

The Wrath of God

Leviticus 20

INTRODUCTION

- THIS IS ABOUT **HOLINESS**... being set apart for God's purposes, distinct from the pagan world His people live in
 - **"I AM THE LORD" IS THE THEME**
 - **Jonathan Edwards** on July 8, 1741 preached *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, "Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment..."
 - Holiness demands that sin be punished...ultimately destroyed.
 - It's the premise we have wrong: First ourselves being the basis is a problem. From there, and this makes sense, the standard by which all things are considered. This makes us our greatest delight.
 - But this isn't numbing or harsh. Ultimately it's about delight in Him alone!
 - If we read the text correctly, we see that what God is essentially saying is "Delight in Me. I'm the Supreme Lord of the Universe and I've loved you first. How could you go after other lovers? The greatest good for you is ME!"

God's Wrath for False Worship (vv.1-6)

- A) Sacrificial worship is judged (children -- only one begotten is sufficient for the one true God)
- B) Trusting in someone / something other than God is judged (only He is in control of the future)
 - a. The medium presumes to know
 - b. The one seeking the medium believes they should know

God's Passion for Holiness (vv.7-8)

- A) God's people are to be set apart
 - a. In the world, not of it
 - b. **2 Cor.5:20** (as ambassadors...not citizens here)
- B) God's people are set apart by obedience to God
 - a. Proves treasure
 - b. Expresses worship

God's Wrath for Sexual Sin (vv.9-21)

- A) Sexual sin profanes the family and God's name
 - a. All mentioned in **Chp.18**
 - b. Guilt and death deserved
 - c. Consequences reach further
- B) This is still the case
 - a. Destroying the image of Christ and the church
 - b. Ref. Eph.5:22-33
- C) Only forgiveness in Christ can bring healing
 - a. Family can be destroyed
 - b. God's name revered

God's Passion for His People (vv.22-27)

- A) Their Purity
 - a. Distinct from the nations (**vv.22-23**)
 - b. To live in God's Promise (**vv.24-25**)
 - i. God's identity is to be kept pure in every way, with every image and symbol.
 - ii. This is particularly true with this subject of wrath. God alone is holy and able to (rightly) judge. When man takes on the role of judge, especially in the damning of others, he takes on a role that only God fulfills, which (ironically) incurs the wrath of God.
 - iii. So, while many may take joy in declaring God's wrath, but in a Spirit that delights in the punishment, not the delight of God, they are in that role and in a dangerous position.
 - iv. God's wrath must be present for purity in holiness.

- B) Their Praise (vv.26-27)
- Our holiness is to God (not relative to men)
 - God has called us out for His possession (do you not know your body...)
 - There is death apart from life and God (no one to blame but themselves)

- We can throw off sin as a weight because His grace is greater than our sin -- the wrath of God that our sinfulness deserves was directed to Christ in our place and was satisfied once and for always, there
- Because Christ is alive at the Father's right hand, interceding for His own, nothing can be brought against us, because even if our sin exposes us, His grace is greater still!

Christ: Our wrath-bearing Delight

- A) Christ enters Jerusalem for a purpose
- B) Central to this purpose was bearing the wrath of God for His chosen people (|prəpi sh ē'ā sh ən|)
- Rom. 3:25 whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.
 - Heb. 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.
 - 1John 2:2 He is the **propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - 1John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.
- C) Is this divine child abuse? Empatically, NO!
- D) Hebrews 12:1-2, "1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."
- For the joy set before - the joy was having accomplished the will of the Father, to sit at His right hand (unhindered fellowship)
 - Endured the wrath-bearing cross, ransoming His children was the Father's will that they would be a covenant people of His possession who would take joy in Him

CONCLUSION

- **What or who do you delight in?**
- **You will either delight in the things that bear your image OR you will delight in bearing His (holy) image.**
- **He took the wrath of God so sinners like us wouldn't have to. Those who acknowledge who God is, confessing their sinfulness, trusting in Christ alone to save, and turning from their sin can know this relief. Those who refuse, will bear God's wrath themselves one day...for eternity.**
- **Jonathan Edwards (Sinners...), "And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition?"**