

The Wrath of God
In the Light of Love, Law, Sin and Death
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To understand the end of sin and sinners, one must factor in the following points. Each is based on Scripture texts (which can be supplied), or are suggestions that attempt to be consistent with Bible statements.

1. God has created all things, and as such they (especially the living things) are the expression and reflection of the unselfish love that He is at the core of His character.
2. God's law is a description of this unselfish love and how it functions, and thus it is a transcript of His character while describing on its positive side how His creation is made to function. On its negative side, the law is not responsible for sin, but describes what it is. There is no reason for sin.
3. Sin's origin sprang from the claim that God Himself is selfish, which is the lie. The deception included the logical conclusion of that lie, which was, living for self will not lead to death.
4. Sin destroys what God has made, and so the wages or results of sin are not a higher level of life, but death. Neither God nor His law can be blamed for death.
5. In the plan of redemption God has had several purposes, both flowing out of His unselfish love. His main goals have been to save sinners from sin, and to eradicate sin, and thus bring to an end its horrible results.
6. To carry out this redemption, God did not have to change, but He did have to reveal His love, with its faith, in a way that had never been seen before.
7. At the personal level of existence, to save sinners He has had to intervene in mercy to prevent that death that is the result of sin. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they had a Savior who saved them from an immediate death that was not seen until Calvary. Since all have sinned, God's intervention, His mercy, is the only reason any sinner is alive.
8. In revealing His true character of love in face of the rebellion, God has had to let sin develop, and at the same time to place other limits on sin. He has limited sin to place boundaries on suffering and to keep sinners alive long enough for there to be a true revealing of the nature of sin, and an opportunity for them to repent. These limits have included supernatural and natural judgments. At times He has directed supernatural intervention, with humans, some beyond repentance, suffering the first death (put to sleep), and at times in His sovereignty He has used other human and natural forces to bring judgment resulting in destruction and the first death.
9. God had to be just in keeping sinners alive, which means He had to be consistent with His own character of unselfish love, to justify the continuing (though temporary) existence of sinners. Thus it was only what Jesus accomplished from His birth to His death, as the representative of the whole human race, that showed God to be just and the justifier of sinners, and resulted in the justification of life for all sinful men. In His representative death Jesus was our substitute. That means that when Jesus died, all died, affirming the law, and revealing the truth about God's unselfish love and faith.

10. Both love and faith are to operate in a reciprocal fashion--love and faith expressed resulting in love and faith returned. The origin of sin can be described as the failure to continue to reciprocate the love and faith that God has been from eternity. And the continuation of sin is but an expression of the same refusal to respond in kind.

11. When Jesus came as a human, His love—seen in His loving His Father with all He had, and His neighbor as Himself, to death—fulfilled the law. The faith of Jesus, seen in these expressions of His love, established the law. In these, Jesus reconciled the human race to God. And when a sinner reciprocates His love and faith, that also fulfills and establishes the law, in the repentant sinner's own small testimony, and in his own relationship to God—he affirms God's character of love and faith. In these, the sinner more fully receives the reconciliation, the atonement.

12. Jesus' death involved His laying down His life—giving Himself to that extent to take in Himself (as the representative of the race) every sinner to his reward. His death involved the Father's giving His Son to that, giving Him up to die that type of death. That is the wrath of God—giving one up to the results of sin. But neither Jesus' action nor the Father's action in this was simply passive. They were both extremely active and full of passion—love for each Other, love for the sinner, and hatred of sin.

13. The lead-up to the final eradication of sin means simply that all intelligent beings caught up in sin have either entered into a reciprocation to God's faith and love, and thus have been separated from sin (which separation is a process, not a point), or they have refused to give up sin. In a way we do not fully grasp, God will orchestrate things where all alive will separate into these two groups. Integral to that will be the final preaching of the gospel--what Jesus has accomplished, which contributes to the polarization of all humanity.

14. At the point when all involved with sin are alive (after the second resurrection), the history of God's dealing with sin will be reviewed publicly, and every knee will bow to His justice—His love and faith expressing His mercy as long as any had the ability to reciprocate. After this, sin will be eradicated by the destruction of all who have refused to give up sin. Since God created and sustains all life, this destruction involves a removal of what He does to sustain life (similar to Jesus' death on the cross). Again, this is active and passionate—God's emotions are involved.

15. This final destruction appears as fire flowing from God. Likely the energy that sustains life and that has had to be veiled for sinners, is unveiled and becomes destructive for those refusing to reciprocate what God has been giving. Those who have abandoned sin are unharmed by that fire, and in some sense will live forever in it. The mysterious and strange work of the final destruction of this fire is met at some level by a fire from within, at least with the originator of sin, reflecting perhaps the dissolution of the very being that was created and has been sustained by God's energy.

16. This destructive process has both speed and severity which are inversely related to each other, but directly proportionate in each creature to that creature's guilt and hardness of rebellion against God's love. This unwillingness to submit is revealed in the resistance of that individual creature to that very process of destruction, and may be the major reason for the measured degree of each one's end. Perhaps the fire from within describes this resistance to God to the end. All the details of this suffering and destruction are not revealed to us, but we can be certain it is consistent with God's character of love, and will contribute to the freely-given love the rescued sinners and unfallen beings will continue to give to God forever as the result of how He has handled the entire sin problem.