

# God's Coming Wrath

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## God's Love Poorly Understood

The Bible declares that God is love, but God's love is poorly understood today. (1 John 4:7,8) The meaning of *love* is so distorted by sin that many people do not understand what love is! When God sends His judgments upon the nations of Earth, one of the most difficult things the [144,000](#) will have to explain is that God is love! How will people reconcile "God is love" when the smoldering evidences of His wrath are lying all around?

God's love is revealed in a perfect balance between justice and mercy. Because of sin, man's sense of balance between justice and mercy has become distorted and inadequate. We cannot see everything that God sees and our limited view makes trusting an infinite God very hard sometimes. God understands our limitations, but He requires His children to trust Him implicitly. He alone knows the best way through the corridors of life to eternity. His laws reflect His infinite knowledge. Few people spend time trying to understand God's laws, mercy, justice, authority, glory and power, but this will change when God's coming wrath is released. Stunned by chaos and destruction, people will open their Bibles and discover a diary of God's actions covering thousands of years. God's policies are changeless because God does not change. It is ironic, but during the time of God's wrath, many people will learn what divine love is all about and, for the first time, experience a saving relationship with God. (Jeremiah 29:13)

God allowed the prophet Isaiah to see certain aspects of His glory, yet Isaiah was amazed at God's reluctance to show Himself to the world. He wrote, "**Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel.**" (Isaiah 45:15) God's *apparent* silence in the affairs of humankind is a consequence of sin. Most people know that inappropriate behavior can separate friends and family members from each other. The same is also true of God. Sin is so offensive to God that it has separated us from His presence. As generations come and go, the reality of God becomes dimmer. As knowledge about God becomes faint, and the longer we go without renewed evidence of God's authority and glory, the more silent He appears to be. In the vacuum of this silence, sin becomes more attractive and less offensive. Wicked people become bold and defiant in their transgressions. Violence, sorrow, and suffering spring up like dandelions after a spring rain. Every night, the evening news confirms the human race is wallowing in the slime of depravity. Degenerate, even hideous sins are either glamorized, justified or treated as inconsequential on television. Sin is like the drug [Novocaine](#) – it deadens our sense of fairness. Sin causes us to minimize the suffering that results from our deeds and to avoid, at all costs, any penalty for wrongful behavior. (How many people in prison falsely maintain their innocence? How many people in prison would be willing to stay in prison and pay the full price for their deeds if they had the option to get out? ) Because of sin's deadening power, people can commit a horrible deed and then convince themselves they did not do it or justify their behavior for doing it. Such is the power of sin. From the very beginning, sinners have been reluctant to accept their responsibility for sin. Lucifer blamed God. Our parents, Adam and Eve, also deflected their responsibility for sin in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis

3:12,13) Even though sin has great control over sinners, the power of sin can be broken. Whenever a sinner is "born again" by Holy Spirit power, the first thing a saint wants to do is to take responsibility (and provide the necessary restitution) for his or her sin.

## God Will Not Be Silent Forever

The Bible confirms that God breaks His silence from time to time by using one or more of His four deadly judgments to limit the growth of sin. (Ezekiel 14:21) The four judgments He uses are sword, famine, plague and wild beasts. (Revelation 6:8) In His infinite wisdom, God allows a nation to have power until it fills up its cup of iniquity, and when it does, the Bible says He removes that nation from power. (See Daniel 2:21; 4:17; Leviticus 18:24-28.) What makes this process so remarkable is that God, even within the chaos of sin, always accomplishes His plans and purposes on Earth! We may try to explain the outcome of earthly events by analyzing the actions of the players, but this remains a limited view. Do not be naive and think that things just happen because of the prowess of human beings. Nothing happens in the universe without God's knowledge and permission. Even though we are not able to see God on His throne, we can know that He reigns over the kingdoms of man. God is Sovereign. We may not see all that He is doing, but the evidence is right before our eyes. The Bible is crystal clear. God is in control. (Job 38) How He maintains control is a mystery. That He does it without showing Himself is His silence.

