

Week 8: Expectations

Who is GOD: God is: Wrath of Fire

God is spirit but he loves to play with fire. Ok, that might be a stretch but God does handle fire for his own purposes. There are Gods that demand a human sacrifice. They are Volcano Gods. People burned others at the stake because they blasphemy God. If we look at people's actions, then yes, God uses wrath of fire. Let's take a closer look if God uses fire for anger or something else. Maybe people should stop using God's name for the things they do.

1. Below list what wrath looks like to you.

Deuteronomy 4-5 tells us that God demanded an animal sacrifice for our sin. That seems very ancient behavior. This section is about 4000 years old take or give a few hundred years. If this God is different than the other Gods, then why the sacrifice? In Abrahams time and beyond God's asked for sacrifices. Many times, the sacrifice was a child or person. Why is this different? It's because of the intent. This God wanted the best animal for sacrifice because the payment for sin had to sting a little. Who wants to give away their best stock for a God? God then burned up the animal so that there was no getting it back. God's intent was to know the heart of the giver and that by burning it, it was final.

1. What sacrifices do you make that are final, or are their conditions? For example, going to a movie that is not your choice.

God is allowed to get angry, right? Are you allowed to be angry? What if you made the very first car? It was very good. You finished it and drove it all over town. It ran well and looked awesome. Someone stole your creation in the middle of the night and drove it into the ground. You found it the next morning under a bush looking quite a bit different than the day before. Would you be mad? So, God makes creation and it is very good. Created Adam and Eve decide to go their own way and become different than God intended. The wrath of God is that anger over design,

intent, and outcome. Sin has killed this earth in the forms of pollution, murder, rape, drugs, and many more rotten things. Sacrifice by fire was one way for us to say to God we are sorry and mean it.

There will be a day when God says enough is enough. I don't have an answer as to why this long. Why does God let sin continue? They say in Revelation that this earth will be redeemed by fire. There will be a day when the wrath of God must happen. God has always said there will be restitution for ruining his planet. God has come in the form of fire several times and we will feel the heat in the future. In the meantime, we have stopped sacrifices. Why and when did that happen. I don't know but God did give a sacrifice to save us. Jesus became that final act to save some of us from the wrath to come. That is why Jesus has been called a savior at times.

Next week let's look at how this works as the redeeming fire. Check out the verses below.

Revelation 20:14-15 *"Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."*

Numbers 11:1 *"Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp."*

Exodus 9:24 *"hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation."*

Lev 1:3 *"If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord."*

Romans 2:5-6 *"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will repay each person according to what they have done."*

1 Thessalonians 5:9 *"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1. Deuteronomy is a tough book of lists, story, and laws. Many people have never read it. If you could, read Deuteronomy 4-5. There is a bunch of sacrifices but it shows that God required sacrifice for sin. There are many sins. We expect payment for things. In law, we expect punishment for crime. Maybe sin is not a crime to you. What if it was a crime to God? Wrath is no fun for God. There is a better way but people like sin more than they like God.

Deuteronomy 4:1 *"Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you."*

2. The Old testament paints a picture of an active God of fire and even wrath. There are places in the New Testament where we see that wrath. Revelation is all about wrath and the coming end of times. There is a lake of fire, several plagues, and earthquakes. The end of time is not a pretty picture. The writer of Hebrews reports that God is a consuming fire. This idea of God and fire is traditional. It goes way back into the past. The writers of the old testament and the new both describe God this way. Read and reflect on these.

Hebrews 12:29 *“for our “God is a consuming fire.”*

Leviticus 10:1-2 *“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.”*

3. God uses fire not only for wrath but to get our attention. We know parents are mad when a belt comes out or some adult yells. God tends to use earthquakes and fire. Jesus said that miracles don't make you believe. We might see one but usually think *“is there more.”* It makes sense when Jesus said the only sign would be that of Jonah. If there was one thing God did that we don't believe, the story of Jonah would be it. Three days alive in a fish seems silly. Is fire from heaven silly too?

1 Kings 18:38-39 *“Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”*

4. If you read about wrath in the Old Testament there is usually a warning before. God asks the people that if they would be his people he would be their God. God is continually pleading with the Israelites to follow him. God takes time to help his people see the light. If you think about 400 years of oppression in Egypt. 400 years between the last prophet and Jesus. Moses 40 years in the desert. God is patient but wrath must come to pay for ruining this place by sin.

Colossians 3 *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.”*

Rev 8:7 *“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.”*

The Jesus Connection

It always comes back to Jesus. I wish for your sake there was another way. The Jesus connection to the end of times is gut wrenching. It's hard to take and hard to believe. 1 Thessalonians above says it all *“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* In week one I said God did it. I also mentioned he had a plan to bring us home to him. Disobedience has always cost someone something. Even God gave his Son Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. If this is real then sin cost God something too.

The cool part is wrath can be avoided. They like to say Jesus is the way. The way to what? The way to avoid the wrath. As you go deeper into the Christian life you will hear different views on wrath and Jesus returning for us. Some say we will be part of the wrath. Clearly verses like 1 Thessalonians says we will avoid this. Other scriptures talk about us being caught up in the air with Jesus. The Jesus connection is simple. He came so that we could avoid the wrath of God. All we had to do was believe and that is the Jesus connection. Check out these two verses below.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 *“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who*

have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*