



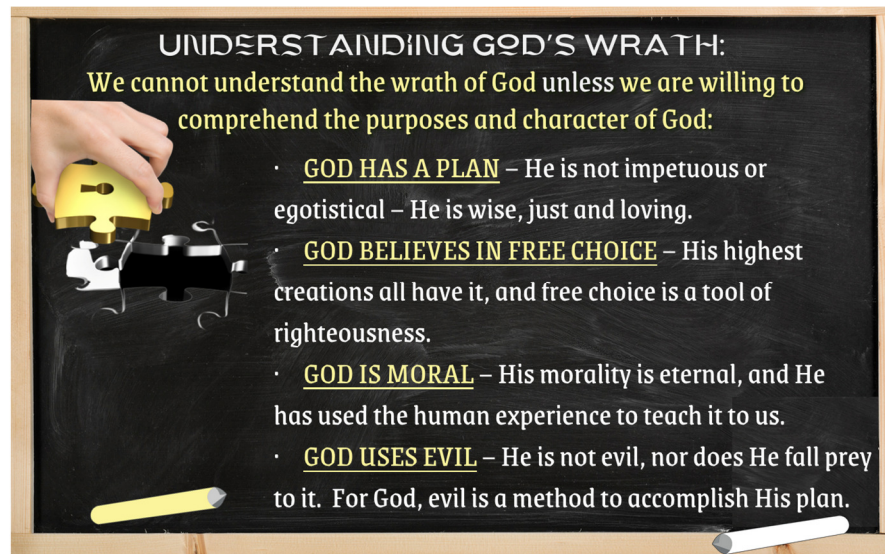
Is God's Wrath Stronger Than His Love? (Part II)

James 1:17: (NASB) *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*



Our last episode focused on some harsh Old Testament accounts that featured God pronouncing death and destruction to those who perpetrated great evil. Bible skeptics parade these accounts as proof that God is merciless, evil and even sadistic. While the Old Testament does put these kinds of judgments into perspective, the ability to draw a full conclusion regarding God's purposes is not complete. We need the rest of the story. We need to understand how the New Testament is built on top of, but does not replace, the Old Testament. In Part II, we continue looking into the entire Bible to accurately measure God's love against His wrath. What we will find is the rest of the story as we apply the role Jesus played as a man to all those who suffered and died before his earthly mission.

recap
recap
of Part I



Proclaiming God to be a monster is to ignore many specific events and social structures in history.

The fact that God does not let sin go without consequences tells us that He is ultimately in control. God often used the rules of the sinful world to deal out consequences for heinous acts.

God's wrath has a foundation. It is wisely and powerfully built upon the principles of justice and love.

1. Justice identifies and exposes the consequences of sin.
2. Love uses this exposure as a teaching tool for an eternal lesson of righteousness for all.

God's wrath should never be taken out of the context of His ultimate plan for the greater good of ALL humanity.



When we consider the Old Testament, we need to back away from the specific events we may be looking at to condemn or judge and ask: *What is the greater context - what is God's ultimate plan in this Old Testament perspective?*

When we did this in Part I, we saw it was not nearly what people make it out to be. There must be even more to the story.

The Old Testament ends with a similar theme of death and destruction for those who do wrong, but with one major addition:

Malachi 4:1-6: (NASB) *¹For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts...*

The Old Testament ends with some of the examples we read about in the previous episode. God is still mad at evildoers - this makes sense; no one wants the wicked to prosper. But we have this "destruction and burning" which sounds scary, because God's wrath is something of which to be afraid.

However, we need to put that fear into a greater context:

²But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings...

³You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing, says the LORD of hosts.

Fear

=

Reverence

But for you who *fear* My name...



There is a ray of hope here, but seemingly only for those *who fear* (or reverence) *My name*. *The hope, then, seems to be only for the faithful.*

Is this correct? The wicked become *ashes* (another burning reference) *under the soles of your feet*. We understand that we do not want the bad guys to win, but our conscience wonders uncomfortably what one has to do to be considered wicked? No one wants to be judged and found guilty, but how bad is bad? And just how good do we have to be to not be *under the soles of the feet*?

The answer to all this comes down to obedience. Wickedness meets with destruction. While that ray of hope seems to apply to only the faithful at this point, let's continue.

These are the last verses of the Old Testament:

⁴Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. ⁵Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.

The last references in the Old Testament are to Moses the deliverer, and to Elijah and his mission of trying to turn the people back to God.



Why do these two prophets get singled out when there are so many other prophets in the Bible?

The Old Testament pauses and the New Testament picks up where the Old Testament left off. **Moses the deliverer foreshadowed Jesus.** **Elijah the prophet foreshadowed John the Baptist.** Please see the **Bonus Material** for more.



The Old Testament ends with the book of Malachi. Four-hundred years later, the first event in the New Testament continues the story.

The angel Gabriel tells Zacharias that he will have a son and describes the work of that son:

Luke 1:16-17: (NASB) *¹⁶And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷It is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*



The first act of the New Testament repeats the words of the last act in the Old Testament. We can see the connection! But what happened in that intervening 400 years between the Old Testament and the New Testament? We are not given specific information, but a lot was happening and little of it was good.



Alexandrian and Egyptian influence polluted the Jewish people once again with pagan thinking and ritual that crept into the purity of the Jewish Law. God did not intervene because that would be a violation of free will. The people had free will to choose whom they would follow.

