

"How can God be both a God of love & wrath?"
The Reason for God - Belief in an Age of Skepticism

What objections do people have about God being both wrathful & loving?

1. "Love & wrath are mutually exclusive."
2. "Judgment demeans the dignity & worth of people."
3. "It's not fair if people are 'sincere' about their wrong beliefs & actions."
4. "It produces more violence in society."

What does the Bible say about God's judgment, wrath & hell?

1. There are popular misunderstandings that the Bible does not teach. Here is the most common.

Modern people inevitably think that hell works like this: God gives us time, but if we haven't made the right choices by the end of our lives, he casts our souls into hell for all eternity. As the poor souls fall through space, they cry out for mercy, but God says "Too late! You had your chance! Now you will suffer!"

2. Jesus told a parable that provides insights into this issue. Listen to Luke 16:19-31.
 - a. The patterns of life lead to the afterlife (19-23); but it is not simply a pattern of conduct - the source of conduct is the heart.

Matt. 15:16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

- b. The response of the "sinner" that reveals what he is (24-31).
 - i. He remains the master of Lazarus (24).

- ii. He fails to ask for removal from hell. Why? (27-31)

- iii. He ultimately gets what he wants! Remember Romans 1:24, 26, 28?

What reasonable evidence exists that establishes God's love as well as His wrath?

1. God must direct His wrath against what is wrong.

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Rom. 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

2. God did direct His wrath against what is wrong & simultaneously His love for the object of His passion - at the cross!

Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25a whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3. And Jesus rose from the dead which establishes His claims as valid.

Rom. 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Acts 17:30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."