

THE WRATH OF GOD

- A Different View -

“His Mercy Endures Forever” (Psalm 107:1)

*compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, Summer 1986
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Scripture from the NKJV unless otherwise noted*

When man sinned, he was immediately in danger of harm or death:

- (1) from natural consequences resulting from his (or others) sins or mistakes
- (2) from the attacks of Satan and/or men inspired or controlled by Satan

Each of these dangers can be demonstrated in Scripture, but in every instance **God accepts the responsibility** for any resulting pain or destruction.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

If you smoke cigarettes - you may get cancer, peripheral vascular disease, or emphysema.

If you overeat - you may gain weight

If you don't exercise - you may gain weight and your muscles will get weak and flabby.

If you drive drunk - you may get arrested, and you may kill someone in an accident.

If you don't take care of your teeth - you may lose them to decay.

If you have unprotected sex - you may get pregnant, or you may get a disease.

Most of us understand cause and effect. We know that choices have consequences. We understand natural consequences, but how many of us blame God when we are suffering the painful consequences of our own choices? “Why did HE allow this to happen?” we cry. The LORD may give you eternal life one day because you have come to trust Him and obey Him, but He will probably not protect you from the natural outcome of poor choices (whether those choices were your own or were those of your parents or even your great-grandparents).

FOOLISH CHOICES - SELFISH CHOICES - REBELLIOUS CHOICES NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Psalm 9:15-16 “The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which He executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands” (*Job 18:7,8; Psalm 5:10*).

This “judgment” doesn’t sound like God Himself is pouring down punishments from heaven.

FOOLISH CHOICES : THE STORY OF AMAZIAH

2 Chronicles 25: The twelve tribes had split into a Northern and Southern kingdom. Amaziah, King of the southern kingdom - Judah, did the right things, but (v.2) “not with a loyal heart.”

Then Amaziah crossed the line. He took a census of the fighting men of Judah (something God had forbidden), and he hired from Israel (the northern kingdom) 100,000 fighting men. Notice verse 7. God told the King not to use those mercenaries, because the Lord would not be with them. Amaziah sent away. On the way back home to the North, from the battle, they attacked several small Judean towns. This because they felt they were owed spoils from the battle in addition to whatever King Amaziah paid them. It was a mess.

Amaziah then went to war and won his small battles. But he took the gods of the people he had just beaten (v.14) and “set them up to be his gods.” (Doesn’t this sound incredibly stupid?) God sent a prophet to the King who asked “Why have you sought the gods which could not rescue their own people?” (A good question!) The King told the prophet to be quiet. He didn't want to listen to God’s prophet. **The LORD had no choice but to leave the King to his fate** (v.16).

The prophet told the King, “God has determined to destroy you.” Read on to see HOW the LORD “destroyed” this King.

King Amaziah of Judah, challenged Israel's King Joash to battle (v.17). Joash insulted King Amaziah (v.18) and told him to stay home (v.19). Read carefully verse 20. **“But Amaziah would not heed, for it came from God, that He might give them into the hands of their enemies, because they sought the gods of Edom.”** King Amaziah would not listen to God. God could not guide or restrain or help him. Amaziah charged into battle and was soundly defeated (v.22). Israel's King Joash even took precious articles from the Temple at Jerusalem.

Did God destroy Amaziah directly? No!! He Permitted Amaziah to destroy himself.

James 1:15 “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown brings forth death.” (*Romans 5:12*)

Hosea 13:9; 14:1 “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.” . . . “Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”

CONFUSED FRIENDLY FIRE

Just one of the methods used by the LORD to deliver His people.

Zechariah 14:12,13 “ ... and it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord [*allowed by God*] shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.”

Isaiah 9:19 “... no man shall spare his brother. ... Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh.”

Isaiah 19:2-4 “I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The spirit of Egypt will fall in its midst; ... says the Lord, the Lord of hosts” (*I Chron 20:22-24; Haggai 2:21,22; Judges 7:22*).

THE LAW - and wrath

Romans 4:15 “the Law brings about wrath;”

God’s Law is not simply a list of those transgressions you’ll be punished for. No. The Law tells us how to live within the limits God has built into His own creation - the limits within nature, within human relationships, within our own physical nature, between ourselves and God.

The Law is like the instruction manual the comes with a new appliance. Sure. You can ignore the manual, or even do things your own way (violating the warranty). The appliance may work for awhile. Then again, it may not work at all, or you may ruin it for good. Some folks act like they need no instruction manual for life. The atheist denies the existence of a Creator, and believes that human beings can figure things out just fine without a manual.

God cannot bless those who ignore His Law. Without the blessing and guidance of the LORD we will make mistake after mistake. The end result will be destruction and eternal death.

