
The Wrath of God

by: Ronald L. Dart

The title of this sermon when it appears on cassette tapes may not inspire a lot of people listen to it. The title is "The Wrath of God."

I think it is fair to say that a lot of people don't see what God has to be angry about. Why in the world would God be so mad about some of the things going on out here in the world? He may be a little bit annoyed about it all, but angry, wrathful?

When people read scriptures about the wrath of God, they shiver a little bit, but I think, they really, really, don't understand.

Why Did God Have to Kill the Firstborn of Egypt?

Someone, on one the Internet forums, asked the question: "Why did God have to kill the firstborn of Egypt, just to get the Israelites out? After all, He is God, He is sovereign. He is all-powerful. Couldn't He have found a better way to get the children of Israel out of Egypt, than have to kill all the firstborn of Egypt? The kids had not done anything had they?"

To us, the generations of Israelites held in slavery is just so many words on paper. We read it. We open the Bible, we know what's there and we forget. I think, we don't have a grasp, for this, to really understand why God did what He did, not only why He did it, but why it had to be done that way.

I am going to take a shot and try to help you understand the wrath of God, to understand the anger of God, and I want you to turn back to the first chapter of the book of Exodus, to a passage of Scripture that is very familiar, I think to most of us, but one which I think has not been explored in the kind of depth that it needs.

Israel In Egypt

In Exodus 1 verse one, it says, "Now these are the names of the children of Israel that came into Egypt, every man and his household came with Jacob. {2} Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, {3} Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, {4} Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. {5} And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was already in Egypt." This is the people that came down there and {6} "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that

generation, {7} And the children of Israel were fruitful, and they increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them."

They were rapidly becoming a serious problem to the Egyptians and the Egyptians having thought this over, decided that instead of having the Israelites as a problem, they might as well have them as an asset.

"There rose up," {8} "a new king over Egypt that never knew Joseph, {9} And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.""

There were more of them, and you can understand, that being the case, why people might start getting a little antsy, that if these people who outnumber us, decided to try to overthrow us, they probably could succeed.

""Let's deal wisely with them, {10} lest they multiply, and it comes to pass, that, when it falls out any war, they join also to our enemies, and fight against us, and so we wind up getting thrown out of the land." {11} Therefore, they set over them taskmasters to afflict them with burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. {12} But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel."

Let's put them to work and work them from dawn to dusk. Let's not give them any time to have any babies and continue multiplying like this. But they kept right on multiplying.

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. {14} And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and brick and all manner of service in the field, all their service where they made them serve was with rigor."

Words on Paper

It's just words on paper, just words on paper, until you have felt the lash across your own back, it is just words on paper, until you have had to get out of bed in the morning, with your feet so sore, you can hardly stand on them, and stagger out and go to work, one more time on nothing more than a little bowl of soup and a little piece of bread, that's all you get for a whole days ration of food, until you have actually been that hungry, until you have been weak from hunger and still had to go to work, until you have had to walk on bloodied feet out to carry on your work because if you don't, you're going to die that day. It is just so many words on paper.

I'm really sorry that I lack the power of description to impress upon the mind of man what this is really like. If you want to get a grip on it, try Viktor Frankl's book "Man's Search for Meaning." Viktor Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist in Germany in the 30s, and like every other Jew, he was sent to concentration camps. He survived it. He tells his story. It is not lurid, it's not one of those things designed to try to make you sick as you read it. It is just factual, and he describes more about the mind of this. He was a psychiatrist of the people who actually went through the slavery of this period of time.

The reason I'm trying to impress this upon your mind is, that the Egyptians, who were going to suffer at the hands of God, had made the children of Israel to suffer untold agonies, not for a few days, not for a few weeks, but throughout the entirety of their lives for generations.

No one had lived among the Israelites who could ever talk to an Israelite who had been a free man. They heard stories and they knew the stories that they had memorized, but they didn't know much else.

Hebrew Midwives

We live so well, even the poorest of us, that we cannot grasp the degradation and the death that is absolutely inseparable from slavery. We cannot grasp the diminution of human life, all the way to infanticide, that was a part of it.

