

THE WRATH OF GOD

- It's not what you think!

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Scripture from New King James Version unless otherwise noted

“His Mercy Endures Forever” Psalm 107:1

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

- (1) the natural consequences of his (or others) choices
- (2) the attacks of Satan (or of evil men under Satan's control)

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

PART ONE : 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, and you may get a disease.

Most of us understand cause and effect. We understand natural consequence, but how many of us blame God when we are suffering the painful consequences of our choices? Why did HE allow this to happen? My answer would be, “Because that's the way His law works.” 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 consequences of poor choices in this life.

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)

FOOLISH CHOICES : THE STORY OF AMAZIAH

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

because the Lord would not be with them. Amaziah sent them away. They attacked several small Judean towns on their way back to the North, because they felt they were owed the spoils.

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 the LORD. **God had no choice but to leave the King to his fate.** (v.16) The prophet told the King, “God has determined to destroy you.” [Notice carefully HOW God “destroyed” this King.] King Amaziah challenges Israel's King Joash to battle (v.17). Joash insults King Amaziah (v.18) and tells 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's Spirit or God’s prophet. God could not help him. Amaziah charged into battle and was soundly defeated (v.22). Israel's King Joash even took the precious articles out of the Temple in Jerusalem. Did God destroy Amaziah directly? No!! He Permitted Amaziah to destroy himself.

GOD DOES NOT NEED TO DESTROY THEM

They're doing a great job of destroying each other.

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)

Zechariah 14:12,13 “... and it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord (meaning 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)

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

The LORD cannot bless those who transgress His moral law. Without the blessing and guidance of the LORD we will make mistake after mistake. The end result will be destruction and 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.

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

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.

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.”

*NOTE: Ephraim, the largest of the tribes 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. **God withdrew His protection**, and left them to be destroyed by their enemies.*

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.”

NOTE: Greed, selfishness, hatred, misguided religious zealotry, destructive choices - these are destroying the earth. But more importantly, the loss of God's blessing, and His protection from the evil one.

When the Spirit of God is withdrawn from this creation, the balance of nature will be lost, and the earth will no longer sustain life. When Christ returns 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 nature completely destroy what is left of the earth.

PART TWO : “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. He started a war in heaven which has now spread to this earth (Revelation 12:7-9). Jesus spoke of him many times (Matt 4, Matt 12, Mrk 4, Lk 10, Lk 13, Lk 22). Satan hates God and He 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 he “has only a short time left.” (Revelation 12:12).

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.”

THE STORY OF JOB GOD TAKES THE BLAME ----- FOR WHAT SATAN HAS DONE

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.

NOTE: 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).

Exodus 7:3 God said to Moses, “I will harden Pharaoh's heart.” God was pleading with Pharaoh, thru Moses. God’s Spirit convicted Pharaoh of the truth. Satan worked against God, telling Pharaoh lies thru His magicians. Satan appealed to Pharaoh’s selfishness, and lust for power. The harder Pharaoh resisted the Spirit of God, the “harder” his heart (mind) became. Yet God takes the responsibility. Why? Because the Spirit of God was the stimulus. (Pharaoh’s resistance, inspired of Satan, was the response.) 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).

NOTE: Our hearts can become so hardened, that God’s Spirit can have no effect - and we are lost.

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 when we look to Christ, who was lifted up on Calvary, and made to be sin for us (symbolized by the serpent), we are 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 and give his kingdom to David. He simply allowed Saul to suffer the natural consequences of his evil actions. 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 who took control of Saul’s mind. God allowed this to happen because King Saul rejected the Lord, disobeying His direct command. He could no longer protect Saul from Satan. The king finally committed suicide. But notice verse 13-14. God takes the responsibility. The Bible says “he (Saul) 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 under the control of Satan. Israel had forfeited God's protection and they were left to destruction.

1 Kings 14:16 "He will give Israel up" said the prophet. When the Jews rejected Christ, they were left to be destroyed by the Romans. (The same thing will happen to the whole world, when the human race has rejected Christ's last entreaty.)

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."

NOTE: 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 the anger of man. 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.

"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" (Isaiah 55:8).

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."

NOTE: 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 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. This God had forbidden him to do. He was to place his 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 himself 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."

NOTE: 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. He has given free will to His created beings. He knew this would someday result

in suffering when Lucifer and then man rebelled against Him. And God has paid the ultimate price, in the incarnation and death of His only begotten Son.

You and I are too close to the pain right now. But 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 God's own law.
Every evil is a distortion of something good.*

*God will allow evil to run its course for the greater good. The universe is witness. They will see that
God does not need, ultimately to destroy evil. Evil will destroy itself.
Sin carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.*

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!**”

NOTE: The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem was in fact called “My Wrath” by God (2Kings 22:17) in the prophecy of Huldah given to Josiah, King of Jerusalem (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 the sin of Adam and Eve. He has stolen the dominion. He 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”).

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, man became her master.

Job 22:15-17 “They said to God 'Depart from us!' What can the Almighty do?”

(Speaking of those who lived in the time of Noah's flood)

NOTE: 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,” He said (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 blessing and 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 HIS SADLY, WITH BREAKING HEART, GIVING UP THOSE CONFIRMED IN REBELLION AND SELFISHNESS, TO THE CONSEQUENCES, IMMEDIATE AND ETERNAL, OF OUR OWN CHOICES. But THEY choose this separation. God says that 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.

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 would you choose. You know there is no hope of rehabilitation. If released, he would only cause more harm, but this is your own child. 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 the studies at this web site on “Death” and “Hell.”]

WONDER OF WONDERS

Jesus suffered God's wrath - for me.

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

NOTE: 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 treated Christ as a sinner. He separated Himself from His own Son.

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

Clearly here 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.