Systematic Theology Series
Theology Proper: The Study of God the Father

Wednesday Night Teaching Schedule			
Date	**Lesson**	**Teacher**	**Topics**
10-7	1	Matt	Introduction to Theology Proper: Why Theology Matters and What is Needed in the Study of Theology Proper
10-14	2	Matt	The Existence of God and The Trinity: God is 3 in 1
10-21	3	Matt	The Essence, Attributes and Sovereignty of God
10-28	4	Tom	The Aseity, Immutability and Eternality of God
11-4	5	Matt	The Immensity/Omnipresence, Omniscience and Names of God
11-11	6	Ben	The Wrath, Jealousy and Patience of God
11-18	7	Rob	The Holiness, Faithfulness and Glory of God
12-2	8	Ben	The Love, Goodness and Wisdom of God
12-9	9	Matt	The Grace, Mercy and Will of God

A.W. Tozer in his classical book on theology proper entitled The Knowledge of the Holy said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Sadly, our fallen world is plagued with a man centered view of God, and the modern church has become deeply infected by this so that what often comes into the mind of many so called believers is not what Scripture teaches regarding the person and work of God the Father. Therefore, we will spend this fall semester on Wednesday nights studying the person and attributes of God. Here at Belcroft Bible we unashamedly have and minister with a high view of God because that is what the Bible declares about God and that is what He demands of us. Thus, as we begin this semester in an ongoing study in systematic theology we will grow deeper in understanding of God that He alone has Ultimate Authority, that He works in Undeniable Sovereignty, that He lives in Unapproachable Holiness, that He is marked by Unquestionable Mercy, that He will bring Undisputable Wrath, that He offers Unfathomable Grace, that His character, plans and promises are all covered in Unending Faithfulness and that all the earth was created to give Him Unequivocal Worship. May the quote below further provoke your thoughts on why this study in Theology Proper matters in our day.

"The god of this century no more resembles the Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the midday sun. The god who is talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday school, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Bible conferences, is a figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside the pale of Christendom form gods of wood and stone, while millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a god out of their carnal minds." – A.W. Pink

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Review:[1]

1. **The Immensity of God:** The immensity and the omnipresence of God are those perfections of God according to which He transcends all limitation of space, "and yet is present with every point of space with His whole Being." (Berkhof, p. 60) The term omnipresent means God is all present, that is, God is present everywhere in the universe and beyond the universe at all times. God transcends all space but is also present at every location in space. He is everywhere present simultaneously. Immensity stresses God's transcendence of space. Omnipresence stresses God's immanence with space. God is everywhere at the same time, but He is not everywhere at the same time in the same way. For instance, God is in Heaven in a much different way than He is in Hell. He is there through His wrath, which is the polar opposite of how He is in Heaven. The Moody Handbook, p. 194, "The doctrine of omnipresence is a comfort to the believer who recognizes that no calamity can befall him that God is not present with Him; it is also a warning to the disobedient person that he cannot escape the presence of God."

2. **The Omniscience of God:** The omniscience of God is that perfection of God according to which He "in one eternal and most simple act" knows Himself, all actual things outside Himself, and all things that do not become actual in time and space. (Berkhof, p. 66) EDOT "God knows all inward thoughts and outward acts of humanity. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the one to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13)." God is infinite with regard to knowledge. To say that God is omniscient means that everything is fully known by God at all times. There is nothing knowable that he doesn't know, and his knowledges is immediate and innate. In this sense God is an "uneducated" God because he did not need to learn anything. His knowing is not the result of observation, learning, or reasoning. He simply knows it because it "is." God's knowledge is eternally willed by Him.

3. The Names of God: To God and to the people of Israel, God's names were especially important because they revealed aspects of who he was in himself, in his actions within himself, and in relation to his creation. God's names represented him so much that how one treated God's name was equivalent to how one treated God. The most common name for God in the Old Testament is Yahweh, which appears more than 6,800 times. God revealed this name as "his name" and "my name forever" and it speaks of God's eternal and unchanging nature. So the name indicates that God "is" and "wills to be." As Hebrew names for the true God, *el, eloah*, and *elohim* indicate God as supreme power, strength, and might. The name *elohim* is a plural of the root *el* (appearing more than two thousand times), and when referring to the true God, it is probably a plural of intensity, indicating that God has such a vast fullness to his power that a plural name is appropriate to him. *Bible Doctrine, pgs 154-58*

[1] Grateful for Pastor Tom Leake and GAMA Bible Institute notes that I have used in different ways throughout this study. I used to teach the *Theology Proper* class at the GAMA institute and Tom's notes were used in that class and used by permission in making these notes as well. Also, I am grateful for my seminary notes from Dr. Mook and his class on *Theology Proper* that have been used by permission in helping create these notes for this series. Also portions of The Shepherds Training Institute (TSI) notes on *Theology Proper* taught by Dr Paul Shirley will used at times in this class.

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I. The Wrath/Justice/ of God[2]

Intro: Is God's Wrath One of His Perfections?