Exodus 23:20-30 God never intended that his people should fight their way into Canaan. He promised to send His Angel before them to prepare the way; But Israel wanted to fight, and in so doing they lost sight of God and relied upon themselves again and again. Jesus said, “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (*Matt. 26:52*). Israel perished by the sword just as Jesus predicted.

FREE TO FAIL

Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:
because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee.”

Hosea 4:17 “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”

*Ephraim, the largest tribe of Israel, was completely destroyed by the Assyrians along with the nine other tribes of the Northern kingdom. The people had turned away and refused to follow God's leading. They worshiped idols, used young girls as ritual prostitutes, and even offered human (usually child) sacrifices. **God withdrew His protection**, and left them to be destroyed by their enemies. Through the prophet Isaiah, He “divorced” the 10 tribes of the North, called “Israel” (Hosea 2:2, Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:8).*

NOTE: The Sinai Covenant was a covenant of marriage.

Isaiah 24:4-6 “The curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left.”

The curse of sin is death, because sin separates us from our Creator. His spirit cannot dwell within those who deny His very existence, or willfully and knowingly do those things which He has forbidden. Without His spirit within, we cannot control our own nature. This is because we were created to be indwelt. Without Him, selfishness, pride, appetites, addictions and destructive habits take over. Greed, hatred, misguided religious zealotry, destructive choices - all these things are destroying the earth because the people are disconnected from their Creator.

Life on this planet is not self-sustaining. God's power keeps this creation in balance. His spirit continually gives life. When the spirit of God is finally withdrawn from this creation, the balance of nature will be lost. The earth will no longer sustain life. At His Glorious Return, He will rescue and remove those who are in covenant with Him. Then wicked violent human beings will destroy each other, as the forces of man and nature completely destroy what is left of life on planet earth. Until the spirit of the Creator is restored to this earth, it will remain desolate and without life.

GOD'S BROKEN HEART

Hosea 11:6,8 “O, how can I give you up.” “How can I let you go O Israel?”

Do you see. God's heart was breaking?

Just as the prophet Hosea allowed his wife Gomer to leave him, to go back to her life of prostitution, God allows us to leave Him. He will never force the will, or take from us our freedom to choose.

THE DESTROYER

The Hebrew word “satam” meaning hatred, is the root word from which we get “Satan.”

Satan was once Lucifer, the “Light-bearer,” a very high created being (*Ezekiel 28:14; Isaiah 14:12-17*). Lucifer rebelled against God, taking one third of the angels with him. The war which began in heaven spread to this earth (*Revelation 12:7-9*). When Eve believed the Serpent lies, and Adam chose to disobey the Creator, God was forced to withdraw His protection. Satan was then free to dominate mankind. He has ruled this world ever since.

Jesus spoke of him many times (*Matt 4, Matt 12, Mrk 4, Lk 10, Lk 13, Lk 22*). Satan hates God and seeks to destroy human beings in whatever way will be most painful. Why? Because God loves us. Because God feels our pain. Human beings need protection from Satan, who is working furiously now because he knows that he “has only a short time left” (*Revelation 12:12*). But God’s protection is available only to those who love Him and obey His law.

1 Corinthians 10:10 Those Israelites who murmured against God in the wilderness were “destroyed by the destroyer.” “The destroyer” is Satan.

Revelation 9:11 “And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon”

“Abaddon” and “Apollyon” both mean “Destroyer.”

Exodus 12:23 [Concerning the death of the firstborn in Egypt God said] “For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.”

God took the blame for what Satan would do, because He allowed Satan to destroy. Those with the blood of the Lamb painted over the symbols of the Egyptian gods around their doors, were protected.

IN THE STORY OF JOB GOD TAKES THE BLAME ----- FOR WHAT SATAN CAUSED

Job 1:6, 2:6 Satan in effect said to God “No one will serve you unless you bribe them or threaten them.” Satan was then given permission to attack Job, to test his loyalty to God. But notice, God took the blame for what happened to Job. God said to Satan “you incited Me against him to destroy him without cause.” God accepted the responsibility for what He allowed Satan to do. “In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong” (*Job 1:22*).

Job did not know why he was suffering, but he refused to surrender his faith in God. The story of Job gives us insight into the suffering of Christ, who passed the ultimate test. "He was obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:8).

DID GOD HARDEN PHAROAH'S HEART?

Exodus 7:3 [God said to Moses] "I will harden Pharaoh's heart."

God was pleading with Pharaoh - through Moses. God's Spirit convicted Pharaoh. Satan was working against God, telling Pharaoh lies through His magicians. Satan appealed to Pharaoh's pride. **The harder Pharaoh resisted the Spirit of God, the "harder" his heart (mind) became.** Yet God takes the responsibility. Why? Answer: Because His Spirit was the stimulus, and because He allowed Satan to deceive.

Think of a very common everyday dynamic - that of a wife nagging her husband to get some minor job done for their home. The more she nags, the "harder" his mind becomes against her request. Is it the "fault" of the wife, or of the husband, that he resists her nagging.

