

The Wrath of Satan Shall Praise God



David Wilkerson September 1, 2006

The Psalmist writes, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee” (Psalm 76:10). According to this verse, the wrath of the wicked will one day be turned into praise of Almighty God. What a moment that’s going to be: the tongues of evildoers will only be able to acknowledge and worship the Lord!

My question about this verse is, where does the “wrath of man” come from? Right now a fierce, intense wrath is blanketing the whole earth, something that man isn’t capable of in himself. And this wrath is manifesting itself in multiple ways. Think of it:

- Radical Islam is unleashing its angry wrath against all who refuse to bow to Allah.
- In North Korea, a raging, demon-possessed dictator is threatening the world, even as he unleashes cruel oppression and starvation on his own people.
- In the Middle East, entire nations have become the devil’s instruments to try to destroy Israel.
- In Europe and the United States, the wrath of those who loathe and despise the name of Jesus is intensifying.
- Finally, there is the wrath of the ungodly who have given themselves over to their sins. They rage in their efforts to throw off God’s rule completely.

As I consider these present forms of men’s wrath, I realize they aren’t human in nature. There can be no question about it: *it is all totally satanic*. The Bible gives us these verses to prove it:

- The apostle John, speaking of the latter days, writes, “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Revelation 12:12).
- Jesus said to those who raged against him, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44). In this one verse, Christ identifies the source of such rage: It isn’t merely human but comes directly from Satan himself.

According to these passages, what we’re facing right now is no less than a hell-directed, demonic rage. It is not just political rage, not mere personal rage, not simply a matter of Islam-versus-Israel. It is much worse.

The Psalmist addresses this phenomenon when he asks in bewilderment: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed” (Psalm 2:1–2).

It is all a demonic fury directed against Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ. And the various forms this wrath is taking are becoming more and more potent. Right now, we see Christ’s words played out before us on the world stage: the children of Satan are clearly doing their father’s bidding.

1. I think of the worldwide wrath of Islam and other heathen religions that try to establish their god as sovereign ruler of the earth.

Islamic clerics are calling for a worldwide fatwah against all who refuse to worship their false god. In a demonic rage, the enemies of Christ are literally lifting weapons and commanding the masses, "Bow to our god, or die."

Yet, none of this satanic wrath is new. We see example after example of such demonic madness throughout history. In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden god in Babylon and demanded that it be worshiped. Every official, leader and citizen in Babylon's one-hundred-plus provinces had to fall down before this god or face death. There were but two choices: bow or burn. If anyone refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol, they would be roasted alive in huge ovens.

After the decree was issued, three devout young Jews in the kingdom refused to bow. Nebuchadnezzar, in a rage, had them dragged before him and demanded to know: "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15). Here was their answer: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king" (3:17).

The response of the demon-gripped king was predictable: "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury...and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (3:19). This was purely demonic hatred against Jehovah God. The truth is, all who stand for Christ can expect to encounter such rage. Their obedience always stirs up the rage of those who take directions from Satan.

So, what was the outcome? Whose God prevailed in Babylon? In the midst of this contest, Jesus himself manifested his glory and power. When King Nebuchadnezzar peered into the red-hot oven, he was shocked at what he saw. He cried: "We threw three men into the furnace, but now I see four men. They're walking around in the fire, and they're not being burned. In fact, they act as if the roaring flames are nothing. And the fourth man has the appearance of the Son of God!" (Daniel 3:25, my paraphrase).

When Jesus shows up, the game is over. His enemies have to cower before him. Right now we're seeing history repeat itself.

Today, Islam is a kind of Babylon with mad leaders like King Nebuchadnezzar. This religion is threatening the whole world with the demand to worship its deity, Allah. Terrorist organizations with Islamic support are demanding: "Bow to Allah, or we will blow up your airplanes. We'll bomb your towns, trains, buses and tunnels. We'll kidnap you, torture you and behead you. Allah will rule the world. Islam is going to prevail."

As we consider such demonic forces, we should turn again to the story of Nebuchadnezzar and those three faithful servants. It tells us that in a single hour, the Lord came down and delivered his servants — and that changed everything. Everything looked different when the Lord manifested his power, causing the king to cry:

"Blessed be the God of (these three men), who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God" (Daniel 3:28). Immediately, Nebuchadnezzar issued a different decree. This one stated that the only God to be worshiped was that of the three young Jews: "Because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (3:29).

