

Jesus, the Only Deliverer from the Wrath to Come! Part 1

by Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)

1 Thess. 1:10

I. The Text Opened

A. 1 Thess. 1:10

1. “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. 1:10).

a) Past pains may easily be forgotten.

b) Future pains are not easily believed.

c) Present pains in extremity are so grievous and afflicting that all the wealth and honor in the world cannot countervail them—and, oh, how welcome is such a physician who can give ease and remove them!

d) But if people believingly apprehended what horrible pains and torments the wicked must endure in the unquenchable flames of hell fire, where they can have no ease, and their misery shall have no end; if they apprehended how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and to be swallowed up by His wrath, which pursues all who are out of Christ, and who will certainly come and may quickly seize upon them—surely they would use their utmost diligence now to escape—surely they would, with the greatest inquisitiveness, seek out a place of refuge from the fiery tempest of God’s vengeance!

2. This text, which makes a revelation of the only Deliverer from the wrath to come, would sound with most transcendent sweetness in their ears; and its glad tidings, concerning what Jesus has done for His people, would, above all things, be most welcome in their hearts. “Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come!”

a) In the former verse, the apostle tells the Thessalonians what manner of reception he had at first among them, and what the great effect of his ministry was upon them, namely that they were converted thereby, which conversion he sets forth:

(1) *By the nature of it: they were turned from dead idols—the lying vanities which they worshiped and served before—unto the living and true God, to worship and serve Him.*

(2) *By the consequence of it, which was their waiting for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. And here he shows:*

(a) *First, the evidence of this second coming: it will certainly be, namely by God’s raising Him from the dead and receiving Him into heaven.*

(b) *Second, the ground of their hope and comforting expectation, and waiting for this coming in the text: because this Jesus had delivered them from the wrath to come.*

(i) *The wicked, if awakened, look for Christ’s second coming with dread and fearful expectation, because of the wrath which He will bring with Him—because He will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon them.*

(ii) *The righteous, if assured of their saving interest in Christ, look for Christ’s second coming with gladness and joyful expectation because He has delivered them from the wrath to come. “Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come!”*

II. The Doctrine and Explanation from the Text

A. Doctrine: It is Jesus Christ who delivers from the wrath to come.

1. In the course of these three sermons, in handling this point, I shall show:
 - a) 1. What this wrath is, which is to come;
 - b) 2. That this wrath, is to come;
 - c) 3. Upon whom this wrath will come;
 - d) 4. When this wrath will come;
 - e) 5. Who this Jesus is, who delivers from wrath to come;
 - f) 6. How Jesus delivers from wrath to come;
 - g) 7. How any do or may have a share, in this deliverance by Jesus from wrath to come;
 - (1) *Then I shall make some use and application.*
2. WHAT this wrath is, which is to come.
 - a) It is not the finite wrath of the most furious and fierce creatures; it is not the wrath of lions, bears, tigers, wolves, or wild bulls; it is not the wrath of the most potent and tyrannical men, who may exceed all these in ferocity and cruelty.
 - b) Neither is it the wrath of the devil, whose wrath is great here on earth when let loose to tempt and deceive—but most furiously will express itself hereafter in hell when he is let loose as God’s executioner to torment the wicked.
 - c) But by “the wrath to come” we are to understand the infinite wrath of the sin-avenging God, in comparison with which the wrath of all other creatures in the world is mild, and not in the least to be regarded.
 - d) We read in the Scripture of the wine of God’s wrath (Revelation 14:10), that this wine is red (Psalm 75:8).
 - (1) *We read of the vials of God’s wrath (Revelation 16:1), of the cup of God’s wrath (Revelation 14:10), of the winepress of God’s wrath (Revelation 14:19).*
 - (2) *We read of the treasury of God’s wrath (Romans 2:5), of the vessels of God’s wrath (Romans 9:22).*
 - (3) *By “the wine of God’s wrath” we are to understand those plagues and punishments which God does and will inflict upon the wicked for their sins.*
 - (4) *By “the redness of the wine” is meant the dreadfulness of those plagues.*
 - (5) *By “the vials of God’s wrath” we mean some smaller plagues and temporal punishments on earth.*
 - (6) *By “the cup of God’s wrath” we mean especially the dregs and bottom of it, the greater plagues and eternal punishments of hell.*
 - (7) *By “the winepress of God’s wrath” we are to understand the place where the wicked shall be punished.*
 - (8) *By “the treasury of God’s wrath” we are to understand the abundance of plagues; by “the vessels of wrath,” we are to understand the damned who are appointed to undergo these plagues and torments.*
 - (9) *These vessels, God will fill to the brim in hell, with the most intensified torments.*
 - e) And this is the wrath which is to come, which will be most bitter—beyond any gall or wormwood to the taste.
 - f) This wrath will be most pure—without any alloy or mixture of any comfortable ingredients.
 - g) This wrath will be most plentiful—the treasury of which will be opened in hell, and all the damned will be filled with it abundantly.

