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Revelation

Chapter 15 - Revealing the Heart of Divine Wrath

God's Wrath Has an End (vs. 1)

Revelation 15:1: Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

Chapter 15 is really an introduction into the rest of the chapter. It's about the wrath of God. What's unique and what's interesting to me about this is where it's placed. I mean, we've had 14 chapters. Where's the wrath of God? You see, people read Revelation and their perception is this is all about how mean God is. But you don't understand. Read the first 14 chapters. Man is the one that's mean. He's the one that's been killing. He's the one that's created mayhem on the earth. Not God. The wrath of God comes against these things. But man is literally

destroying himself. And so, by the time you come up to Chapter 15, I mean, the beast is in control and he's literally manipulating every man, woman, and child in the face of the earth to bow down to him. That's not God being mean. He's killing anybody that disagrees with him. That's not God being mean. So, the wrath of God now comes in Chapter 15. It is a response in many ways to the hostility and hatred of man.

The interesting conspicuous difference as you read the beginning of Revelation, and you see some of the pictures of heaven and earth, and there is a conspicuous difference. And the difference is that when you see the scenes in heaven, you see praise and the honor and the glory and the lifting up of that which is gracious and kind. You see a sense of harmony and a sense of unity. But when you then look at the things of the earth, you see things that are in disarray, things that are confusing, things that are full of slaughter and chaos and mayhem and deceit and treachery and tyranny. I mean, the contrast is pretty obvious.

So, when we come to Chapter 15, it is good to take it in the context of where it comes. Why is God angry? What we're going to see in this one little verse are basically 3 things. One is that the wrath of God is emotionally charged. The word itself is going to describe that. So, we're going to look into that. And the second thing we're going to see is that His wrath is great and marvelous.

If you look within the passage, it says,

(Revelation 15:1) “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous...”

And the third thing that we're going to see is that His wrath actually has an end.

The passage will ultimately end this way, as it says,

“... because in them the wrath of God is finished.”

It's finished.

Those 3 magnificent points as we come into the passage; as we've been going through the Book of Revelation, it is a book that reveals. The word itself, “*apokoluptos*,” makes reference to uncovering or revealing things. And as we've been going through, if we looked at the different

chapters, and you have it on your sheet right here, we realize that God is revealing to us the mystery of light. Where does light come from? Where does hope come from? Where does peace come from? Well, it comes from Christ alone. And He is the One.

And so, Chapter 1 really reveals Him as a source of light, not only to the world, but to the church. And they become candlesticks as such, in which God is beginning to reveal through His wonderful gospel, that wonderful message.

We realize that there are secrets of overcoming darkness, and He begins to reveal that in chapters 2 and 3 to the church, "Here's the problem of the darkness. The darkness is coming into the church. This is how you get out of that." And so, God is revealing the secrets of overcoming darkness.

God has revealed, according to Chapter 4, things from heaven's view. How is God looking at these things? And so, Revelation is revealing things from God's perspective.

In Chapter 5, God is revealing the only power worthy, which we see the Lamb of God as if slain, that is only

worthy to inherit all the things of creation. And we see that in Chapter 5.

We see in chapters 6 and 7 the revealing of coming forces. And those coming forces, we begin to see the mayhem that comes from those.

We see the forces of the heavens in chapters 8 through 11.

And as you come into Chapter 10, you see the 2 ways 1 message is viewed and how people perceive it as something destructive in their lives, and other people see it as the power of salvation.

We see revealed in Chapter 12 why God is so passionate, and that really is kind of the theme of what we're going to be looking at today, is the passion of God and how that literally conjures up His anger. We're going to see that in the wrath of God. And then we're going to see what happens when man takes over the world and how the beast is literally deified. It's a strange phenomenon that man would worship a beast. Let's put it another way. That man would worship an insatiable, destructive force. And yet, obviously, this is what man will do. And then,

according to Chapter 14, we actually went back into the 7 churches and revealed the 7 things that the church must do and 1 thing that it must not. And then we revealed the consequence of choice in Chapter 14, and now I trust that you'll see just why God is angry.

As we come to the beginning of this, if you look with me in Chapter 15, it starts off this way,

(Revelation 15:1) “Then I saw another sign in heaven...”