"Righteous wrath is no less noble than love, since both coexist in God." John MacArthur

- Some theologians say yes and some say no as this has been debated throughout church history. However, all agree that God's wrath is part of how God has revealed Himself and thus foundational to seeing and knowing Him rightly.

- Those theologians that do not see "wrath" as an attribute of God declare that God's wrath is the outworking of or a subset of God's justice and/or righteousness. So, for those theologians it becomes a matter of semantics as God's wrath is then another aspect of God's justice and thus another aspect of God's character.

- **God's Justice defined** is God's perfect absolute justice in and toward Himself, His prevention of any violation of the justice of His essence, and His revelation of Himself in acts of justice.

- God's justice rightly understood as revealed in Scripture has different categories:

    - Rectoral Justice: God's rectitude (Latin: rectus = "straight") (moral rightness) as the moral Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge of the world – imposing Law with promises of reward and punishment. Deut 4:8; 2 Sam 23:3; Ps 9:4; 99:4; 119:7, 62, 75, 106; Isa 33:22; Rom 7:12; 9:31; Luke 1:6; Rom 1:32; 2:26; 8:4; Jas 4:12.

    - Distributive Justice: God's rectitude in the execution of the Law – in distributing reward and punishment. 1 Kgs 8:32; 2 Chr 6:23; Ps 7:11; Isa 3:10-11; 11:4, 7; 16:5; 31:1; Rom 2:6; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 1:17.

        - Retributive Justice: God's infliction of punishment for disobeying His Law. 2 Chr 12:6; Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:23; Ps 129:4; Isa 5:15- 16; Jer 11:20; Ezek 28:22; 36:23; 38:16, 23; 39:27; 43:8; Dan 9:14; Hos 10:12; Zeph 3:5; Rom 1:32; 2:9; 12:19; 2 Thess 1:8; Rev 15:4; 16:5, 7; 19:2, 11.

        - Remunerative Justice: God's distributing of rewards for obeying His Law. Deut 7:9, 12, 13; 2 Chr 6:15; Ps 58:11; Micah 7:20; Matt 25:21, 34; Rom 2:7; Heb 11:26. God is not required to give rewards for obedience, since it is required. But He graciously gives them. See Job 41:11; Luke 17:10; 1 Cor 4:7.

[2] Most of the notes on God's wrath come from a lesson taught by Pastor Matt on this topic in our Rooted ministry.

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- Theologians like to see God's wrath as the outworking of retributive or punitive justice and so they will speak as if God's wrath is a subset of His justice. See these passages that speak to wrath as being a characteristic of God…Rom 11:22; Nah 1:2,6; Ps 95:11 cf. 89:35; Rev 6:16 cf. Jn 2:15-17; Heb 12:28-29 cf. 10:29-31 & Deut 4:24; Also compare Deut 1:34 with Ps 95:11 and God "swearing" by His wrath; Ps 90:11.

A. Biblical Declarations about the Wrath of God:

1. God's Wrath is Great and Powerful: As you study this topic biblically you quickly see how many times the Scripture declares and describes God's wrath as "great" meaning exceeding and extreme as well as "powerful" in that it lacks no strength being mighty so that God's vengeance overpowers, conquers, and consumes everything and everyone it is poured upon. See these passages for further clarity Deut 29:28; Ezra 8:22; 2 Kings 3:27; 22:13; 23:26; 2 Chron 34:21; Ps 90:11; Jer 21:5; 32:37; 36:7; Zech 8:2; Joel 2:11; Rom 9:22.

2. God's Wrath is Terrifying and Fierce: A sobering truth about God's wrath declared throughout the Scriptures is that God's anger is real and really scary so that the idea of coming under punitive judgment should strike terror in the heart of everyone (Heb 10:29-31; 12:29). The Bible says the wrath of God is "fierce" meaning unrelenting and intensely hot so that it burns like a consuming furnace of fire. The Hebrew word translated fierce carries the idea of burning anger that is ferocious and brings with it the unrelenting fury of heaven. See these passages for further clarity Ex 32:10, 12; Num 25:4; 1 Sam 28:18; 2 Chron 28:11, 13; Ezra 10:14; Ps 2:5; 78:49; Isa 13:9; Rom 2:8; Rev 16:19; 19:15. God's wrath is describe as being a consuming fire in Neh 1:6; Jer 21:12; Ezek 21:31; 22:21, 31 and an horrific storm in Jer 23:19; 30:23; Ezek 13:13 that destroys everything in its path so that Jer 10:10 says the whole earth cowers in trepidation at the wrath of God for no one nor any nation can withstand God's fury! Contemplate how Ezek 38:19 speaks of God's wrath as "blazing" meaning a consuming fire and how the fierce anger of God is often compared to a divine winepress that squeezes, presses, and squashes unrepentant man under the holy punitive judgment of God so that man's blood covers the garments of God (Isa 63:3-6; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:13; Rev 14:10, 19; 19:15 cf. Ezek 16:38). Here is a thought to mediate on…God's wrath will be worse than described as words cannot fully express the full fury of almighty God!