- h) It will be most weighty—beyond any mountain of lead, to sink sinners down into the bottomless pit.
- i) It will be most fierce—and so powerful that all the powers of men and devils shall not be able to make the least resistance.
- j) It will be intolerable—and yet must be borne; it will be implacable—so as never to be appeased; and it will be eternal—so as never to be ended!
- k) Plainly, the wrath to come, is the same as the punishment of hell, the great effect of the wrath of God.
- l) This punishment has two parts: the punishment of loss and the punishment of sense.

(1) The punishment of loss—will consist of the loss of the crown, glory, and happiness of heaven, where the righteous shall be admitted to the immediate vision and full fruition of God the chief good, which will fill them with soul-ravishing, inconceivable, and eternal joy.

(2) But from this, all the wicked will be eternally shut out, and wholly denied any share in the least of that happiness which, when they come to understand the worth and excellency of it—will above all things be most vexing to them

- m) The punishment of sense—will consist in the horrible pains and tortures which shall in extreme measure be inflicted upon every part of the bodies of all the wicked, by the most dreadful and unquenchable fire into which they shall be thrown; and the horrible anguish which, through the immediate impressions of God's wrath, shall be inflicted upon every faculty of their souls in hell, where they shall have no ease or release forever," Matthew 25:41, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"
- n) Revelation 14:10-11, "They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night."

3. This wrath of God, is TO COME, which implies two things: the wrath is not yet come, and it certainly will come.

- a) First, the wrath of God has not yet come.
- b) Had it already come, who could have stood before it?
- c) Who could deliver from it?
- d) Where it seizes—it crushes and it burns, and that worse than any fire!
- e) Where it seizes—it holds and never lets go its hold!
- f) But, as it has not yet come, some sparks of this fire may be let fall in temporal judgments upon sinners in this life; but what are temporal judgments in comparison to eternal ones!
- g) In this world, God exercises His patience towards the wicked.
- h) He is angry with them, and His anger smokes against them; but He withholds His wrath from breaking forth into a flame, which would quickly devour all the wicked of the earth should He give way to it and let it loose upon them.
- i) Indeed, we read in John 3:36 that the wrath of God abides upon unbelievers; that is, it shall abide upon those who at last are found in a state of unbelief—as surely as if it already were abiding on them!
- j) Or, the wrath of God abides upon unbelievers, that is, the sentence of condemnation unto this wrath abides upon them.

(1) *John 3:18: "He who believes not is condemned already."*

k) Indeed, it is said of the persecuting Jews who had killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and had forbidden the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, that "the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

l) But we are to understand it thus: the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost, not in regard to eternal judgments—but in regard to spiritual judgments, it being the expression of God's wrath here—to give sinners up to a persecuting spirit, which prepares them for the uttermost and most dreadful punishments of hell hereafter.

(1) *But as yet, the wrath of God has not yet come; none in this world does know, or can know—the power of God's anger.*

m) Second, the wrath of God is to come, that is, it will certainly come.