What an interesting description of God really revealing future events. When it makes reference to the sign, it is a picture in this context of something coming about in the future, and God is not only warning, but revealing what is about to be. The picture is a sign in heaven. And so, it's revealing the source of this power. The reason why it's being done is matched that it's coming from the heavens. The force of the power is coming from the source of the heavens. That is a heavenly thing that is about to happen. Now, we don't usually picture and perceive plagues as a heavenly thing. But God is doing a good work in plagues, and they are sent by heaven above.

So, if you look at the passage, it says,

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels...”

Which once again makes reference to the fact that this is going to be finished and completed.

“... seven angels who had seven plagues...”

Now, if you underline the word “plagues,” the best way I can put it is 7 calamities, 7 afflictions. It's not just a disease or something. It could be. But it makes reference to anything that's a calamity, or anything that's an affliction that comes upon them.

“... which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.”

It becomes completed; carried out would be another way of putting it; terminated. Everything is done. And there's tremendous peace in knowing that there is an end to evil. Scripture actually tells us that there is going to be an end to death, that death will no longer not only not have a sting, but God will literally end death and its existence.

In this passage it says, if you look at the phrase,

“... because in them the wrath of God is finished.”

And so, as we go through we're going to see the seven bowls of wrath within this particular text. And we're going to see literally the heart of God in the wrath. What is oftentimes missed is, what is God doing? Why is He so angry? Well, you're going to see the heart of God within this particular chapter. It's going to be revealed to us as the 7 bowls are coming out.

Now, what's also interesting is the context of where these bowls are going to come out of. And for that, we're going to kind of skip ahead just a little bit within the passage.

And if you look with me in verse 5, it reads,

(Revelation 15:5) “After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,

(Revelation 15:6) and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple...”

And then if you look in verse 8,

(Revelation 15:8) “And the temple was filled with smoke...”

So, go into Chapter 16,

(Revelation 16:1) “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.””

In every case, it's coming out of the temple, which is a point that we're going to be talking about as we go through this. Now, as you see the word “wrath” of God within the passage, it makes reference to something that literally defines heating, so to speak. We oftentimes used a word such as, well, thermodynamics, and what we're talking about is the laws of heat and things like that. And so, *“thymos”* is the word that is actually used for “wrath” of God within the passage, and it always gives the picture of passion. In other words, that there's emotions involved. So, this passage is literally telling us that the wrath of God is emotionally charged. That's why it's defining His anger in terms of heatedness, that He feels very passionate about this. I know a lot of times people don't perceive God as having emotions or feelings, but Scripture tells us that we can literally grieve the Holy Spirit. By the way, that's one of the ways you know that the Holy Spirit's not an it, because you can't grieve an it.

You can only grieve a person. And so, Scripture tells us to not grieve the Holy Spirit, for God has called us to really proclaim that wonderful name, and by virtue of doing the wrong things, according to Ephesians, you and I can cause great grief to Him within our lives.

If you look at the passage, it begins to make reference therefore to the energy and the passion, the idea of heated. And here again, the connotation is a heavy breathing. Have you ever gotten mad? It's almost like you ran a marathon, but you can hear the heavy breathing. In the Old Testament, it actually refers to anger as in flared nostrils. But the point is that there's heavy breathing, highly charged, with intense emotion. God is emotionally involved. Now, one of the things we saw in particular in Revelation 12 is why God is emotionally involved and charged. And that is that somebody's trying to kill His child. Somebody's trying to kill His wife. Let's put it another way. Someone is trying to murder somebody that He loves very much. So, would you be angry? Would you just sit back and do nothing? I mean, if you really cared

for somebody, would you not step up? And so, in many respects, the passage is going to make reference to this.

If you would, a familiar passage in Romans 1, and we're going to use Romans to parallel as we begin to delve a little bit into this anger of God and why He would be angry at all. If you look with me in Romans 1, one of the great jumping points of the wrath of God is really found there.

If you look with me, it reads this way in verse 18,

(Romans 1:18) “For the wrath of God is revealed...”

Now, I just want to stop here. Just to let you know, the word “revealed” here is “*apokalyptō*,” which is the same word for revelation. So, what he's telling us is, “I'm telling you why God is angry.”

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness...”

Now, when he's talking about ungodliness, what he's talking about is anything that is without reverence or respect for God. So, the word “ungodliness” is not as much dealing with an action, but it's dealing with how you

perceive God. And there's a lack of respect and a lack of reverence for Him. It literally means “without respect” or “without reverence” within the passage. So, against all disrespect, we'll put it this way, and irreverence towards God, and now the next phrase is what?

“... and unrighteousness of men...”

Now, the unrighteousness is that you're willingly and wittingly committing a crime. And more specifically, it's any violation, any moral, ethical, natural, going against internal conscience, going against external laws. It's that sense of, “I'm going to do whatever I'm going to do.” So, it's that sense of rebellion. And Scripture is saying, you're going against everything that is right. And that's what man does. It's not that man doesn't know what is right. It's that he doesn't want to do it. And this is what makes him hostile towards God. The reason why he doesn't want to reverence God is because if he revered God, he would have to reverence what He believed in, what God was about. And that is about righteousness, morality, integrity; all these things.

And so, the passage says,

“... who suppress the truth...”

“Well, is God a righteous person?” I mean, you get a guy at the end of his life and maybe he feels like he's going to die any minute. And he might even up to this point call himself an atheist. But then you'll hear probably something out of his mouth, something like this, “God help me!” So, what he's saying with that very simple declaration is, “I believe that there is a God, and I believe that He would help me.” Otherwise, he wouldn't cry out for help, right? So, the point is, we know. But we suppress this because we want to do the things that we want to do. And so, the passage reads that way. We suppress the truth. We willingly, willingly violate more ethical, natural; it's going to actually say within the text, “natural laws,” because we don't want to do what He wants us to do.

Watch verse 19; this is very important that you understand this.

(Romans 1:19) “because that which is known about God is evident...”

You see the word there? Plainly seen. The point is that God has made it visible. “*Phaneros*” is to make something

visible and apparent and clearly seen. So, once again, man will say, "Well, you know, I don't know about that God thing." And God would say, "I reveal Myself to you."

Now, watch the text. Is evident where? Where did He reveal it?

"... within them..."

Okay, here again, every human being on the face of this earth has been revealed by God that He exists. Every human being. God has spoken. Now, I know we sit back, "Well that person certainly doesn't know God." How do you know that? How do you know God hasn't talked to them already? "Well, I know God, but I don't think they do." Well, how do you know God? Who revealed it to you? Isn't it interesting that you could speak for yourself, "Well, I know God. I know there's a God. But this person, they couldn't know." Why couldn't they know? This particular passage says God made it evident to them. Why is God angry with the earth? Because every soul on the face of the earth, God has made evident inside of them that He exists.

"... for God made it evident to them."

Now, it's the same word. God manifested it to them. He made it apparent to them. It's undeniable. It's irrefutable in them. They know this is true. And yet, out of their mouths will go, "God does not exist." Why? Because they want to do wrong. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Now, watch the next text.

(Romans 1:20) "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen..."

Now, we're going external. I mean, even by virtue of a conscience, God speaks to every person and goes, "You know that's not right." You don't have to read to a 2-year-old the Ten Commandments. They know they shouldn't be taking that thing off the dresser. That's why they're sneaking it. So, God has written a conscience on everybody's heart, and there's this sense of God consciousness within them. But on top of that, God has revealed many of His invisible attributes, that is to say, how great He is, how wise He is.

If you look at the passage,

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

You're without excuse. Because God has made it apparent to you. God has made it evident to you. He's not only made it evident in your heart; He's made it evident in the visual.

Why is God upset? Because you continue to suppress what you know is true. You continue to deny what is clearly right.

Psalm 79:6 reads,

“Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You,

And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name.”

The passage is not saying that they don't know how to call; it's just saying they will not call. And he's talking about all the other nations.

John 1 is a strange passage to me, if you really just think about it, because he says in John 1:10-11,

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

(John 1:11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”

Now, does that make any sense to you? The Creator of the earth comes to the earth and they say, “Who are you?” It's not because Jesus was not so evident in His character and nature that He was God, it was that man didn't want that kind of character and nature. He suppressed it. What you're going to be held accountable for, according to this text, when it says you're without excuse, is not what you don't know. It's what you do know. God is going to hold you accountable for what you do know. What has been made evident to you, God is holding you accountable for that. Well, somebody could say, “Well, I haven't been at church, so I don't know about all that stuff.” “Do you know it's wrong to steal? Have you been stealing?” “Yes.” Well, you're going to be held accountable for that.

If you look in Romans 2, he emphasizes that,

(Romans 2:6) “who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:”

If you go on down,

(Romans 2:11) “For there is no partiality with God.”

He's going to judge correctly. But to me, what's amazing about this text is, as it goes on, it begins to reveal how man continues to suppress by virtue of his longing to do evil.

And if you'll come to the end of Chapter 1 with me, it reads this way,

(Romans 1:28) “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer...”

Now, it's not that God didn't exist, and they didn't know He existed. They just wouldn't acknowledge it.

“... God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper”

to do what they wanted to do.

Watch verse 29.

(Romans 1:29) “being filled with all unrighteousness...”

That is to say, having a desire to do everything wrong.

“... wickedness...”

Immorality.

“... greed, evil...”

I think the way King James puts it is, “maliciousness,” wanting to hurt somebody. Do you know there are actually some people that want to hurt people?

“... full of envy, murder, strife...”

Divisiveness. Have you ever noticed anybody just looking for an argument?

“... deceit, malice; they are gossips,”

I like the description in the Greek lexicon, “malicious whispers”. Those are people that are mean, but they don't want you to know it. They do it behind your back.

(Romans 1:30) “Slanderers...”

People that are just tearing people down. I think King James actually calls them “backbiters”. That's a good way to put it.

“... haters of God, insolent...”

“Injuriously arrogant” would be a way to put that. You know how people are boastful and they're in your face with it to hurt you? That's insolent.

“insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil...”

It's bad enough that evil exists, but somebody has to invent it. “Let's think of another way to bring torture and pain and misery to people.” And you just see people going, “This is a good one.” They probably even have clubs for it.

“... disobedient to parents,”

Now, watch the phrase here,

(Romans 1:31) “without understanding...”

Actually in the Greek lexicon, they define that as “stupid”. So, the word is “stupid”. But what it's saying is they're stupid about good.

It's much like Jeremiah 4:22,

“... They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know.”

And it's uncanny. I mean, you'll talk to certain people, and they really know how to do really bad things. I mean, they're just, wow, really impressive to me how they've worked out this evil and how destructive they are and how good they are at being destructive. But you say, "Did you do anything good today?" They go, "What? What is that?" They're not really sure how to do good. So, they're stupid about good.

(Romans 1:31) "...untrustworthy..."

I don't think there's hardly anything more treacherous than somebody that's unfaithful. I mean, it's like it was being said, we were going through the Book of Jeremiah, and God says, "Israel, You played the harlot with Me. You left Me. But you said you didn't love Me. But Judah, you said you loved Me. And then you left Me. That's become more treacherous."

"... untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful."

I mean, if you look in verse 32, it's not that they don't know what the right thing is. It's just that They don't want to do it. And so that's the reason Romans 2 starts off,

(Romans 2:1) “Therefore you have no excuse...”

And even if you go all the way down to Romans 2:15, he talks about the conscience. And he says within the text, if you were to look at verses basically 13 through 16, His argument is that some people are going to say, “Well, I wasn't brought up in church. I didn't know the law.” He goes, “Okay, you won't be judged according to that. But you'll be judged according to what you knew was right inside.” Why? Because God is fair. God is just. But if you're thinking that that's going to get you off the hook, think about how much you know that you should have done the right thing and you didn't do it. I mean, we're not talking about Sunday school or anything. We're just talking about how you did the wrong thing. And you knew it was the wrong thing; you did it anyway. Just think about that. So, God says, “We'll judge that.”

