God's Wrath in 1 Thessalonians 2:16

I. 1 Thessalonians 2:16 – God's wrath is "_____"

A. The _____ Jews were a people to be _____ for (2:15-16):

1. They were the tragic antithesis of the _____ in Thessaloniki. The Jews had a long-standing, persistent resentment, envy, and rage against Paul, the Gospel, and the Gentiles: Acts 9:20, 22; 13:40-50; 14:1-7, 19-20; 18:12-17; 19:8-10; 2 Corinthians 11:24.

2. Paul _____ over the Thessalonians because they received God's Word (2:13), honored the other saints (2:14a), and persevered in suffering (2:14b).

3. Paul _____ over the unbelieving Jews because they killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets (2:15a), hindered the saints from missionary work among the Gentiles (2:15b-16a), and would suffer punishment under God's wrath (2:16b).

B. Wrath of God in 1 Thessalonians 2:16

1. Wrath of God often symbolized in terms of a _____:
Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15-17, 27-29; Lament. 4:21-22; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Habakkuk 2:16; Matt. 20:22; 26:39; John 18:11; Rev. 14:10; 16:19.

a. The Apostle Paul could be alluding to: Babylonian Exile in Ezekiel 8-11; Roman destruction of Jerusalem that came in 70 A.D.; Christ's second coming in judgment in Revelation 19; or most probably to God's _____ wrath on _____ as also mentioned by the Apostle John in his gospel (3:18, 36).

2. The Jews who rejected and hindered the Gospel "always fill up the measure of their sins" = "They always heap up their sins to the limit."

*There is a well-defined point set by God at which people reach the limit of their sins. See Genesis 6:3-6; 15:16; Matthew 23:32.

*It means God brings _____ only when sin has reached a certain limit. See Daniel 8:23; **Acts 17:30-31**; **Romans 2:5-6**; Hebrews 10:28-31.

"Wrath has come upon them to the utmost" – 1 Thessalonians 2:16 =

"has come" = coming is certain, for sure, done deal!
Those Jews had met all the prerequisites for future damnation. They had murdered their Messiah and His messengers; therefore, God's wrath would *"come upon them to the utmost"* = God will extend His wrath to the unbelieving to its extreme limit, or fullest expression. See 2 Kings 22:17; Psalm 78:59; Matthew 3:7; Romans 9:22.

II. Jesus Took the Cup of God's Wrath for You
God's wrath is far outweighed by His _____ – Psalm 85:10

A. He suffered for His whole life: Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 5:8; 12:3-4; John 11:35; Isaiah 53:3, *"…a man of sorrows acquainted with grief."*

B. His suffering climaxed at the cross in physical pain and death, in the pain of bearing sin (Isaiah 53:6, 12; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24), and in abandonment (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:34). Matthew 27:46, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* Jesus was finally cut off from the sweet fellowship He had always known with His heavenly Father; the unfailing source of His inward strength and greatest joy in a life filled with sorrows. Jesus faced the weight of the guilt of trillions of sins alone because God is *"of purer eyes than to behold evil"* (Habakkuk 1:13).

C. He suffered by becoming the object of God's full wrath against our sin. Jesus became the object of God's intense hatred of sin and His vengeance and fury against all sin that had been stored up since the beginning of the world.

D. Jesus was our "_____" (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). "Propitiation" means "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the very end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor (propitious)."

E. We can thank and praise God for His wrath because in Christ we no longer have to fear or dread His wrath (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 5:10). God's wrath should also remind us of His great patience toward sinners so that many can be saved (Psalm 103:8-9; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9-10). God's wrath should motivate us toward evangelism. And God's wrath should stir thanks because we know that one day He will finally punish all wrongdoing, and will reign over a new heavens and a new earth in which there will be no unrighteousness.

THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH

1 Thessalonians 2:15

DEFINITION

"God intensely ***hates*** all ***sin*** and is obliged by His Holy Nature to judge and ***punish*** all sin."

The Vanishing of God’s Wrath

The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about one’s self; God doesn’t need to be particularly involved in my life except if I need Him to solve a problem; good people go to heaven.

Radically Undemanding Faith

“A Toothless Lion of Judah?”

Is true Christian faith undemanding? No! It is the opposite. It is so demanding that God sent His Son to die for our sin – becoming the object of God’s wrath - and call us to holiness.

Major Biblical Theme

"God's wrath is such an essential aspect of the biblical message that writers can speak of "(the) wrath", meaning God's wrath, without specifying that His wrath is in view: Matthew 3:7; Luke 21:23; Romans 12:19; 13:4)."