God's silence is not impossible to penetrate if you really want to see and hear Him. The evidences of His handiwork are all around us if we want to acknowledge Him. However, if we choose not to give Him respect, we can easily ignore Him and deny the recognition He is due. Thus, His silence complements our power of choice. God can either be the greatest and most wonderful Being in all the universe, or if we so choose, we can deny His existence. What a God! Perhaps the least understood element within God's character is His reluctance to awe His creatures with His power and presence. His silence will be a topic of eternal discovery!

## God's Character is Misunderstood

God will soon break His silence with the first global earthquake. (Revelation 8:5) When Earth's inhabitants experience God's coming judgments, God's love and His purposes will be grossly misunderstood and misrepresented. The religious leaders of the world will encourage politicians to enact laws "honoring and appeasing the God of Heaven." However, mandating righteousness cannot accomplish what God wants! God is more interested in true repentance and a submissive attitude from His children. He wants men and women to recognize His sovereignty, not for who He is, but for *what* He is and what He represents. God is love. He calls men and women to live a life free from the damning power of sin. Even more, He will grant His power to everyone so they can be victorious over sin. He wants us to overcome our carnal nature and rebellion against His boundless ways of life. Inconceivable as it may seem, Revelation predicts that the majority of men and women will reject God's terms and conditions for salvation during the [great tribulation](#). Hardened by lifelong rebellion, the hearts of many people have become so numbed by sin that even God cannot reach them. If a person's heart cannot be reached

through love and patience or through redemptive judgments, how can God produce a broken heart and a repentant spirit within a sinner?

Revelation describes how wicked people will be filled with a spirit of hatred when confronted with the truth about God and His will. God will initiate this confrontation when He selects and anoints [144,000](#) servant-prophets to speak on His behalf. These spirit filled people will proclaim the gospel to the inhabitants of every nation. Evil men will punish and torture God's servants because their message will openly reveal man's rebellion against God. God's messengers will be in direct conflict with those who govern a world that currently belongs to Satan. (Luke 4:5-6) The persecutors of God's servants will think, like Pilate, that they can wash their hands from the guilt of these acts. Yet, God *never* ignores evil, even though He may allow it to flourish for a time. Eventually, God will avenge every evil deed and He will be sure that wicked people receive a double portion of pain in return for the pain they have inflicted. (See Revelation 18:6, 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Obadiah 1:15.)

In the context of His coming judgments, God's character and His behavior will be grossly misrepresented and misinterpreted. This is the heart of Revelation's story. It is a story of a patient God visiting a planet in deep trouble. It is also a story about rebellious people and a world gone astray. Most people, when put to the coming test, will openly and willfully reject the clearest evidences of God's truth and God's sovereignty. They will unite themselves in rebellion against the laws of the Most High God by first obeying the laws of the land and then, the laws of the radiant being, the Antichrist – the devil himself. About two and a half years after the [great tribulation](#) begins, God will allow Satan to physically appear before the people of Earth because **"they refused to love the truth and so be saved."** (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11) Jesus said, **"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."** (John 3:19-20)

## The Full Cup Principle

The Bible says that God is love. (1 John 4:8) The Bible also says that God has wrath. (Colossians 3:5,6; Revelation 15:1) Because God's character has both properties, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile these two attributes. So, let us consider how the perfect balance works between God's love and God's wrath. Bible history reveals that God follows a consistent principle when dealing with humanity. I call this principle the "full cup principle" because the Bible often uses the metaphor of a cup to indicate the fullness of an experience. For example, consider the words of Jesus just before He was arrested and crucified, **". . . My Father, if it is possible, may this [bitter] cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."** (Matthew 26:39, insertion mine) Jesus did not want to endure the experience of a bitter death on the cross, but He was willing to do it if this was the only way to save the human race. The metaphor of a cup can be used to indicate a joyful experience. Consider David's well known words, **"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup [of joy] overflows."** (Psalm 23:5, insertion mine) King David uses the metaphor of an overflowing cup to express joy beyond containment! From these two examples we see that a cup represents an experience. The contents of the cup indicate the type of

experience.

