

Why is the Wrath of God Essential Good News?
Romans 1:18-23
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For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. - Romans 1:18, ESV

When you think of the good news of the gospel, the wrath of God is probably not the first thing that comes to mind, is it? Yet right after Paul makes his bold declaration that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, he immediately turns his thoughts to the wrath of God. Why?

On a practical level, we need to understand the bad news of God's just condemnation before we can understand the good news of His grace and forgiveness. In other words, news of a cure for cancer doesn't strike you as profoundly wonderful and life-changing unless you first know that you have cancer.

On a higher level, we need the wrath of God because it reveals to us God's holy, just and unchanging character. If the wrath of God were not being "*revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,*" it would mean one of three things:

1. God is not truly holy, but He is in some way tainted, corrupted or influenced by sin.
2. God is not truly just, and thus we have no hope for real and final justice in this world.
3. God is passive and uninterested in the affairs of the world, which means we cannot look to Him for hope and help.

The wrath of God reassures us that God is indeed holy and just and that He does care about the world He created.

Paul tells us that the wrath of God is just because people made in God's image and living in God's world have suppressed the truth about God by their unrighteousness. He tells us that the evidence for God is clearly seen in creation. Everyone sees it and knows that God exists and that He is eternal and powerful. Yet people love unrighteousness, and so they suppress the truth about God and pursue lesser things instead.

Paul also tells us that the root cause of our sin problems is our rejection of God and our embrace of idols, created things that replace God in our hearts. Refusing to honor God and turning to created things in His place is what makes our thinking futile and our hearts dark. All other sin flows from this root problem of God-denial and God-replacement.

We all deny God and replace Him with pathetically inadequate substitutes. This is the dark, fallen condition of every sinful human heart. Thankfully, God has come to provide salvation through the gospel, to rescue us from our dark idolatry and His just condemnation.