

The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript**Episode 13****Updates and Preliminary Thoughts on Divine Wrath****May 9, 2023****Teacher: Matthew Halsted****Episode Summary:**

+ + +

If you like this podcast, consider becoming a Patreon supporter. You can do so by visiting: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted>

Don't forget to subscribe to the podcast and share it with others!

www.matthewhalsted.com

Transcript:

0:00 Hey Everyone. Welcome back to another episode of The Bible Unmuted. Thank you so much for joining this week. I am excited to be with you once again. So, this episode is unscripted, off the cuff. Because I've had an incredibly busy past week. In fact, the last several weeks have been pretty busy, but this past week especially so. And as a result, I haven't had a lot of margin in the schedule to plan out and prep for the next installment of the Romans series. We're going to be looking in Romans chapter 1:18, which is that verse and the verses following is the passage that has a lot to do with divine wrath. And I have a lot to say about that, but I just haven't had a lot of time to sit down and put my thoughts together on paper. And so, I thought it would be best to take a breather this week - put a pause on it. And none the less, I still wanted to put out an episode even if it was unscripted and off the cuff, as they say. Because I thought I would use this time to share some updates on some things that I'm working on this month, and this week especially. I'll share more about that, but I also thought it would be good to take this time to share some preliminary thoughts before we get into that next episode of Romans. Because like I say, that passage is pretty thick. And there is just a lot there. It's about divine wrath and God's wrath, obviously. So, we need to be careful, in my opinion, in how we think about God's wrath. And I think it's obvious why, right? If you don't...this is my thoughts here...if you don't understand how God's wrath works, if you don't have a good handle on that, then you risk not understanding the text in a way that is healthy. Here's what I mean by that. A lot of teachers and preachers... and you know, sadly, we've all heard a bad teaching of scripture I'm sure... but anyway, a lot of teaching on divine wrath and a lot of preaching on God's wrath, is not healthy in a sense that almost sometimes God comes off looking pretty bad. And maybe you've had these experiences - I hope not - but maybe you've had these experiences where you've heard someone teach about God's wrath and God almost looks very vindictive. (Laughs) God looks, it comes off looking as if His default mode is anger, right? And you know, you have to convince Him not to bring wrath on you or something like that. It's almost as if sometimes preaching on divine wrath makes God look like He is very quick to show anger and wrath, but very slow to show mercy. Like His default mode is wrath and anger. And actually scripture says the opposite. Scripture says that God is slow to get angry. He's very quick to show mercy and kindness and so forth. It's just interesting to me that how sometimes the "hellfire" preaching - well, it's just sad that sometimes we can take these texts like were going to be getting into and just not give them the proper reflection that they need. And I think that all scripture deserves meditation, contemplation, prayer... I think it was Tim Mackie who said this - it was given to me second hand, but whoever said this was spot on. They said, "Some passages of scripture require a cup of tea and long walks." And I would agree. That was attributed to Tim Mackie, I think, and I definitely agree with that. The point is that some texts of scripture just require care, deep care. And the passages that speak about divine wrath are definitely one of those texts. Anyway, I have a passion for really just helping people have an accurate view of God. Because I've seen so many people

have an inaccurate view of God. Where their view of God is just that He is a monster or something like that. Or that God spends His time floating on a cloud up in heaven, looking down on earth with lightning bolts in His hands waiting to pounce on you. Sometimes people have these views of God like that. And, you know, those views are just wrong. The God that we serve is the God who takes up the cross. He is a God who sacrifices for me and for you. We are deeply loved by God, in fact. I don't think we can fathom the depth of God's love for us. So, I guess one thing we could do is just get rid of all the texts in scripture that have to do with wrath, right? We could just get rid of those...laughs. But you, I have a high view of scripture, and I don't want to just get rid of those texts. And I don't have the authority to do that. I want to deal with it. I want them to speak to me. I don't want to mute the text. There are texts in scripture that are about God's wrath, and so we want to deal with them and we want to understand them properly within the context of God being a God of love. And when you think about it, scripture says that God is love. And what that means is, that love is not something that God does from time to time. No, no, no. God is love. That means love is something God is all the time. And how do we square that with these very real texts about God's wrath? There's lots of ways to do that and as we get into that text next time we are together, I want us to approach those texts with some preliminary thoughts. So on today's episode, today's show, I want to share some preliminary thoughts. We'll get to that in just a moment. Let me set that aside for just a moment and I just want to share with you some updates on things that I've been doing and asking for your prayers....Man, goodness, I need your prayers because I've got a lot going on.

