

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Romans 1:18

Divine wrath! Few topics are less popular. Few subjects are more dreaded and avoided by modern man. Yet, the gospel is intricately tied to the wrath of God. Without the wrath of God, the gospel is not necessary.

Scottish theologian James Denney shows how the wrath of God is at the core of Christianity and the gospel:

What is it that makes a Gospel necessary? What is it that the wisdom and love of God undertake to deal with, and do deal with, in that marvelous way which constitutes the Gospel? Is it man’s distrust of God? Is it man’s dislike, fear, antipathy, spiritual alienation? Not if we accept the Apostle’s teaching. The serious thing which makes the Gospel necessary, and the putting away of which constitutes the Gospel, is God’s condemnation of the world and its sin; it is God’s wrath, “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”

Denney is right. He touches on something that most believers rarely consider. It may be easier to understand if we pose this simple question—from what is it that we need to be saved?

Some might say we need to be saved “from ourselves.” Most Christians would probably say “from hell,” and in a sense that’s correct. But why is hell a threat, and what is it that necessitates the existence of hell and the fate of those who end up there? The answer, as Denney points out, is divine wrath. As one writer notes, “Our only hope is for God to save us from Himself! This is the great glory of the gospel, that God in his grace takes action in Christ to save us from God in his wrath.”

This Easter season as you contemplate the cross and the empty tomb, don’t leave out the wrath of God, for it is God’s wrath that makes the gospel necessary.

REFLECTION

- How would you biblically define the concept of divine wrath? Why do we deserve it?
- How often do you take time to think about God’s wrath in relation to the gospel?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Father, help me remember often what I’ve been saved from. Draw me closer to You and give me a deeper appreciation of the gospel, a greater love for You, and a stronger sense of urgency to share the good news with others. Amen.