Exodus 8:15, 8:32, and 9:34 all place the responsibility with Pharaoh who hardened his own heart when he refused, again and again, to obey the Lord. Samuel later said to the people of Israel, "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?" (*1Samuel 6:6*). (See *Isaiah 6:9-10* and *John 12:39-40*. Also *Psa. 95:8*, *Heb. 3:8*, *Heb. 3:15*). Our hearts can become so hardened, that God's Spirit can have no further effect.

Numbers 21:4-9 The children of Israel rebelled against God and against Moses. God withdrew His protection. They happened to be passing through an area with many highly poisonous snakes, and many of the Israelites were bitten. God commanded Moses to make a serpent of bronze and put it up on a pole. Anyone who looked at the serpent would recover.

So with us, when we refuse God's rulership and protection, we are left to be bitten by Satan the great serpent. But if we will look to Christ, who was lifted up on Calvary, and made to be sin for us (symbolized by the serpent), we can be healed.

1 Samuel 15:28 Samuel said to King Saul, "The Lord has torn the kingdom from you." But God did not literally destroy Saul. He allowed Saul to destroy himself. The story says, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing Spirit from the Lord troubled Him" (*1Samuel 16:14*). The distressing Spirit was Satan. The Evil One drove King Saul crazy! God **allowed** this to happen because King Saul had rejected the Lord, disobeying His direct commands. The LORD could no longer protect King Saul, from Satan. The king finally committed suicide, but notice verse 13-14. God takes the responsibility. The Bible says "he did not inquire of the Lord: therefore He (God) killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David" (*1Chronicles 10:4*).

1 Kings 14:15 [Ahijah's prophecy of the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians.] “For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land, which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the rivers, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger.”

*Once again **God takes the blame** when the action was carried out by the Assyrians. Israel had forfeit God's protection and she was left to be destroyed by her enemies.*

1 Kings 14:16 “He will give Israel up.”

Isaiah 59:2 “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”

The Lord’s “anger” is not the anger of a man. The Hebrew word “charown” (#2740) is always used of God’s anger, never of human anger. It signifies a strong emotion, an overwhelming grief or frustration. Think of a loving father, who’s son has committed a foolish, hateful or destructive act.

Isaiah 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

1 Kings 22:19-23 God allowed Satan (“a spirit” v. 21) to lie through false prophets.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 “God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”

God only allows such deception to be practiced upon those who no longer want to hear the truth (2Thessalonians 2:10). But once again, God accepts responsibility for work done by the Great Deceiver.

2 Samuel 24:1 Compare the two accounts in these texts of the same story.

In Samuel it says “He (God) moved David to number Israel.

In 1 Chronicles 21:1 it says, “Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.

God accepts responsibility for allowing Satan to tempt the king. David took a census of the fighting men of Israel (something God had forbidden). Kings were to place their trust in God not in armies. When David put his trust in men, he forfeited God's protection. Seventy-thousand died of pestilence.

Isaiah 13:5,6,11,17 God takes responsibility for the destruction of Babylon by the Medes.

Jeremiah 6:8,11-12; 7:14-16,20,34 God takes responsibility for the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of its people. He says "I make thee desolate" (Isaiah 10:5-6).

Jeremiah 21:5,10 "I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. For I have set my face against this city for adversity and not for good,' says the Lord. 'It shall be given into the hand of the King of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire."

There are 500 similar texts in which God takes responsibility for what happens to those people who forfeit His protection and become victims of Satan or of evil men under Satan's control. Ultimately God is responsible, because He gave free will to men and women. He knew that free will would someday bring about suffering. And has not God paid the ultimate price. He gave His only begotten Son - first to become a man, then to suffer extreme humiliation as He was executed publicly by torture.

You and I are too close to the pain right now. Someday, when sin is no more, when we have lived for a thousand years with eternity before us in the earth made new, I believe we will agree that it was worth the pain. Because without free will, there can be no love.

Exodus 22:24 ". . . and My Wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword,"

Genesis 19 Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain were most likely destroyed by an asteroid hit. God sent angels to warn the people, but they would not listen.

Isaiah 45:7 "I form light and create darkness: I make peace and create calamity: I the Lord do all these things."

God has allowed Satan to bring about evil by the natural processes of His own laws.

Every evil is a distortion of something good, or the absence of something good. An example of this principle might be the use that extremists (who hate the United States) make of our laws which allow for free speech, for free representation for the accused, for liberal sentences, for easy entry into our country, for welfare, etc. etc. etc.

God will allow evil to run its course for the greater good. The universe is witness. They will see that SELFISHNESS ultimately destroys. For human beings, sin (selfishness and rebellion against God) carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Human beings are naturally selfish without the indwelling spirit of God. God is love - and only those indwelt by Him will live forever. Human beings are naturally mortal. Without life continually from God - they die.