NT Presence of Wrath

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not believe in the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Hebrews 10:26-31

"…a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of fire…deserving much severer punishment…vengeance is Mine, I will repay…it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The Wrath of God

- Still in place; still exists; always will
- Not just an Old Testament doctrine
- Holy, just, pure, right, perfect…
- Not unloving
- Directed and specific (i.e. Romans 1)
- Man’s wrath not productive; must put off

Man's Wrath

Tainted by self-serving sin nature:

Ephesians 4:26 – be vigilant against it; destructive if it lingers

James 1:19-20 – ineffective for God's purposes/righteousness

Romans 12:19ff - abandon all vengeance!

God’s Wrath

“Principle of rational, retributive justice – not arbitrary maliciousness like other Near Eastern religions; God’s response to sin, His holy antipathy toward the unholy; induced even by ignorance of God (Job 42:7; Ps. 78:22, 32; Romans 1:18-25).

God’s Wrath

“The Apostle Paul says God’s wrath is universally revealed now and always against human impiety and injustice because they spring from suppression of the truth about God’s eternal power and Divine Nature (Romans 1).”

1 Thessalonians 2:16

“the full measure of God’s wrath for their sins”

The Apostle Paul is addressing the unbelieving Jews who were hindering the work of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul's Heart

The **unbelieving** Jews were a people to be **sad** for. They were the tragic antithesis of the **believers** in Thessaloniki. They opposed Paul, the Gospel, Christ, the Gentiles, and "all men."

Opposites Don’t Attract

Paul ***rejoiced*** over the Thessalonians, but ***grieved*** over the Jews because:

1. They killed Jesus and His prophets;
2. They hindered the Gospel ministry;
3. They would suffer God’s wrath.

The Grapes of God's Wrath

Often symbolized in terms of a ***cup***.

Paul most probably referring to God's ***eternal*** wrath on ***unbelievers***.

Revelation 14:9-13

"…he will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger, being tormented with fire and brimstone, day and night without rest, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb forever and ever."

A Full Measure

“always heap up their sins to the limit.”

God brings ***judgment*** only when sin has reached a certain limit.

Acts 17:30-31

"Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring that all people everywhere should repent, because He has ***fixed a day*** *in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed."*

Romans 2:5-6

Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself ***in the day*** *of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.*

*“wrath **HAS** come to utmost”*

Grammatical structure of “has come” declares that though it is future, God’s wrath against unbelievers is so certain that it can be spoken of as already happening.

“to the utmost”

God will pour out upon the unbeliever for eternity the full extent, the fullest expression, the extreme limits of His Divine wrath, judgment, punishment, and vengeance; escape and death will not be possible.

Wrath: Not the Last Word

Love Wins! ;)

God's wrath is far outweighed by His ***LOVE***!

Common Grace

“I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rains on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Particular Grace

“What if God, willing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, whom He called even from among Gentiles” (Romans 9:22).

Ephesians 2:1-10

"…dead in trespasses and sins…by nature children of wrath…but God being rich in mercy, because of His great love, loved us…even when dead in our trespasses He made us alive together with Christ…by grace you have been saved…"

Jesus and God’s Wrath

- Jesus took the cup of God’s wrath for you
- Jesus suffered for His whole life
- Jesus suffered at the cross in physical pain, in the pain of bearing sin, and in in the pain of abandonment

Suffered His Whole Life

“though rich, became poor”

“man of sorrows acquainted with grief”

“learned obedience from the things He suffered, having been made perfect”

Hebrews 5:8; 2:18

Suffered at the Cross

Suffered in physical pain and death

Suffered in bearing sins

Suffered in abandonment

“My God, My God, why have you abandoned Me?”

Habakkuk 1:3

“God’s eyes are pure; of purer eyes than to behold evil”

Suffered God's Wrath

Jesus became the object of God's full wrath and intense hatred against our sin; God's vengeance and fury was poured out on all sin that had been stored up since the beginning of time and all sin to be committed in the future (Rom. 3:25).

From Wrath to Favor

Jesus was and is our ***propitiation***.

"A sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the very end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor."

Romans 3:23-26

“All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory; justified as a gift of God’s grace through redemption in Jesus Christ; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.”

1 John 2:2; 4:10

“Jesus Christ Himself is the propitiation for our sins. Love is not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

John 3:36

Yes indeed, love does win, BUT only for those who "believe in the Son and have eternal life," not for those "who do not believe in the Son, for the wrath of God abides on him."

Jesus and Wrath

The coming of salvation in Christ does not mean that Divine wrath has been eliminated. The Gospel proclamation calls hearers to repentance and promises “wrath to come.” Salvation through Christ is salvation from eschatological wrath.

Jesus and Wrath

Scripture such as 1 Thessalonians 2:16 and John 3:36 demonstrate that in certain respects wrath is already resting on humankind because the “eschaton,” end of all things, has already been initiated by the fist coming of Jesus Christ and the preaching of the Gospel (Matthew 3:7).

Praise God for His Wrath

- In Christ we no longer fear wrath
- God must be praised for His patience
- We must urgently evangelize
- All wrong will one day be punished and a new sinless world will come!