3. God's Wrath is Righteous and Pure: One of the recurring responses to God's wrath is that this seems so unfair (Rom 3:5; 9:15), but the Bible is unequivocally clear that God's judgments are always righteous and pure. **Rom 2:5** declares emphatically that God's wrath is given through "righteous" judgment. This means that every ounce of God's wrath is given in complete truthfulness, holiness, and without any sense of guilt or wrongdoing on God's part. His judgments are perfect so that whatever sentence He brings upon sinners is exactly the right and perfect verdict. This means God's wrath is never beyond what the crime demands so that His judgments in that sense are never extreme or over the top and never cruel in that they are never beyond what man deserves. See these passages for clarity Gen 18:25; Jer 11:20; Ps 7:11; 50:6; 67:4; 96:13; Acts 17:31; Rom

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3:5; 9:15; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:8; Rev 16:5-7. God is a just God because He is righteous which means He always does what is right and true! Ps 145:17 Says that Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds. Ps 119:37 says Righteous are you O Lord and upright are your judgments! Ps 89:14 says that righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne! It is against the backdrop of God's judgment that His holiness, righteousness, and justice stand out for all to see! God's judgment displays the depth of God's love like nothing else! God's judgment proves His purity, proclaims His power, and undeniably pictures His sovereign providence! **Listen, the righteousness and justice of God is the outworking of His holiness in how He interacts with His creation!** Therefore, when God brings judgment, He puts His holiness on display through His righteous justice in the deliverance of His wrath! See Josh 7:19 where Josh calls Achan to give glory to God by admitting what he did in sinning against God and by thus admitting what God was about to do in judgment was righteous.

4. God's Wrath is Provoked and Punitive: Building off what we just saw from the Scriptures, is this most vital truth regarding how the wrath of God is really God giving man what he deserves because it is what man has freely chosen for himself! God's wrath is always directed toward sin and the evil rebellion of man **and never** some uncontrolled, frustrated, merely emotional rage from God. God's wrath is His holy hatred for sin and His passionate punitive judgment against it because of man's willing choice of love for evil over love for what is good, beautiful, and true! Every ounce of holy wrath is always provoked by man's proactive rejection of God's love and man's replacement of divine love with love for sin, self, and this world. Therefore, God's wrath is always punitive meaning the inflicting of judicial punishment rightly due a convicted criminal. God's wrath is always the outworking of His retributive justice as holy Judge of all. God's wrath is the perfect sentence from the perfect Judge upon the undeniable lawbreaker.

   So never forget what the Bible teaches that God's wrath is not only exactly what man deserves **but what man has proactively and aggressively chosen for himself.** Jn 3:18-20 emphatically declares this truth! Think about it, unredeemed man chooses darkness over light meaning he chooses to live apart from God by living in the darkness of sin and thus actively and gladly being separated from holy God. This what we see Adam and Eve do in Gen 3:8 when they ran from God and hid themselves from the Lord! So also does every signal person born of Adam as we come into this world hell bent on running away from God and into the darkness of our own sin! That is why Paul says the gospel is all about God sovereignly shining the light of truth into the darkness of the repentant sinner's heart (2 Cor 4:6 cf. Jn 12:46 & Acts 26:18 & 1 Pet 2:9). Paul goes on to say that as unbelievers we once lived in the domain of darkness (Col 1:13) and were once actually darkness ourselves (Eph 5:8). John tells us that to be an unbeliever is to live in utter darkness (1 Jn 1:6; 2:9, 11) because that is what every person freely chooses…darkness over light (Jn 3:18-20). Thus, we are dead in our sins (Eph 2:1-3), living in outer darkness separated from God (Eph 2:11-13), and thus separated from the light of hope and truth found in Christ alone (Col 1:21).

   So, God's wrath in the end is God giving man what man really wants…to live in utter darkness away from the light and love of God Himself! And what is Hell? The punitive

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judgment from God where unbelieving man gets what he wants so that he lives forever in outer darkness (Mt 22:13; 25:30), gloomy darkness (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6), utter darkness (2 Pet 2:17), the gloom of utter darkness (Jude 13) under the eternal wrath of God forever (Rev 14:10-11 cf. Mt 3:12, 13:41-42; 25:41; Mk 9:48; Lk 16:23-24) but forever removed from the light, grace, and love of God.

5. God's Wrath is Personal and Jealous: As we continue looking at how the Bible declares and describes God's wrath; we learn that His holy anger is both personal and jealous. God's wrath is not some impersonal force at work against sinners, but a very personal, passionate, and methodical decision made by God to judge those who have sinned against Him. See these passages where the Bible makes this point clear that God's decision to bring wrath in judgment is very personal to Him…Ex 22:24; 32:10; 2 Kings 22:17; Isa 51:22; 60:10; 63:3; Jerm 7:20; 42:18; Ezek 7:8; 8:18; 21:31; 38:19; Heb 3:11. We also learn that this wrath is described as jealous which surprises many people. God's name is said to be "Jealous" in Ex 34:14 and He is declared to be a "jealous" God numerous times in Scripture (Ex 20:5; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:21; Josh 24:19; Ezek 39:25). But this is so helpful as it further demonstrates how God's love and wrath go together. Don't forget that God is not like us so His jealousy is not nor could it ever be the selfish, greedy, envious lust for that which is undeserved or that which is not rightfully His. There is nothing sinful or immoral about God's jealous love or His jealous wrath (Num 25:11, 13; Ezek 36:6; Neh 1:2-6; Zech 8:2).

