

May 12, 2015

## The Divine Wrath

Romans 1:18a, “of God”

The Puritan writer Thomas Watson once said, “Is God so infinitely holy? Then see how unlike to God sin is.... No wonder, therefore, that God hates sin, being so unlike to him, nay, so contrary to him; it strikes at his holiness.” The first feature of God’s wrath then is in the very fact that this wrath is divine, it is “**of God.**” This means that it then is unlike anything we know of in this present world. God’s wrath is not like human anger, which is always tainted by our sinfulness. God’s wrath is the opposite of our anger in that it is always and completely righteous. God, unlike me, never loses His temper.

One liberal theologian made the following claim as he was unable to reconcile the idea of God’s wrath with his own idea of goodness and righteousness: “We cannot think with full consistency of God in terms of the highest human ideals of personality and yet attribute to Him the rational passion of anger.” This is complete foolishness, not to mention that it is completely unbiblical, to measure God by human standards and to then discount the idea of His wrath simply because human anger is always, *always* flawed by sin.

God’s anger is not irrational; it’s not capricious but is the only response that a holy God could have toward evil. God could not be holy and not be angry at evil. Holiness cannot tolerate and it will not tolerate unholiness. Habakkuk 1:13 says, “**Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And you cannot look on wickedness with favor.**” Paul writes of love, true Christian love in 1 Corinthians 13:6 that it “**does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.**” God does not celebrate our sin and He does not find humor in it either.

Jesus twice cleansed the Temple because He was incensed at the money changers and sacrifice sellers. It says in John 2:14-16, “**And He found in the Temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, ‘Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business.’”**

In Lamentations 1:18 Jeremiah speaking in place of the sinful inhabitants of Jerusalem, acknowledged the rightness of God’s punishment of them, saying, “**The LORD is righteous; For I have rebelled against His command; Hear now, all peoples, and behold my pain; My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity.**” In Joshua 7:20-25 Achan confessed before Joshua that he had kept some of the forbidden things of Jericho that was reserved for the

house of the Lord and he acknowledged that the punishment he was about to receive was just and righteous.

Increasingly in our culture today there is less and less indignation at that which is criminal and vile. Instead we live in a day and time when crime is increasingly justified and that which is vile is celebrated. Romans 1:32 says, **“and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval of those who practice them.”** The Greek scholar Richard Trench wrote, “There [can be no] surer and sadder token of an utterly prostrate moral condition than... not being able to be angry with sin – and sinners.”

This may be said about us but it cannot be said about the holy, righteous, and yes wrathful God. My prayer is that we as a people will understand God’s righteous wrath and fall to our knees in repentance of our sins.