Notice how God used the metaphor of "the cup" in Jeremiah's day: **"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup filled [to the brim] with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them.' So I took the cup from the Lord's hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it:"** (Jeremiah 25:15-17, insertion mine) Now, compare Jeremiah's words with the warning words of God's servants, the [144,000](#) in Revelation 14: ". . . **If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.**" (Revelation 14:9,10) This text points forward to a time during the [great tribulation](#) when people will be warned about worshiping the Antichrist. Everyone who submits to the laws of the devil will have to drink from the cup of God's wrath.

The full cup principle is based on the idea that God *measures* the actions of mankind. Every time we do wrong, we add a sin to our cup of grace. When all of God's grace has been displaced by willful sin, our cup becomes full of bitterness and we have to drink the consequences of our actions. When God forces people to reap what they have sown, He is returning to them what they deserve. (Galatians 6:7) The golden rule is an iron clad rule. It says: As we do unto others, the same will be done to us. (Matthew 7:12; Obadiah 1:15) Because God acts on this principle, He is said to have vengeance. (Romans 12:19; Revelation 2:23)

In a similar way, God *measures* the actions of nations. Do you remember the words Daniel spoke to King Belshazzar the night he saw the handwriting on the wall? Daniel said, **"This is what these words [on the wall] mean: Mene : God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel : You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres : Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."** (Daniel 5:26-28) Babylon had filled its cup and God responded. God's patience with man's arrogance and defiance has limits. When the cup of transgression is nearly full, God breaks His silence by sending a warning through His selected messengers. If the warning does not work, He then uses one or more of His four deadly judgments (sword, famine, plagues and wild beasts – Ezekiel 14:21; Revelation 6:8). If the situation is redeemable, His judgments are redemptive. If the situation goes beyond redemption, His judgments are totally destructive. Remember, the coming events predicted in Revelation will be divided into two groups of seven. The first seven plagues ([seven trumpets](#)) will be redemptive. The seven last plagues ([seven bowls](#)) will be totally destructive.

Many people currently interpret God's silence or passiveness with evil to mean that He is either nonexistent or indifferent to what we do. Others see His permissiveness as proof that He is not interested in each person's day to day activities. For this reason, a growing number of people are committing horrible, evil deeds, thinking that God does not see them and will not hold them responsible for their actions. Many people do not realize the strict accountability that each of us must give to God for every action! Solomon said, ". . . **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into**

judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14, italics mine)

## Examples of God's Wrath

The people in Noah's day filled up their cup: "**The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the Earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the Earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air for I am grieved that I have made them.'**" (Genesis 6:5-7) God destroyed the world with a flood in Noah's day when the antediluvians' cup of iniquity had reached full measure. God broke His silence through Noah by warning the world about His forthcoming actions. Then, when 120 years had expired, He destroyed all but eight of the inhabitants of the world. When extended mercy fails to produce repentance and reformation, as with the antediluvians, God's justice demands destructive action.

The Amorites filled up their cup: "**Then the Lord said to him (Abraham), 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.'**" (Genesis 15:13-16)

Notice the last sentence of the previous text. God promised to give Canaan to Abraham's offspring only after the sins of the Amorites had reached their full measure! Make no mistake about this. Canaan belongs to the Creator, and He promised Canaan to Abraham's descendants only after the Amorites had exhausted their chance for possessing that beautiful land. Keep in mind that Israel's possession of Canaan was based on the same conditions that applied to the Amorites. Contrary to what a lot of people think today, Israel's possession of Canaan has always been conditional. Moses warned Israel: "**But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly. . . . After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, 'The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.' No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations . . ."** (Deuteronomy 9:3-5) This is an extremely important point: The Canaanites were also driven out and/or destroyed when they filled their cup of wickedness! When God's patience with the Canaanites reached its limit, He broke His silence by sending wrath upon them! (Leviticus 18:24-25)