Now, God's judgment displays His divine jealously which turns out to bring great delight to those who are true children of God. Yahweh is a jealous God! This is an attribute or characteristic of who God is! This divine jealously speaks of a holy zeal for protecting all that belongs to Him! **Now righteous jealously is the outworking of true love!** What happens when that which is rightfully loved and rightfully yours is taken from you? It provokes a holy zeal to protect that which has been assaulted!

Thus, God is jealous for all that is rightfully His including His glory, His name, and His people. God's jealously will both consume His enemies and redeem His people. God's jealously will punish evil doers and protect believers. God's jealously will remove wickedness and reform that which is broken. Therefore, God's jealousy always has His glory and the good of His creation in mind even if that jealousy leads to judgment.

You cannot rightfully understand or even correctly see the love of God apart from the judgment of God because the wrath of God is proper outworking of God's perfect love! Thus, you will often have the love of God and the judgment of God within the same verse or context! Isa 53; Rom 5:8; John 3:16; 1 Jn 2:2 are just a few verses that show the symbiotic relationship between the declaration of God's love and the deliverance of God's wrath! It has been rightfully said (D.A. Carson) that "A wrathless God does not make Him more attractive but morally indifferent, relationally disconnected, and personally insensitive!"

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6. God's Wrath is Patient and Purposeful: The wrath of God cannot be rightly understood if it is not seen through the lens of God's forbearance and longsuffering patience. No one could ever judge God for being rash, quick tempered, or short fused as God is seen in Scripture as very slow to anger (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3; 2 Pet 3:9) and overwhelmingly patient with all people. This truth about God is what irritated Jonah as he wanted God to pour out His wrath on the Ninevites, but Jonah knew that that if they repented at God's message God would be patient with them (Jonah 4:2). God gently endures with wicked men everyday (Ps 7:11) as He gives underserved grace in restraining the wrath due to them (Num 14:27; Neh 9:30-31; Ps 50:20-21; 78:36-39; Isa 42:14; Ezek 20:17; Hab 2:3; Mt 5:45). God's wrath is many things but impatient outbursts of uncontrolled rage it is not nor will ever it be!

   The Bible also helps us see how God's wrath is also patient for multiple purposes. God desires salvation for man and His restraining His punitive anger provides man with more time to turn and repent and thus be rescued from God's holy hatred and coming wrath (2 Pet 3:8-9, 15). Consider how God waited patiently for 120 years while Noah preached righteousness before the wrath of God literally flooded the earth (1 Pet 3:20). This salvific patience Paul's says is powerfully used by God to draw His people to Him as they see how they rightfully deserve God's wrath, but God has been storing it up. This kind forbearance is meant to lead man to repentance (Rom 2:4). Yet, Paul is also clear that God has not nor will He overlook man's sin but He is storing it up like a divine damn of fury that will break over the life of every unbeliever bringing their sure destruction and eternal torment and damnation (Rom 2:4-11).

7. God's Wrath is Revealed and Continual: As we turn to Romans 1:18 we learn a very important truth about the wrath of God in that it now and continually being revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of man. The word translated in Rom 1:18 as "revealed" is in a form that means it is constantly or continually being revealed. The wrath of God, as we have learned, is always against the sin of man for as the text says it is against "ungodliness" which rebellion toward God and "unrighteousness" is evil done toward man (See this as the opposite of Mt 22:36-40). This wrath of God can be seen throughout society as unregenerate man continues to spiral down the cesspool of perversity as God turns man over to his own wickedness. The text says three different times that God gives man up (1:24; 26, 28) to the lusts of his heart, to dishonorable passions, and a debased mind! Is there any doubt we are witnessing the active revealing of God's wrath as our world seems to be exponentially becoming more and more debauched and enslaved with sexual perversions and unnatural lusts! Think about Ps 7:11-16 and how God's wrath is continual and how all unbelievers continually live under the wrath of God (Jn 3:36)! In many ways God's wrath has been continually revealed since Gen 3 (see the point made on pages 3-4 above for how many ways God's wrath is clearly and constantly revealed). The entrance of the divine curse upon man (death) for sin and all the hell on earth that followed was not simply a consequence of sin as many suppose but more clearly served as part of the direct curse and righteous judgment of God for man's rebellion. Every time we witness the death of man, we can see a sliver of God's severe wrath that awaits every sinner.