Moses, the deliverer, tells us he was an obvious picture of Jesus:

Deuteronomy 18:15: (NASB) *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.*

Moses and Elijah are the two key players that bring the New Testament into focus. **Elijah represents John the Baptist.** This is obvious because the angel Gabriel said so. **Moses represents Jesus**, obviously, because Moses himself said so! We have these two significant Old Testament characters picturing two New Testament individuals. Because of them, especially Jesus, the world is going to change.

John 1:45: (NASB) *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

This proclamation - *We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth* - prepares us to see how the Old Testament focuses on Jesus as the centerpiece. The Old Testament is predicting the New, and the New Testament refers back to the Old as though there never was the 400 years in between.



WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

- MALACHI ENDED THE OLD TESTAMENT WITH THE SAME HARSH WARNINGS AGAINST EVIL AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN.
- HOPE IS ADDED FOR THE FAITHFUL AMID THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL.
- MOSES AND ELIJAH ARE REFERENCED AS KEY PROPHETS.
- THE ANGEL GABRIEL PROCLAIMED THAT JOHN WOULD CONTINUE ELIJAH'S WORK OF TURNING MEN BACK TO GOD AND MAKING READY THE PEOPLE FOR THE LORD.

We now have several pieces in place. To answer to the question, *Is God's wrath stronger than His love*, we must be willing to look at the complete picture.

Conclusion: The New Testament picks up EXACTLY where the Old Testament ended. The only difference is God's plan is now taking a giant leap forward by bringing Jesus, the NEW deliverer onto the scene!

The **pattern of promise** we uncovered in Part I is beginning to appear and will become increasingly clear. We discussed understanding God's wrath. In this episode we will be talking about understanding God's wrath *in the context of God's love*.



The generations of Old Testament experiences show us an unrelenting battle between good and evil that God will win.



Where does the precise path of God's plan begin to bring humanity from His wrath and to His love?

Because God is the God of eternity, the first thing we need to acknowledge is that He is NEVER in a hurry. When God deems that a lesson needs to be taught, He will teach it in such a way as to have its results be impactful and lasting. God created humanity to be a family and He is teaching us how to do this.



We have two undeniable statements:

1. Through the lineage of Adam – everyone dies.
2. We need a long-term solution for everyone.

We want to find the path to God's love.

As we set the stage for this path, remember one thing that ALL humanity will have in common - RESURRECTION! Jesus was specific about this:

John 5:28-29: (NASB) ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of **judgment** <2920>.

Judgment: Greek English Lexicon #2920 *krisis*;

1) a separating, sundering, separation 1a) a trial, contest 2) selection 3) judgment

The King James translation grossly misleads us by translating this word as *damnation*. Please see the Bonus Material for more on Judgment Day.

JESUS IS SPEAKING ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT RESURRECTIONS:

A RESURRECTION
OF LIFE.

A RESURRECTION
OF JUDGMENT.

In either case, this is a monumental, personal miracle done for every human who ever lived!

In Part I, we looked at the evil city of Sodom, a Canaanite city that was destroyed because the people were so violent and evil. Why didn't God save Sodom with some supernatural intervention? If we can understand this, maybe we can see why God is not intervening in today's violence, evil and disease.

Part I showed us what Jesus taught about judgment regarding the destruction of the evil city of Sodom:

Matthew 11:23-24: (NASB) ²³And you, Capernaum... for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of **judgment** <2920>, than for you.



Jesus here proclaims two important things:

1. If the miracles that Jesus did were done in Sodom, the city would still exist.
2. There was a door of progress left clearly open in the Day of Judgment.



If the miracles Jesus did in Capernaum would have saved Sodom, why didn't God intervene?

Because God's plan at that time was NOT about miraculously giving people a way out; it was about showing them righteousness and giving them a free will choice.

God's plan now is NOT about miraculously bailing people out, but about showing them righteousness and giving them a free will choice.

God's plan in Jesus' time was, interestingly, not about miraculously bailing people out, it was about showing them righteousness, and giving them a free will choice!

It comes down to choosing obedience to Almighty God instead of us wanting to be our own god.

This is another bridge Jesus gives us between the Old and the New Testaments. He goes back to the Old and pulls the lesson forward into the New. It is a big bridge that helps to understand that the people of Sodom have an opportunity for a future life.



Now let's establish the beginning of the pathway through God's wrath to God's love. If we want to understand God's wrath, we need to think of it as a point along the road that brings us to a different destination. God's love is the destination, and it does pass through His wrath.

There are several things we need to recognize for God's anger to fully subside. **God's initial requirement for humanity was obedience to Him always!** In Part I, we touched on Adam's disobedience. His choice was to do something God strictly forbade him to do.



Adam and Eve had never experienced death. They took a bite of fruit! The resulting punishment on them (and therefore on all of us) does not seem to fit the crime. Was that appropriate?

Their sin was not taking a bite of fruit. Their sin was deciding to follow Satan's advice that was contrary to God's. **THEIR SIN WAS TO DISOBEY THEIR CREATOR** who gave them simple, straightforward laws and rules. Adam was not ignorant. It was not about the fruit - it was about the choice.

While he did not have any experience with death, he did have a dramatic appreciation for life:

Genesis 2:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹*Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.* ²⁰*The man gave names to all the*



cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

Adam was privileged to look at the animals and understand their personalities and characteristics. He named them accordingly. He had tremendous experience with God's magnificence and His creation. He still **willfully** sinned. He **willfully disobeyed** God and followed what Satan said.

Adam's willful sin brought severe consequences:

Romans 5:12-14: (NASB) ¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— ¹³for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type (a picture) of him who was to come.

This is again a New Testament look at the Old Testament. Adam's family was allowed to exist within the context of sin. God did not wipe out all humanity; He allowed them to exist within the context of a sinful nature. Because sin now reigned, God required the human family to present sacrifices to Him to show their efforts in obedience to Him.

