

EPHESIANS 2:3 THE WRATH OF GOD

As we look at the first 3 verses of chapter 2 of Ephesians, we get the message about what God thinks about man in his condition. We are so self-centered that we forget to think about how God thinks on matters. There is no more important subject for man to know, than the condition he is really in. He needs to know the horrible situation he is in and the terrible destiny awaiting him. Because of the nature of man, being a child of disobedience and a child of wrath, God has warned of His wrath and anger that He will use to send man to eternal punishment. There is no subject more detested by people, and that even includes many professing Christians, than the doctrine of the wrath of God. Paul says two things about this in verse 3: that we are all born under God's wrath, and we are all under wrath by nature.

Why do we talk about the wrath of God?

First of all it is a fact that is found throughout all the Bible. If this is mentioned this much, and it is true, then our eternal destiny hangs in the balance.

Secondly, we can't understand the grace, mercy, and love of God, until we understand the wrath of God. People like to talk about the love of God but actually, to love God is to obey His commandments. If we don't really love Him by those actions, then we speak hypocritically about the love of God. If we don't obey Him, then He says He will pour out His wrath on us.

Why did Christ die? It was because of the wrath of God. God hates sin. The death of Christ on the cross is not absolutely necessary unless this doctrine is true.

Thirdly, this doctrine is essential in the matter of evangelism. People need to see their desperate need of Christ because of their absolute bankruptcy. They need to know they are sinners and God is holy.

1. ALL ARE BORN UNDER GOD'S WRATH

This is so unpopular and hated by so many people. It doesn't jive with their view of the love of God.

A. MEANING OF WRATH (ORGE)

1. What it doesn't mean

The ancient tribal gods of mythology displayed their anger and wrath because that was their makeup. People identify the OT God with these mythological gods, so they like the NT God, but not the OT God. They say we need to deliver ourselves out of this kind of bondage and believe in the God of love.

Wrath is not some out of control manifestation of anger. It is not One who has lost self-control and has become violent.

2. What it does mean

A manifestation of anger based upon justice. To go further it is the other side of love. God is a God of love and equally a God of justice and of righteousness and if God's love is spurned there remains nothing but the justice and righteousness of God.

B. OTHER SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

This doctrine is taught all throughout scripture.

1. Gen 3:24---When Adam sinned, He pronounced judgment on him. He placed the flaming sword in the Garden. It is the sword of wrath and punishment
2. Gen 6
3. Gen 19:23-29
4. Judgment of Israel and Judah
God gave His law and pronounced that if men disobey it, He will punish them.
5. Matthew 3:7
6. John 3:36—All men are under the wrath of God unless we believe on the Son of God the wrath of God abides on us.
7. Rom 1:18---Paul taught the same truth of the Old Testament and John the Baptist and Jesus. It is because of the wrath of God that Paul is preaching the Gospel.
8. Eph 5:6
9. 1 Thess 1:10
10. Heb 10:26-31
11. Rev 6:17---The wrath of the Lamb, how ironic. The Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, judges the world

Until man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is under the wrath of God. The wrath expresses God's anger at sin. The wrath of God against sin manifests itself, finally, in hell where people are outside God, slaves to their own lusts and desires, selfish and self-centered.

C. MAN'S FINITE UNDERSTANDING

How do we understand this doctrine? Are people going to burn forever in hell? How could God do this? This doesn't make sense. Why aren't they just annihilated, to be non-existent, destroyed?

The answer starts with the fact that my mind is finite and also sinful. I can't possibly understand the fullness of God's nature. If we are going to base everything on understanding, we might as well give up.

1 Cor 2:14

It was because man desired to understand that he was led to the Fall. Intellectual pride is sin. Preaching the message that all are under the wrath of God is what we are told to say. We are not told to make them understand completely that doctrine.

2. ALL ARE UNDER WRATH BY NATURE

A. MEANING OF NATURE (PHYSIS)

1. What it doesn't mean

Paul doesn't say we will become the children of wrath. He says we are children of wrath. He does not say we were born in a state of innocence or neutrality. He says we were born as children under the wrath of God from the moment of birth. It is not something that happens as a result of our actions. That absolutely denies scripture. Paul does not say we are under the wrath of God only because of our nature or because of the manifestation of our nature. He says we are in that position by birth.

2. What it does mean

Man is in that position *by birth*

B. THE BEST SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE

Rom 5:12-21 our relationship to Christ is analogous to our relationship formerly to Adam. What was true of us in Adam is now true of us in Christ. If we believe we are in Christ because of God imputing to us in Christ, we must also believe exactly the same thing on the other side About what was imputed to us in Adam.

1. All sinned in Adam

The federal head—imputation

All died, regardless of when the Law was initiated. One reason; they died because of the sin of Adam. The sin of Adam brought death to all men.

He said that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who committed no act of sin. Who are they? Infants who died in infancy. Death reigned, even over infants. Infants die because Adam sinned and it involved them.

This is the universality of sin. 1 Cor 15:22

2. Believers are now in Christ

The head of the church---imputation