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8. God's Wrath is Decreed and Coming: As our study through Scripture continues, we learn that God's wrath could never be seen as irrational moments of outrage for the Bible is clear that God's anger is decreed long before it is ever delivered! In many ways God's wrath is simply the faithful outworking for what He has already promised. God told Adam and Eve what would happen if they disobeyed Him (Gen 2:16-17) and that is exactly what happened (Gen 3:1-24). God told Israel what would happened if they rebelled against Him and His Word (Deut 28:15-68) and that is exactly what He did as He righteously judged them sending them to exile (Neh 1:8-9; Jer 30:11; Ezek 11:16 cf. 2 Kings 17:21-23; 25:21) and spreading His people to the four corners of the globe in judgment which is where they remain to this day (Luke 21:20-24). Even unregenerate man knows that what He does rightfully deserves God's judgment because God has decreed His holy wrath and made known to all through conscience and His Law upon the hearts of all (Rom 1:32; 2:12-16). However, the Bible is also lucid in declaring that while God's wrath has been decreed and is being constantly revealed, yet, it has not come in its full manifestation. God's full fury and judgment is coming as the "day of wrath" (Ezek 38:18-19; Zeph 1:15-18; Rom 2:5; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 6:16) is still yet future but no less certain in its fulfillment.

9. God's Wrath is only Satisfied and Removed in Christ: The most important truth to learn from this study is how the Bible makes clear that only Christ can appease, "satisfy" God's holy wrath against man! This truth is what Bible calls *propitiation* which is the divine act where God utterly appeases and satisfies His own holy wrath against sin through personally and fully judging it by the perfect and substitutionary sacrifice of His sinless Son (Ex 32:7-10; 34:6-7, 14; Numbers 16:41-50; 25:1-9; Nahum 1:2-3; Isa 53 Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10). Here is how Jerry Bridges explains it…

> "Propitiation addresses the wrath of God. It is the work of Christ saving us from God's wrath by absorbing it in His own person as our substitute. Expiation, which basically means "removal," accompanies propitiation and speaks of the work of Christ in removing or putting away our sin. Such is the symbolism of the two goats used on the Day of Atonement. The first goat represented Christ's work of propitiation as it was killed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. The second goat represented Christ's work of expiation in removing or blotting out the sins that were against us. The object of propitiation is the wrath of God. The object of expiation is the sin, which must be removed from His presence." (*The Gospel for Real Life* by Jerry Bridges)

This is why there is salvation in no other name but Christ (Acts 4:12) and this is why Jesus is the only way to find and receive the truth of eternal life (Jn 14:6) for only He can appease the wrath of God that everyone deserves (Rom 3:19-26)! That is why no man will ever be right with God by doing good works for in the end those so called good works, among other things, will never propitiate God's holy wrath against man's sin! But in Christ we are seen as righteous (2 Cor 5:21) and our sin is completely taken away and judged on the cross (Col 2:13-14). Thus, what A.W. Tozer says is great news for those

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once under God's wrath…

"The cross is the lightening rod of grace that short circuits the wrath of God to Christ so that only the light of God's love remains on believers" A W Tozer

B. A Biblical Definition of the Wrath of God

"God's wrath is his righteousness reacting against unrighteousness." J.I. Packer

"God's wrath means that he intensely hates sin." Wayne Grudem

"The wrath of God is his eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin. It is the moving cause of that just sentence which passes upon evildoers. God is angry against sin because it is a rebelling against his authority, a wrong done to his inviolable sovereignty." A.W. Pink

"God's wrath arises from His intense, settled hatred of all sin and is the tangible expression of His inflexible determination to punish it. We might say God's wrath is His justice in action, rendering to everyone his just due, which, because of sin, is always judgment." Jerry Bridges

"To avoid a comparison to human wrath, God's wrath has been defined as His settled determination to punish sin. It is more than that; it's a determination to punish sin with a vengeance." Jerry Bridges

"But God's wrath is nevertheless an outworking of his love. Once we understand God's love, we know it is a tough love, one that respects God's standards of righteousness and that burns in jealousy against those who betray it. So, God's wrath serves the purposes of his love, and God's love is the richer for it; it bestows on his beloved the ultimate blessing of a sin-free world." John Frame

"God's wrath is his "holy, white-hot hatred of sin, the reaction and revulsion of His holy nature against all that is evil." Charles Leiter

<u>God's wrath is His holy hatred for and righteous judgment on all sin!</u>

C. Biblical Distinctions with the Wrath of God[3]

1. <u>Cataclysmic Wrath</u>: Examples would be the flood (Gen 6-8) and the Red Sea (Ex 15)

2. <u>Consequential Wrath</u>: Examples would be the exiles of Israel and Judah (2 Kings 17:21-23; 25:21)

[3] Dr. Richard Mayhue was helpful here in articulating some of this in his writings

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3. Abandoning Wrath: Example would be God giving man over to his sin (Rom 1:24, 26, 28)

4. Eschatological Wrath: Example would be the wrath of the Lamb brought during the future tribulation (Rev 6:16-17)

5. Eternal Wrath: Example is the never-ending judgment of unrepentant sinners in hell (Rev 14:10-11)

6. Redemptive Wrath: Example is the cross of Christ as it pleased the Father to crush His Son under the Holy wrath He bore for sinners (Isa 53)

Group Exercise: Look up Rom 11:22 and explain how important it is to see God rightly in all of attributes and not just the ones that make us feel nice. In context what does the "severity" God point to?

