

1 Thessalonians

I. Introduction

A. **1 Thessalonians 1:8-10** . . . For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. [9] For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, [10] **and** to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

B. Pray

II. **1 Thessalonians 1:10** – the importance of Christ being raised from the dead, and His rescuing us from the wrath of God

A. **1 Thessalonians 1:10a** . . . whom [God] raised from the dead, that is Jesus.

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is just as important to our eternal salvation and living a godly life as is His death on the cross. We know this to be true because God's word says so.
2. For example, in **Acts 2:23-24**, we read that Jesus was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men, and put to death. **But God** raised Him up again, and in so doing, **put an end** to the agony of death – that is, the death that eternally separates us from God.
3. In putting Jesus to death on the cross, God broke the power and ability of sin to enslave us. In raising Jesus from the dead, God broke the power and ability of death (*which is the penalty for sin*) to eternally separate us from Himself.
4. Paul explains this in **Romans 6**, where he says that we enter into or share in Christ's **death and resurrection** through baptism. And why do we need to know this? Because – according to **Romans 6:4-9** – it is by entering into Christ's death that sin's enslaving power is broken in the Christian's life. And it is by entering into His resurrection that we are **able** and **enabled** to live a life that is pleasing to God and for God.
5. In **1 Corinthians 15:12-19**, Paul uses deductive reasoning to show that without the resurrection, the gospel is foolish and trusting in

Christ for eternal salvation is worthless. In other words, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, neither the gospel nor faith in Christ can do you any good.

6. Peter shows the power and the effect of the resurrection in **1 Peter 1:3-5**, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His (*God’s*) great mercy has caused us to be **born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] **who are protected by the power of God** through faith **for a salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.
7. To sum up, there would be no reason to wait for Christ’s return if He had not been raised from the dead. And there would be no purpose for evangelism or for the hope of living a godly life if Jesus had not been raised from the dead. His resurrection is just as important as His death on the cross – which is why we celebrate Easter Sunday and worship on Sunday instead of Saturday.

B. **1 Thessalonians 1:10b** . . . that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

1. Modern day Christians are known to talk about God’s love far more than about His wrath. And in talking this way they seem to imply that God’s love is a good thing while His wrath is not such a good thing.
2. In my opinion, the problem is not with God’s wrath, but with our desire to fashion our image of God according to what we want Him to be instead of seeing and accepting and trusting Him for who He is. The reality is, He is a complete though multifaceted being.
 - a. Therefore, though the Bible says, “God is love” (**1 John 4:8,16**), it does not mean that He is devoid of wrath or that He must not feel and express wrath. Wrath is but one of the integrated parts of His multifaceted being.
 - b. God affirms this in **Exodus 34:6-7** where He describes himself to Moses as: “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; [7] who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

3. What many don't understand is that God's love is not confined to His mercy, patience, and long-suffering, it includes his wrath and indignation – which are just two of His various responses to the needless harm, unnecessary destruction, and cruelty brought upon the victims of willful, deliberate sinners who know better yet either don't want to do better or won't do what is necessary to be better.
 4. To better understand what I am talking about, imagine someone knowingly and deliberately doing what they know is wrong, and in so doing cruelly treat, seriously injure, or emotionally scar someone near and dear to you – like a child or spouse or dear friend. Or imagine someone repeatedly take advantage of you or your loved one, or repeatedly being mean, selfish, or unjust toward you or those you love.
 - a. What would you think and how would you feel toward such a person? What would you do to correct the situation, and how would you deal with the willful and unrepentant sinner?
 - b. If you understand where these questions are taking you, then you have at least a beginning understanding of God's wrath and indignation when dealing with unrepentant sinners whose selfish and sinful behavior has hurt and harmed those He loves.
 - c. However, too often there is a stark difference between God's wrath and our anger toward willful and unrepentant sinners.
 - (1) God's wrath is conditioned or mixed with His mercy, His compassion, His knowledge of what is in the evil person's heart, and His knowledge of what the evil person has experienced or had to endure in the past.
 - (2) In contrast, our anger or wrath is often blind to the things God takes into account – which is why we blow up and vent our anger on the person rather than being compassionate in dealing with them and fair in punishing them.
- C. God's wrath is spoken of enough times in scripture to give us a good idea of the why and how of His wrath. For example, there are a number of examples of God being angry with the Israelites, and among those examples are a few where in His wrath He wanted to destroy them and start over – just as He destroyed all but Noah and his family in the Flood. Two of these stories are found in **Number 16**, and they happened within 24 hours of each other.
1. In **Numbers 16:1-40**, we have the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who led 250 Israelite leaders in a rebellion against Moses

and Aaron because they felt they were qualified to be spiritual leaders equal to Moses and Aaron.

2. In response to their prideful rebellion, God opened the earth and swallowed Korah, Dathan, Abiram along with their wives and children. Then He sent fire and consumed the 250 men who joined Korah in the rebellion.
3. The next day, many of the Israelites were angry at Moses and Aaron and blamed them for the way God dealt with the rebels. In response to their attack on Moses and Aaron, God sent a plague that killed 14,700 Israelites before Aaron – at Moses’ direction – could appease God’s wrath and stop the plague (**Numbers 16:41-50**).
4. Now you may think that God’s anger and resulting actions were excessive in both these stories. However, this was far from the first time this generation of Israelites had acted in these ways. As you may recall, their first acts of rebellion, complaining, and blaming took place when they were trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army. Yet that time, and in several subsequent times, God and Moses remained patiently gracious with them.
 - a. However, Korah’s rebellion and the people’s blaming and complaining were the ninth and tenth such episodes in the span of a year or so.
 - b. And to make matters worse, these two incidents took place soon after Israel voted against going into the Promised Land and learning what their punishment would be for their disobedient decision. It is as if they didn’t want to learn from past experiences, rather than they couldn’t learn.
 - c. And beyond all this, their rebellious, complaining behavior was not just an offense to God. It set a bad example for the younger generation and it brought unneeded and unnecessary troubles on the whole nation. Think about this, their own children – children whom God loved and they should have loved, became victims of their distrust, selfishness, and disobedience.
5. Are you beginning to see the reasons for God’s wrath, and that these reasons make His wrath reasonable? Do you also see that His love and mercy are an inseparable part of His wrath. You see, punishing sinners is not just giving them what they deserve, it is also a means of warning others not to do as they have done. And this warning is for would-be sinners, who if they go ahead and sin

will bring God's judgment and discipline on themselves while increasing the evil, suffering, and destruction in the world.

III. Conclusion

- A. I want to conclude our look at the wrath of God by presenting a list of biblical examples of God's wrath, and by reading several portions of scripture that speak about God's wrath. As I read the list and the scriptures, think about life in our world today.
1. Examples of God's wrath: famine, wild beasts and snakes that kill mostly children, plagues, wars, flooding, hurricane force winds, hailstones, fire, being controlled by foreign powers, trouble, distress, destruction, desolation, and turning sinners over to follow their own sinful desires with the outcome being self-destruction.
 2. **John 3:36** . . . He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.
 3. **Ephesians 5:3-6** . . . But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; [4] and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. [5] For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
 4. **Romans 1:18** (ESV) . . . For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
 5. **Romans 5:8-9** . . . But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through [Jesus Christ]. (*We deserve God's wrath because of how we have lived and the harmful and hurtful effect of our behavior has had and may continue to have on others.*)