These sacrifices were to be of their flocks and were there to picture the necessity of satisfying justice - an innocent life sacrificed for a sinful life lived.



This was an important perspective. Because man disobeyed God, there were consequences and a continual reaching out to regain harmony with God. When we are out of harmony, we are sinful - we cannot communicate with God. Sacrifices were put into place to show that mankind needed something to pay for their sins.

This principle was obviously passed on to all of Adam's children. We see the idea of sacrifices given to God throughout the Old Testament. What happened when this was passed on? Cain murdered Abel! Cain wanted to sacrifice in his own way - **without the shedding of blood**. He murdered his brother out of jealousy because his sacrifice was not accepted. Sacrificing acknowledged that man had become removed from God but desired to come close to Him again. **The shedding of blood was a very important factor - this is why Jesus had to die. He had to shed his blood to satisfy justice.**



The fallen angels contaminated the human race by impregnating human women to create a hybrid race called the Nephilim, who were considered giants on the earth. This was completely **OUT OF HARMONY** with God's plan. When there is great disharmony with the plan, purposes and righteousness of God, there are always consequences. No matter what you do, no matter who you are, no matter when you live, that is the case.



Aside from the fallen angel debacle, humanity had reached a tipping point:

Genesis 6:5: (NASB) *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Their evil came to a “full measure” - the tipping point was that they were only interested in evil. Remember the Canaanites from the previous episode and how dark, violent and evil their lives became.

God preserved righteousness (found in Noah) as He destroyed an evil society whose iniquity was complete. This was common in the Old Testament. Evil has grave consequences. Those grave consequences lead to the “grave.”

Generations later, God chose Abraham to establish a **pattern of promise**. This pattern started in the Old Testament but shines out in the New Testament.

Let's look at how the New Testament expands on this pattern of promise:

Galatians 3:6-9: (NASB) *“Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”*

Abraham left his father's house. He believed God, and that belief produced obedience. The Scriptures tell us over and over how much God values obedience as most important.

Abraham lived what he professed:

⁷Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed in you.

This is exciting! Here we see this **pattern of promise** that will go beyond the Jewish people and Israel to all nations, promised way back then. Remember in Malachi, it seemed like only the faithful, those who revered God, would be blessed? Here, through those who revered God, ALL the nations would be blessed. Why? It is because of belief and obedience that anyone from any background can now (according to the promise in Galatians 3) come to Christ.

This shows us the development of that **pattern of promise** in a unique way - the called to be favored of God has been expanded:

⁹So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

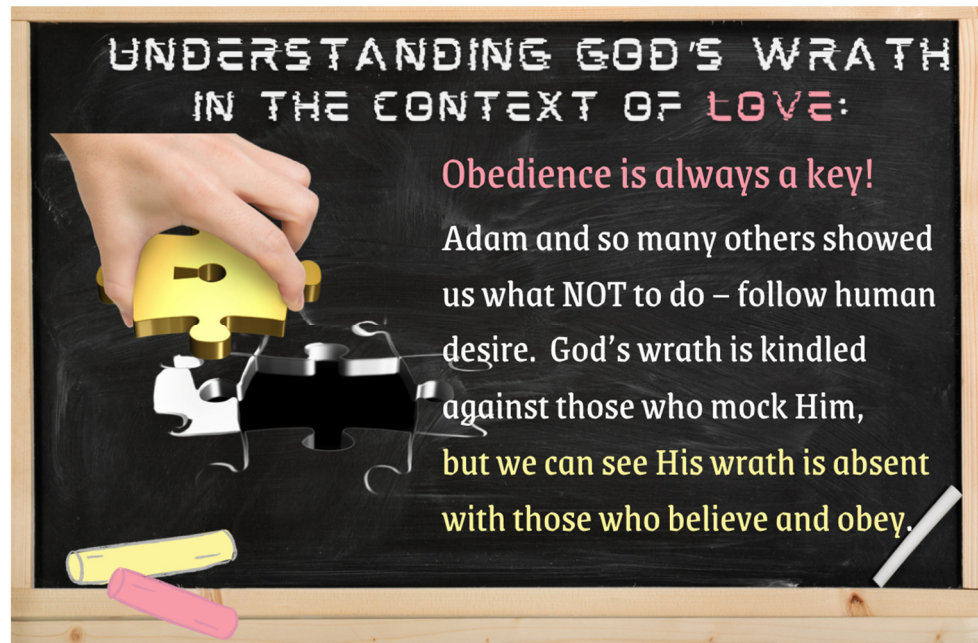
To be *blessed with Abraham* is to be in the company of the father of the faithful! Part of the blessings is that Gentiles were invited to be followers of Jesus. To be blessed with Abraham, we have to be obedient in our faith like he was.

OBEDIENCE IS THE TRUE EXPRESSION OF OUR BELIEF.

1 Samuel 15:22: (NASB) *...to obey is better than sacrifice...*

God's wrath is because of disobedience; God's love is because of obedience. God is the Creator, and we need to understand His role in our lives.

Obedience!



God's wrath is against systems and the way sinful humanity thinks. He will honor and bless those who honor and bless Him. God is not looking at man and saying that He is going to wipe us all out. That is not God's plan.

God's plan unfolds over time and sometimes takes a giant leap forward. This next giant leap is named Jesus!

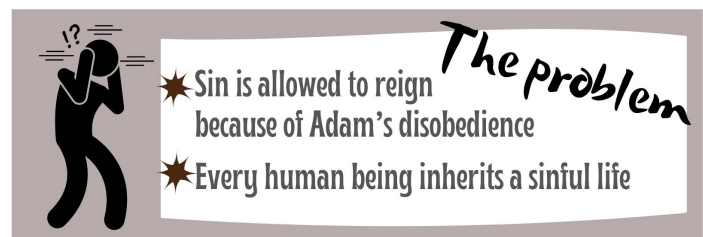
**We know that Jesus fulfilled the Law and changed things.
Does that mean he appeased God's anger?**

This is an important question as many seem to believe that without Jesus, God would be out of control with vengeance and wrath. Nothing is further from the truth! As we shall see, God's anger is against anything and everything sinful, and His plan is to systematically eradicate all such things.

One of the false teachings held by some Christians is that God is vengeful, full of wrath, bent on slaying and torturing much of the human family. Further, this view asserts, it is only through the intervention of Jesus, who mercifully placated God's anger by taking the place of sinners in death that mankind might be saved from such a fate. Why is this incorrect?

This viewpoint is not only incorrect, but is absolutely insulting to the Creator.

Let's review the issue of disobedience and sin as it appears before God:



What have we have found out so far in these two episodes about God's plan for the restoration of mankind back to a relationship with Him?

1

God showed humanity the need for justice, as shown through the sacrificing of animals representing the shedding of blood for their sins.

2

God found a faithful individual, Abraham, to reveal His plan to.

3

God promised him that, because of his obedience and allegiance, His plan would be accomplished through him and his posterity. In the end it would bless all humanity.

4

Once his posterity is ready, which will take generations, He would rescue them from hard slavery in Egypt through Moses the deliverer.

5

Then God would show them what obedience and community should look like through a Law, unlike any law ever given to any nation.

Even though they cannot keep this Law perfectly because they are sinful, it would reflect the standards of true obedience.

When we look at that great big picture, we see intentional action building an intentional road that intentionally brings humanity towards God. God is not some vindictive being that needs Jesus to calm Him down. God is the architect, showing us step-by-small-step the artistry and harmony of His plan.

The Galatian church was being influenced by Christians who were teaching that Christianity needs the Jewish Law as part of its belief system.

The Apostle Paul resolves this error:

Galatians 3:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰*For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them. ¹¹Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, the righteous man shall live by faith. ¹²However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them.*



The Law was a list of rules God gave to Moses for the Israelites to follow. There were not just the Ten Commandments, but the Law included over 600 rules or parts. In a way, the Law “itemized” sin so that the average sinful individual who paid attention to it would know right from wrong.



For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse - the curse of death. Imperfect humans are not able to fulfill the Law by works to be brought back into God's favor - we are too broken in sin. Faith, not the Law, is what is actually needed here!



Understanding the fundamental role of faith and works in our Christian walk



Why bother giving a Law if no one is able to keep perfectly, if it cannot be lived up to? Isn't God just setting them up for failure?

No, He is actually setting them up for success! The book of Hebrews helps with this answer:

Hebrews 10:1-3: (NASB) ¹*For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.* ²*Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?* ³*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.*

But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year - they would continually be thinking about what was right and wrong. The Law would “buy them time” each year in order to continue having a relationship with God.

The Law...has only a shadow of the good things to come - it was only a hint, but following a shadow brings us to its reality. They would be constantly reminded of the high standards of acceptability to God. Again, the Law “itemized” all the ways sinful humanity falls short. The shadow was the Law, and its reality of what would correct our sinful condition was the man Christ Jesus.



Galatians 3:13-14: (NASB) ¹³*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree—* ¹⁴*in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the spirit through faith.*

God's love is beginning to come out from behind the clouds of imperfect human conclusions. It is not the clouds of God's word; rather, our imperfect interpretations. Although keeping the Law perfectly for all except Jesus was impossible, it was a necessary step towards a relationship with God.



TESTAMENT OLD NEW TESTAMENT OLD TESTAMENT TESTAMENT NEW OLD TESTAMENT NEW TESTAMENT

When we see these verses in the book of Hebrews referring to the shadow (events in the Old Testament) of the reality (events in the New Testament), it makes us realize those that choose to only study the New Testament miss out on so much which is built upon the Old Testament! We are being told right here in Hebrews and Galatians that we need to go back and look at the lessons in the Old Testament because they lead to the even bigger lessons in the New Testament.

In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles - we will talk about the blessing of Abraham shortly. But this demonstrates how Jesus being able to keep the Law in all points proved he was the promised Messiah, not just for the Jews and Christians, but for everybody.

1 Corinthians 15:22: (NASB) *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

All get that personal miracle of resurrection - of being saved from Adamic death. What mankind does after that resurrection is up to them. More on this soon.

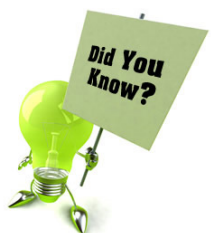
We need the Old Testament to understand the New Testament. We need the pictures in the Old Testament to show us the value of the New Testament. We need the events leading up to the New Testament to show us how it all works.

The books of Hebrews and Galatians work well together to further clarify how the yearly sacrifices by the Jews fit in with Jesus sacrificing his human life for us.

Let's return to Hebrews to let it explain the "why" of all these sacrifices and the importance of Jesus:

Hebrews 10:4-7: (NASB) *⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵Therefore, when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; ⁶in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O God.*

The message is abundant and clear. All those sacrifices bought time for those who would have allegiance to God until the time was complete for the actual sacrifice to appear! *It was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*, but it did make possible a temporarily restored relationship with God.