II. The Jealousy of God

God's jealousy is not a compound of frustration, envy and spite, as human jealously so often is, but appears instead as a literally praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious. J.I. Packer (Knowing God, 170)

…God's jealousy, vengeance, and wrath may not be separated from his love and grace. They belong to the same God because they are essential to each other…God's desire for his people requires an exclusive relationship. God's fierce love for us kindles his jealously when we give our hearts, souls, and minds to other loves. God's love also ignites his wrath against any who would draw us away from him. If God did not care when our hearts are far from him (Isa 29:13) or when we adulterously give our hearts to the world (James 4:4), he would not love us… The notion of love without jealously and vengeance cannot survive a thorough biblical examination. It is a concept lacking passion or power. It is apathy masquerading as virtue. Gregory D. Cook

1. Definition

   The perfection of God according to which He feels a protective possessiveness about and zealously protects and avenges all that belongs to Him (Himself, His name, His glory, His people, His sole right to worship and obedience, His land, His city).

2. Scriptural Assertions

   1. God's name is "Jealous."

   Exod 34:14 – '(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

   2. God is jealous to be the only God worshiped and served. (Exod 20:5)

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Exod 20:5 – you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, (Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; 32:16, 21; 1 Kings 14:22; Ps 78:58-59; Ps 79:1-7; 1 Cor 10:22)

3. God is jealous to be served as the holy God.

Josh 24:19 – But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. (James 4:5)

4. God jealously chastens His sinning people.

Ezek 23:25 – I will set My jealousy against you, And they shall deal furiously with you; They shall remove your nose and your ears, And your remnant shall fall by the sword; They shall take your sons and your daughters, And your remnant shall be devoured by fire. (Ezek 16:42; Ps 79:1-7).

5. God restores His people by His jealousy. (2 Kgs 19:31; Isa 37:32; 63:15)

6. God is jealous for His holy name and glory.

   Ezek 39:25 – " Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name (Isa 59:16-20)

7. God by His jealousy will establish Messiah's Davidic Kingdom. (Isa 9:6-7)

8. God jealously takes vengeance on His enemies.

   Nahum 1:2 – God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies; (Ezek 5:13; 36:5; 38:19; Isa 42:13; 59:16-20; Nahum 1:2; Zeph 3:8)

9. God is jealous for the land of Canaan and Jerusalem.

   Ezek 36:5 – 'therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with whole-hearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country." ' (see v. 6ff.; Joel 1:18; Zech 1:14)

10. See number 5 above under God's Wrath where the Bible declares and displays how God's Wrath is Personal and Jealous.

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Group Exercise: Look up Numbers 25:10-13 and explain what you can learn from this event regarding God's jealously and the godly man's jealously for God.

III. The Patience of God

It is a part of the Divine goodness and mercy, yet differs from both. God being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness; mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the greater the mildness. Who so holy as Christ, and who so meek? God's slowness to anger is a branch of His mercy: "the Lord is full of compassion, slow to anger" (Psalm 145:8). It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the subject: mercy respects the creature as miserable, patience respects the creature as criminal; mercy pities him in his misery, patience bears with the sin which engendered the misery, and giving birth to more. Stephan Charnock (written around 1680)

Personally we would define the Divine patience as that power of control which God exercises over Himself, causing Him to bear with the wicked and forebear so long in punishing them…It is at the above point, we think, that God's patience is most clearly distinguished from His mercy. Though the creature is benefited thereby, the patience of God chiefly respects Himself, a restraint placed upon His acts by His will; whereas His mercy terminates wholly upon the creature. The patience of God is that excellency which causes Him to sustain great injuries without immediately avenging Himself. He has a power of patience as well as a power of justice. A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*; (pgs. 78-80)

A. Meaning

1. This is God's long-suffering with the sins and inconsistencies and immaturities of man. Rather than quickly distributing justice, God waits for and encourages repentance from sin.

2. This is God's long-suffering with the sins and inconsistencies and immaturities of man. Rather than quickly distributing justice, God waits for and encourages repentance from sin.

3. God's longsuffering speaks of his being perfectly placid in himself and toward sinners in spite of their continual disobedience and disregard for his warnings. God does not "lose his temper" but rather acts calmly with proper affection according to his eternal sovereign plan. Tranquility implies not that God lacks affections but rather that God's affections do not overwhelm him or cause him to act against his nature.[4]

4. God works with man **with a great restraint** of His holy wrath.

[4] MacArthur, J., & Mayhue, R., eds. (2017). *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (p. 183). Crossway.

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5. Patience is the first attribute mentioned in the list in 1 Corinthians 13:4. “Love is patient. Love is kind.”

6. God’s patience is His goodness toward those who resist His goodness through sin and idolatry (1Pt 3:20). God’s patience allows the elect the opportunity to come to faith, but for all others it becomes a source of greater judgment when it is ultimately rejected (Rom 2:4-5). Patience must be abounding within the church among those led by the Spirit (Gal 5:22).

