

Gospel and Wrath of God

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1. God's wrath and the gospel

The gospel is good news. But the good news is eternally so good because it saves us from the eternally bad news of the wrath of God. And we can't understand God's wrath against sinners like us because we don't understand how **wretched** sinners we are. Consequently, we will not hear the sweet sound of amazing God's grace unless we know what a wretch we are.

Rom 1:17-18 For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

The wretchedness of sin is seen in Rom 1:18. We are not only ungodly and unrighteous, but we also suppress the truth by our unrighteousness. In other words, we are unrighteous and shut the door to the truth in our unrighteousness. We not only shut the door to the truth but crucified truth became man, Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. So, we are wretched sinners indeed and under **the wrath of God**.

Wrath of God: We can define wrath as anger we experience when others do something wrong and unjust to us. There is a vast difference between God's wrath and man's wrath. God's wrath is holy and always justified; man's is never holy and not often justified. Man's wrath is sinful and opens us to demonic influence. Therefore, the Bible warns us not to repay evil for evil, not take revenge, but to leave room for God's wrath, for He alone can repay.

Rom 12:17, 19 Do not repay anyone evil for evil... ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

God's wrath and the Gospel: God's wrath against wretched sinners like us is perfectly justified because God is holy and perfect, so His plan for humanity is also holy and perfect. And we are destroying His plan for humanity by our ungodliness and unrighteousness. But God is also loving, merciful and gracious and provided a way for us to receive His divine favour through the gospel. The gospel came at an infinite price because His Son (Jesus) took God's wrath upon Himself when He died in our place on the cross (Rom 5:8-9). To reject God's perfect plan for our salvation is to reject God's love, mercy, grace and favour. Then all that remains is to receive His righteous wrath on unrepentant sinners whilst on earth (John 3:36) and on the

final Day of Judgement (Rom 2:5).

Rom 5:8-9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since his blood has justified us, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Rom 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

2. God's wrath is revealed in three ways while we live on earth

a. By human death

Rom 5:15-16 For if the many died by the trespass of the one man [Adam]... ..¹⁶the judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation.

Human death is God's judgment on the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the human race rooted in Adam and is the manifestation of His wrath on sinful man.

b. By human misery and suffering

Gen 3:16-19 To the woman, he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour, you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷ To Adam, he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope.

At the heart of society, the family, there will be a continuous battle between the husband and wife. The wife desires to control and manipulate her husband, who, in turn, will dominate his wife. And man's survival will always be difficult because nature will be against him. Don't blame the devil when things go wrong because God subjected creation to frustration (Rom 8:20). All this misery manifests God's wrath. But there is still hope in the redemption by God in Jesus Christ.

c. By human behaviour growing in the depravity of body, heart and mind

Read Romans 1:20-28. Because humanity turned away from the worship of the Creator God and worshipped created things, God, in His wrath, gave humans over to increasing sinful depravity of body, heart and mind. In other words, God reveals His wrath against sin by giving people over to more sin — to unnatural sex, shameful lusts (1:26) and a depraved mind (1:28).

3. God's wrath and the unbeliever

Despite His wrath against sinful humanity, God does not want anyone to perish but everyone to repent, believe the gospel and be saved (2 Pet 3:9, 1 Tim 2:3-4). The grace of God has appeared to all humanity (Titus 2:11), and He made believers His ambassadors to appeal to them on His behalf to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-20). Furthermore, God is kind to both the just and the wicked, giving them equal treatment with the sun and the rain (Matt 5:45). But above all, God also sends His Holy Spirit to convict humanity of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). So, amid His wrath, there is His kindness which should lead people to repent and believe the gospel (Rom 2:4).

Peter 3:9 He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Tim 2:3-4 This is good and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

Cor 5:18-20 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Matt 5:45 He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

John 16:8 When he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

Rom 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Man is destined to die once, and after death, there is judgment (Heb 9:27). On judgment day, those whose names are not written in the Book of Life were thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15) — **Hell**.

There is no presence of God in hell. God's love, mercy and kindness will not be there. The Holy Spirit, who brings conviction of sin, is not present in hell. People in hell are unable to repent. They are left with selfishness and sinfulness, in which they can only grow from one degree to another for eternity — making everyone a monster. It's like being in a never-ending horror movie that is real.

4. God's wrath and the believer

1 Thess 5:9-11 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as, in fact, you are doing.

If God has not appointed believers to suffer wrath, what is the meaning of our death, misery and sin, which we still face in our lives on earth? The answer is the gospel, the good news that our Saviour and Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross and has borne the wrath of God on our behalf. And He has also completely altered the death, misery and sin we face today. How has He altered them?

a. Human death: For believers, death is swallowed up in victory

Cor 15:20-22, 53-55 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive... ... ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

b. Human misery: For believers, misery makes us Christlike.

Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Cor 4:16-18 Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory

that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Heb 12:5-7, 11 “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ... ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

c. Human sin —For believers, the gospel breaks the power of sin and replaces it with love for righteousness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit

Jesus has set us free from the bondage of sin (Rom 6:14-22), which led to the depravity of body, heart and mind. We are now growing in holiness, offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to God and renewing our minds (Rom 12:1-2)

Rom 6:14, 18, For sin, shall no longer be your master because you are not under the law, but under grace... ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Rom 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Conclusion: The gospel is the power of God to save believers from the wrath to come. If you have not accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, consider seriously doing so as soon as possible. If you are a believer, thank God for His amazing grace to save a wretch like you.