

The Wrath of God

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

While many people prefer not to think about the wrath of God, the Bible does not hesitate to speak of it. In Scripture, God's wrath serves as a warning to unbelievers and a reason for holy living for His people. In this message, Dr. Lawson looks at the nature and necessity of God's wrath, and the many different ways that it is shown in Scripture.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Proverbs 1:24–31; Romans 1:18–32

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To explain the necessity and various modes of God's wrath
2. To instill a holy fear in the God who will judge the world
3. To elicit thanksgiving by reflecting on that from which believers are saved, and what it is that Christ suffered

QUOTATIONS

There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

—Jonathan Edwards

The wisdom of God devised a way for the love of God to deliver sinners from the wrath of God while not compromising the righteousness of God.

—John Piper

LECTURE OUTLINE

- I. The Need for God's Wrath
 - A. The wrath of God is an expression of His holiness.
 - B. God cannot be neutral toward sin.

- II. The Nature of God's Wrath
 - A. One aspect of God's wrath is that it is abiding.
 - i. God's wrath is already abiding on the heads of sinners (Rom. 1:18).
 - ii. Right now His mercy is holding it back.
 - B. It is also catastrophic wrath.
 - i. There are individual times in human history when God brings severe judgment upon the human race.
 1. The flood of Genesis 6 and 7.
 2. The fire and brimstone from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah.
 3. The plagues upon the Egyptians.
 - ii. These are expressions of God's wrath.
 - C. It is consequential wrath.
 - i. God's wrath is revealed in the principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7; Hos. 8:7).
 - ii. Sinful actions will be met with God's wrath.
 - D. It is abandoning wrath.
 - i. God's wrath expresses itself when the sinner, after repeatedly rejecting the knowledge of God and the gospel of Christ, is abandoned by God and turned over to the pursuit of their own sins (Rom. 1:24–26).
 - E. It is eschatological wrath.
 - i. This refers to the wrath surrounding the final hour of human history immediately preceding the return of God's Son (Rev. 19).
 - F. It is eternal wrath.
 - i. The wrath of God is displayed in hell (Rev. 20:14).
 - G. It is redemptive wrath.
 - i. This is displayed as Jesus bore believers' sins and suffered on the cross, enduring the wrath of God so that they would never be subject to condemnation.
 - ii. Every soul will either be damned in hell or will be pardoned in Christ.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. When God allows individuals to continue in their sin, it is an example of _____.
 - a. Abiding wrath
 - b. Abandoning wrath
 - c. Consequential wrath
 - d. None of the above

2. Only those who have knowingly rejected the gospel of Christ will face eternal punishment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. God's wrath is necessitated primarily by His _____.
 - a. Omniscience
 - b. Goodness
 - c. Holiness
 - d. Sovereignty

4. Hell is not everlasting.
 - a. True
 - b. False

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Many people claim that it would be unfair for God to release His wrath on His own creation. How would you respond?
2. People often understand God's wrath in terms of human anger. What are the similarities and differences between the two?
3. Since Christians need no longer stand under the wrath of God, what is the benefit of meditating on this attribute of God?
4. In addition to God's wrath, what other attribute or attributes of God do you see clearly displayed in Christ's crucifixion?