

God's Wrath

Today, much is said about the love of God but very little is heard about His righteousness and justice. No one doubts the great love God has shown us through Jesus nor the love He pours into our lives each day but so little is said about the fact that, at the Judgement, God is going to pour out His wrath on all who continued in sin. For this reason, we need to be careful to *"worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire"* (Heb. 12:28-29). This is not a popular subject but the awful truth is that most people are going to face God's righteous judgment and go to their eternal destruction in the lake of fire. Jesus left no doubt about this when He said, *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14). We all need to be sure that we are on the narrow road.

The aim of this article is to draw attention to God's righteous wrath and to encourage everyone to *"examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves"* (2 Cor. 13:5). In 2 Pet. 3:9 we are told that God *"is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish"* but there is a limit to His patience so we need to examine ourselves and be sure that we are not among the many sinners who will face the *"raging fire that will consume the enemies of God"* (Heb. 10:27). None of us can afford to be casual about our relationship with Jesus. We only get one chance to get things right with God as after death we face judgment. When we die, we will be eternally rewarded or eternally condemned. In John 15:10, Jesus tells us, *"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love"* and, in John 15:6, He warns that *"If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."* From these verses we can see that Jesus' love for us is not unconditional. The verses clearly say that we will remain in His love only if we obey His commands otherwise we will be cut out and burned in the fire.

The Old Testament gives us many examples where God put disobedient people to death; people like Uzzah, Nadab & Abihu, Korah and his followers etc. In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira were struck down for lying. Let's not take these examples lightly as though "God isn't like that anymore" because God does not change. We can be sure that He will destroy all who stand before Him in disobedience so we need to examine our faith carefully. Paul told Timothy that both his life and his doctrine played a part in his salvation. In 1 Tim. 4:16 he said, *"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."* So, not only do we need to examine our life, we need to examine our doctrine as well.

Watching Our Life

Isa. 59:2 says, *"your iniquities have separated you from your God,"* and that truth has not changed since the time of Adam. When Adam sinned, he was removed from the garden and separated from God. It is exactly the same today. Sin always separates man from God and the wages of sin is always death so we need to carefully examine ourselves and repent of any sin we may be allowing in our life. God is a righteous Judge so don't make the terrible mistake of continuing in sin and telling yourself, "Jesus is love. He understands. He won't send ME to hell." God would not be righteous and just if He punished others for a sin but let you or I go unpunished. Rom. 2:11 tells us that *"God does not show favouritism,"* so, if you are in sin, repent while you still have time.

As well as examining our own life, we need to watch our brothers and sisters. As hard as it may be to do, it is important that we gently come alongside a brother or sister who is sinning and encourage them to get right with God. In Gal. 6:1 we are told, *"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently,"* and James 5:19-20 tell us, *"My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins."* So, if you see a brother or sister wandering from the truth, look for an opening to bring them back to God and save them from His wrath.

Watching Our Doctrine

Many people say, "Doctrine is not important because we all love the same Jesus." "Loving Jesus is all that matters," they say. However, as already mentioned, Paul told Timothy that his salvation depended on both his life and his doctrine. Teaching false doctrine can destroy a church and false teachers will face their own destruction as 1 Cor. 3:17 says, *"If anyone destroys God's temple [the church], God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."*

The Devil's purpose with all false doctrine is to mislead and guide us to hell so we need to study the Bible to be sure of what we believe. We need a solid understanding not only for our own benefit but so that we can warn and guide others to the truth as well. In 1 Tim. 1:3-5 Paul told Timothy, *"command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer ... The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."* It is because of our love for others that we need to speak against false doctrine so that people can know the truth and separate from error. Rom 16:17 tells us, *"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them."* So, examine your doctrine and separate from error.

Finally

There is never a need to question Jesus' love but overlooking His righteous judgment is going to bring terrible results for many. Those who believe that Jesus' love can be used as an excuse to remain in sin or error will be horribly mistaken when they stand before Him. This is made very clear in Rom. 2:6-8 which say, *"God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."* So I encourage you to check your life and doctrine; *"examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves"* (2 Cor. 13:5)

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