Continuing in verse 15 of Exodus 1, "The King of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of the which the name of one was Shiprah, and the name of the other was Puah."

Their names are recorded in history for a reason.

Pharaoh said, {16} "When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and you see them up on the stools, if it be a son, then you shall kill him."

If they are on the birthing stool and the child comes out and you see it's a boy, just wack his head on a stone and kill him.

"If it be a daughter, she can live."

It was Pharaoh's intent to kill half of the newborn babies among all the Israelites.

Verse 17, "But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them but saved the men children alive. {18} And the king of Egypt called for the midwives in, and said, "What are you doing? Why have you done this?"" Of course, their lives were at risk on this. {19} "And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and they are delivered before the midwives can get there.""

In many cases they were out working in the field and had labor pains and had a baby in the field and went on doing some work thereafter. These were tough women who were having these babies.

"Therefore, God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty. {21} And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses."

Pharaoh Charged ALL His People

Now this next verse is the one that I think is very important. I think it has been overlooked.

Verse 22 of Exodus 1, "Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every son that is born, you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.""

Have you ever noticed that 'ALL' of the Egyptians were involved in this atrocity! It was not just Pharaoh. It was not just his army. It was not just a few platoons of his soldiers. He told ALL his people that whenever a Hebrew baby was born, if it was a boy, you throw this child into the river. Now this takes on special meaning when you realize, that this question that this woman on the forum asked about the death of the firstborn in Egypt. Why did God do that? He could have delivered them another way.

This is the reason. It is because the Egyptians had destroyed, who knows how many thousands of Hebrew babies, over how long of a period of time, callously throwing all of these little boys in the river for the crocodiles or to drown. That is what was being done to the Hebrew children.

God Is A God of Justice

Now what is not sometimes understood about God, is that God is a God of justice. You can NOT let things like this go! Crimes like this cannot be left unanswered. They cannot be left unpunished. They have to be dealt with in ways that are meaningful, appropriate and balanced.

So, in this case, balance was going to call ultimately for the death of the firstborn, not all the children in Egypt, only the firstborn. Note well, it was not just the firstborn of Israelites that were dead, it was all the boys that were to be killed.

Let's continue in Exodus 2, "There went a man of the house of Levi and took to wife a daughter of Levi. {2} And the woman conceived and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him for three months."

There is only so long that you can keep a child hidden.

"And when she could no longer hide him, she made an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink."

In a curious way she was obeying the order and she was throwing her child into the river, but she put him in a little ark made of bulrushes.

"His sister hid watching to see what would happen to the child, {5} And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. {6} And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, the baby was weeping. And she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children.""

If this woman had followed her father's edict, she would have thrown the child to the crocks. Right? But she had compassion. {7} "And his sister was standing nearby and said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" {8} And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go.""

Now of course there would be Hebrew women who had breast milk and no baby to nurse because their children had been thrown in the Nile River.

Pharaoh's daughter said, ""Go." And the maid went and called the child's mother. {9} And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." And the woman took the child and nursed it. {10} And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, "Because I drew him out of the water.""

You know, there is a staggering irony in this. Pharaoh's daughter saved alive the very instrument of God's judgment. If she had followed her father's instruction, Moses would have died. He would not had been there to see the burning bush and to be sent back by God to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.

But God's hand no doubt was in this from the beginning.

How Does God Value Life?

So how does this explain God's wrath and God's judgment on the Egyptians? I think the fact that we don't really understand the wrath of God is a measure of how cheap life has become for us. We think we value life but somehow or other, I don't think we grasp how God values life, the life of His children.

Consider a medical procedure that is now practiced commonly in this country and that is at this moment perfectly legal. When a woman is late in her pregnancy and wants to terminate it, they do a procedure called 'dilation and curettage', I think, and you have heard it called 'partial birth abortion.' The baby is turned and delivered feet first and when nothing, but the head is left in the birth canal, the doctor punctures the base of the skull with an instrument, inserts a suction tube and sucks out the contents and kills the baby. And I've heard it said, that when babies are brought out of there, their little legs are kicking until the moment when the doctor finally sucks out their brains and then they stop and go still.