The nation of Israel filled its cup with sin: Just before the Babylonian captivity (605 B.C.), God

told Israel, **"But you did not listen to me . . . and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves. . . . Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon . . . and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin . . . This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt . . . and will make it desolate forever."** (Jeremiah 25:7-12)

According to Jeremiah 25, Israel was destroyed for provoking God to anger and the prophecy in Jeremiah 25 also predicts the destruction of Babylon at a time in the future! This proves that God deals fairly with all nations. In God's eyes, wickedness is wickedness. Each person, city, nation and kingdom has a cup and when it becomes full, God breaks His silence. Because God is always consistent, we discover an interesting truth. Civilizations rise and fall by divine decree. When the Babylonian empire's cup became full, God destroyed the empire and gave it to the Medes and Persians. When the time came for Babylon's destruction, based on the full cup principle, it occurred because God made it happen. The time will come when God will destroy the whole world so Jesus can come and establish an eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace! This too, will occur because God will make it happen!

## **New Testament Examples of God's Coming Wrath**

The full cup principle concept is also confirmed in the New Testament. Paul warned the sexually immoral Romans, **". . . you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."** (Romans 2:5,6,8) Compare these verses with Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:10: **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."** Paul understood why God's wrath is coming. He told the believers in Colosse, **"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."** (Colossians 3:5,6)

Paul encouraged the believers in Thessalonica to be patient in their suffering until the enemies of Christ had filled up their cup. **". . . You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches [in Judea] suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They [the Jews] displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last."** (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, insertions mine) When Paul wrote this epistle, he knew the Jewish nation had filled up its cup of sin and he knew that God was sending the Romans to destroy Jerusalem. Rome destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 just as Jesus had

prophesied. (Matthew 24:1,2; Luke 21:22)

## Jesus Explains God's Wrath

Jesus explained the full cup principle in a discourse with the Pharisees. After pronouncing seven curses on the Jewish leaders for their religious bigotry and hypocrisy, Jesus said, **"Fill up, then, the measure of the [cup of] sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"** (Matthew 23:32,33, insertion mine) Again, the point is made: When a nation or individual reaches the limit of divine forbearance, God breaks His silence. His mercy with sin and sinners has a limit. Jesus concluded His denunciation of the Jewish nation by saying, **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house [temple] is left to you desolate."** (Matthew 23:37,38, insertion mine) Later, Jesus predicted Jerusalem's destruction as a fulfillment of God's wrath: **"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment [wrath] in fulfillment of all that has been written [in the Scriptures concerning Israel]."** (Luke 21:20-22, insertions mine)

## Does God Kill People?

From time to time, scholars and pastors assert that God does not kill or destroy people. They defend this by saying that, (1) God does not violate His own commandment, **"Thou shalt not kill"** (Exodus 20:13, KJV), and/or (2) God just steps aside and turns evil people over to the natural consequences of sin which brings death and destruction. In simple terms, advocates of this view reason that if God is love, He does not violate His character of love by doing evil (e.g., killing). (1 John 4:8) Instead, God simply steps out of the way when people become totally evil. He either allows sin to take its natural, destructive course or He turns them over to the devil – allowing Satan to do whatever he wishes. The justification used to support either position is false.