Let's return now to the Psalmist, who asked why the heathen nations rage against the Lord. According to him, here is how God responds to such wrath: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" (Psalm 2:4–5).

The Lord himself then declares: "(I) have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion...Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (2:6–7). Islamics and other heathen religions may hope to install their gods as king, ruling the globe. But Jehovah God says, "I have already installed my Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as king of the heavens and the earth. He is even now Lord of all."

The Father says it himself: Jesus reigns as Lord. What is the world's reaction to this?

2. There is a growing wrath and anger in the hearts of wicked men against the very name of Jesus.

All over the world, there is arising a red-hot hatred for God's Word. The Bible is despised, mocked and cursed by ungodly men. I ask you: what is it about Jesus' name that stirs up such anger by its mere mention? No name is so despised in all the world. Yet there can be no salvation in any name but his: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We know that Jesus' name has always been hated by wicked men. But now that hatred has turned into a demonic rage. Christ's name is slowly and subtly being erased from society, by legislative mandates in nations all over the globe.

I received word recently from a very reliable source about an astonishing development in the U.S. military. An attempt is being made to rule that no chaplain, even a Catholic or Protestant, can mention the name of Jesus Christ. The reasoning behind this is unbelievable: "We must have spiritual maturity in a pluralistic society." What a deception! Think of it: first, to forbid any mention of the name of Jesus, and then to say it's a matter of spiritual maturity. This is straight out of hell!

Why is there such rage against the Son of God? Why do wicked men shudder at the mention of his name? It is because of what his name represents: Christ's name means deliverance from sin. It means freedom from the dominion of sin. It means death to the old, fallen, adamic nature, and entry into newness of life. It means power to forsake and deny all ungodly lusts and pleasures.

But, you see, pleasure lovers don't want to give up their sensual way of life. Paul says of them, "These people not only love their sins, they fully understand that God's judgment is against adulterers, fornicators, sexual perversions. And yet they take pleasure in those who do such things. They are haters of God" (Romans 1:28–32, my paraphrase).

Hear what Jehovah God has to say about this satanic wrath against his Son, his Word and his people.

According to the Psalmist, the heathen's attitude is, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:3). Translated into modern terms, this reads: "Come now, we can no longer tolerate any condemnation from the Bible. We won't allow this 'Jesus bondage' to stop us. We're going to put into effect laws that break all the old chains of morality. We'll claim our right to marriage between two men or two women. We're going to push for the rights of all manner of sexual deviations. We need to break down the old moral boundaries. We'll claim the moral high ground."

My Bible tells me what will happen in such an hour. When evil men's wrath is poised to overwhelm the laws of nature — turning society into an indescribable, Sodom-like hell, where every man is a law unto himself — that's when our Lord moves in: "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" (2:5).

The Psalmist tells us, "They have set up their own standards as holy. They've lifted up their earthly axes in a forest of trees to cut down all that is righteous. They're smashing holy things with hatchets and hammers, and defiling God's dwelling place" (see Psalm 74:4–7). He then laments, "O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?" (74:10).

That's when God's Word tells us the destruction and blasphemy being brought about by man's wrath won't last much longer. "Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (76:10). How will this happen? Simply put, the more intense the wrath of men becomes, the more God will pour out his grace. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).

We see wonderful examples of this throughout history. Think about how the church of Christ was trampled in China, under the horrible wrath of communism. All forms of religious activity were banned, including Buddhism, the prominent religion in that land. A spiritual vacuum was left, with people empty and hungering. Yet, once again, the wrath of man was turned into the praises of God. The Lord poured out rivers of grace on China, and an underground church sprang up all across the nation. Today the Chinese church numbers in the millions, and it's still growing strong.

Perhaps the clearest example to me of man's wrath turning into God's praise is the testimony of the apostle Paul. Jesus manifested himself to this fierce persecutor of the early church, on the road to Damascus. In a single moment, Paul's raging hatred for Christ and his church was turned into God's praise. The entire world is different today as a result.

Even now we're seeing the wrath of Hezbollah being turned into God's praise. How? Islamics in South Lebanon fled the war into Jordan and Syria, where many were taken in by Christians. As those believers showed Christ's unconditional love to the refugees, feeding and housing them, the hearts of the disenfranchised Islamics were being melted. They are now more open to the gospel than ever.

Through all of these examples, I see the Lord answering the Psalmist's cry: "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually" (Psalm 74:22–23).

