

# THE WRATH OF GOD

## “Does God love the sinner and hate the sin?”

My theme begins with: **Rom 11:22** *Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.* [NASB used throughout] Allow me to say from the outset there are no divisions in the divine nature but there are distinctions.

In the verse sighted we see the twofold nature of God, His kindness and His severity or His love and His wrath. We see this at the cross so clearly, **Rom 3:24-25** “*being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (25) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. ...*” Notice the love of God in the Redemptive act while we observe the wrath of God in the Propitiatory act. [wrath removing sacrifice]

We all acknowledge that God is love. **1 John 4:8** *The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.* But another “distinction” of His nature is: **Heb 12:29** *for our God is a consuming fire.*

Love is not the all embracing attribute of our God. Holiness is, as Roger Chambers brought to our attention around 1986 [circa] at Hillsboro Family Camp. It is the only attribute that is used in triplicate twice in the divine record, once in the NT and once in the OT. **Rev 4:8** *And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."* **Isa 6:3** *And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."*

The basic biblical term for the transcendence of God is holiness. In scripture God is characteristically described as “the Holy One” [Hosea 11:9, 12], “the Holy One of Israel” [Psalm 71:22], “Holy God” [Isa. 7:15], “Holy is He” [Psalm 99:3, 5], “Holy is the Lord our God” [Psalm 99:9], And “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God” [Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8]. When the Bible says that God is Holy, it means above all else that He is “Wholly Other,” [Jack Cottrell] that He is transcendent, that He is separate from the world of creatures in His infinite uncreated majesty. He is simply not “one of the boys.”

“Holiness is the nature of God, that which distinguishes Him from everything else, the Transcendence of God is His very nature, as ‘Wholly Other.’ Hence Holiness is not a quality which God possesses in common with other beings; on the contrary, it is that which distinguishes Him clearly and absolutely from everything else. To be Holy is the distinguishing mark peculiar to God alone: it is that which sets the being of God apart from all other forms of being.” Emil Brunner

**1 Tim. 6:16** *who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

When God exists totally by Himself, he simply is who He is. There is no right or wrong, as if something God may choose could be wrong. He is totally, absolutely and morally Holy. Such holiness in God sets the distinction of right and wrong on eternal foundations. They are grounded in the very nature of God. Because God is who He is, the very words right and wrong make sense to us. Because God is who He is, going against His nature or His will is wrong, while

staying within His will is right. Not necessarily because of His Love, but because of Who He is! Because His character is HOLINESS!

Many feel that Isaiah's vision of the Holy God [Isa. 6:3-7] must have impressed him with the **divine aversion to sin**. When the seraphim cried out, "*Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,*" Isaiah's immediate response was, "*Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips,*" it was his sinfulness and not his created being that bothered him. "*Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. And he touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven.'*"

Holiness expresses itself further in the form of Law and Wrath. Law is directed to man as creature while wrath is directed to man as sinner.

"God's wrath in the Bible is never capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. J. I. Packer

"God's wrath is not a sudden flaring up of passion which is soon over, but a strong and settled opposition to all that is evil arising out of God's very nature." Leon Morris

"**Divine Wrath is the natural, inevitable and eternal recoil of the all-holy God against all that is unholy.**"  
Maldwyn Hughes

**I might point out here that Divine wrath is not the by-product of spurned love.** God is not on a holy pout because of wounded affection as would a rejected teenager be. **It is not an emotion, it is a violation of His perfect, moral, absolute Holiness.**

Now to the point at hand. Does God love the sinner and hate the sin? Strong also observes that God loves and hates the sinner at the same time. "...**hates him as he is a living and willful antagonist of truth and holiness, loves him as he is a creature capable of good and ruined by his transgression.**" Augustus H. Strong. Systematic Theology, P. 290. Strong seems to believe that God has a love/hate relationship with unregenerate sinners? I do as well.

One might ask, "how can God make such a judgment?" He sees us as no one else can ever see us. **1 Cor 4:5** *Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.* God alone knows the motives of man's heart.

