

# What Turns Away God's Anger

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Date: 05 June 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, the death of Christ has accomplished many things for us. It's our victory, our redemption, our reconciliation, our justification, our sanctification, our purification, our forgiveness.

The cross is like a cut diamond that no matter which way you turn it, it sparkles with new luster. And so it is as we look at the cross from different angles, we see different beauties in our Savior.

And tonight I want us to meditate on the cross from the perspective of Him being our propitiation.

We just sang, Christ drank God's wrath on sin and then cried tis done.

Sin's wages paid, propitiation won. Now this is a Bible word that is missing in some of our newer translations or relegated to a footnote as in the NIV, but it is a word we need to know as God Himself uses it in Scripture to describe for us what the death of Christ has done for His people.

The most basic idea behind the word to propitiate is to turn away wrath. Propitiation is what Christ did on the cross then.

[ 1 : 26 ] He turned God's wrath away from us by taking it upon Himself. And so by suffering God's wrath, He pacified God's wrath that stood against us.

So you can't even begin to explain propitiation without mentioning the wrath of God because it is the turning away of God's wrath.

That could be why some of the newer versions don't like the word propitiation. The wrath of God is not the subject of delight.

And so this is a difficult truth that the Bible teaches us, but one that if we don't understand it, we will not drink of the sweetness of the work of Christ for us.

So let's consider propitiation tonight just under two points. The first is sin provokes the wrath of God. Sin provokes the wrath of God. The Old Testament speaks of God's wrath well over 500 times, and it's not at all lacking in the New Testament.

[ 2 : 36 ] We must remember that God's wrath is without any of the imperfections that are found in man's wrath. He has no flying off the handle in a fit of unreasonable rage or uncontrolled temper.

It's rather the consistent, inevitable response of God's holiness to sin. Professor John Murray puts it this way, the wrath of God is the inevitable reaction of the divine holiness against sin.

Sin is the contradiction of his being, and so he cannot but recoil against that which is the contradiction of himself. And this holy revulsion is called his wrath.

Now, when you think of it, any true love of the good is always accompanied by hatred of the evil.

And because God's love is real, his wrath for evil is real.

If God loves the lives of those 19 children and two teachers that were killed in Uvalde, Texas, then he hates the evil and the evil person who took their lives.

[ 3 : 56 ] Psalm 115, the Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence, his soul hates.

Psalm 55, you hate, speaking to God, you hate all who do wrong. Psalm 711, God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.

Romans 118, the wrath of God is, this present tense being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Colossians 3, 5, and 6, put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry, because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.

So, you'll be glad to know then from these verses and many, many more in Scripture that the only one, there's only one thing that provokes the wrath of God, and that is sin.

[ 5 : 07 ] Evil of any kind. So, if you're without sin, then the wrath of God has nothing to do with you, and it's not a concern of yours. But, it is a concern of ours because we know that the Scripture

teaches we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And so, this does point out, as we saw this morning, the greatest problem that we have. It's our sin against God, and it's a problem because sin provokes His holy wrath against us.

If there's no wrath in God, then sinners are not in danger, and no one really needs salvation at all.

But the truth is, His wrath is as great as the fear that is due Him.

Psalms 90 and verse 11. So, it's sin alone, evil alone, that provokes the wrath of God. That's the first point. The second point is this, there's only one thing that pacifies or propitiates the wrath of God against sinners.

If we have any idea of how offensive our sins are to a holy God, then the thing that amazes us is not that our sins provoke God's infinite wrath, but rather, that there is actually something that can appease His wrath and turn it away from us.

[ 6 : 31 ] That's the really amazing thing. And it's not something that can appease His wrath, it's rather someone.

He's a person. And John speaks of Him in 1 John 2.2. He says, if any of us sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous one, who is the propitiation for our sins.

He Himself is the propitiation, the one that turns away God's wrath from us because of our sins. And then Romans 3.25 shows us God, the Father's involvement in this whole thing, that God presented Him, Christ, as the propitiation through faith in His blood.

It was through Christ's bloody death in our place that God's wrath was pacified, but it was God, the Father Himself, who sent Him to be that wrath-pacifying sacrifice for us.

Now, God's way of propitiating His own wrath was portrayed in the Old Testament to God's people in their tabernacle and temple worship, in the sacrifices that they had for sin.