A person cannot understand aspects of God's character and ignore His own words! Notice what the Lord *Himself said* in the days of Noah, **"The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them.'"** (Genesis 6:6,7) The Bible puts God in an active role – not a passive position concerning the destruction of Earth at the time of the flood. Notice the same position of God with respect to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: **"Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. . . . Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah – from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities – and also the vegetation in the land."** (Genesis 13:13; 19:24,25) Centuries later, Jude warned early Christians saying, **"In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns**

**gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who [will] suffer the punishment of eternal fire [that will come down from God out of Heaven]."** (Jude 7, Revelation 20:9 insertions mine) One more example is included to show how God Himself is willing to destroy nations when necessary. The Lord *said* to Israel at the time of the giving of the covenant at Mount Sinai: **"If in spite of these things [redemptive judgments] you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands."** (Leviticus 26:23-25, insertion mine) There are many more examples in the Bible, but these should be sufficient to show that God not only kills people for justifiable reasons, but He takes full responsibility for doing so.

Falsehoods about God's character do a lot of damage when they contain some truth. (A good lie is 99% truth.) The Bible says that God is love. Jesus' death on Calvary *proves* that God is love. What more could He do than live among the stench and rejection of sinners for 30 years and then give His life for us? Not only did He make eternal salvation possible, but He gives us grace to meet the challenges of each day. He provides food and clothing for us, He sustains us because He cares for us and desires the best for us. He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. (Matthew 10:30) The problem though, is that God's love does not lessen the importance of His boundaries between good and evil. (Genesis 2:17) God requires man to live within boundaries He has established – both physical laws and moral laws. For example, consider the physical law of momentum: Mass times velocity equals momentum. A 4,000 pound car going 60 miles per hour has a lot of momentum. Suppose a man drinks too much, gets drunk, and while driving his car at a high rate of speed hits a tree and dies. Did God kill the driver? No. The law of momentum produced the injury that caused death. So, there is validity to the claim that sin has consequences. But the question remains, did a loving God create the law of momentum that killed the drunk driver? Yes, God created the law of momentum and He wants us to live within the boundaries of that law. If a man chooses to get drunk and drive his car into a tree, then it is fair to conclude that the drunk killed himself. The other motorists can consider themselves fortunate if the drunk kills only him or herself!

Regarding this issue, many people stumble over the sixth commandment, **"Thou shalt not kill?"** Does God violate His own commandment when He kills people? This is a good question. Let us examine the *intent* of the commandment, **"Thou shalt not kill."** God has declared that there are a few circumstances where death can be inflicted upon a person (as in capital punishment) without breaking the *intent* of His law. Notice what the Lord told Noah at the time of his exit from the ark: **"And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."** (Genesis 9:5,6) This verse indicates that God not only commanded, but expected other men to put murderers to death. *Capital punishment is not man's invention.* The Bible reveals that capital punishment originated with God – not man. (See also Leviticus 20.)

In the wilderness, God not only spoke the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, He also

elaborated on the terms and conditions for capital punishment. **"These are to be legal requirements for you throughout the generations to come, wherever you live. Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put to death."** (Numbers 35:29-31) The point is that God does not break the *intent* of His own law by requiring men to put murderers to death. A person has to incorporate *all* that God has said about killing to understand the *intent* underlying the laws that govern life and death. When God said, **"Thou shalt not kill,"** He was forbidding premeditated murder. However, if someone chose to commit murder, God declared that the murderer must be put to death and the next of kin could kill the murderer without incurring guilt. Notice, **"[If] the avenger of blood finds him [the murderer] outside the city [of refuge], the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder."** (Numbers 35:27, insertion mine) If sinful people can kill a wicked person without incurring guilt under lawful circumstances, God can too.

## Atonement and Restitution

The underlying principles behind capital punishment are atonement and restitution. God requires atonement and restitution for every sin. In God's order, there is no forgiveness for sin. Now, before you jump to any hasty conclusions, keep on reading. I am not saying that sinners are not forgiven. I am saying that sin itself is not forgiven. At first, this statement seems contradictory, but this is what atonement is all about. Atonement for sin is possible only after restitution has been made. It is for this very purpose that Jesus died on the cross. God placed our sins upon Jesus and He was slain in our place. Jesus was our atonement! We may "say" that our sins are forgiven, but this is not the whole story. The sins of all believers are transferred to Jesus, the Lamb of God, when we put our faith in Him as our means to salvation. He is our atonement for sin through faith. If the Old Testament sanctuary service teaches us anything, it is this: God requires atonement for all wrong doing. **"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."** (Leviticus 17:11) **"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."** (Hebrews 9:22)

