

God's Wrath: Objections Answered

Peter Ditzel

In "God's Wrath, Part 1" (<https://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wp/gods-wrath-1/>) and "God's Wrath, Part 2" (<https://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wp/gods-wrath-2/>), I showed proof from Scripture that God is loving and wrathful in both the Old and the New Testaments. In this article, I'd like to answer objections to the idea of God's wrath.

I have already explained in the previous articles that God can be both loving and wrathful because His love is toward one group and His wrath toward another. Only for the sake of Jesus Christ, does God love those for whom Christ made atonement on the Cross. These people always become believers whom God justifies of their sins. God's wrath is toward unbelievers because of their unbelief and because they are still in their sins.

Isn't Matthew 5:44-45 Contrary to God's Wrath?

Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45). Isn't this saying that God loves His enemies, the unjust?

This passage requires more explanation than most people usually give it. We've just seen that God has wrath toward sinners, even after Jesus' atoning sacrifice for His elect. God does not have wrath toward believers, but He does have wrath toward unbelievers. So, why does Jesus tell us to love our enemies so that we may be children of our Father in heaven?

Paul gives us the answer in Romans 5:8-10:

But God commends his own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we will be saved by his life.

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Prior to our reconciliation by Jesus Christ, even though we were elect, we were God's enemies because our sins were still on us. But God showed His love toward us—His enemies—through Christ's death.

God sends rain on the just and the unjust because withholding rain from the unjust would also hurt the just. But we humans don't know who is elect and who isn't. So, we're to love everyone, including our enemies.

On the other hand, Paul tells us, "The Lord knows those who are his" (see 2 Timothy 2:19). So, God can, does, and will love believers and show His wrath toward unrepentant unbelievers:

"But bring those enemies of mine who didn't want me to reign over them here, and kill them before me."

Luke 19:27

Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and throw him into the outer darkness; there is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be."

Matthew 22:13

But if that evil servant should say in his heart, "My lord is delaying his coming," and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with the drunkards, the lord of that servant will come in a day when he doesn't expect it, and in an hour when he doesn't know it and will cut him in pieces, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be."

Matthew 24:48-51

The kings of the earth, the princes, the commanding officers, the rich, the strong, and every slave and free person, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. They told the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 6:15-17

"I still don't see how God can be righteous by showing love to some and wrath to others."

This is a classic question that the Bible directly answers.

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I caused you to be raised up, that I might show in you my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then, he has mercy on whom he desires, and he hardens whom he desires. You will say then to me, "Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?" But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed ask him who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" Or hasn't the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel for honour, and another for dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath made for destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory, us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles?

Romans 9:17-24

"If the Old Covenant has ended, and we are living in the age of the New Covenant, why is God still wrathful?"

It's true that we are living in the age of the New Covenant and the kingdom of God. But only those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior are under the terms of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant and its law have ended, but that did not end God's wrath. The unbelieving world is still under God's wrath, and it will remain under God's wrath for eternity with the exception of those who, in this life, come to believe.

"Does God still punish entire nations?"

History doesn't just happen. It is always the working out of God's purpose. Thus, although God uses secondary means to accomplish His purpose, nations fall because of God's wrath upon them. The ultimate wrath that unbelievers must face is God's eternal wrath. Nations don't have an afterlife. When nations fill up their wickedness and God reaches the end of His patience, God punishes them in the here and now. And, quite frankly, those who've had a greater exposure to the truth, He holds to a higher standard and tolerates less wickedness.

I'm not a prophet. But as I look at the world around me, I do have a personal opinion about this. I see the possible collapse of not just a single nation, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, but the impending collapse of many nations.

Some will answer me by saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). But have things really continued as they have from the Creation? No. Wasn't the world destroyed by the Flood? Weren't Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire? Weren't Jerusalem and the Temple crushed by the Romans in AD 70? Haven't the great empires fallen, each in its own time? God's wrath has periodically intervened in the continuation of things from the Creation.

Jesus told the Jews of His generation that they should have been able to discern the times (Matthew 16:1-3). What are the signs of our times?

The message that God is never wrathful and is always loving might sound appealing. But it is a lie. It denies the central purpose for which Jesus Christ came in the flesh. As Paul wrote, "But the Scriptures imprisoned all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3:22), and, "The saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15), and, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through him" (Romans 5:9).