[ 7 : 56 ] So the guilty sinner would bring this innocent animal without defect. He would lay his hands upon the head of the animal and confess his sins over it, symbolically transferring his sins onto that animal.

And from that point on, the animal was treated as the guilty one. And the guilty one was treated as the innocent one. The animal was killed and sacrificed in the place of the guilty.

and all in order that God's wrath might be turned away from the guilty one who by sin had stirred up that wrath and provoked it. Well, I say that was set before the Israelites every day.

Morning sacrifice, evening sacrifice, they brought their own sacrifices. God was telling them the one way by which the wrath of God could be pacified.

And then Hebrews 10.4 makes clear that it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. No animal blood could ever placate the wrath of God against the sinner.

[ 9 : 03 ] God was just using the sacrificial system to point their faith to the coming Lamb of God who actually could and would turn aside God's wrath by His own death on the cross in their place.

But here's the thing. Old Testament Israel began to think of their sacrifices as automatically placating the wrath of God.

So they sinned with a high hand, careless, and then they thought a few blood sacrifices should appease God's wrath. There. We've taken care of it. We've got bloody sacrifices to give Him and that will automatically placate His wrath.

Well, God sent His prophets to tell them otherwise. Turn to Isaiah chapter 1. I'd like to look at this doctrine of a propitiation through the eyes of Isaiah, the prophet, and here we see Israel thinking, oh, we can propitiate God's wrath with our animal sacrifices.

No problem. And the book opens with God charging Israel with their rebellion against Him. Verse 4, He says, Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption.

[ 10 : 23 ] They've forsaken the Lord. They've spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on Him. These were the things for which the Lord's anger was burning against Israel. And Israel's response was to think that they could just appease the Lord with their animal sacrifices.

And God says, think again, verse 11, the multitude of your sacrifices, what are they to me? I have more than enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of fattened animals.

I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. It's all meaningless. It's detestable to me. Your religious festivals my soul hates. I'm weary of it all. So you see, their sacrifices did nothing to turn away the wrath of God.

And neither did God's judgments that were brought upon them because of their sin. So the sacrifices didn't propitiate God's wrath.

God brought judgments upon them. And what we're going to see is that did not placate the wrath of God. Isaiah chapter 5, he continues the charges of their sins and pronounces six woes of judgment in this chapter.

[11:32] There's drought and famine and dying of hunger. There's exile into foreign lands. There's death. There's ruined houses. and desolate land. They had rejected God's law and spurned His word.

Verse 25 of Isaiah 5. Therefore, the Lord's anger burns against His people. His hand is raised and He strikes them down.

The mountains shake. The dead bodies are like garbage in the streets. Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised.

He confronts them with their pride and arrogance of heart.

And they say, well, so the enemies have destroyed our brick houses. We'll just rebuild with dress stone. It'll be even better. No problem. They chop down our fig trees.

[12:32] We'll replace them with mighty cedars. And then in verses 11 and 12, but the Lord has strengthened their foes against them and has spurred on their enemies.

Arameans from the east and Philistines from the west have devoured Israel with open mouth. Yet, for all this, His anger is not turned away.

His hand is still upraised. So, God's judgments upon Israel one after another falling upon them, but it did not turn His anger away.

His hand was still upraised in judgment. In verses 13 to 17, they did not return to God who had struck them. And so, more judgments are falling on them.

We read, the Lord will cut down leaders and prophets and even young men and even the fatherless and widows. For everyone is ungodly and wicked.

[13:35] Every mouth speaks vileness. Verse 17b, yet for all this, His anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised.

And by now, after three times reading that, we ought to be thinking. and wondering, what does it take to turn away God's wrath and anger?

If these judgments outpoured upon them and venting God's wrath upon them does not turn it away, what will? Verse 18 through 21, there's more in store.

By the wrath of the Lord Almighty, the land will be scorched, the people will be fuel for the fire.

Famine will result such that they will be feeding on the flesh of their own offspring.

Verse 21, yet for all this, His anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised. Chapter 10, verses 1-4, woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people.

[14:51] What will you do on the day of reckoning when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain.

Verse 4, yet for all this, His anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised. It's starting to sound like a broken record, isn't it? Kids, you can ask your parents what that means.