The sins of the Jewish people were forgiven each year by recognizing their sins through the offering of sacrifices. See Leviticus 16. This foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus for remission of sins.



Does this sound like an angry and vengeful God? No! It sounds like a God who cares. Here He is, showing us step-by-step the way back to Him. Remember, mankind lost their relationship with God in the Garden of Eden. There is a cost to getting that relationship back. If someone falls down a really steep cliff, they do not just jump back up to the top. They have to claw their way up, step-by-step.



God showed us how to climb back up to Him. When the time came, Jesus catapulted that plan much further:

Galatians 3:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, and to seeds, as referring to many, but rather to one, and to your seed, that is, Christ.

Continuing the **pattern of promise**, Paul deepens the meaning of that original promise to Abraham.

He clearly shows that Jesus is THE seed, the Messiah, upon which the promise was centered:

¹⁷What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

The Old Testament Law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham, but the Law did not cancel the promise. It built upon it.

Even though the Law was given to an entire nation to follow for thousands of years, it did not and cannot invalidate the original Abrahamic promise:

Genesis 12:3: (NASB) And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

The promised blessing of *all the families of the earth* never expired, and yet we still have not seen this fulfilled. We still await its completion.

The Law was given *because of* the promise, not *despite* the promise. It was the next step towards fulfilling the promise to *bless all the families of the earth*. God's promises do not get forgotten, despite a long passage of time. The Law was given to Israel specifically to show them the pathway towards becoming right with God. It was an important part of God's love bringing man back to Him. The **pattern of promise** is verified through the Law.

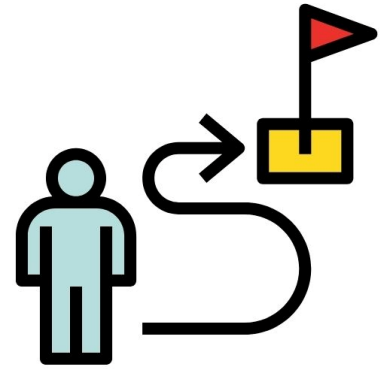


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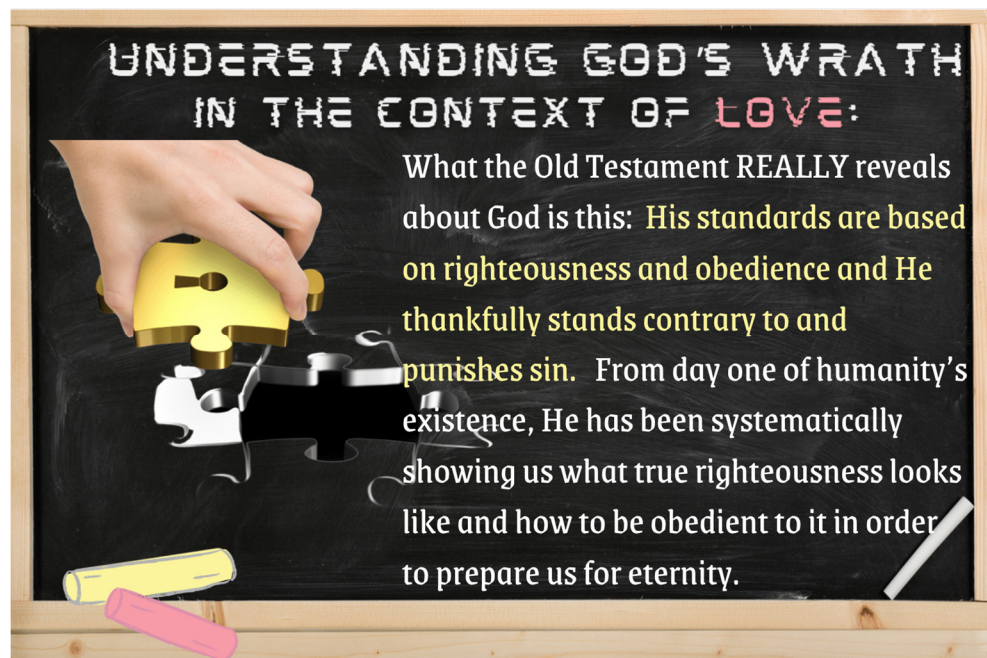


The Law accomplished many purposes:

- 📖 It created accountability for Israel. It is vitally important to have recognizable accountability. The standards they needed to live up to were unmistakable.
- 📖 It kept Israel separate from the pagan nations that surrounded them. The Law made the Jews different on purpose. It helped them focus on God and living a righteous life.
- 📖 It identified sin and showed that fallen man could not live in harmony with God. We become humbler and more teachable when we realize how much we need Jesus to help us overcome sin and become closer to God.
- 📖 It gave the people a specific way to follow God and live a prosperous human life.
- 📖 It proved that a perfect man could keep God's perfect Law, pointing to Jesus.



The Law was not just given to one small nation and then forgotten later. Just like the Abrahamic promise, it was a major steppingstone for all back to God.



It is inspiring to look at God's true character and purpose explode into plain view. The Bible DOES reveal all!

**If God is as benevolent and wise as we have suggested He is,
how does this all work out?**

We all like a happy ending, but we usually do not like the twists and turns a real-life drama must take to get there. Well, the destiny of humanity is a big and complex real-life drama that continues to unfold before our eyes. The good news is, none of this is beyond the grasp, wisdom or power of God Himself.

How does this all work out? We have seen God's plan unfold in places that many never thought was possible. Some think these happenings were arbitrary, but we can now see His plan is architecturally designed to bring us to something greater.

