“To Know Me Is to Love Me: the Jealousy and Wrath of God”

Light and Life Class (March 31, 2019)

The attributes of God that we have studied: Trinity, love, holiness, grace, mercy, patience, faithfulness, righteousness, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability (changelessness), independence, eternity

A. The eternity of God means that God has no beginning and will have no end, and he does not live within time as a succession of moments, so that he sees all events of all times with equal clarity; however, God does act within time that is a succession of moments. (See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* p. 168)

1. Evidence for the “definition” from Scripture (last Sunday)

2. Two questions

a. What was God doing before the creation of the world?

i. Ponder the deep answer given by St. Augustine in *Confessions*.

b. Will the eternal state of the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21-22 be a place of timelessness or time? See Revelation 22:1-5; appears we will live in an infinite succession of moments into the future

3. Applications

a. God will be there to keep his promises.

b. He is so much greater than we can understand!

B. The jealousy of God is his righteous and holy zeal for his own glory and for the affection of his people.

1. Scriptural teaching (bad and good jealousy)

a. Exodus 20:4-5 (2nd Commandment; Hebrew for “wrath” is *qana*): You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Yu shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.

b. Exodus 34:14 (time of golden calf, why to destroy idols of Canaanites when come into the land: . . . for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

c. Ezekiel 39:25 (return of Jews to land): Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name.

2. Two reasons why it is righteous and holy and good for God to seek his own glory in all things

a. Jonathan Edwards and *The End for Which God Created the World* (1765)

i. right for God to be for his holiness

ii. when he most for his holiness he is most for us

C. The wrath of God is his settled and holy opposition to and hatred of sin, which opposition and hatred move him to punish sin (four major Hebrew terms and two major Greek terms translated “wrath” in OT and NT, respectively).

1. Scriptural teaching

a. Exodus 32:9-10: And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them.”

b. John 3:36: Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

c. Romans 1:18 (note the use of the present tense in this verse)” For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

d. Caution: God’s wrath is very different from ordinary human wrath or anger.

2. Why is God not wrathful toward Christians, since we too are sinners?

a. the concept of Jesus’ death for sinners on the cross as an act of “propitiation” (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Greek terms are *hilasmos* and *hilasterion*)

b. so result for believers is Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

3. God instead practices loving and fatherly discipline for our sins in this world (Hebrews 12:7-10).

4. Three reasons why God hates sin so much

a. By sin we offend the holiness of God.

b. By sin we hurt other human beings.

c. By sin we hurt ourselves.

5. Am I wrathful toward sin—especially mine—in the same way God is?

Here is the answer of which I want to persuade you. Since God is unique as the most glorious of all beings and totally self-sufficient, he must be for himself if he is to be for us. If he were to abandon the goal of his own self-exaltation we would be the losers. His aim to bring praise to himself, and his aim to bring pleasure to his people, are one aim. They stand or fall together. I think we will see this if we ask the following question.

In view of God’s infinitely admirable beauty, power and wisdom, what would his love to a creature involve? Or to put it another way: What could God give us to enjoy that would show him most loving? There is only one possible answer, isn’t there? *Himself*! If God would give us that which is best and most satisfying, that is, if he would love us perfectly, he must offer us no less than himself for our contemplation and fellowship and joy. “In thy presence is fullness of joy. In thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

This was precisely God’s intention in sending his son. Ephesians 2:18 says that Christ came that we might “have access in one Spirit to the Father.” And 1 Peter 3:18 says, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God.” God is after us to give us what is best — not prestige, wealth or even health in this life, but a full-blown vision of, and fellowship with, himself.

Now we are on the brink of what, for me, was a grand discovery, and is the solution to our problem. To be supremely loving, God must give us what will be best for us and delight us most; he must give us himself. . . .

God is the one being in the entire universe for whom self-centeredness, or the pursuit of his own glory, is the ultimately loving act. For him, self-exaltation is the highest virtue. When he does all things “for the praise of his glory,” he preserves for us and offers to us the only thing in the entire world, which can satisfy our longings. God is for us, and therefore has been, is now and always will be, first, for himself. I urge you not to resent the centrality of God in his own affections, but to experience it as the fountain of your everlasting joy.