6:48 First thing, I just finished up this past week, my book, "*The End Of The World As You Know It*", published by Lexham Press. I think it's going to be available for pre-order in June. I'm pretty sure of that. I'll definitely keep you updated. And if you're on social media, just follow me. I've got a Facebook page and I'm on Instagram, and you can follow me on Twitter... those are the only three that I do. I don't do them well. I'm not very good at social media... But anyway, I'll keep everybody updated there. The book has been done for a while now, but I finished up the indexes. So I finished that up and sent it back to the publisher and I think that's the last time I'll see the book until it comes out. So I'm super stoked, very excited about it. I hope that everybody enjoys the book. I hope it's helpful to people. It's a book on eschatology. It's not an academic book. It's a popular level book that is written so that people can just hand it to anybody in the church; or anybody outside the church, for that matter. And, it's a book that I'm really excited about...I really am. My prayer is that it gives people a lot of peace. I'm very thankful for the scholars who endorsed it. I'll share more about who has endorsed it later...But, man, I am just so excited about it. I can't tell you how excited I am about it. I hope it's helpful. If you would, just pray that... I don't know... just pray that people find the book helpful. And ultimately just pray that it's a blessing to people and that it glorifies God. So anyway, I've had to busy myself the last several weeks to get the index done and, of course, I gave it another proof read one more time and went through that. That was quite a bit of work and got that done.

The other thing is, this week I'm actually recording a podcast episode for the Naked Bible Podcast. I'm going to be doing 1 Samuel 25. I've already recorded one episode. Did that a few weeks ago. So doing another this week. So just pray for me as I do that. That's actually kind of part of the reason why I wasn't able to sit down and script up something for this episode because I'm, you know, any spare time I had, I needed to do that because we were set to record this week. So look for that. If you don't subscribe to the Naked Bible Podcast, you *should*. You really, really should. So pause this episode and go search for Naked Bible Podcast and subscribe because there's some good content there. Hundreds of episodes of Mike Heiser doing some cool stuff, and of course other scholars are routine guests now. So you'll want to check those out.

9:40 The other thing I'm doing this month, I'm re-writing a course. It's called, "*A Jewish and Greco-Roman Background of the New Testament*". And I'm super excited about it because this is a course that will be used by Eternity Bible College *and* it will be used by Awakening School of Theology. And so I'm set to film this course later on this month. And it's a course I teach every year at my school, but my school has a partnership with Awakening – so Eternity Bible College and Awakening School of Theology, we have

a partnership together. We work together. We help each other out. So we are super excited to be able share this class in the days ahead. So be on the lookout for that. And super excited about that. But anyway, I am neck deep and most of my time is spent writing that course. So, yeah, just taking up a lot of time. Prayers appreciated. Pray that God helps me to use my time wisely and that I get a lot done. It's a fun class. It's super cool – we read the apocrypha, we read all the Greco-Roman background stuff. It's basically everything about the New Testament in the background. Like what's going on in the Greco-Roman culture, politics, cultures, socio-economic stuff, and religious background stuff. Anyway, super, super fun class. It's a lot of fun to teach.

11:07 So, a couple of weeks ago I guess it has been... yeah, a couple of weeks ago, I got an email from a very nice lady named Linda. She had reached out. She said, "Hey, I would like to transcribe your episodes for the podcast. Do you mind if I do that?" And she sent me like a sample and stuff. And it's super cool and she does a great job. And so, I'm excited to announce that we're going to have transcriptions of all the episodes and those will be available to everybody. You just download them. And I'll post them on the website. So, shout out to Linda. Linda thank you so very much for your willingness to do this. I think this will be a blessing for a lot of people. It's a blessing to me. So thank you for your time and willingness to do that. Shout out to Linda... everybody say, "Thank you, Linda".

