

Three Things You May Not Like About God

Hebrews 2:16-18

USA Today reported this past Easter weekend that Pastor Joel Osteen builds his 43,000 member congregation by giving to people what they wish to hear—God is love and He has no wrath. Many people embrace a god of their imagination rather than believe in the God of revelation. For your faith to be rock solid, built to last, it must be based on what God says about Himself.

I. God does not give help to every sinner who rebels against Him.

Some embrace the belief that because “God is love” then he **MUST** deliver and not judge. “*For assuredly he does not give help to angels*” (2:16). God could have devised a way to offer deliverance (take hold of and rescue) to the angels who rebelled against Him, but He chose not to do so. Does this choice negate His love and justice? Can fallen angels bring a charge against God that because He didn’t rescue them He is not a loving God? Of course not! Neither can sinful people claim that God is unloving or unjust if He chooses some as vessels of mercy, but demonstrates His wrath and power on others as vessels of wrath and judgment. “*There is no injustice with God ... ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy’*” (Rom. 9:15).

II. God is personally angry with every sinner who rebels against Him.

That God possesses anger or has a personal wrath toward sinners is rejected by many people. Our text clearly shows that God can be both full of wrath and full of love *at the same time*. Jesus Christ (the subject of Hebrews) delivers many of the “seed of Abraham” and not angels. “*He had to be made like His brethren ... to make propitiation for the sins of the people*” (v.17).

Propitiation isn’t a word in day-to-day usage, so a brief definition needs to be given. It refers primarily to the process whereby *one’s wrath is either averted or satisfied*, resulting in mercy being received. The Greek words translated *propitiate* occur six times in the NT.

hilaskomai - used in Luke 18:13 (translated ‘be merciful’) and in our text Hebrews 2:17.

hilasmos - used in I John 2:2 and 4:10 (some translations use the word “expiation”).

hilasterion - used in Rom 3:25 (‘an expiation’) and Heb 9:5 (translated ‘mercy seat’).

To illustrate the word: Suppose you stayed at our house and decided that you wanted to smear the entire contents of your chocolate wrapper all over the living room carpet, you can rest assured that I would be angry (who wouldn’t?). But, should you then arrange for a brand new carpet to be bought for us and did the hard work of removing all the furniture from the room and arrange to be there when the carpet layers arrived, then my anger would be averted (propitiated) and you would find mercy. Christ makes propitiation for us before God.

III. God gives comfort only to those who come to Him through Christ.

“*Since He himself was tempted in what He suffered, He is able to come to the aid ...*” (v.18).

The exclusive claim of Christianity rattles the theist. “How dare you be so exclusive?”

The contemporary world of religious pluralism hates anyone who points the sinner to Jesus Christ alone as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Christian gospel is unintelligible apart from the uniqueness of Christ. There is only “one name” given among men for deliverance. Jesus Christ is **THE** way, **THE** truth, **THE** life. No man comes to God except through Him. The message to the Hebrews was one of hope and deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ.