



GENESIS: THE FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING

A person is silhouetted against a night sky filled with stars. The Milky Way galaxy is visible, stretching across the sky from the bottom center towards the top. The person is standing on a small rock or mound of earth. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric, with the stars providing a soft glow.

RELATING TO GOD IN HIS FURY AND FORGIVENESS

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Each of the three passages of Scripture we'll look at today help us establish how God relates to sinners in their sin.

Do these people get God's fury or God's forgiveness?

Thomas Chalmers' sermon from Isaiah 27 , "Fury Not in God," deals with balancing God's fury against sin with God's benevolence for sinners.

I. Isaiah 27:4-5

“There are three distinct lessons in this text. The first is, that fury is not in God; the second, that He does not want to glorify Himself by the death of sinners (‘Who would set the briars and thorns against Me in battle’); the third, the invitation (‘Take hold of My strength, that you may make peace with me; and you shall make peace with Me’).” (T.C.)

“I have no wrath.”

“Fury will be discharged on those who reject the invitation. But we cannot say that there is any exercise of fury in God at the time of giving the invitation. In fact, our text explicitly and directly states God’s assurance to the contrary.” (T.C.)

I. Isaiah 27:4-5

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (Jn. 14:27)

“The day of the fury of the Lord is approaching.... The terror of His wrath on that day will be more horrible than all the rest of the destruction of the universe.” (T.C.)

“But what I have to tell you on this day is this: such fury is not now in God. Now is an opportunity to make peace with God for all eternity. And if you will only hear on this day of your merciful visitation, you will be borne off in safety from all those horrors. Amid the wild war and frenzy of the reeling elements of divine judgement, you will be carried by the arms of love to a place of security and everlasting triumph.” (T.C.)

I. Isaiah 27:4-5

The second lesson from this text concerns: *“Should someone give Me briars and thorns in battle, then I would step on them, I would burn them completely.”*

Thorns and briars are biblical metaphors for the unbelieving who set themselves as enemies of God. The issue here is that those who rebel against God set themselves at odds with God—to do battle with Him. Battling God is the problem. It’s not a problem for God, but for them.

I. Isaiah 27:4-5

“And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame, and it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.” (Is. 10:17)

“...but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.” (Heb. 6:8)

“Why set up, then, a contest so unequal as this? Why put the wicked in battle array against Him who could go through them and devour them in an instant by the breath of His fury? God is saying in the text that this is not what He is wanting. He does not want to set Himself forth as any enemy, or as a strong man armed against them for battle—it is a battle He is not at all disposed to enter into. The glory He would achieve by a victory over a host so feeble is not a glory that His heart is at all set upon... He would rather that sinners take hold of His strength [protection] and make peace with Him.” (T.C.)

I. Isaiah 27:4-5

The third lesson concerns God's invitation for sinners to avoid their destruction by His wrath, and to come to Him, so that in His protection they will know peace with God.

“God will certainly be glorified in the destruction of the sinner, but He prefers the glory that is His through the salvation of sinners. To destroy you is to do no more than to set fire to briars and thorns and to consume them. But to save you—this is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God. This is the mighty achievement which angels desire to look into (1 Pet. 1:12).” (T.C.)

II. Ezekiel 18

The problem being confronted is whether God is just in His dealings with sinners.

The tension being resolved concerns Israel accusing God of acting unfairly with them.

II. Ezekiel 18

“The soul who sins will die.” This represents an unrepentant person living in unbelief.

Now we see five different souls in action and how God deals with each of these souls:

- 1) Verses 5-9: God explains His position.
- 2) Verses 10-13: God’s punishment of individual sin.
- 3) Verses 14-20: A son who does right in God’s sight.
- 4) Verses 21-23: Repentance in a sinner’s life.
- 5) Verses 24-26: Personal responsibility for sin.

Verses 25 and 29 reveal the root: Israel is spitefully deluded about God and His ways—*“The way of the Lord is not right.”* This is an assault on God’s character as being righteous in Himself and in all His ways.

II. Ezekiel 18

“The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.... The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. The Lord keeps all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.” (Ps. 145:9, 17-20)

My third passage helps us see God's heart of love for self-deceived sinners; His invitation to come to Him to be forgiven for their sins and know His peace is costly, but also free.

How can this be?

III. Mark 10:17-31



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