

## **Wrath**

This is a word not heard too often in secular conversation. It's not a pleasant word by either its sound or its meanings. Wrath is something that no one wants anything to do with, because it connotes anger, vengeance, a reason for fear, and is associated with pain and suffering. The word is found 152 times in the Old Testament expressed by 9 different Hebrews words and 47 times in the New Testament by 3 different Greek words. When the word is applied, it is most often in the context of God's wrath against men. To the world it is most often viewed as symbolic of God's unfairness and an arbitrary application of various forms of unwarranted harm. We think of God's wrath as being some serious and painful activity we call punishment directed by God in response to man's manifested rebellious nature otherwise known as sin.

God hates sin with a vengeance. Those who know Him through study and knowledge of His word, know that every aspect of His wrath is caused by this hatred. There is no other reason for His wrath other than disobedience to His will. Satan, the fallen angels and demons, may be classified as sinners of a different kind for which God has made no provision for redemption. These are all spirits as also is man. However man is also a soul, uniquely placed in a physical body of flesh, and was originally made in the image of God. It is not the flesh that is evil, it is the soul / spirit that sins, and engages the flesh to participate. Sin is born in the mind as thoughts or feelings.

Through careful, spirit-led study of Scripture we find that when God's wrath is applied, it is after long patience and forbearance during which His precepts and commandments have been ignored, and have failed to bring about repentance and obedience. Many proofs of this are found in both the Old and New Testaments.

From studies Dr. Misler has made, we find an interesting observation regarding God's wrath. He has noted that God's wrath may be placed into five categories, or types of wrath. Let us now examine how God applies His wrath in each of these categories.

1. Eternal Wrath – Given God’s hatred of sin, we might say that His first and “everlasting” wrath began in the Garden of Eden. Absent sin, there never would have been such a thing as wrath or pain or suffering or death! It was in Eden after the “apple incident” that God declared entropy on all of creation. What is entropy? In this context, we might simply call it the process by which man and all living things are programmed to die. Entropy is also the process that results in the decay of all non-living matter as well, including the stars, the sun the moon, and the earth. Only man’s soul/spirit will survive this death. All other components of creation will be obliterated. Thus, it may be called eternal wrath. I believe that “eternal” is not quite appropriate, it may seem that way, but it had a beginning in Eden and will end when God destroys the present heaven and earth. For redeemed souls, eternity future will be on a new earth absent of sin or entropy or death. There will no longer be any circumstances that could cause His wrath, What about the poor souls that will spend eternity in the lake of fire? They will be suffering the eternal punishment, as the result of His final wrath.
2. Eschatological or end time Wrath – This is described in detail in the Book of Revelation and is spoken of by nearly all of the Old Testament Prophets, as well as by Jesus and the writers of the epistles. It is the end times wrath when the fullness of man’s contempt for, and rebellion against, God has reached the point when none who have been given the opportunity to repent, will choose to do so. That is when God’s wrath will descend on Satan, Antichrist, and the false prophet, and on all of mankind who have accepted Satan’s mark. This wrath ends the Great Tribulation after which Jesus will return to rule the Tribulation survivors throughout the millennium. This same wrath will manifest one final time when man again rebels against God as a result of Satan’s last deception. This will end the millennium, and begin the final and total destruction mentioned in 1 above.
3. Calamitous Wrath – This of course was expressed in the most violent manner when God reshaped the entire earth, by causing a world-wide flood. By this means He destroyed all breathing earthly creatures except for Noah and his family, and one pair of each species for replenishing life on the restored earth. While not of this magnitude, there have been many other less profound

expressions of His calamitous wrath. Huge volcanic eruptions, limited floods, major earthquakes, Tsunamis and meteor collisions may well be localized evidences of His wrath serving as either warnings or punishments.

4. Consequential Wrath – This category may be described as “you reap what you sow.” This is a wrath directed at individuals as the consequences of sins. It effects both non-believers and believers. I believe that it is directed in some special ways towards His sons and daughters when they slip or backslide and grow lukewarm in their worship, or in their appointed service (See paper entitled “*Do Christians Suffer More than Other People?*”) God wants His own to grow in faith in the prescribed ways that will best qualify them for a glorious eternal career. This wrath may be rather painful and long lasting depending on the severity of the transgression and what it takes to put them back on track. It may also be expressed as merely a stinging nudge where God deems that as sufficient to serve His purpose.
5. Abandonment Wrath – To me, this is the most disturbing of them all. It is this wrath of termination, a wrath against individuals, groups, and nations where the means of prevention are known or at least readily knowable, yet ignored. It is this wrath that God, in His foreknowledge, inflicts on those whose hearts have been so hardened that no repentance is possible. It is for this cause God abandons them to their own evil natures and no longer offers salvation. This wrath is evidenced a number of times in Scripture.

- In Proverbs 1, we find God explaining through Solomon the nature and consequences of what this wrath is all about. The whole Proverb should be read. However, for the sake of brevity only verses 24 – 32 are quoted where the salient point is made regarding abandonment. “*24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28*

*Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29 for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: 30 they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”*

As we can see, this is an angry God who is fed up with His people's disregard of their covenant with Him at Sinai and their refusal to heed His commands. These are His people, Israel. These are not Gentiles, or of any other category of not-saved souls. Their seeking Him will not be in spiritual truth and confession, but rather as a repentant criminal whose repentance is related to having been caught rather than any spiritual remorse for having offended God.