B. A Few Key NT Verses

1. 1 Peter 3:20 “who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

2. Romans 2:4-5 “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,”

3. 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

C. Further Scriptural Evidence for God’s longsuffering is visible in the following observations:

1. God is patient with those deserving divine punishment (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Pss. 86:15; 103:8–9; 145:8; Jer. 15:15; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah. 1:3).

2. God was longsuffering before the time of Christ (Rom. 3:25; 1 Pet. 3:20).

3. God’s longsuffering is shown to sinners now, especially through Jesus Christ (Rom.2:4; 9:22–23; 1Tim.1:16; 2Pet.3:9,15).

4. God is patient in not immediately responding to cries for justified vengeance (Rev. 6:9–11).[5]

[5] MacArthur, J., & Mayhue, R., eds. (2017). *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (p. 183). Crossway.

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5. See number 5 under the point above on God's wrath where the Bible declares and displays how God's Wrath is Patient and Purposeful

D. Specific Examples of God's Patience

1. God's patience with Adam and Eve (Gen 3)
2. God's patience with Abraham (Gen 12:10-20)
3. God's patience with the people of Canaan (Gen 15:13-16 cf. Josh 2; Heb 11:31)
4. God's patience with Israel (Ex 32:14; Num14:17-20; Ps 95:10; Act 13:18)
5. God's patience with Job and his friends (Job 38-42)
6. God's patience with David (2 Sam 12:13 cf. Lev 20:10; 24:17)
7. God's patience with Solomon (1 Kings 11:9-13)
8. God was patient with Jonah (Jonah 4)
9. God's patience with sinning mankind (Acts 14:17)

Group Exercise: Look up Gen 6:3 (see also 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 2:5) and explain how you can see God's patience displayed on earth during the time Noah built the ark. According to what we see in the flood account does God's patience with unrepentant sinners last forever?

"It is dangerous to abuse His patience, for God has wrath to punish as well as patience to bear. He has a fury to revenge the outrages done to His meekness; when His messages of peace, sent to reclaim men, are slighted, His sword shall be whetted, and His instruments of war prepared; (Hosea 5:8) "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah." As He deals gently like a father, so He can punish capitally as a judge. Though He holds His peace for a long time, yet at last He will go forth like a mighty man, and stir up jealousy as a man of war, to cut in pieces His enemies. It is not said, He has no anger, but that He is slow to anger, but sharp in it. He has a sword to cut, and a bow to shoot, and arrows to pierce (Psa 12:13). And though He be long a-drawing the one out of the scabbard, and long a-fitting the other to His bow, yet when they are ready, He strikes home and hits the mark… The more His patience is abused, the sharper will be the wrath He inflicts. All the time men are abusing His patience, God is whetting His sword, and the longer it is whetting the sharper will be the edge." (Stephen Charnock who lived from 1620-1680 wrote an amazing book on theology proper called *The Existence Attributes of God.* The above quote comes from a section he wrote titled *God's Patience Abused)*

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Additional Considerations Regarding God's Wrath

- **The Scriptural Prevalence Regarding the Wrath of God**

    - The Bible is bookended by displays and declarations regarding God's wrath (Gen 2:17; 3:1-24 cf. Rev 19:11-16; 20:11-15; 21:8). It has been said that there are more references in the Bible to God's wrath, anger, fury and judgment than to His love, gentleness, and tenderness (See A.W. Pink pg. 106 & Swindoll and Zuck pg. 176).

    - Around 600 references to the wrath, anger, vengeance, and judgment of God in the Old Testament alone (Ex 22:24; 32:10-11; Num 16:46; 25:11; Deut 9:8; 29:23; Josh 22:20; 2 Kings 23:26; 2 Chron 19:2; Ezra 8:22; Neh 13:18; Job 19:11; Ps 2:12; 21:9; 76:10; 78:21, 49, 59, 62; 90:7, 9, 11; 95:11; 110:5; Prov 11:4; Isa 9:19; 13:13; 51:20; 59:18; 63:3; Jer 4:4; 7:20; 10:10; 23:19; 25:15; 42:18; Lam 4:11; Ezek 7:8; 13:13; 16:38; 24:8; 36:6; 38:19; Dan 9:16; Hos 5:10; Mic 5:15; Nah 1:1-6; Hab 3:2; Zep 1:15, 18; Zech 8:2, 14).

    - Jesus (Gospels) spoke more about judgment and God's wrath, especially eternal Hell fire, than He did about heaven. Listen Jesus said hell was a place of everlasting punishment (Mt 25:46); a place of eternal fire (Mt 18:8); a place of unquenchable fire (Mk 9:45); A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:12); a place of outer darkness (Mt 22:13); a place of horrific torment (Lk 16:23); a place where maggots never die (Mk 9:46); and place or better yet a fiery furnace where all unbelievers will be thrown (Mt 13:42, 50). See also Jn 2:18 Jesus vividly displayed God's righteous anger and Mt 10:28 where Jesus warned man about not being afraid of man but being afraid of God who kill the body and then cast you into hell where you sit under His wrath.