**Heb 4:12-13** *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (13) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.* He knows our thoughts and intention; we are bare before the Holy God.

Notice the following verses: **Rom 5:6-10** *For while we were still **helpless**, at the right time Christ died for the **ungodly**. (7) For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. (8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet **sinners**, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, having now been*

justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (10) For if while we were **enemies**, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. We were helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies of the Holy God. **1 Pet 3:12** "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST **THOSE WHO DO EVIL.**"

Jesus makes this point when he compares people to trees, and their deeds to fruit produced by trees: "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit" (**Matt 7:17**). Here he speaks not just of bad *fruit*, i.e., actions, but also of a bad *tree*, i.e., **the person himself**. He says the tree—the person—is bad or rotten, using the word *safros*, which means "rotten, putrid, corrupted, worn out, bad, unfit for use."

Love disciplines, but wrath inflicts retribution for sin. Does God actually hate the sinner? "**He loves His image in us while hating our rebellious selves at the same time.**"

**Psalm 5:5-6** *The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes; Thou dost hate all who do iniquity. (6) Thou dost destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.*

**Psalm 11:5** *The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.* See Pro. 11:20; 16:5; 17:15; Lev. 20:22; Ps. 78:59 also.

**Pro 6:16-19** *There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: (17) Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, (18) A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, (19) A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers. [The heart here is the very center of the will and intellect, the very person or the "one"]*

**Mal 1:3** but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

**Rom 9:13** Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

The context of these two verses are about two nations but in Malachi, "hated" is the same as the above references.

The Hebrew word for hated to my best information is **sane** - pronounced *saw-nay* -- to hate personally, enemy, foe, utterly odious).

Could anything be worse than God saying, "Accursed ones"? Depart from Me accursed ones?

**Mat 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" But this is what it means to be under God's wrath. **It means to be God's enemy, to be hated by God, to be under God's curse.** It means, in short, to be marked out for God's punishment of the most dreaded kind.

Does all this mean that God's wrath is cruel? The answer to the question is *no* because it is "*judicial*". **IT IS NOT EMOTIONAL.** It is the wrath of the judge administering the justice. We get what we deserve. We earn, over the years, retribution. This is why sin is called a debt. **Matt. 6:12** "And forgive us our *debts*, as we also have forgiven our debtors." **God owes us punish-**

ment; we earned it. **Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* To repeat a previous statement, “God’s wrath is not a sudden flaring up of passion which is soon over, but a strong and settled opposition to all that is evil arising out of God’s very nature.” [Leon Morris]

Wrath is the natural, inevitable and eternal recoil of the all-holy God against all that is unholy. God’s wrath is always evoked by sin as disobedience to law. Spurned commandments, not spurned love evoked God’s wrath. **1 Sam. 12:15** *“And if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers. 2 Chron. 24:20 ... “Thus God has said, ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.’”*

And God's wrath takes on the form of deserved vengeance and is retributive upon sin. God is not angry by pouring out His wrath against sin and sinners because of wounded, spurned, or rejected love or grace. Wrath is a result of injured holiness and transgressed justice. Yes, love is involved, but love is not "the all-embracing attribute of God". Holiness is! **Rev 4:8** *"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."*

“...He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins.” [Hos 9:9] There will be a day reserved for fire, kept for the “...day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men,” [2 Pet 3:7] who must exist with “a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.” [Heb. 10:27] “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” [Heb 10:31]

Roger Chambers reminded us, during his sojourn on earth, that the wrath of God would catch us in the grave, **Heb 9:27** *“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment”* or at the cross, **Rom 5:9** *“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”*

I am counting on the cross as I am certain you are too. **1 Pet. 2:24** *and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

**2 Cor. 5:17-21** *Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (18) Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, (19) namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Through “reconciliation” Christ both “redeemed” us and made “propitiation” for us, He both paid the price, with His precious blood [1 Pet. 1:19], and turned the wrath of God away from us forever, thank God.