3. Finally, there is ever-increasing satanic wrath against every devoted follower of Christ.

I believe a messenger of Satan has been assigned to every godly person, and is charged to afflict and harass them every day. If you're drawing closer to the Lord, then you're going to face the full wrath of a mad devil.

However, there is a way to turn Satan's wrath against you into God's praise. The fact is, we're not sitting ducks or helpless babies. We have been given weapons and resources that are mighty to the pulling down of satanic strongholds. What is our greatest weapon? It is the promises of Almighty God.

Scripture tells us, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). You may ask, "But how do I resist the enemy?" You do it by feeding on God's promises, making them part of your very being, and calling on them when you're under fire, quoting them to the devil. Here is just one example of such a promise:

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:10–13).

I think of the wrath aimed at Nicky Cruz recently when he preached in London.

Former gang leader Nicky Cruz held evangelistic meetings not long ago in a gang-infested borough of London known as Hackney. The crime rate there was spiraling out of control, and Nicky was invited by the chief of police to speak.

The mayor of Hackney is gay, as are many of the city council members. When they learned Nicky would be speaking, they looked into his website and found a statement saying the Bible calls homosexuality a sin. (The context was Nicky's response to a letter. Nicky added, "Homosexuality is not the problem — sin is the problem. The same is true of fornication, adultery, violence, and drug and alcohol abuse.")

These leaders began a campaign to keep Nicky from speaking, and the wrath they brought against him was awful. He was called intolerant and homophobic, and newspapers spread the story across their front pages. Our ministry received e-mail reports about the whole furor.

As all this wrath was being spewed at Nicky, he was advised to make compromising statements to the press. But Nicky refused, instead demanding equal rights to hold public meetings, just as other groups enjoyed. A law firm took up Nicky's cause and represented him, winning the case.

When Nicky held his meetings in Hackney, the Holy Spirit came and Jesus manifested his power. The auditorium was packed each night, and at week's end some 1,500 people had asked Jesus into their hearts. That number included some gang leaders, as well as addicts and prostitutes. Seven gangs in the area ended up calling for temporary peace. All told, after Nicky's meetings the crime rate in Hackney dropped 14 percent.

I ask you: was all of that wrath actually directed at Nicky? No, it was aimed at the redeeming power of Christ, the transforming power of the gospel. And it came because there was a great fear of being convicted for sin. Think about it: if drug addicts got delivered from their habits...if murderous gang members were changed and made new creatures in Christ...if homosexuals and prostitutes were given a witness that nothing is impossible with Christ, that they could miraculously be set free...if God's love could reach incorrigible gangs...then his love could break any chain of bondage. Is it any wonder Satan's wrath was so stirred?

The rage of sinful men against Christ and his church will never be appeased.

No amount of compromise, love or tolerance will ever satisfy this demonic anger and fury. In fact, it's only going to get worse, much worse. Right now, wrathful forces are gaining increased political power, running for offices worldwide and getting elected.

In some areas of the European Union, it is now illegal to preach Christ with the freedom we enjoy in the U.S. Much gospel preaching is called a “bias crime.” I fear a day is coming when the same will be true in America.

King David was overwhelmed by the anti-God spirit of his day. He cried out to the Lord, “Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred” (Psalm 25:19). Likewise, Psalm 124:2–3 tells us: “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.”

David the Psalmist expresses what many in the church feel today. At times it seems we’re helpless to stand against the evil forces amassing. Even the courts are involved, hastening our society closer and closer to the gates of hell. I can hardly believe how, day after day, the morals of our country are being trampled into the dirt.

Will the Lord allow this wrath against him and his church to go on, until our society becomes like Sodom, with every man a law unto himself? No, never! Right now, we are experiencing the Lord’s incredible patience. He is going to bring judgment, but all of his judgments are meant to redeem. Isaiah gives us a wonderful picture of this:

“I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them...

“The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once...

“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

“They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see” (Isaiah 42:8–9, 13–14, 16–18).

Beloved, the divine grace Isaiah describes turned Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle. It raised up a multimillion-member church in communist China. It’s sending Islamic refugees into the loving arms of devoted servants of Christ. And right now, at a Teen Challenge center in an Islamic country, it has raised up 500 converted drug addicts who are eager to preach Christ. God is indeed pouring out his redeeming grace in these last days.

We are not to fret over the battles that Satan seems to be winning. The battle we’re in is an eternal one. And the gates of hell will not prevail against Christ’s church. Our Father has declared it: *Jesus already reigns as King!* ?

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