- The first six chapters of the Book of Judges illustrate how the conduct of the Israelites, as they adopted pagan ways and departed from God, led to consequential wrath that in turn, brought them back to Him. As they abandoned Him, so He also abandoned them, leaving them to drown in their sins. This condition eventually brought them back to God who then reinstated His blessing, after which they returned again to their evil ways. Six times this up and down condition went on for the major portion of the four hundred year period of the judges.
- We find in the Book of Hosea, another abandonment prophesized for Israel in chapter 1 verse 9. And in chapter 4 verse 6. Hoses 1:9 *“Then said God, Call his name Lo-am’ mi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”* Hosea 4:6 *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”* The Book of Hosea is a wonderful study of God's love and concern for His people, Israel. In it we also see revealed His long suffering, forbearance, patience and almost tearful anguish over their refusal to make Him their One and Only God in

obedience and worship. However, in the above passages, we also see His frustration and near readiness to abandon them. This has to do with the northern and southern kingdoms prior to His wrath descending on them with horrible destruction.

- Examples of abandonment wrath did not end with the Old Testament. This wrath of abandonment was evidenced by the unforgivable sin of Matthew 12:31. There we have what I believe is the most profound and longest lasting abandonment of all. We read Matthew 23:37-39 “*37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*” Ye will not see me, effectually means that neither they, nor their decedents, as a nation, are any longer able to be His people.

This abandonment will remain in force until the time of the Great Tribulation. Thirty-eight years after that pronouncement by Jesus, that is in 70 AD, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, “*their house*”, was indeed made desolate. The cause of this abandonment wrath is evident from the quoted verse. The Nation of Israel, as represented by the religious elite refused to recognize the coming of the Messiah Jesus, even though He had clearly demonstrated to them every sign of His authenticity. The destruction of the temple denied them their place of worship and thus the very foundation of their identity as God’s special people.

Only a few years later in 132 AD, because of the revolt against Rome led by Simon Bar Kokhba the Romans under the 13<sup>th</sup> Roman emperor Hadrian, effectually obliterated Jerusalem and most of the country. Under

his direction came the largest dispersion of the Jewish people, exceeding even that which occurred in 721 BC when the Assyrians destroyed Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Hadrian had a statue of himself and another of Jupiter erected on the Holy site where the temple had been. Then he went even further, and changed the name of the country to Palestine, the Syrian name for "Philistines," Israel's ancient enemy. He also forbade Jewish worship anywhere in the country. From this, and the continued history of discrimination, we can see that this pattern of abandonment wrath in its various forms has not yet abated.

- Lastly, for this essay at least, we come to the most disturbing example of abandonment wrath. It is that which is what is before us at this very moment. For the biblically astute Christians, it should be clearly evident that God has finally abandoned this nation, the United States of America! Great evil has engulfed this country, and has worsen day by day and year by year until it has reached the point of no return as did the world before the flood and as did Israel when they rejected Jesus the Messiah. This country has done the same things only on a much larger scale than has ever occurred in the past.

Regardless of the many accusations to the contrary, this nation was founded on biblical Christian principals as expressed by its constitution, and was therefore unlike any that had previously existed. It was for this reason that God blessed it with great abundance, prosperity and power that grew over many decades to where it became the greatest nation on earth in all the ways one might choose to measure greatness, including a form of basic goodness. Of course, there was also much evil here from the beginning, because it is impossible for Satan to leave alone anything that is good. He eventually planted his seeds of contamination everywhere where good was growing. He has done this in governments, churches, schools, and every other institution or agency. However, the vast majority of the population was made up of God fearing, Bible believing, church

attending, and basically honest and ethical people. Many today in this country and elsewhere will dispute this characterization. As I review this paper at age 89, I have personally witnessed and lived through most of this era. I've witnessed a vast majority of God-fearing people dwindled to near zero. In my career, I've seen a very high level of integrity, and the "my word is my bond" behavior, change to a "sue me" attitude where firm agreements and commitments are no longer honored.

They will be quick to point out the existence of scoundrels that have infected it and influenced it in the ways of ungodliness from the very beginning. They would have us believe that this nation was filled with greed and wickedness from the beginning, and that from that perspective nothing has changed. However, an examination of the country's true history proves otherwise. This positive characterization of the nation as a whole is no longer defensible and has ceased to be true. Its rate of decline, since the last half of the previous century has been incredibly rapid as I have personally attested to.

Since then, Satan's grip has become even stronger. I believed that for quite some time it remained salvageable that God through His mercy, and love, and long suffering patience would so. However, it is now evident that His patience has ended and His abandonment wrath is beginning to manifest more rapidly than most are aware. The current wide spread, and all pervasive corruption of not only government, but nearly all aspects of society are growing more and more evident even to the spiritually blind. The elimination of God in schools, in government and in the higher education institutions, and the growing manifestation and coming of persecution of biblical Christianity, are all evidences of the cause of God's growing wrath.

In the Book of Romans, chapter one, verse 18-32, God has made clear the basis for His abandonment of certain cultures. As we read this it is evident that He is describing our current culture and revealing His manner of dealing with it prior to its inevitable total destruction. Here are His Words which apply to our present circumstances as if they were written specifically for our generation and this nation.

*“18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: 25 who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, 30 backbiters, haters of God,*



*despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,  
31 without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection,  
implacable, unmerciful: 32 who, knowing the judgment of God, that they  
which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but  
have pleasure in them that do them”*

How do we reconcile these expressions of God's wrath with the great love and mercy He generously applies to us whose natural hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? (Jeremiah 17:9). I believe we find the basis for an answer in the above descriptions of wrath. God is just but His patience with our rebellions, both individual and corporate, must reach an end point where His justice must be satisfied. His love and mercy cause Him long suffering as He delays rendering the necessary justice. In His infinite wisdom, He determines when delay will no longer be affectual. That is when His justice is rendered, and is often expressed as wrath.