

The Cup of God's Wrath

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The following was one of John's contributions to a discussion that included the subject of the wrath of God:

A thought or two to complement what you both have shared: What is translated as "wrath" in conventional translations cannot---as commonly believed---be an essential change of disposition on God's part toward man. God has only one disposition, one inclination, one divine posture in His relationship with man, that of unconditional love coming to us in unearned grace. He is determined to fully give Himself to us unreservedly. When one sees this, we become His bond slave, bound by such love.

The primary Greek work translated as "wrath" is "orge," from which we get our English word, "orgy," and it's various forms. The word itself and it's root conveys aroused passion, excitement, a reaching after and overlaps in meaning with "thumos," translated also as "wrath."

Jonathan Mitchell translates "orge" it as "inherent fervor, and Ed Browne (he says hi to you both), translates it as "intrinsic fervor." For me, it suggests, in the case of God, pure, ravishing love.

Since God IS love, then wrath, necessarily, is a form of love, for nothing could proceed out from the nature of God that is inconsistent with the love that He IS.

The conclusion is just too obvious once one has been delivered from the dark, demonic imagination that fuels eternal torment dogma; namely, that God, when faced with the ontological contrarianism that seeks to impose on us a false identity, with us being overcome by a false persona, His love is aroused to reclaim us, to lay claim with divine jealousy to that which belongs to Him.

With inherent, intrinsic fervor He reaches out to possess that which is His---and we are His by generation, creation and redemption.

How does the law play into this, for it certainly does as Charley has pointed out? We must trace the law of God, as a code of moral and

ethical requirement back to the presence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil generically. At the very beginning, that is the crisis that man faced, to relate to God legally, or to know Him intimately by sharing the life of Christ, as pictured by the tree of life.

As soon as Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (came to know some of what God knew without knowing God), an infestation, an element of perversity occurred in their understanding of God and of themselves. They were brain-washed into carnal minded enmity against God. They began to relate to God differently than He related to them, and they projected their darkened identity on to Him.

It is an immutable principle, that when men, contrary to their God-given nature, are subjected to legal requirement, rather than gracious provision, the result is resentment, leading to rebellion, for we were not created for law. From that very moment on, God's love became an aroused passion to have us back, to rescue His Beloved from the enemy.

Though He, Himself, in His wisdom, interjected law into the scheme of things as a necessary antithesis leading to an ultimate synthesis, He simply will not let such antithesis remain permanently. You alluded to the truth that "the law worketh wrath" (intrinsic fervor), Charley. How are we to understand that?

If you look up "worketh" in Strong's, the sense conveyed has to do with performing and finishing a task. When the law diverts us from God's purpose, with intrinsic fervor, He rises up bring us back to Himself, and onward into the glory He has predestined for us. Faced with the very antithesis of what He has planned for man, His love becomes an inferno of divine desire revealing how adamantly He is determined to bring us back to Himself, and in Himself into the glory that He planned for us in love.

What is commonly called the wrath of God, is that quality of love that will not let us go, and will not let us miss the glory of His love. It's an awesome, passionate, jealous, intense, possessive (in a pure sense) love, that when heated up fills us with awe. Initially it can be terribly frightening to be the object of such fervor.

I think of the old song about Casey waltzing with the strawberry blond.

"His brain was so loaded it nearly exploded, the poor girl would shake with alarm..."

Whenever we are not participating in the faith of Christ, when we are not ongoingly believing in Christ, sharing His restful trust in the Father's perfect love, His intrinsic fervor abides on us. He becomes, out from the depths of His love, a consuming fire, utterly radical in His pursuit of us, even to the cross.

Peace,
John