12:01 So another quick thing. I think I'm going to do a Q&A episode maybe sometime in the next few weeks. I don't know. Do a Q&A episode on evolution. Is the Bible compatible with evolution? That's a great question, isn't it? I'm actually going to have my wife come on the show and we are going to talk back and forth. Because of course, her and I, we talk about this kind of stuff all the time. And we thought it would be kind of fun to have a short dialog on the questions pertaining to the Bible and evolution. Is evolution compatible with the Bible? And I do have some thoughts so I can't wait to share that with you.

I need to put out eventually, or pretty soon...solicit some Q&A questions and topics So, I'll do that soon. And I want to field some of your questions, as well. So we'll have an episode dedicated to that. Be on the lookout for that. Super excited about it.

13:06 Okay. So let's look at a few things about Romans chapter 1. Let's go back to the whole divine wrath stuff. I want to offer you some preliminary thoughts so that whenever we get into that passage, Romans 1:18, when we get into that...I want to toss something out to you real quick here, on today's show to be thinking about before you get to that episode. There are a couple of ways to think about God's wrath. Now one scholar has proposed that we should think about God's wrath in one or two different ways. And actually he opts for one of these ways. But he lists the two options. The first option is to think of God's wrath as an extrinsic event. Like God's wrath is something that is extrinsic to the sin that deserves the wrath. Here's what I mean by that. When you sin, under this view, God's wrath works like this... When a person sins, or when a nation sins, or whatever, then God finds a punishment in His punishment bag, and He picks out the right one, and He metes it out on the person or the group of people who sinned. So, in that sense the punishment is extrinsic to the sin. There is not like a relationship inherently between the sin and the punishment. The punishment is independent of the sin. It's something that God actively activates. And so that is called the extrinsic view. The other view is the intrinsic view. Now this is slightly different. This is where the relationship between the sin committed and the punishment given is intrinsic. Like, the punishment is inherent to the nature of the sin such that when you sin, the sin just produces in its own right, a punishment. And you will get that punishment if God allows it to follow through and to bear the fruit of punishment. So sin is a bit like a seed when planted, it blooms into something thorny and really bad. Now God can stop the process and not let it grow up into something bad that can hurt you, or becomes a judgement for you. But if you persist in your sin, and given that God gives you some sort of free will... if you persist willfully in your sin, then God honors that, and He removes His grace which allows the sin to bear fruit which over time sin, when its fully grown, brings forth death, right? And so, the point there, is that divine wrath is intrinsically related to the sin committed. So they are not detached. So God does not have a wrath bag that He goes and finds His little wrath and metes it out on people. It works

differently than that. God just allows the sin to bring forth the death that it is. Now, I want to toss this out to you because when we get into Romans chapter one, there is a lot of talk about wrath. And I want you to ask yourself a question. I want you to ask a question. In Romans one, which view is more consistent? The extrinsic view of wrath or the intrinsic view of wrath? Okay... and it may be worth even going ahead of time and reading through Romans one and thinking through that. Let's put a pause on that for just a moment because I want to read to you some texts that I've been going through. The first one is actually 1 Samuel 25. Now I won't read the whole text. This is actually the chapter that I'm doing for the Naked Bible Podcast. So, if you're interested in my thoughts on the whole chapter, then whenever that episode comes out, definitely check it out. But anyway, there is a part in this text that I think is consistent with the intrinsic view of God's wrath.

Let me just to give you some context. So, 1 Samuel 25. This is about the situation of David with Nabel. N-A-B-E-L. In Hebrew it's Nabal. So I'll just say Nabal. David and Nabal,...It's just not a very good situation. I'll leave it at that. He's not a good guy. And David essentially wants to go fight him. David wants to go and take care of business. A series of events happen that prevent David from doing that and David basically says, "Ahh, Thank God", "God has kept me ..." Where does it say this... in verse 34...yeah..

