

The Wrath of God; John 3:35-36

I. Heaven or Hell

- A. A lot of people (even Christians) will tell you that there is no hell, that God loves everyone so everyone is going to heaven
- B. They deny that God has any wrath to give to His children
- C. It may be easier to understand heaven and hell as “life” and “death”
- D. Matthew 18:8 (ESV); And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.
- E. Here Matthew uses the phrase “eternal fire” for death
- F. Revelation 20:14–15 (ESV); ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- G. There are many other texts that talk about heaven and hell, but with just these two we lay a solid foundation for the existence of both
- H. In order for there to be hell, God must have wrath

II. The Wrath of God

- A. We read a lot about God’s wrath in the Old Testament
 - 1. Korah’s rebellion
 - a) Korah challenged Moses for the leadership of Israel
 - b) He claimed that all in the congregation are holy and that Moses and Aaron were “exalting themselves” above everyone in the assembly
 - c) Numbers 16:31–33 (ESV); ³¹ And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. ³² And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. ³³ So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.
 - 2. Israel’s complaint
 - a) Numbers 21:4–6 (ESV); ⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” ⁶ Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.
 - b) God instructs Moses to make a serpent and lift it up — then everyone who was bitten and look upon the serpent would live and not die
 - c) Jesus refers to this in John 3:14-18 — as Moses lifted up the serpent so Jesus must be lifted up
 - d) This alludes to both the crucifixion (lifted up on the cross) and his resurrection (ascension into heaven to be at the right hand of God)
 - 3. Ananias and Sapphira
 - a) They sold some property for money intending to give it to the apostles (in the same way Barnabas gave his money to the apostles)
 - b) They wanted the recognition of giving the entire amount
 - c) They lied about how much they sold the property for so they could keep some of the money for themselves
 - d) God took Ananias’ life then Sapphira’s (Acts 4:34-5:10)

4. Herod

- a) The people of Sidon and Tyre begged Herod for peace
- b) Herod gave a speech and the people were calling him a god
- c) Acts 12:23–24 (ESV); ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. ²⁴ But the word of God increased and multiplied.

B. Make no mistake — God has wrath and will exercise that wrath when needed

C. We could be victims of God’s wrath

III. The Day of Wrath

A. Romans 2:5–11 (ESV); ⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. ⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹ For God shows no partiality.

B. This is clearly the day of judgment when Jesus returns to claim God’s children

C. “Strong indignation directed at wrongdoing, with focus on retribution” ¹

D. “Storing up wrath”

1. Bernie Sanders: “You wrote, ‘Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, his Son, and they stand condemned.’ Do you believe that statement is Islamophobic?”
2. Russell Vought: “Absolutely not, Senator. I’m a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith.”
3. John 3:18 (ESV); Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
4. Only a hard impenitent heart will store up wrath
5. One that refuses to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ and that God is the Father

E. I think the key to understanding God’s wrath is in the statement “God’s righteous judgment will be revealed”

F. On the that day, those who have put their faith and obedience in the Son of God will be exempt from judgment

G. We will be caught up in the air as God destroys the heavens and earth

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (ESV); ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.
2. 2 Peter 3:10 (ESV); But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 720.

3. In verse 7 Peter calls the “Day of the Lord” the “day of judgment”
 4. The wrath will be for those who are left, not caught up in the air
 5. The picture of the earth and the heavens burning up and the second death being the lake of fire come together and help us visualize the day of judgment
- H. The wrath of God is reserved for those who are self seeking, do not obey the truth, obey unrighteousness (Romans 2:8)

IV. The Blood of Jesus

- A. We absolutely should be concerned about the wrath of God if we are not covered by the blood of Jesus
- B. But for those of us who are covered, there is not wrath or condemnation
 1. 1 Thessalonians 1:8–10 (ESV); ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 2. Ephesians 2:12–13 (ESV); ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- C. Are you covered by the blood?
- D. Have you been washed, cleansed, made holy?
- E. If so, you have nothing to fear, God’s wrath will not touch you