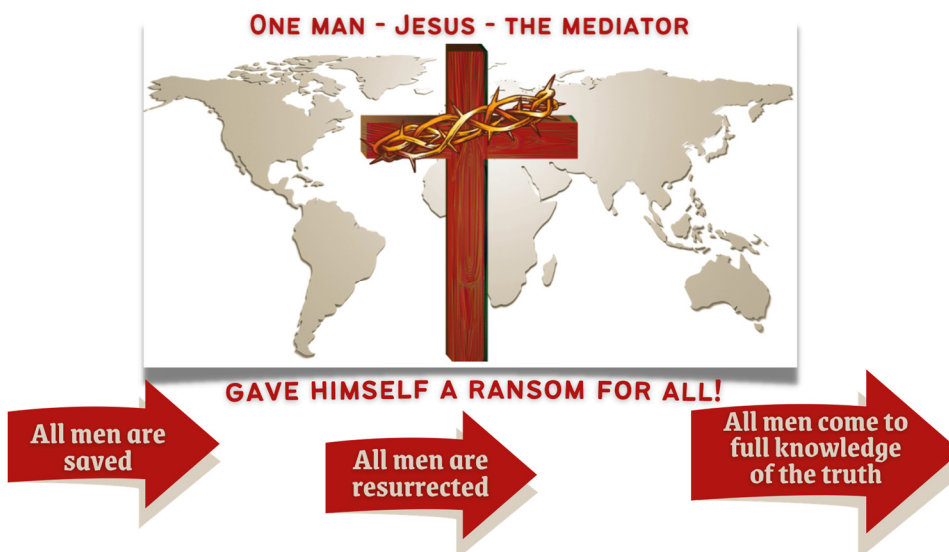
One more important point regarding the Law being brought to Israel:

Galatians 3:19,22: (NASB) ¹⁹Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. ²²But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin (no one is exempt from sin), so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

We see the Law not only demonstrated what sin is, but the process of the Law being instituted by a mediator was to show how everlasting righteousness would be instituted. These scriptures show that the Law was not only a "flashing sign" for them to recognize sin, but it was a picture or guidebook for what would happen later.

Paul expands our understanding of this part of God's plan and perspective in his first letter to Timothy:

1 Timothy 2:3-6: (NASB) ³This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires (meaning is resolved or determined; not just a wish or a hope) all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge (meaning full discernment) of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.



Who desires all men to be saved - this is unconditional. All will be saved by resurrection out of the death we all inherited from Adam. Notice the order: all men to be saved (resurrected), then to come into the knowledge (the full discernment) of the truth.



Many churches today say the only time to believe is now, regardless of your circumstances. There is so much misinformation out there that finally mankind will be given all the knowledge - the full discernment - they need to make a decision on how they want to live from then on. Will they be obedient to God's righteous ways or still do evil even after seeing its devastating and traumatic path?

Therefore, the Day of Judgment is a good thing where all are raised, given their personal miracle and then rehabilitated to full knowledge and healing.

The Law was a guidebook to what will happen with all of humanity. The Law Covenant was given to the nation of Israel and Moses was its mediator. Jesus is the mediator for the world of mankind under the New Covenant. That personal miracle of resurrection allows for Jesus to then mediate between each individual and God.

For more on these covenants:



Moses was the MEDIATOR between God and Israel
Galatians 3:19



Jesus is the MEDIATOR between God and mankind
1 Timothy 2:5



A MEDIATOR is a translator, someone who intervenes between two sides at odds to bring them together

God is the author of the plan that redeems all of humanity, and Jesus is the way we are redeemed.



Galatians 3:24-29: (NASB) ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our **tutor <3807>** to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.



Tutor: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3807 *paidagōgos*; a boy-leader, i.e. a servant whose office it was to take the children to school; (by implication, (figuratively) a tutor)): -- instructor, schoolmaster

Tutor: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon - a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.

The Law was a *tutor* or schoolmaster for Israel in that it acted as a restraint on their human nature to prevent them from becoming degraded like the other nations. It showed them their weaknesses and need for self-control.

It prepared them to recognize their need for Jesus. Here in Galatians, it says *the Law has become our tutor as well, to lead us to Christ*. The principles of the Law bring us directly to Jesus. This is why having an understanding of the Old Testament is so important in this whole picture. The progression of God's plan shows that what was once used to identify sin is no longer the overriding influence that brings us to God. Why? Because *now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*.

Through faith, we now understand sin and what can truly remove it from us - the sacrifice of Jesus:

²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Heirs according to promise - meaning that original (and later repeated) promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. Jesus, as "Abraham's seed," is the direct inheritor of blessing all the families of the world.

We also inherit this privilege, as we are part of him - part of the "one seed":

recap
recap

Galatians 3:16: (NASB) *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, and to seeds, as referring to many, but rather to one, and to your seed, that is, Christ.*

There is just one seed, Jesus. How do his faithful followers fit in?

1 Corinthians 12:12: (NASB) *For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise (Galatians 3:29). The faithful followers of Jesus are a part of that seed because all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body - they are a part of the body of Christ.

Blessings come to the families of the earth through the mediation of Jesus and his true followers for all recipients of that personal miracle of resurrection.



THE GOAL: Reconciling mankind back to God

- Adam sinned and lost his relationship (and ours) with God.
- Through faith, Abraham was able to have a temporary relationship with God.
- Through the Law, the Israelites could have a temporary relationship with God. The Law was a bridge until the actual solution (Jesus) came.
- Through Jesus, we can once again have a relationship with God - this time permanently. This applies now to his faithful followers and in the kingdom after resurrection and rehabilitation for the rest of the world of mankind.

This shows God's love and meticulous planning.