(1) *There are some things which may come—such and such temporal judgments may come, such and such deliverances may come—but there are some things which will certainly come.*

(2) *Death will certainly come, Christ will certainly come; and, as certainly as death and Christ will come, so certainly this wrath of God will come. God has foretold it; and heaven and earth shall pass away—but not one jot or tittle of what God has foretold shall pass away, until it is fulfilled.*

(3) *God has threatened it, and God is not more faithful in His promises to His people—than He is true in His threatenings to His enemies! God's justice engages Him to send it, which can be satisfied in no other way by those who have no saving interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.*

(4) *The wicked are vessels fitted by sin for destruction, and prepared for wrath; and therefore they shall be filled with it, even as the vessels of mercy are fitted for and shall be filled with glory.*

(5) *God has treasured up wrath for the wicked—as they have treasured up sin; and God will give them that which they have so much deserved, and which He has prepared for them.*

(6) *However sinners may escape this wrath for a while, and vainly hope to flee or hide themselves from the stroke of God's vengeance, yet God's right hand will find all those who hate Him; and He will make them as a fiery oven in the time of His anger, swallow them up in His wrath, and devour them with the fire of His indignation! (Psalm 21:8-9).*

4. WHOM this wrath will come upon.

a) First, the wrath of God will come upon all the DISOBEDIENT.

b) Colossians 3:5-6, "Put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient."

c) These are such as do not yield obedience unto the law of God—but live in and allow themselves the practice of known sins, and the neglect of known duties.

d) They are such as are under the power of reigning sin—who are willing servants of sin, who yield up their members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin (Romans 6:13), who serve divers lusts (Titus 3:3), and who make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof (Romans 13:14).

e) They are such as are blasphemers, swearers, murderers, adulterers, drunkards, thieves, covetous, unrighteous, extortioners, revilers, scoffers at religion, persecutors of God's people; or who have an enmity to the power of godliness.

f) They are such as are proud and boasters, such as are disobedient to parents without natural affection, such as are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, such as are liars and unfaithful, such as are idle and slothful, such as live in envy and malice, such as are given to revenge and cannot forgive injuries, and other like sinners.

g) These are all children of disobedience, upon whom the wrath of God will come. Ephesians 5:6: “Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

h) Let none deceive you with vain words—neither deceive yourselves with vain thoughts—as if you might escape the wrath of God, although you live in the practice of such and such sins.

i) See how vain and groundless the security of such people is.

(1) *Deuteronomy 29:18-20*, “Let none of those who hear the warnings of this curse consider themselves immune, thinking, ‘I am safe, even though I am walking in my own stubborn way.’ This would lead to utter ruin! The Lord will not pardon such people. His anger and jealousy will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will come down on them, and the Lord will erase their names from under heaven! The Lord will pour out on them all the covenant curses recorded in this Book of the Law!”

(2) Moreover, we read in *Galatians 3:10*, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.”

(3) Such as are guilty of any transgression of the law (while out of Christ) are under the curse, and liable to God’s wrath.

(a) *Hebrews 2:2*, “The people were punished for every violation of the law and every act of disobedience.”

(b) Hence it is that the children of disobedience, are called children of wrath (*Ephesians 2:2-3*).

j) Second, the wrath of God will come upon all HYPOCRITES.

(1) *It is more peculiarly appropriated unto them, as their portion.*

(2) *Matthew 24:51*, “He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

(3) *Whoever escapes God’s wrath, hypocrites shall not escape; whoever is pardoned, hypocrites shall be punished.*

(4) *These are such as have a form of godliness—but deny the power thereof; such as make some outward show of reformation—but are without inward transformation.*

(5) *These are such as are like painted sepulchers, fair and beautiful without—but within are full of rottenness!*

(6) *These are such as make it their great business to appear religious, and take no care to be pious—but are rotten at heart and cover carnal designs with a cloak of profession.*

(7) *As their sin is most offensive unto God here—so His wrath will certainly come upon them with the greatest severity hereafter!*

k) Third, the wrath of God will come upon all IMPENITENT and UNBELIEVING people.

(1) *Luke 13:3*, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.”

(2) *Mark 16:16*, “He who believes not, shall be damned.”

(3) *Repentance and faith are two great duties of the gospel, and wrath is particularly threatened to such as do not obey the gospel; to such God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish (Romans 2:8-9).*

(4) *And Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon them (2 Thessalonians 1:8).*

(5) *Such as are impenitent and unbelieving, neglect the salvation of the gospel which, by faith in Christ alone, is attainable!*

(6) *Thus sinning against the only remedy—they cannot escape!*

(7) *Hebrews 2:3, “How shall we escape—if we neglect so great salvation!”*