existed through **creation** and **conscience**, but you took the truth and held it down. You suffocated it.

(B). You sinned willingly against me --- I didn't force you to go against my will.

You "*darkened your own heart.*" You took what I revealed and rejected it!

God says this to sinners in verses 19-21. As a result, there is "*no excuse.*"

The day of judgment is remote --- thy day of judgment is at hand. The Lord has a golden scepter and an iron rod. Bow to the one or be broken by the other.