

Sermon Title: The Pagan is Under the Sentence of Condemnation, Extra Notes

Sermon Text: Romans 1:18-23

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand the justified wrath of God against all sin.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 reasons why God's wrath against sin/sinners is justified.

“The New Testament ends with the somber warning from the Lord Himself:

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying ... I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (Rev 22:14-15, 18-19)”

[John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991, pp.72]

Four cautions are in order in regard to little teaching occurring about God's wrath.

1. We should be aware of the great appeal to the natural man of such concepts as unconscious soul sleep and universalism both which deny God's judgment and wrath.
2. We should recognize the pervasive influence of Christian liberalism, which views God as being too loving to condemn anyone and necessarily denies the authority of the scriptures that state otherwise.
3. We should realize that religious groups that deny God's wrath are frequently cultic.
4. We should remember that denial of God's wrath removes the purpose and motivation for witnessing, namely, the God-glorifying salvation of unbelievers from sin and hell.

“Bible teacher R. A. Torrey wisely wrote: ‘Shallow views of sin and of God's holiness, and of the glory of Jesus Christ and His claims upon us, lie at the bottom of weak theories of the doom of the impenitent. When we see sin in all its hideousness and enormity, the Holiness of God in all its perfection, and the glory of Jesus Christ in all its infinity, nothing but a doctrine that those who persist in the rejection of the Son of God, shall endure everlasting anguish, will satisfy the demands of our own moral intuitions The more closely men walk with God and the more devoted they become to His service, the more likely they are to believe this doctrine’ (What the Bible Teaches [New York: Revell, 1898], pp.311-13).

Those faithful saints, and many others like them, have clearly understood the wrath and the judgment of God and the consequent horror of men dying without Christ. Without such understanding there is no basis for evangelism. If men are not lost, hopeless, and incapable of glorifying God apart from Christ, there is no reason for them to be saved by Him.

The biblical order in any gospel presentation is always first the warning of danger and then the way of escape, first the message of condemnation and then the offer of forgiveness, first the bad news of guilt and then the good news of grace. The whole message and purpose of the loving, redeeming grace of God offering eternal life through Jesus Christ rests upon the reality of man's universal guilt of abandoning God and thereby being under His sentence of eternal condemnation and death.”

[John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991, pp.73-4]