It's a barbarous procedure but it is perfectly legal in our country right now. When this was being debated in the Senate, one senator asked two other senators, "Now what would happen if instead of the baby stopping, if it accidentally slipped completely out of the birth canal, could the doctor still kill it?" Two American senators who were on the record and caught on 'C-SPAN' on television saying this. It was finally falsified in the Congressional record, and you will not find it there. The two senators said, "Well I suppose that would be a decision for the woman and her doctor to make."

How did we get to this point? To where we would consider infanticide. Has life become this cheap? Now how does this differ from the midwives killing the newborn of Israel as they came out of the birth canal and right on the birthing stool. How does this differ? How is our system different from Pharaohs? Except for the mandatory nature of his, he required it. This is his command. In our country, nobody is commanding it and people are still doing it. It's a strange thing.

Why Would God Be Angry?

Now can you begin to understand why God, who can see all of this, would be angry? How would it affect you to actually witness a child being killed? How would it affect you to witness a live child, out of the birth canal, on a table, being killed? Would you be angry at all? How do you think it affects God?

I don't think God is quite patient enough to understand the difference between 4 inches of its head being in and its head out. I think God looks at things a little broader than that.

But why take it out on the children of Egypt is the next question. The question the woman asked on the forum. Pharaoh's kid didn't do anything. The Egyptian families' children didn't do anything.

There are two important things to remember: One, God can raise the dead. No death is final to Him. In fact, He intends to raise everybody at some time or another. Second, and this is really important for people to understand. God is a God of justice.

God Is A God of Justice

All of the plagues that descended upon Egypt were just. Every one of them corresponded in some symbolic way to the treatment of the slaves in Egypt all the way down to the death of the firstborn. Think for a moment: What was the first plague that Moses did? He turned the river to blood. Right? He goes down, he turns the Nile River into blood. Do you see the connection? Where were they throwing all the Hebrew children? They were throwing them in the Nile River. And the first thing that Moses did was turn the waters of the Nile to blood. Don't miss that connection. It is deliberate, because it was the river that claimed the lives, over what period of time we don't know.

Why Did God Harden Pharaoh's heart?

People often ask about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Why did God harden his heart? Why didn't God soften his heart, so he would let them go? The reason God didn't want to soften Pharaoh's heart was because justice had to be done and for justice to be done this whole scheme had to be played out. Pharaoh's heart, by the way, was hardened in the first place. If you go back and read your way through this account, you will find that Pharaoh's heart, with all of his arrogance, was hardened to start with. How did God soften his heart, He softened it with a plague, then how did He harden Pharaoh's heart, He removed the plague?

God did not have to change the wiring in Pharaoh's head. All He had to do was manipulate circumstances around this man, and his heart was hardened. It's as simple as that.

God did so because justice had to be done. Understand this. This is really important for you to understand. Without justice there is no repentance. Without justice there is no mercy. Without justice there is only evil continually.

Why We Punish Criminals

Can we understand why we punish criminals? Why do we put anybody in jail? Why do we put anybody to death? Why do we have any penalties at all for anything that people do? Because of justice. Because we have to somehow demonstrate that if something people did was wrong then we also have to demonstrate how wrong it was. Right? You can't let people off with these things. If you had the same precise prison sentence for a man who stole some VCRs and a man who killed somebody, what you have said is, that a human life is not worth any more than a few VCRs. That is what you say. Send them both to jail for five years.

A kid who was working in a convenience store to get money to go to college, who was shot by a guy who came in the convenience store, his life is not worth any more than a handful of VCRs if the two criminals get the same penalty. And the fact is, that some of the people that you encounter in prison in this country today, the sentences that they are serving makes no sense whatsoever, because the law should make a statement by the punishment that they receive, it should make some kind of a statement as to the enormity of the crime, the value of whatever it was that was done.