It's something that just never got out of the groove and you just keep hearing it over and over again. We've heard it some five times now. For all this, His anger has not been turned away.

And so more judgments fall in verses 5 and 6. God's going to raise up the Assyrians as the rod of His anger in whose hand is the club of God's wrath. And He's going to send the Assyrians against the godless nation of Israel and dispatch Assyria against a people who anger me.

And I'm going to send them to seize loot and snatch plunder and to trample them down like mud in the streets. And then at last, some good news comes to the undeserving in verse 25.

[16:10] Very soon, very soon, my anger against you will end and my wrath will be directed to their destruction, the Assyrians.

So this coming end of God's anger against them is right away linked, you see in chapter 11, to the coming Messiah. A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse.

A branch will bear fruit. You see, this is a prophecy of the coming Messiah. Very soon, my anger will turn away from you. And what's the next words out of Isaiah's mouth?

The Messiah is coming. This will be his work and with righteousness, he will judge the needy and with justice, he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips.

He will slay the wicked. And amazing peace and security he will bring to his gathered people from all the nations of the world. Verse 10, and in that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for all the peoples and the nations will rally to him and his place of rest will be glorious.

[17:21] The next chapter, chapter 12, begins, in that day, that is in Messiah's day, you will say, I will praise you, O Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.

At last, at long last, God's anger has turned away. And so what has Isaiah taught us on propitiation? He's shown us that it's not an easy thing to turn God's anger away from sinners.

No amount of empty religious sacrifice of animal blood could do it. No amount of judgments poured out on them from heaven could do it. Yet for all this, his anger was not turned away.

His hand was still upraised. And so it would be only by the work of the long-promised Messiah, the King of David, that he would be the one to turn God's anger away.

Surely God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. And so with joy we will draw water from the wells of salvation.

[18:38] So Isaiah points us to the coming Messiah and points the people of Israel. That's the way the wrath of God will be turned away from you. But precisely how? How will Messiah turn the wrath away from God's people?

Well, the latter part of the book of Isaiah has four servant of the Lord songs, as they're called. They come as poems or songs and they're all about the Lord Jesus.

And the last of those four songs is found in chapter 53, if you want to turn there. Because this is where we see how it is that the Messiah, King of David, will turn away the wrath of God.

It's the suffering song, the suffering servant song. And he says in verse 4, Surely he took up our infirmities. Remember the one thing that provokes the wrath of God?

It's our sins. And surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions.

[19:51] He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep had gone astray. We had turned to his own way, each to his own way.

And the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. This is how the wrath of God is turned away by Messiah. And once the iniquities of all God's people were placed upon Messiah, he goes on to say, he was then led like a lamb to the slaughter.

He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people. He was stricken. It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.

And though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offering and prolong his days and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hands. God sent Jesus to propitiate God's wrath.

And he's telling us that the will of the Lord will prosper in the hands of his Son. And so, by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many and he will bear their iniquities.

[21:11] Therefore, God says, I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors for he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

It would be 700 years later that this shoot from the stump of Jesse would arise on the scene born of the Virgin Mary and that age 33 would make his way to the Garden of Gethsemane and there he would tell his disciples that he was deeply distressed and troubled.

He who told his disciples earlier that night, do not let your hearts be troubled, now tells them, my heart is troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Some of the strongest language portraying the greatest kind of torment of soul that it nearly brought him to death itself. And going a little farther he fell to the ground and prayed while his disciples slept and his prayer was, Father, if you're willing, take this cup from me.

Yet not my will but yours be done. What was that cup? Well, it was the cup that he was to drink the next day.

[22:47] The cup that the Father had put in his hand to drink on the morrow. There was wrath in that cup. Wrath for the sins of God's people. Divine wrath.

White, hot, fury of God. Wrath against sin. It's the wrath that you and I would have been drinking forever in hell. That was the content of that cup.

Father, if it be possible, take this from me. And this perfect humanity recoiled at the sight of it to be cut off, separated from his heavenly Father, the one he had enjoyed perfect communion with.

It was more than he could bear. It sapped his energy completely such that an angel had to be sent from heaven just to buoy him up and strengthen him. to go on praying.

And so being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly such that he started sweating as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground as he prayed, again, my Father.

[ 23 : 59 ] Only now it's not if it is possible, it is now if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink unless I drink it.