But the point is, if you look in verse 16, that the secrets of men will be judged by Christ on that day. I mean, you can deny all day long, “Well, I didn't know God exists.” God goes, “Wait a minute, I saw in your heart, you knew I existed.” So, you can lie outwardly, but on that day, God's

going to judge. The point is that God is angry. Why? This is very interesting if you understand where we've been coming from in Romans 1. Not only have you suppressed the truth in your unrighteousness, not only have you denied who God is by virtue of your longing to do wrong, but look how hateful you've been to everybody else. Envy, strife, murder, gossips, malice, infidelity, slanderers? Look how mean you've been. You think that God should sit back and go, "No problem. Not an issue." You know, I see somebody abusing somebody else, and it makes me boil. Literally my face turns red. That's the picture of God. And His patience, I can't imagine His patience, but He goes, "I'm longsuffering, but I'm not going to let you do that. I'm not going to let you do that." I think one of the more encouraging passages to me in the New Testament is where the soldiers were coming after Christ and they go, "Are You the one?" He goes, "I'm the One." And you can see the soldiers maybe even coming after His disciples. He goes, "Leave these alone." And Scripture says, all the soldiers fell on their face. I mean, instantly Jesus was going, "You touch them and you're

toast.” And they knew it. And they left them alone. And all of them left unscathed. You could see the heart of God to not protect Himself, but to protect others. Why is God angry? Because they're after His people. They're destroying His people. They're hurting His people. And people that are hostile and hateful and destructive are running rampant. And the beast is oppressing people. And God says, “Enough.” And that's why you see this whole text of God being emotionally charged. Wrath is always going to be described that way as it's coming from God. Now, the second thing that I want you to see within the passage is this, that the wrath of God is great and marvelous. Once again, if you look at Chapter 15, he says, (Revelation 15:1) “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous...”

When he talks about great, he's talking about literally incomprehensible and magnificent. I mean, we're talking about extensively; that is to say that it seems to have no boundaries, as well as the fact that we're dealing with great might. So, it's extensive in its effect, and it's powerful in its effect, is what it's saying when he's talking

about great. Then when he uses the word “marvelous,” he's talking about literally incomprehensible to the mind, or that it's strikingly fearful. It just takes your breath away. When God moves, there's nothing you can do. It's irresistible. I mean, you can't resist this power, this great event that is taking place.

Jeremiah 10:10 reads this way, if I could describe God's power,

“But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.

At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.”

Its effect is unavoidable. It produces real change. And it's the power of God. How do you know it's God moving? Well, man does a little thing, and things go back to normal. God does something, and that's it; it just changes the whole contour. Everything changes at that moment. I mean, you think about it, if God decides to make one particular place in the world a desert and He just shuts off the water, people don't live there anymore. They just stop living there. I've been watching this whole thing with

Texas and the freezing of this area that usually is fairly warm during these times, and yet these poor people are going through a tremendous amount. We saw a picture of one person's fan and it had icicles coming from their fan inside their house, which is a sad thing. I heard one man died in his lounge chair, frozen overnight because he didn't have any electricity. What's interesting is that all through the years, our nation, our cities, our states have been proclaiming, "We'll take care of you." I'm not slighting them. Look, this is beyond their power, but they won't admit it. I don't want to undermine the severity of it. It's a very terrible thing. But here you have a small freeze, something that people in Chicago go, "It's just winter." But in this area, because they're not suited for it, pipes are bursting, electricity is going out. And unfortunately, they've put windmills there, which is a large part of their electricity, and of course, those were frozen. So, that's not going to be able to save you too well. But the point is that the world has said, "We'll take care of you," and now, it's interesting, a mayor was being interviewed and the mayor comes and he steps forward and he goes, he says something, I don't know the exact

quote, but it was something like this, "You folks need to stop depending on us and save yourself." And I said, "Thank you, God." Because finally a voice of reason is coming out. The problem is all these people, they don't know how to survive because they've been trusting in all these organizations that have said, "Trust us, trust us, trust us." And now, they found themselves in, "What do I do now?" And nobody's there to help them. God did that with one little blanket of frost. And at the moment of a blanket of frost, everything begins to change. And the cities, the states, the federal government go, "We can't do anything." Now, that's the graciousness of God because at that moment what God has done is He has shaken up the world and said, "Right." And the day is coming when everything will shake, everything will move, and you won't be able to do anything. This is a warning to us. Put your trust in God. Don't put your trust in these things. Man will fail you. You say, "Well, he hasn't failed me yet." Give him time. Because the end of what man can do is always going to be evident by virtue of what God brings. And it's God's grace that He's been gentle. God's been gentle to reveal these things to us. But the day is

going to come when this is going to be revealed, and you're going to see how great and marvelous.