For as surely as the LORD the God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there would not have been left to Nabal so much as one male."

18:20 So essentially, David was going to wreak havoc on Nabal, his family and what not. David...This episode, in my opinion at least, has quite the temper and he doesn't act too Christ-like. But anyway, God keeps him from doing something that ought not to be done, so David is very thankful for that. At any rate, what ends up happening is that Nabal...he dies. Without David killing him, or anything like that. I'm trying to find the verse here. This verse 36:

*Abigail came to Nabal; (that was his wife) he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she told him nothing at all until the morning light. **37** In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him; he became like a stone. **38** About ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.*

I don't know what happened medically to him. Maybe he had a stroke, or some sort of heart attack...I don't know. I'm not a doctor....Well, I am a doctor. (Laugh) But I'm not a medical doctor. I can't, I can't...I don't know how the body works. I joke with people. I say, "I'm not a real doctor. I can't keep you from dying. I don't even know CPR. But, I can prepare you to die. (Laugh) And, I can help you get with God." So, I'm that kind of doctor. But anyway, I don't know what happened. Maybe he had a stroke. It kind of sounds like maybe he had a stroke. But anyway, David didn't have to do anything. And so listen, this is the point I want to get to. David says something here that I think is pretty interesting. He says...and by the way...let me just stop...Nabal clearly has experienced the judgement of God, or the wrath of God, here. Notice how David describes that. How he understands that wrath, or that judgment. Verse 39 it says:

***39** When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who has judged the case of Nabal's insult to me,*

So Go God has brought judgement upon Nabal.

"Blessed be the LORD who has judged the case of Nabal's insult to me, and has kept back his servant (meaning David) from evil; the LORD has returned the evildoing of Nabal upon his own head."

That is really interesting. Because that, I think, is consistent with the intrinsic view of God's wrath. That all God really did to Nabal is return upon Nabal his own sin, essentially. This is a very routine sort of refrain in scripture. You see this sometimes in Proverbs, and you see this sometimes in the text. And I'll have an episode where we talk more this and give more examples. I can't think of any off the top of my head, but there are many examples in the text where it says things like, the evil person plants a trap for the righteous, but the evil person falls into his own trap. And it's this idea that whatever sin you are planning to commit, that sin comes back and gets you. Because the judgment that you experience is basically just your sin in fruition, in fullness. And I think that's kind of what's going on here. Nabal just experiences his own evil, essentially. And God sort of just lets that happen.

I'm going to share with you another text that I was reading. In scripture...you see this as a common theme throughout scripture, too. Whenever God shows His face. Whenever God lets His face shine upon people, there's a blessing. You know...Let your face shine upon us. That's another constant refrain in scripture. And whenever God's face, or His presence (in Hebrew that's the same word), is shining on you, you're blessed. And whenever God removes his presence or hides His face from His people, they experience destruction. And they're distraught. They don't want God to hide His face from them. "Hide not your face from me". These sorts of things are in scripture, too. Why is that important? What does that have to do with this? Well, it has a lot to do with it because it shows, I think, divine wrath is just simply God withdrawing His presence, or withdrawing His grace from the situation. He's just going to withdraw His grace so that the sin that's being committed reaches fruition. Which, when sin is fully conceived, it brings forth death. That's a very scriptural idea. In Deuteronomy chapter 31, which is this whole section from Deuteronomy 28 through 32, really. It's just a fascinating section. I won't go into all the details, but there is a section here whenever God is...is this the section? Yeah. So this whole section is about God calling Israel to faithfulness and if they are not faithful, He will send them into exile. I want you to catch this section here. I'm going to read Deuteronomy 31, beginning at verse 14. It says,

14 The LORD said to Moses, "Your time to die is near; call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, so that I may commission him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting, **15** and the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud; the pillar of cloud stood at the entrance to the tent.

So then it says,

16 The LORD said to Moses, "Soon you will lie down with your ancestors. Then this people will begin to prostitute themselves to the foreign gods in their midst, the gods of the land into which they are going; they will forsake me, breaking my covenant that I have made with them. **17** My anger will be kindled against them in that day.

