

The Wrath of God

Thomas Boston (1676-1732)

John 3:36

I. The Text Opened

A. John 3:36

1. "The wrath of God abides on him," (John 3:36).
2. Upon the children of disobedience, certainly and inevitably the horrible wrath of God comes.
 - a) This is clear in the text without any collection made from it.
 - b) The Scripture testifies everywhere that this wrath is horrible and altogether intolerable, such as Heb. 10:27; Rev 6:16-17;2 and elsewhere.
 - c) And the thing itself sufficiently shows it, if we consider God's anger as to its intensity, extent, and duration.
3. As to its intensity, it is called in Scripture a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29.
 - a) Now, this fire of the wrath of God does not consume lightly, or light things only.
 - b) But as it is said in Deut. 32:22, God's wrath set on fire will burn down to the grave, etc.
 - c) In Nahum 1:6 there is a most similar and pithy description.
 - (1) *"Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him."* (Nah. 1:6).
 - d) Such descriptions signify that the wrath of God thoroughly pierces not only into the body, but into the soul and the inward part of the spirit, for which reason in many passages of Scripture it is compared to sharp arrows piercing into the heart itself, and consuming the spirit and life.
4. As to the extent, this wrath of God contains in it all sorts of evils, whether corporal or spiritual; whether in this life or at the end of it, and in death, or at death.
 - a) Here belong those catalogues or inventories of curses that are found in Deut. 28 and Lev. 26.
5. As to the duration, it remains upon impenitent sinners, John 3:36, not for some short space, but unto all eternity, and without end.
 - a) For as with that obligation whereby we are bound to render to God all obedience without end, so consequently, the transgression whereby sinners break that obligation, is in a way infinite and without end.
 - b) So also the punishment, which takes away its measure from the nature of the transgression, will be without end and infinite — and that is in the privation of an infinite good, as well as in the endless duration of this privation or loss.
 - c) Nor should it seem strange that for a sin which is committed in a short time, an endless punishment should be inflicted; because equity itself requires that

everyone should be deprived of that good from which, by his own fault, he has turned.

d) But every sinner has turned himself away from an endless good, by a fault he can never come out of by himself and make an end of; and therefore, it is only reasonable that he be endlessly deprived of that good.

e) And moreover, because he has disturbed that order which God set and appointed, it is only justice if he were never freed from the punishment of this fault, until he has repaired God his honor — which an unrepenting sinner can never do, even into eternity.

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: The wrath of God will be poured out on all unrepentant sinners, and that forever.

1. The wrath of God is IRRESISTIBLE, there is no standing before it; "Who can stand in Your sight, when once You are angry?" Psalm 76:7.

a) Can the worm or the moth defend itself against him who designs to crush it?

b) Can the worm, man, stand before an angry God?

c) Foolish men, indeed, bid a defiance against God; but the Lord often, even in this world, opens such sluices of wrath upon them, as all their might cannot stop— they are carried away thereby, as with a flood!

(1) How much more will it be so in hell!

2. The wrath of God is INSUPPORTABLE.

a) What a man cannot resist, he will try to endure.

b) But who shall dwell in devouring fire?

c) Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

d) God's wrath is a weight which will sink men into the lowest hell.

(1) It is a burden which no man can endure.

3. The wrath of God is UNAVOIDABLE to those who continue impenitently, and die in their sinful course.

a) "He who, being often reprov'd, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed— and that without remedy!" Proverbs 29:1.

b) We may now flee from it, indeed, by fleeing to Jesus Christ.

(1) But those who flee from Christ, will never be able to avoid it.

(2) Where can men flee from the avenging God?

(3) Where will they find a shelter?

(4) The hills will not bear them.

(5) The mountains will be deaf to their loudest supplications, when they cry to them to "hide them from the wrath of the Lamb."

4. The wrath of God is POWERFUL and FIERCE.
- "Who can comprehend the power of Your anger? Your wrath is as awesome as the fear You deserve." Psalm 90:11.
 - We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought; but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is.
 - The power of God's wrath can never be known to the utmost; for it is infinite, and, properly speaking, has no utmost limit.
 - However fierce it is, either on earth or in hell, God can still carry it farther.
 - Everything in God is most perfect in its kind; and therefore no wrath is so fierce as His.
 - O sinner! how will you be able to endure that wrath, which will tear you in pieces, Psalm 50:22, and grind you to powder! Luke 20:18.*
5. The wrath of God is PENETRATING and PIERCING wrath.
- It is burning wrath, and fiery indignation.
 - There is no pain more intense than that which is caused by fire; and no fire so piercing as the fire of God's indignation, which burns unto the lowest hell, Deut. 32:22.
 - The arrows of men's wrath can pierce flesh, blood, and bones—but cannot reach the soul. But the wrath of God will sink into the soul, and so pierce a man in the most tender part.
6. The wrath of God is CONSTANT wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate state; constantly attending him from the womb to the grave.
- There are few days so dark—but the sun sometimes looks out from under the clouds.
 - But the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it; John 3:36, "The wrath of God abides on him" who believes not.
7. The wrath of God is ETERNAL.
- O, miserable soul! if you flee not from this wrath unto Jesus Christ; though your misery had a beginning—yet it will never have an end!
 - Should devouring death wholly swallow you up, and forever hold you fast in the grave—it would be kind.
 - But your body must be reunited to your immortal soul, and live again, and never die; that you may be ever-dying, in the hands of the ever-living God.
 - Death will quench the flame of man's wrath against us, if nothing else does.
 - But God's wrath, when it has come on the sinner for millions of ages, will still be the wrath to come! Matt. 3:7; 1 Thess. 1:10.
 - While God is, He will pursue the quarrel.*

III. The Text Applied

A. The Dreadful Wrath of God

1. However dreadful it is, and though it is eternal—yet it is a most JUST wrath!
 - a) It is a clear fire, without the least smoke of injustice.
 - b) The sea of wrath, raging with greatest fury against the sinner, is clear as crystal.
 - c) The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong against you.
 - d) "Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath? Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world?" Romans 3:5-6.
 - e) The Judge being infinitely just—the sentence must be righteous.
 - f) Therefore, stop your mouth, O proud sinner!
 - g) Still your clamor against your righteous Judge!