I mean, one of the statements that's made in Hebrews and Peter makes the same statement, if you look with me in Hebrews, interesting way that it's put. It says this in Hebrews 12, that the day was when Moses stood at a mountain and the mountain began to quake and people said, "Wow, this is too terrible. You go, Moses." And so, Moses goes up to the mountain.

It says in verse 20,

(Hebrews 12:20) "For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."

(Hebrews 12:21) And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."

Can you imagine Moses being afraid?

But it goes on and says, but something greater than that is going to happen in these last days.

And it says this in verse 25,

(Hebrews 12:25) “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.”

(Hebrews 12:26) And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.””

So, even if you land on another planet and you found another planet where there's life.

(Hebrews 12:27) “This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

That would be in the context of Hebrews, your faith.

(Hebrews 12:28) “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

(Hebrews 12:29) for our God is a consuming fire.”

See, why do you want to trust in God? Because once you start trusting in God, you just enter into a kingdom that cannot be shaken. It doesn't matter what happens, you cannot be moved. Nothing changes in your life. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. When He comes in your heart, guess what happens to you? Finally steadfastness. You're not up and down with the things of the world, but you're solid. You're on solid ground. And the wonderful thing is that He has to sometimes shake the things of the earth in order for us to realize that. But how wonderful is His wrath and how great and marvelous it is because it shows us this. God is not just simply spewing out anger. He is showing us something. As Habakkuk would say, He's remembering mercy in the midst of His wrath; that God, by virtue of His wrath, by shaking the things of the earth, is saving us and is causing us to cry unto Him and He's now grabbing our hand and holding us. It's at that time that we find His goodness and His kindness and His faithfulness to us and how wonderful that is, how marvelous that is, how great is His power. What He has to do ultimately is shake everything.

If you look with me in Zephaniah, one of those familiar Old Testament books, isn't it? That's not Zechariah, that's Zephaniah. And Zephaniah is after Habakkuk, which is not really a big book itself. So, I probably didn't help you on that one. Zephaniah 1, if you look with me, it says in verse 2, something's going to happen. Listen to the phrase, because it resonates exactly what was being said in Hebrews.

It reads this way,

(Zephaniah 1:2) ““I will completely remove all things From the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.”

Could you just meditate on that for just a moment? Okay. So, you get in trouble, what's going to save you? “I don't know. Maybe there's a bird that will save me.” Okay.

(Zephaniah 1: 3) ““I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky

And the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked;

And I will cut off man from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.”

So, in case you missed it,

(Zephaniah 1:14) “Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly;

Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.

(Zephaniah 1:15) A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress,

A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

(Zephaniah 1:16) A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities

And the high corner towers.

(Zephaniah 1:17) I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind,

Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust

And their flesh like dung.

(Zephaniah 1:18) Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them

On the day of the LORD’S wrath; And all the earth will be

devoured

In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end,

Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Great and marvelous is the wrath of God. Why? Because it completely obliterates anything that man may hold onto. And yet, here's what's so marvelous, He'll still save. Now, at that time, man will have to say, “Well, only God can save.” That's what he should have been saying all along. But on that day, he'll have to say it. Great and marvelous is God. His effect is unavoidable. It creates real change. And everything that you and I have trusted in will fail on that day, but that's what makes that day such a great and marvelous day. But even beyond this, I think one of the most comforting things in this particular passage is, it'll be done. It's finished. He's going to have a beginning and an end in his wrath, and never more will the wrath of God exist towards us.

If you look with me in Psalm 30, it will reiterate this. In this particular Psalm, you can hear the Psalmist crying

out. You hear David crying out. And his cry is for God to heal him, that his soul was brought down to Sheol and he needs to be saved. And he cries unto God.

And the statement in verse 5, if you read with me, is this, (Psalm 30:5) “For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime (forever);

Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

Isaiah will put it pretty much like that in Isaiah 54:7-8,

“For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you.

(Isaiah 54:8) In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment,

But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,”

Says the LORD your Redeemer.”

Why does He have to be angry with us at all? I'll show you.

It's in this particular Psalm. Psalm 30, if you look with me in verse 6. When everything is going fine, what do you say

to yourself? “I'll never be moved. I control everything.” Of course, you watch this young person; he finally gets a job, and he buys a car, and he says, “I'm in control.” Just live a little longer, you'll see. You're not in control of anything.