We Need Justice

If you don't have justice, there is only evil continually. And so, consequently, God in order to be just must hold people accountable for what they have done! So, God held Pharaoh and all of the Egyptian people accountable for what they had done. Was it just? Yes, it was! Is it uncomfortable? Yes, it is. Sin is always uncomfortable. The consequences of sin are always uncomfortable, but you have to understand, you cannot make God over into the image you'd like for Him to be. You can't make God over into Santa Claus, or a granddaddy in the sky, who never punishes.

Sometimes we try to create a different kind of an image of what God is like, but fathers still have to be there, and the father still has to have the firm hand of discipline, or else his children's lives will be ruined. And so, it is that God also has to be there.

The death of the firstborn of Egypt was not merely to deliver the Israelites. The fact is that it could have been done another way, but that would have dismissed the deaths of thousands of Israelite babies drowned in the Nile, which is why God turned the river into blood.

Yes, the idea of vengeance does make me shudder, but we need to understand, vengeance is the central value of justice. You've got to avenge the poor, the weak, and the downtrodden, if you're ever going to claim to be a part of a just system. In fact, we ought to shudder at the idea of vengeance.

The Civil War and Slavery

Have you ever thought much about the Civil War? Have you ever connected it to the great evil of slavery practiced and tolerated in this country for so many years? It is kind of hard not to connect it in one sense, because the Civil War is the great pivotal event that ended slavery. Although there were other issues involved in the Civil War that didn't have so much to do with slavery.

How many soldiers, North and South, died at Gettysburg? I had no way to look to see how many it was. Thousands I believe, who died there. Then you go across to the other Civil War battlefields and all the thousands and thousands of men who died, were crippled, maimed, and all the fights and the battles that were fought in that war.

How many slaves died on ships coming across from Africa and were thrown over the side of the ship, not buried at sea, just thrown over the side of the ship for the sharks. I don't know. But I think the number runs in the millions. I think the number of slaves that actually died between the time they were captured and the time they got to the place where they could work and lived, exceeds the number of people who were killed by far than the ones the Germans killed in World War II in the Holocaust.

Do you suppose that it was really in the mind of God to let us get off scot free for that? It makes me wonder a little bit about the Civil War, now that I have begun to think about what happened to the Egyptians, and the firstborn of the Egyptians and what has happened to our own people with the Civil War that we had to fight and also it makes me wonder if we have any idea what we spared ourselves by ending slavery? What might've happened to us if we had not ended it and had gone on and on? Sooner or later we probably would have, but if the Civil War is any kind of judgment from God upon our peoples, what else might have happened?

The more that I read about these battles, the more I see that these soldiers were brothers on both sides of the fence, the less that war makes sense to me. It was a crazy war. It was a terrible war, a bloody war. Why did we have to fight it?

Did we have to fight it? Why, because we had to pay for our national sins of slavery and justice ultimately would have required God to act. If God cares, if we are God's people, then justice would require Him to act. The longer the evil, the greater the evil, the greater the punishment.

As we approach the end time, the wrath of God will loom larger and larger across the landscape. In fact, when I speak of the wrath of God, most people's minds will turn toward the end time. They might forget how much the wrath of God has been revealed in years gone by, and there will be fools who just can't understand whatever it is, that God is mad about.

Jeremiah Is Calling for Repentance

I want to turn back to Jeremiah chapter 7. What on earth is God so mad about? "The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, {2} "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, "Go up out of the Temple, stand in the gate and say this, "Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah and those that enter the gates to worship the LORD. {3} Thus saith the LORD of

hosts, the God of Israel, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place."

Turn your life around and it will be alright. Now you have to understand that unless there is such a thing as justice, mercy doesn't mean anything. What was being offered to these people at this point, if they will amend their ways and their doings, is mercy. They will not have to pay the penalty that they might otherwise have to pay.

The Temple of the LORD

Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 7 verse 4, "Do not trust in lying words, saying, "The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD are these."

What Jeremiah is talking about here, right in the middle of the Temple is Jeremiah, standing in the doorway, saying, "Don't trust in lying words, saying, "The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD are these."