May your will be done. And heaven was silent again. And he prayed the same the third time. My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, then your will be done. Silence. And what it was that he was looking at in the cup was what it would take to take away the wrath of God from us.

And the silence of heaven was indicating there is no other way, son. There is no other way for this cup to pass from them. No other way for my wrath to be turned away from them unless you drink it yourself.

You see, it's either you drink the wrath of your people or your people will drink it in hell forever. And so the Lord, knowing full well that it was damnation in his cup, he headed to the cross willingly to drink it.

[ 25 : 21 ] He went as a sheep to the slaughter. He bore the wrath that should have been ours. And that's what it costs for God's wrath to be turned away from us. And I trust that tonight we'll see right into the heart of God.

The heart of God in Christ laid bare for us. Would the Father give his Son to suffer that for us? And would the Son willingly lay down his life? Don't you love him and want to love him more for the way he's loved us? God I've told you before of those newly wed, that newly wed couple that went scuba diving down along the Great Barrier Reef on their honeymoon and a killer shark began to circle them and then attack the woman.

And at the last moment the husband pushed himself in front of her and pushed her back behind him toward the boat. He took the full brunt of the shark's attack and he was killed but it was through his death that his bride was saved.

And that's the picture of what our Lord Jesus did for us there on Calvary's cross. He lost his life. He gave his life to save ours. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride.

[ 26 : 45 ] With his own blood he bought her and for her life he died. He turned God's wrath away from us by taking it himself.

That's propitiation through his blood. So brothers and sisters we have one who speaks to the father on our behalf when we've sinned.

It is Jesus Christ the righteous one, the only righteous one and he himself is the propitiation for our sins. What a comfort to know that. He is the one that by sacrificing himself is turned away all of God's wrath forever away from us.

And so we marvel at the cost as we sang. We marvel at the cost. The cost to our Lord Jesus. But we also marvel at the cost to the God the father to deliver his son up for us as the propitiating sacrifice.

You should never get the idea that the Lord Jesus by his sacrifice is somehow twisting the father's arm to forgive us and to be pacified in his love toward us. We must always remember that it was the father that sent his son and sent him to be that propitiating sacrifice to turn his own wrath away from us.

[ 28 : 04 ] They were one in this marvel of our salvation. God presented him as the propitiation through faith in his blood. It was his initiative. It was his plan.

And it came at no small sacrifice to the father to crush his own son. That he perfectly loved. Well, notice it's through faith. He says in Romans 3.25, God presented him as the propitiation through faith in his blood. It's through faith in his blood that this work of propitiation is applied to us. It comes to every believer because of their faith. They put faith in Jesus and this work of propitiation is counted theirs. And so God is just in the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.

And he's willing to receive all who come unto him through faith in his son and what he did to accomplish their salvation. So the end of John chapter 3, that chapter that begins with Jesus evening conversation with Nicodemus, that chapter ends in verse 36 with this promise.  
[ 29 : 20 ] Whoever believes in the son has eternal life. There's the free, sincere offer. Whoever you are, if you trust in the Lord Jesus, you have eternal life.

But the verse doesn't end there. Whoever believes in the son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Remains on him. We're all born into this world with God's wrath on us. And the only way that we escape that wrath is by faith in the only one that could propitiate and pacify that wrath.

Jesus and his blood shed for us. What a promise, but what a tremendous consequence to just rejecting the son, to have the wrath of God remain on us.

And to have it remain on us, as you know, remains forever. And there would be no end to that wrath. If that wrath is on the unbeliever at death, it will remain on him for all eternity.

[ 30 : 30 ] So here we sit tonight, and as our faith is in Jesus, that wrath is no longer remaining on us. There is therefore now no condemnation, no damnation.

No wrath. If you're outside of Christ, get into Christ tonight. And then, dear family of God, this is what we remember tonight in the Lord's Supper, that there was wrath in his cup that he drank, that there might be none in our cup for all eternity.

We'll drink from that well of salvation, those living waters forever and ever. He drank it willingly for us. Let's love and sing and wonder. And then let's offer ourselves up afresh to him, to love him who first loved us.

Oh, so we Dios are are here being for a truly must ask you to love him, to love him, to love him, to the name of his name of him, to him. To the love his name of his name of him, to her one of his name of his name. The fourth time I want to bear. The