(Psalm 30:6) “Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, “I will never be moved.”

(Psalm 30:7) O LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand...”

It's only by God's grace that any of us stand.

I mean, if you back up into verse 2,

(Psalm 30:2) “O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me.”

Well, why did you need help, David, if you were in control? He says, “Well, I kind of got out of my prosperity.” Yeah, the day of your prosperity is not always going to last. And I think David realized that he does a lousy job protecting himself. But I mean, he started off and he goes, “I can kill a giant; I can do anything.” And God goes, “Okay, let's see you kill a giant when you're old.” So, he goes into battle when he's old and the giants

begin to take him and his men have to come and pull him out and rescue him. And they turn to him, and they say, "You can't fight anymore." And David realizes, "I can't fight anymore." I mean, the greatest soldier that ever existed, a man by himself, killed 10s of thousands of people single-handedly by himself. No greater warriors ever existed. And yet the day came, "I can't even fight anymore." The giants became too overwhelming for him. I mean, they'd be overwhelming to me on the first day. 9'6" walking up to me, forget about it. The only thing I could hope for is maybe kick him in the knee or something. But God's strength ultimately has to be realized. And David realized it with his battle with Saul. I mean, they're invisible battles that you're dealing with. He was dealing with his son hating him. How do you defeat that? I'm sure David wished 1,000 times, "If I could just take care of this with a sword." And God says, "You can't take care of it with a sword. It's a battle that can't be won. You can't make your son love you. You can't change everything." And there's going to be something in your life where you're going to realize it's God shaking the mountains. I mean, in your prosperity, you say, "I'm not

going to be moved. Nothing's going to happen.” But God says, “You know why I'm so angry? Because you're killing yourself. You're trusting in lies and you're going to die forever.” If you've ever watched a loved one self-destruct, you'll understand in some small way the wrath of God. Because you're sitting there and you feel so helpless. It's not that God feels helpless, but you feel so helpless and you go, “I'm so angry that they're doing this to themselves.” Look, could dust really, really affect God? A piece of dust? I mean, the psalmist says He knows that we're but dust. We can't affect Him. It's not like we can mess up His world. What is He angry about? You're messing up your world. And He came to die for you and He loves you. And so, what you're going to watch, and this is what's so interesting about this, the wrath of God coming out of the temple. And in particular, it's going to come from the altar. And the reason why is, the altar is representing God's sacrifice for you. And God is angry because He has died for you and you are self-destructing. He's angry for you. And that's why the wrath has to come out of the temple. So, wonderful signs in heaven. When you see the wrath of God, understand how far it's been

until the wrath is interjected. And then ultimately, as you realize, as Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5, that God has not destined us for wrath, but for salvation. And Christ says, “You could be saved. You don't even have to go the wrath route if you just receive Him today.” Isn't that a wonderful peace?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness to us. We give You thanks for Your anger. I'm really thankful that You don't sit back and say, “Who cares?” That somebody gets hurt, You care. And if somebody is hurting somebody else, You're angry. This brings me comfort. You don't tell us that if somebody hurts You that nothing's going to happen. You tell us that vengeance is Yours. You will, not You might, but You will repay. You're not going to allow people to be abused and misused. You will not do that. You will not sit back and do nothing. And I take great comfort in that. I take great comfort in the fact that You feel intensely about this, that Your emotions are involved,

and that it's because You love us so much. For out of the very heart of God is coming Your anger because You want to save us. It is from the altar that the wrath is being poured. And I'm so thankful for that. Most of all, I'm thankful that there is a day when all the wrath is done. It's finished. No more. That You will have completed because all will be taken care of. Peace will reign eternally. And I am so looking forward to that.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm going to ask you to just simply come before the Lord and thank Him for the times that He's brought difficulties in your life, for the times that your world has been shaken up. For at that moment, at that time, God has been speaking to you and been revealing to you that He's got to be the only One you cling to. In that moment of His wrath, you were feeling His mercy too, weren't you? And you began to realize that it wasn't you that sustained yourself. It's God. And the day will come when you will breathe your last. All men do. And on that last breath, you could say something as simple as, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit." And at that moment, everlasting life. Are you trusting in Him?