Okay, so there you see the anger of God, or the Judgement of God. His anger will be kindled, he says.

I will forsake them and hide my face from them;

That's interesting. That's an interesting way of describing God's anger...He just hides His face.

they will become easy prey, and many terrible troubles will come upon them.

Because after all, when God hides His face, He is taking away His presence, and where God's presence is not, you can find every devil coming to play. Because God is the creator, by virtue of His presence, things come alive because that's who He is. He is the *Creator*. You don't want to be in a situation where God hides his face from you. Because troubles will come upon you. So anyway, it goes on to say,

In that day they will say, 'Have not these troubles come upon us because our God is not in our midst?' 18 On that day I will surely hide my face on account of all the evil they have done by turning to other gods.

25:18 So this is the idea of divine withdrawal. It's another thing that one scholar talks about a lot. It's fascinating to me. It really, really is. And it's because I think this captures the intrinsic view of wrath where God whenever He sees His people sin, He doesn't need to go back to His shed and pull out His wrath bag and find wrath and take it back out and pelt them with it. No, no, no. He just withdraws Himself. And when He withdraws Himself, then sin is allowed to grow. And as I said several times already, sin when it's fully conceived and grows, it brings forth death. You have to think of God as the embodiment of grace. And for Him to leave, for Him to hide His face, for Him to hide His presence, and to remove Himself from the situation, is to allow darkness to come into the situation. It's just to allow sin to grow. When God's presence is with us, when God's goodness is overshadowing us, there can be no room for darkness. Because in the presence of light, which is the presence of God, darkness cannot exist. And so, that's a way that God judges wrath. Now here's the question I want to pose to you. Before we get into Romans 1:18, and the wrath of God, I want you to think about all that I just said about God's wrath. Is the intrinsic view of wrath consistent with what you will read in Romans 1:18 and following? Just ask yourself that question. Is it consistent with what you see? I think a case can be made that it is. But never mind my opinion. Just ask yourself that question. What is God doing in Romans 1:18 and following? How is God's wrath described there? Now, you've got to read the whole thing – 1:18 all the way down to the end. Just ask yourself that question. This is just a preliminary thought and a preliminary question that I think is worth asking. And why this is important in my opinion is because it helps us conceive of God as pure love. And when a person says "no" to pure love, they necessarily embrace evil and bad things. But when they say "yes" to love and God comes to them, then life can thrive. But here's the deal...if God has given us significant free will, then He will honor our choices. And if we say "no" to God, he will give us a "no". He will give us our final "no". And that's not a world we want to live in. So, something to think about. I'll have more to say about it later. I hope this helpful. I hope maybe this gets some gears turning in your head. It's gotten gears turning in my head. So think about it, pray about it, consider it; and when come together again, and when we read Romans 1:18 I think we'll have even further questions and even further things to consider.

Well, guys...that's been it. That's all for today. Let's see what time is it? Its 10:53pm...my kids are in bed, and the house is quiet, and I'm exhausted. So my hope...this is one of those things where I record something unscripted – which if you know me, you know that is something I don't like doing. I'm a perfectionist. I think I mentioned that in the first episode. But this is one of those things, I'm slightly exhausted, I'm pretty tired and it's almost 11pm at night...and I'm thinking to myself, "Man, I hope this is coherent." (Laugh). I hope this episode is coherent. If it's not, forgive me. I'm not going to go back and listen to it and do a lot of editing so...(Laugh)..We'll just let it go and we'll trust God for grace. Thank you once again for listening. I appreciate you all, email me, reach out to me, go to my website – just matthewhalsted.com – and there's a contact form. I want to hear from you, I'd love to hear from you. I hope that you are enjoying the show. I hope that you're doing well and I hope that you have a wonderful week. And I guess the only way to end this show would be to read this wonderful passage from the book of Numbers

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen. Amen, Amen! Have a great week everybody.

30:07 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You

can also support the podcast by becoming a patreon member. Go to: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted> - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.