One day God will blot out his own memory of those who refuse every effort at reconciliation.

FORSAKEN BY GOD

2 Chronicles 12:5 “Thus says the Lord: You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you In the hand of Shishak (king of Egypt).”

Hosea 9:12 “Woe to them when I depart from them!”

The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem was in fact called “My Wrath” by God in the prophecy of Huldah given to Josiah, King of Jerusalem (2 Kings 22:17, Ezekiel 22:31).

Deuteronomy 32:29-30 “Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had surrendered them?”

God does not withdraw His protection just to punish men. Satan has claimed this earth as his kingdom because of Adam’s sin. (Satan took over the earth when the LORD was forced to remove His special protection of Adam and Eve.) Satan has said in effect, “These human beings have chosen me as their ruler. You God, have no right to protect them from me, their chosen lord.” This is why Satan is called the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). This is why Satan is portrayed as accusing Joshua the high priest (who represented Israel) in the vision of Zechariah 3:1. He is claiming the right to destroy these people because of their sin (“filthy garments”).

One day soon, the Heavenly Court will take dominion away from Satan and give it to Jesus Christ, who fulfilled every requirement of the Law (Daniel 7:14 & 26). Jesus committed no sin, therefore Satan could not accuse him.

Question: Did God cause the thorns to grow or did he predict that it would result from sin? (Genesis 3:17-18). Jesus said “an enemy has done this,” of the one who sowed the tares (Matthew 13:28).

Question: Did God ordain the subjugation of woman or did he simply predict that such would be the result of sin? (Genesis 3:16) Instead of provider and protector, men became the masters of women.

Job 22:15-17 [Speaking of those who lived in the time of Noah’s flood]
“They said to God ‘Depart from us! What can the Almighty do?’”

The destruction of the City Jerusalem, and the captivity of its people is called “a little wrath” by the Lord. “I hid My face from you for a moment” (Isaiah 54:7-8). The Lord continues, “This is like the waters of Noah to me” (v.9) The flood of Noah, like the destruction of Jerusalem, came about because the Lord withdrew His protection.

WHAT IS GOD'S WRATH?

*With a breaking heart, He honors their wish to be left alone.
He will plead no longer.*

Romans 1:18-28 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth” . . . “therefore God also gave them up” (v.24) . . . “God gave them up” (v.26) . . . “God gave them over to a debased mind” (v.28).

God’s “wrath” is what happens when He sadly - with breaking heart, turns away from those confirmed in rebellion against Him. They are left to the consequences - immediate and eternal, of their own choices. They choose this separation! Sometimes they do not realize they are making this choice, but they are none-the-less.

God says He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” With Him there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (*Mal. 3:6, Heb. 13:8, James 1:17*). “His mercy endures forever” (*Ps. 106:1, plus 39 other verses*). Our Heavenly Father pleads with us so long as there is any chance that we will come to Him. Only when there is no possibility of reconciliation does He sadly turn away. He respects our choices.

Imagine for a moment that you yourself have a child. That child shows great promise and you spare no energy or expense in his training. But something is wrong. The child makes wrong choices again and again. He shows a selfish character that ruins his every relationship. Finally that child, now grown, commits unspeakable crimes. He is apprehended, tried and convicted. If you yourself pronounced sentence upon this, your own child, what sentence would you choose? You know there is no hope of rehabilitation. If released he would only cause more harm. But this is your own son.

Would you choose to torture him, to make him pay for every bit of suffering he has caused. Remember that Lucifer, Hitler, all the worst criminals of this world's history were loved by God. He has shed many, many tears over them. How will God finally deal with those who refuse Him?

“The wages of sin is death” (*Romans 6:23*). Those who refuse Christ will “perish” (*John 3:16*).

See our study “[Hell - What it's Not.](#)”

continued next page

WONDER OF WONDERS
Jesus suffered God's wrath - for me.

Romans 8:32 "God gave Him up for us all." (NIV) (Amplified)

The verse does not say "God killed Him." It says "God gave Him up." Jesus cried out "My God, my God why have You forsaken me?" (Luke 15:34). The Father did not shelter His own Son from torture at the hands of Satan and evil men.

The Greek word used in Romans 8, speaking of Christ, is the same as the one used in Romans 1:24,26,28 and Romans 8:32 - "gave up." God the Father treated His own Son, as He will one day treat sinners. He gave up His Son, and He will give up those who refuse His greatest gift.

Isaiah 53:10 "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief."

We can see that God allowed the sufferings of Christ for His great plan. He did not directly torture His own Son. Jesus felt the full fury of Satan and evil men, while His father withdrew His protection. Jesus suffered the wrath of God, so that we need not.

*We thank Them for their unfailing love
- our wonderful Heavenly Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.*

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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