

The Wrath to Come

The Bible indicates that there is a Day of Wrath coming (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Many people have difficulty believing that truth. They simply cannot imagine that a loving God (1 John 4:8) would ever act with the unmitigated anger described in His Word (Rom. 11:22). Revelation depicts desperate and panicked men begging the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and hide them from God's anger, crying out, "The great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17-18). Wise indeed are those who acknowledge the wrath to come and prepare accordingly.

God has promised wrath to come – He has said: "The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, for when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them... and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:2-3). Sin is the reason for God's wrath (Ps. 7:11; Rom. 1:18); however, He also has historically exercised great patience with mankind: "[God is] not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). God's patience does have a limit and must never be taken for granted. He has promised that He will send Jesus and His angels in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who do not know Him and who do not obey the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Although it will be severe, God's wrath will also be righteous and infinitely fair: "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5).

Men of God warned about the wrath to come – John the Baptist questioned the Pharisees who had come to be baptized: "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Luke 3:7). He further taught that, "He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). Jesus frequently spoke of the Day when He will return to settle all accounts and cast unprofitable servants, "Into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). Paul preached about how, "We shall be saved from wrath through [Christ]" (Rom. 5:9). Peter wrote of a Day when, "The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, and Peter all believed in the reality of the great Day of God's Wrath. How foolish to ignore their inspired words!

Everyone can be prepared for the wrath to come – The Christians who worshipped in Thessalonica in the first century had prepared themselves for the wrath to come. Paul told them, "You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Peter exhorted the crowd on Pentecost, "Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:40). God has commanded all men everywhere to repent before that Day arrives (Acts 17:30-31). The Gospel of Jesus

Christ does not just cleanse people of their sin; it delivers them from God's wrath. May all of us be dedicated to warning others and preparing ourselves for that Day. **--JB**