What he means by this is, don't assume for a minute that because this is the Temple of God, that it can't be brought down. Don't assume that this is a place of safety. Don't assume that God's wrath will never descend upon this place, because it has His name upon it. You're making a very big mistake, if you do.

He said, {5} "If you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, {6} If you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and if you stop shedding innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: {7} Then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."

Is that too much to ask? Is that really asking a lot? Will it strain us to do this?

Don't oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. Don't shed innocent blood. Don't walk after other gods to your hurt. That is what I want from you.

He says in verse 8, ""Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. {9} "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, {10} "and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations?'"

"Give me a break," says Jeremiah, "How can you say that?" The whole idea is one of the corruption from the top down in Israel, not only of the worship of God and their conduct. He's talking about murder. He said, {11} ""Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I have seen it," says the LORD. {12} "I will tell you what to do, you go your way to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel.""

Shiloh

I have told this story before of how I was driving north in a Volkswagen out of Jerusalem one day. Allie, my wife, and I were on our way toward Jacob's well, and some cities up North, and I saw a sign, that said, 'Shiloh' with an arrow pointing to the right, and I remembered this Scripture, "Go into my place which was in Shiloh" and I thought, "Well, here I am, I ought to do it." So, I hung a right and went bouncing on down this little road and found the place out in the middle of nowhere and I stopped and looked around and there was nothing there, except an old Arab mosque which was over a couple hundred yards away, which apparently dated around the 10th century. So, what were we supposed to go to Shiloh for? There was nothing there. That's the point.

You think that this place will be protected because the Temple the LORD is here. Go to Shiloh and see what is there. It is bare. It is just rocks, just ground. Not any grass at this particular point in time.

So, what is the message of this? Don't think that just because this is God's house that there is going to be any relief from this. It isn't enough for it to be God's house to have the name there, to have the form of worship, to have all the rituals. It is not enough to have that right.

He says, ""Now, because you have done these works," says the LORD, "I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you would not listen. I called you and you wouldn't answer. {14} Therefore, I will do to this house, which is called by my name, wherein you trust, and to the place that I gave your fathers, I will do this just like I did to Shiloh.""

And He did. There would come a time when you would go by, just a little after 70 A.D. and not be able to figure out where the Temple had stood. It would not be evident, just like when I went to Shiloh, it wasn't evident where anything had stood.

"I will cast you out of my sight," {15} "as I cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim."

They were all gone for the same reason.

"Now therefore pray not for this people, don't lift up a cry or prayer for them, do not make intercession to Me. I will not hear you."

That folks are really chilling. Really chilling!

The Queen of Heaven

In verse 17 of Jeremiah 7, He says, "Do you see what they're doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children are gathering wood, the fathers kindle the fire. The women are kneading their dough."

The whole family, everybody, is involved in this.

"The women are kneading their dough to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven and pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger."

Now I can easily see why someone would say, "Well, what's the big deal? We don't mean anything by this. We know that this is an old pagan custom, but we are going to make these cakes to the Queen of Heaven. Again, why is it such a big deal?"

Now let's read verse 19, "Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the LORD. "Do they not promote themselves to the shame of their own faces?"

Do you know something? This baking of cakes to the Queen of Heaven, is not by itself such a big deal, if that was all there were to it, it probably would not have been such a big deal to God. The problem was, it wasn't all there was to it!

"Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, my anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, on the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it shall burn, and nobody is going to put it out. {21} Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Put your burnt offerings to your sacrifice and eat meat {22} Because I never spoke to your fathers. I never commanded them in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices."

It is not what I wanted. Did you realize that? God never wanted burnt offerings and sacrifices. The burnt offerings and sacrifices and the whole system that was instituted was added because of sin. It was a means of dealing with the sins of the people.

Verse 23, "But this is what I commanded them, saying, "Obey my voice, and I'll be your God and you will be my people. You walk in the way that I have commanded you, that it might be well with you." {24} But they wouldn't listen, they would not incline their ear. They walked in the councils in the imagination of their evil heart and went backward and not forward. {25} And since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them {26} And they would not listen. nor would they incline their ear, they hardened their neck and they did worse than their fathers."