## God Does Kill People

Individuals who claim that God does not kill people cannot give a Scriptural reason for the death of the firstborn, both men and animals, at the time of the Exodus. The Lord warned Moses that if the destroying angel did not find blood on the doorposts, He Himself would slay the firstborn of each family, whether man or animal! **"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn both men and animals and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord."** (Exodus 12:12, italics mine) This is an important point. Who claims responsibility for killing the eldest (the highest ranking) family member of men and animals in Egypt? Who spoke to Moses? If we make the devil responsible, then we must conclude that (a) the devil is speaking in Exodus 12, or (b) God and the devil were partners in the killing of the firstborn.

God does not need or use the devil to accomplish works of righteousness. Furthermore, if God simply turned His back on the firstborn in Egypt and allowed the devil to kill this select group of people, then God should be considered an accomplice to murder. (God says that if an individual has the opportunity to prevent harm and does nothing about it, he becomes an accomplice to the harm committed and shares in its guilt. Ezekiel 3:17-21) The real point is, "Do we take God at His word?" Notice what the Lord told Moses: **"See now that I myself am He! There is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand."** (Deuteronomy 32:39)

The deaths of the firstborn in Egypt reveal something important about the character of God. He gave Pharaoh and his court nine plagues (nine chances) to convince them that He was Sovereign, but Pharaoh refused to recognize God's authority. So, God sent a tenth plague upon Egypt which killed many, including Pharaoh's firstborn. During the [great tribulation](#), history will be repeated. God will provide an abundance of evidence that He is sovereign, but millions of people will refuse to obey the commands of the Almighty and they will receive His seven last plagues! When men and women refuse the clearest evidences of God's will, what more can He do? What are God's options if individuals willfully refuse to recognize the difference between right and wrong? God killed Egypt's firstborn as an object lesson for Israel and to punish Egypt. Egypt's punishment was due to open rebellion against the authority of God. Pharaoh had filled his cup! The object lesson for Israel was even more impressive! The "passing over" pointed forward to a time when God would pass over every human being in judgment to verify that the blood of His sacrifice on Calvary was on the door posts of the heart. (2 Corinthians 5:10) The death of the firstborn in Egypt was a shadow of the death of God's only Son that would be necessary for man's salvation. (The story of Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah reveals the same concept. God tested Abraham's faith to see if Abraham was willing to do to his own son what God would have to do to His Son.) No wonder Jesus is called the Lamb of God. (John 1:29) Incidentally, the New Testament describes three instances in which people were killed outright under interesting circumstances. Read Acts 5:1-11 and Acts 12:23 and see if you can determine who did the killing. Also, carefully examine 2 Kings 1:1-17 and determine who destroyed 102 men with fire. Then, read Isaiah 37 and pay close attention to verse 36 where you will discover who killed 185,000 men. These texts should help to dismiss any doubt you may have on this compelling subject.

## **God's Coming Wrath Will Be Revealed Soon**

**"I the Lord have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions, declares the Sovereign Lord."** (Ezekiel 24:14) When the Lord spoke these words to Ezekiel, He was referring to the fact that Israel had filled its cup. Our day is coming, too. God will break His silence and demonstrate His animosity toward sin. It will happen suddenly, severing the past from the oncoming future. Life as we know it will immediately and irrevocably change. The world has never witnessed anything like the coming judgments of God, nor can it sustain more than one visitation. God will act suddenly and powerfully, and all the inhabitants of Earth will be overwhelmed with His swiftness and intensity. In this context, the authority, character and actions of God will become the subject of profound interest and controversy

among all the people of Earth.

If you would like to read the next segment, go to [The First Four Trumpets of Revelation](#)