Remember the first scripture we discussed:

Malachi 4:1: (NASB) *For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts...*

Once again there is this time of God's anger against sin. We just talked about all this love; where does all the anger fit in? If we look around us, how is the world doing according to God's righteousness? Pretty lousy. To end this age (the age of the gospel message) God's anger again appears. It is necessary because sinful actions, reactions, rules and laws only bring death and destruction. That is what Malachi is talking about - the end of the age, our period of time. Make no mistake, trouble is coming. We can see that in the world around us right now.

It once again is a day of God's anger against sin:

Zephaniah 3:8: (NASB) *Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.*

Here is more imagery of burning and fire. Listeners of Christian Questions know we do not believe in a burning hellfire of eternal torture, but even if this is symbolic, it sounds scary! Should we be afraid?



Episodes 1021, 1024 and 1027:
Is the Hell of Christian Tradition
Taught in the Bible? (Parts I, II and III)

Understanding the error of the hellfire teaching



Zephaniah is talking about this present evil world and Satan's sinful governments. Sin must be eradicated!

If we have faith and believe in the plan of God, there is nothing to fear, even though difficult times are ahead. Our fear should be in not being obedient to God.

Instead of a “here we go again” moment, it is actually a “here is how we move forward” moment - just read the next verse:

Zephaniah 3:9: (NASB) *For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.*

Zephaniah gives us God's plan in two verses - God's anger over and destruction of sin because of disobedience, but then the people are left with purity. The “burning” purified, not tortured. There are no “serving lips” in a burning hell. This completely dismantles any idea of eternal torment. These people have been purified - rehabilitated - AFTER their resurrection.



It is necessary to eradicate sin. Sin always brings consequences and collateral damage. Look at the situation in the world with Russia under Putin's invasion of Ukraine, unprovoked. We attempt to stop Putin with sanctions against Russia, which cause unfortunate hurt and collateral damage to the people of Russia. Why would we look at God judging sin and think He should not do so?

God's anger is to end Satan's rule and reconcile mankind back to Himself. It is interesting how we always want God to step in and intervene against evil people and circumstances, and yet when He did that in the Old Testament, He was criticized by some for doing so.

A further prophetic look at the end result of all of these hard teachings:

Micah 4:1-3: (NASB) *¹And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. ²Many nations will come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.*

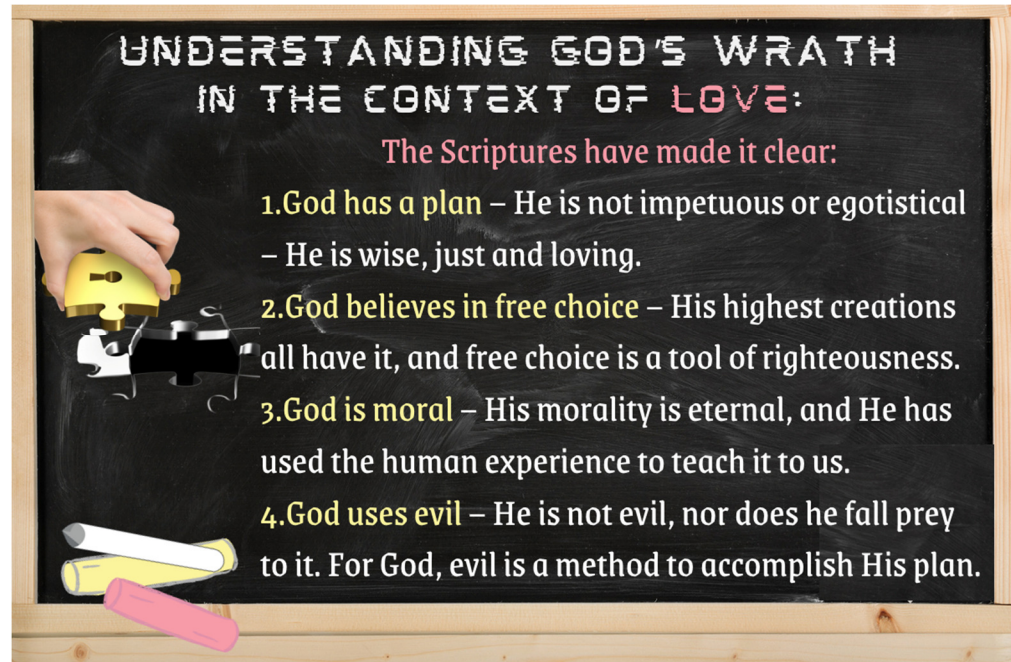
There are MANY other prophecies that echo this description of God's kingdom on earth, such as the beautiful Isaiah 25:8: (NASB) *He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord ^[a]GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.*

The next time you are confronted with the question, “Is God's wrath stronger than His love?” remember this next verse because it shows His character:

James 1:17-18: (NASB) *¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. ¹⁸In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.*



When we understand the plan of God that runs through the whole Bible, we see the goodness, perfection and grace shining through.



There was power and love in God's plan right from the beginning. God IS love, and in a bigger way than any of us could have imagined.

We must give God the honor and praise He deserves. He is the God of eternity, creation, goodness, righteousness, grace, mercy and love. God's wrath takes away sin so that His love can reign eternally.

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

*So, is God's wrath stronger than His love?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on March 14, 2022
Ep. 1220: Can Faith Take Me From Failure to Victory?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

More about Judgment Day and how it fits so perfectly into God's character of love, justice and mercy:



Understanding how Judgment Day works and why it probably isn't what you think it is

Judgment Day is absolutely inescapable. God sees all:

Hebrews 4:12-13: (ASV) ¹²For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Everyone will be justly held accountable:

Matthew 12:36-37: (YLT) ³⁶And I say to you, that every idle word that men may speak, they shall give for it a reckoning in a day of judgment; ³⁷for from thy words thou shalt be declared righteous, and from thy words thou shalt be declared unrighteous.