Verse 29, "Cut off your hair Jerusalem, cast it away and take up a lamentation on the high places, for the Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath."

There is a generation of people, God says, that are going to suffer for this. They are the generation of my wrath. {30} ""The children of Judah have done evil in my sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in my house, which is called by My name to pollute it."" And even there, if it had stopped there, it would be one thing, but it didn't stop there. {31} "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command them. It never came into my heart." God did not want that kind of a religion for His people.

Burn the Children in the Fire

Do they think my religion is too hard? And then they go off with a religion that requires them to burn their sons and their own daughters in the fire. Do you want to know why God is angry? Wouldn't it make you angry to see someone burn their own children in the fire to another god like this? Are we still capable of anger? To hate the things that God hates, being angry at the things that God is angry with?

Let's continue in Jeremiah 7 and verse 32, "Therefore behold, the days come," says the LORD, "that it shall no longer be called Tophet, or Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they shall bury in Tophet, until there is no place left to bury any one, {33} And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, for the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away."

Why? For justice. Justice demands it! That a people who would go out and burn their own children in the fire to gods like Molech, deserve to die. They deserve to have their bodies lying out being picked over by vultures.

Abortions

We have in our country come to the place to where the wanton destruction of 40 million potential citizens of the United States is no big deal. That's how many have been aborted since Roe V Wade and probably a lot more than that because the count goes up about one million a year. (Note: It is estimated at 59 million abortions as of the year 2014).

Let me ask you this. Do you think that it was the religious aspect of child sacrifice that made it so bad before God? Do you think it would have been okay if they just disposed of the infants for economic and personal reasons? In other words, I take my kids down to the valley of Tophet, with burning fires all over the place and I just throw my kid out there on the fires that burn. Kill him first so he doesn't scream and cry, then that would be okay? It's only because they were burning them in the fire to other gods that that's the problem. Do you think that's what was going on here? No one is going to think that for a moment.

No matter why you do this, no matter why you kill children, it's evil in the sight of God and God will avenge it, because the children are not themselves going to be around to avenge it, and the children are the weakest of our society.

In the course of preparing this message, I came to the conclusion that most of the sin of the world, sooner or later comes to rest on the children. We started off talking about the murders, the stealing and lying and committing adultery and all the things that people do, and in the end, with all the adultery, with all sleeping around, with all of the broken homes and all of the marriages coming apart, it all comes down on the children in the end. That's where it came to rest in Israel and that is where it is coming to rest today.

Do you realize what happens to these aborted babies? They are incinerated unless they are being used for medical tests. They go up in smoke or non-smoke, because they probably have filters on their smoke stacks, but they are incinerated in hospital incinerators where they dispose of

medical waste. Over 40 million of them. They never got to that kind of numbers in ancient Israel. It never even came close.

When I looked at this, I thought I would go a little distance and explain why Jesus had to be born as a baby, come into this world as a tiny baby, totally vulnerable, totally dependent upon His mother and you know they persecuted Him, even when he was a child. As a child His family had to jump up and flee to Egypt to save His life when Herod ordered all the children around Bethlehem to be killed. I don't know how many dozens, a hundred perhaps, maybe more, little boys lost their lives because Herod wanted Jesus dead. It all comes back to the children.

Jesus Blessed the Little Children

Then there was a day when they brought the young children to Jesus that he would touch them. His disciples rebuked those that brought them and when Jesus saw that He was really unhappy about that. He said in Mark 10 verse 14, ""Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of God. {15} Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." {16} And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Do you suppose, when all is said and done, the primary ways in which we are going to be judged by God has to do with the way we treat the little children? It will be in there. You can count on that.

Psalms 127 and verse 1 says, "Unless the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. {2} It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for he gives his beloved sleep. {3} Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. {4} As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of youth."

Children are the heritage of God. How does God look upon people who destroy children? How should God look upon people who abuse children, they belong to Him? The children that you have in your homes, the children that you rock to sleep at night, the children you read stories to aren't yours. They are the heritage of God. Why? Because God ultimately expects these children to be in His family. He demands the parents love their children and that they treat their children well.

