

The Wrath of God

Scripture Reading — Revelation 19:11-21

He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. — Revelation 19:15-16

Julia Ward Howe had Revelation 19 in mind when she wrote “The Battle Hymn of the Re-pub-lic” during the American Civil War: “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord: He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.” Abraham Lincoln, reflecting on the terrible bloodshed of that war, which he hoped would purge the guilt of 250 years of slavery, quoted Psalm 19:9 (KJV), “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

God does not just look the other way when there is a holocaust or people are enslaved. In the same way, when you and I sin, God does not just blandly smile.

It may sound crazy, but we should be glad that God is angry with sin. Man’s anger usually causes more trouble; God’s anger burns away evil.

The Bible holds forth the love and mercy of God in one hand, and the wrath of God in the other. At the cross, where the love and wrath of God meet, Christ saves us from the punishment we deserve. Jesus paid the price for us! “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!” (Romans 5:9).

Prayer

We know, O God, that your hatred of evil is what restrains wickedness in this world, and that you will -finally destroy it. Thank you for finding a way to judge sin without destroying us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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