Judgment Day is about reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 5:17-21: (ASV) ¹⁷Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. ¹⁸But all things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. ²¹Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Judgment will be based fully upon one's own actions, with the past considered but not primarily:

Jeremiah 31:27-30: (NASB) ²⁷Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, When I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. ²⁸As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, (past actions) so I will watch over them to build and to plant," (present Day of Judgment actions) declares the LORD. ²⁹In those days they will not say again, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. ³⁰But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.

The good news - there will be no place to hide!

Here are the fruits of Judgment Day:

Isaiah 35:8-10: (ASV) ⁸And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: ¹⁰and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

It all boils down to God's promised blessing to ALL of humanity:

Matthew 6:9-10: (NRSV) ⁹Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.



Daniel 2:44: (NRSV) *And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.*

Habakkuk 2:14: (KJV) *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

Never forget the all-seeing power and love of our Creator:

Isaiah 55:6-12: (NASB) *⁶Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. ¹²For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

More about Elijah foreshadowing John the Baptist:

Elijah was commissioned with bringing Israel back to God and back to the teachings of their fathers. He confronted the people about their pagan practices and challenged and executed the powerless false prophets.

With God's miraculous help, Elijah turned the people of that day away from false worship and back to the God of Israel. But Elijah only partially succeeded. In later accounts, we find that both the houses of Israel and Judah continued to rebel to such an extent that they would not listen to prophets like Elijah, and they both went into national captivity. See 2 Kings 17:13-18 and 2 Chronicles 36:15-16.

Elijah's prophetic commission was a CONTINUING one. Israel only partially listened to John the Baptist during his brief ministry, but he did manage to prepare the hearts of the few to accept the Messiah.

How did John the Baptist fulfill going in the spirit and power of Elijah, as prophesied by the angel Gabriel?

Malachi 4:6: (NASB) *He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with complete destruction.*

Luke 1:16-17: (NASB) *¹⁶And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And it is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

To turn the hearts - to prepare the way of Messiah by performing a reformation work in preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins and declaring the kingdom of heaven at hand.



To the wisdom - to restore harmony between Israel and the “fathers,” the patriarchs, and in a fuller sense, the world whom Israel pictures will come into a condition of harmony with God, similar to that of the “fathers.”

Matthew 17:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰And his disciples asked him, Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? ¹¹And he answered and said, Elijah is coming and will restore all things; ¹²but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. ¹³Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1219: Is God's Wrath Stronger Than His Love? (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1219-gods-wrath/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. What tells us that God is in control? How do justice and love work together to form the foundation of God's wrath?
2. With what warning does the Old Testament end? What is the protection from this warning? Which two prophets are mentioned? What actions of Elijah are promised here? (See Malachi 4:1-6)
3. How many years passed between the Old and New Testaments? What prediction did the angel Gabriel make about John the Baptist to his father, Zacharias? How does this tie into the prophecy in Malachi 4:1-6? Who did Elijah represent in the New Testament? Who did Moses represent? What causes God's plan to take a "giant leap forward?" (See Luke 1:16-17, Deuteronomy 18:15, John 1:45)
4. Describe the two types of resurrection. What happened to the Old Testament city of Sodom? What did Jesus say about its future in the Day of Judgment? Why did God not intervene to save Sodom if many of the people would have reformed if miracles had been done there? Why does He not intervene miraculously now to correct terrible world situations and tragedies? (See John 5:28-29, Genesis 19:1-29, Matthew 11:23-24)
5. What was Adam's sin and its consequences? What did God require to temporarily bring man back into harmony with Him? Why did God destroy the society of Noah's day? (See Romans 5:12-14, Genesis 6:5)
6. Why was Abraham special to God? What did God promise Abraham? Who does this promise say will be blessed? How is the promise expanded in the New Testament? What is necessary to be "blessed with Abraham?" (See Genesis 12:1-3, Galatians 3:6-9, 1 Samuel 15:22)
7. What was the purpose of the Law given to Israel? Why did God knowingly give a Law that no imperfect human could keep? In what way was it a "shadow of good things to come"? As the Law was a "shadow," what was its reality? What will permanently remove the death and dying process we inherited from Adam? (See Galatians 3:10-14, Hebrews 10:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:22)
8. What did the sacrifices of the Law temporarily accomplish? Did the Law nullify the promise God gave to Abraham? Who is the "seed" mentioned in the promise God gave to Abraham? (See Hebrews 10:4-7, Leviticus 16, Galatians 3:16-18, Genesis 12:3)
9. What process did the Law demonstrate for bringing everlasting righteousness? Moses was the mediator between God and Israel. Who is the mediator between God and the world of mankind? How are the principles of the Law a "tutor" for Christians? Why are we "no longer under a tutor"? How can we be part of the "one seed?" (See Galatians 3:16,19,22,24-29, 1 Timothy 2:3-6, 1 Corinthians 12:12)
10. Describe the four main steps since Adam's sin that God has taken to reconcile man back to Himself. What does Zephaniah tell us about the fate of the present evil world and Satan's governments? What follows this fate? (See Zephaniah 3:8-9, also Malachi 4:1)
11. How do the promises of Micah 4:1-3, Isaiah 25:8 and James 1:17-18 reveal the true character of God? Do you think God's wrath is stronger than His love? How do you know?