It's not merely a respect for life. A while back I was listening to the president's speech about the respect for the life of the elderly and the life of the weak, of the sick and the life of the unborn and I agree with him entirely on that, but it is not really respect for life that is at stake in the abortion issue. It's respect for the heritage of God that is at stake. Do you understand? These are not merely 'life' that people are killing, they are more than life. Is it any wonder then that the wrath of God might be kindled because of the way men treat little children?

The Wrath of God Is Righteous

Unless you can come to understand that the wrath of God is right, unless you can understand that the wrath of God is righteous, you will never understand the sacrifice of Christ, because you could just as easily say, "Well why is God upset about that? Why doesn't He just write it off? Why doesn't He just say, "I forgive you." Why doesn't He just let it all go? You see, if you do this, there is no necessity for the death of Jesus. God could just write off your sins, but then there would be no justice. There would be no justice, and God's law would just be arbitrary. He could just as easily have said, "Thou shalt commit adultery," as saying "Thou shall not commit adultery." And His law is just as He says it is. Instead of being right as opposed to wrong. Unless we can come to understand that, unless we understand that God's punishment upon us personally is just. Unless we can come to understand that His condemnation of us is just and right, we are not going to understand the sacrifice of Christ. Unless you come to understand the anger of God is justified, never in this lifetime will you understand mercy.

I will not take the time to turn to it, but you might want to read the fifth chapter of Jeremiah for an advance on this because in this passage of Scripture, He talks about the kind of sins that we see all around us today all the time. All the way down to the question, that we have seen in the seventh chapter of killing their children and burning them in the fire. Whenever you look at this and you go back to Jeremiah 5, there are two different times in this chapter and another time in chapter 9 where He outlines all these things.

He says this in Jeremiah 9 verse 9, "Shall I not be avenged on a nation such as this?" That little expression "such as this" makes my blood run cold, and the reason is, because we are a nation just like that! God says, "I'll avenge them." God has not gone off somewhere. He hasn't lost interest. He is patient, He is slow to anger but He does become angry. He does become wrathful and it's just and it should be just.

"He will be avenged," He says, "on a nation such as this." Unfortunately, a lot of people who look at prophecy and read these prophecies, they see them as history written in advance and they try to say, "This is a description of what will be." I look at these prophecies as a description of 'why' it will be, not merely 'what,' but 'why.'

When you understand 'why,' it ought to scare the daylights out of you about the circumstances that prevail in our country today. We have not really lost all respect for God. We've lost our respect for God's life in us. We have lost respect for God's heritage in the children. We have lost respect and fear as the people of God, and we have concluded, "There is no reason for God to be mad about this, and if He really is a good God, He wouldn't be mad about this." We re-create Him in our own image.

It's a terrifying thing to consider, but every so often when you read your Bible, you ought to tremble because there is justice there, and justice, I am sorry to say, is what lies close on the horizon for us as a people. We've already experienced it in the past in some very painful ways and we are going to experience again in the future.

Without justice, mercy has no meaning and we do know that it is through God's mercy that we are not consumed. Ahead of us lies some of the greatest examples of the mercy of God that man will ever see. I'm looking forward to that side of the equation.

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. As a sinful human being, do we even have the right to ask God why He does the things he does?
2. Have you ever noticed that all the Egyptians were told to kill the Hebrews' sons?
3. What kind of wrath do you think God may have in store for the countries that make abortion legal?
4. Do you find it ironic that many can read the decree by Pharaoh and call it barbaric, yet still support abortion?
5. What side of God do you see more often in the Bible, the God of justice or the God of grace? He is both, but which side of Him is shown more frequently.
6. Do you agree with Mr. Dart that the Civil War was God enacting judgment on the US?
7. Are God's requests and commands really that hard to follow?
8. Is it really a burden to walk in righteousness?
9. Have you ever noticed that "God never wanted burnt offerings and sacrifices"?
10. What do you think of Mr. Dart's point that "most of the sin of the world, sooner or later comes to rest on the children"?