    - Almost every NT Epistle displays, describes, declares, or predicts God's wrath, vengeance, and judgment (Acts 5:1-11; 17:30-31; Rom 1:18; 1 Cor 11:29; 2 Cor 5:10; Eph 2:3; 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 9:27; 10:30; Js 2:13; 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17; 2 Pet 2:4, 9; 3:7; 1 Jn 4:17; Jude 9,15; Rev 6:16).

    - The book of Romans (the "Gospel letter") speaks of God's wrath, vengeance, condemnation, and judgment more than all of Paul's other letters combined (1:18, 32; 2:2, 3, 5, 8; 3:5, 8; 4:15; 5:9, 16, 18; 8:1; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4, 5; 14:10).

    - It has rightly been said that the Bible could be called a book of God's wrath as it is full of portrayals of God's divine retribution on sinful man (J.I. Packer: *Knowing God,* pg. 150). The curse in the garden to banishment from the garden (Gen 2-3). The flood of the world to the Babel dispersion (Gen 6, 11). Sodom and Gomorrah to Lot's wife (Gen 19). The plagues in Egypt and the Red Sea devastation (Ex 6-14). The slaughter of 3000 at Sinai to the fiery deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Ex 32 & Lev 10). The earth consuming Korah and his followers to the

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plague that killed 14,000 (Num 16). Baal Worship and the plague that killed 24,000 to the 40-year wilderness wondering (Num 25; Deut 1-2). That is just a cursory selection from the Torah alone. What about Achan's rebellion and the death of he and his family (Josh 7). The retributive judgment through the book of Judges (Judges 2). The rejection of Saul to the divine killing of Uzzah (1 Sam 15; 2 Sam 6). The kingdom of Israel divided to both kingdoms eventually being exiled and destroyed (1 Kings 12; 2 Kings 17, 25). The divine devastation brought upon Jerusalem that yielded horrific death and destruction so that some of the people turned to cannibalism (Jerm 19:1-9 cf. Lam 2:20; Lam 2:1-22)! The New Testament is no different as Jesus begins His ministry with a public display of God's righteous anger against the false man centered worship in Israel (Jn 2:18). John the Baptist warns about the coming wrath and the Apostle John declares all unbelievers abide under God's wrath (Mt 3:7; Jn 3:36). Jesus regularly warned about God's coming judgment and even told numerous parables about it (Mt 7, 10, 11, 12, 21-25; Mk 11-13; Lk 10-11, 16, 21; Jn 3, 5). Judgment on Ananias and Sapphira to Elymas (Acts 6; 13). Judgment on some in the Church of Corinth and the severe warnings about rejecting the gospel and receiving God's consuming fire to those in Hebrews (1 Cor 11; Heb 2, 4, 6, 10, 12). The scathing predication of hell's fury on those who persecuted the Church in Thessalonica (2 Thess 1) to what Peter and Jude said regarding the divine vengeance that awaits false teachers (2 Pet 2-3; Jude 3-16). Then there is the book of Revelation with its cosmic warnings and vivid descriptions regarding the coming wrath of the Lamb on the globe (Rev 2-3, 6-20)!

- **The Natural Propensity to Downplay the Wrath of God**
    - Ps 50:21…Man tends to think God is like him
    - Jn 3:16 cf. Rom 11:22…Man tends to think God is only love
    - Rom 3:5 cf. 9:14-20…Man tends to think the idea of "wrath" is unworthy of God
    - Rom 2:17-24 cf. Gal 6:3… Man tends to think he does not deserve wrath
    - 2 Pet 3:3-5…Man tends to think that God's wrath will never come, he mocks it
    - Isa 6:1-7…Man tends to minimize the holiness of God and personal wretchedness
- **The Eternal Problem of Denying the Wrath of God**
    - God's love can never be rightly understood (Rom 5:1-10; 2 Cor 5:14-15)
    - God's grace can never be joyfully embraced (Eph 2:1-10; 1 Cor 15:9-10)

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- God's mercy can never be humbly enjoyed (Titus 3:1-7; Js 2:13; 2 Cor 4:1)
- God's gospel can never be truly followed (Jn 3:16-36; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 3:19-26; 5:9; 6:23)
- God's glory can never be fully praised (Rom 3:23; 8:28-30; 11:33-36; 1 Cor 1:18-31; 10:31; Eph 1:6, 12, 14)
- God's wrath will never be personally removed (Rom 3:25 cf. Isa 53:11, 5:9; 8:1; 1 Jn 2:2, 4:10; Col 2:13-14; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 2:17, 9:15 see how no one will be justified by personal works in Rom 3:19-20 and how all unbelievers are now currently abiding under the wrath of God as John says in Jn 3:36)

- **God's Wrath Is Not…**
  - Unfair and thus it is never unjust
  - Unfounded and thus it is never irrational
  - Uncontrolled and thus it is never reckless rage
  - Unguarded and thus it is never like sinful man's anger
  - Undiscriminating and thus it is never arbitrary
  - Unstated and thus it must never be minimized or mocked…you have no excuse

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