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REDEEMING WRATH

What good would a God be who would not right what's wrong? Certainly not worthy of worship. Last time we looked at God's righteous wrath. 1- It is abiding, ready to be released in terrible judgment. God's wrath is necessary, because He is holy and righteous. His wrath is consistent with His character and warnings in history. 2- God's wrath is abandoning, leaving sinners to what they demand. And it is consequential. Refuse His saving grace and God says, OK, have it your way.

God's wrath is catastrophic. It brings deserved destruction. In Genesis 6-8, *"the earth was corrupt in God's sight and filled with violence."* The flood of God's righteous wrath covered the whole world. But He saved eight people, Noah and his family, to renew His covenant with His creation. In Genesis 18-19, *"The Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and overthrew it, and behold the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace."* Ruth Graham, wife of the famous evangelist, remarking about the state of sin in America, said, "If God doesn't judge America soon, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." Her parents were missionaries in Pyongyang, the Jerusalem of the East, before Communism. Today, missionaries send tracts and Bibles to North Korea by balloons, smuggling and radio, helping the persecuted underground church. Will judgment come again? A frightful prospect for anyone who says no to God. But there's more to God's wrath than righteousness.

3- God's wrath is atoning - because Jesus satisfied God's righteous wrath. "Atoning wrath" almost sounds like a contradiction in terms. But it goes right to the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:16, *"the gospel is the power of God for salvation, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed."* This is in contrast to Romans 1:18 which says *"the wrath of God is revealed"* because of inexcusable sin. Pastor-author John Piper says "the wisdom of God devised a way for the love of God to deliver sinners from the wrath of God, while not compromising the righteousness of God." The way is the Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 3:25) through "propitiation" by His blood, paying for sin and satisfying God's righteous wrath.

But God's wrath is also eternal. John 3: 36, *"whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."* Forever. Matthew 25:41, *"then He will say to those on His left, depart from Me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."* Revelation 20:15, *"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."* Unimaginable drowning in the lake of fire forever. The earned wages of rejecting God.

God's wrath is eschatological. It will come in fullness at the end of human time. Judgment can come on any person, culture or nation at any time. Yet God has appointed a day to wrap up human history, when Christ comes again. The scene in Revelation 19: *"I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are flames of fire, He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood" of His enemies (Isaiah 63). From His mouth comes a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."* This will surpass all the wrath of His historical judgments in Scripture. Romans 2:4 asks *"do you suppose you will escape the judgment of God? Do you presume upon the riches of the kindness and forbearance and patience of God? Which is meant to lead you to repentance. But because of your hard impenitent heart, you store up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath."* God's righteous judgment.

But thanks to God, His wrath provides a way out, through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. **God's wrath is redemptive.** Because Jesus suffered the wrath you deserve. In Exodus, God's wrath passed over houses with the blood of the lamb on the door. The Bible says Jesus is the passover lamb, God's firstborn who bore the wrath of God on the cross. Romans 5:9, *"justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God."* 1 Thessalonians 5:9 *"God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that we might live through Him."*

You know you deserve eternal wrath. But Jesus endured all of God's wrath against sin. If you put all your trust in Him alone, then you will escape wrath. Jesus says *"come to Me, live forever through Me."* What will it be for you? Rebel and perish? Or trust and obey? Your way or God's way?