

By metaphorical language God communicates terms and concepts so they are etched in the memory of the readers. Metaphorical references regarding the anger of God are used to “prick” sincere hearts. These are emotionally weighty.

The Postmodernist/Progressive/Liberal takes the biblical metaphors and removes the power that Inspiration intended to impact mankind for repentance and restoration to God. If all of the Bible’s writings are metaphorical then removed is the entire content of the Bible from any reasoned application. Everything in the Bible is figurative and nothing literal; the Bible’s teachings become worthless as a governing authority.

“Fire”

Fire is used to communicate God’s punishing wrath; an intense and persistent pain. Fire is associated with disobedience (Genesis 19:24; Exodus 9:23; Leviticus 10:3). Fire is tormenting punishment (Matthew 3:10; 7:19; 25:41; John 15:6; Matthew 3:12; 18:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 7; Revelation 14:10; 16:8; 17:16)

The “lake of fire” (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) stresses the vastness of God’s punishing anger. It is not a single instance; a simple burn. It speaks of an intense all consuming; completely enveloping and overwhelming pain.

“Pouring out the cup of wrath”

This phrase speaks of the anger of God being kept until punishment arrives (Revelation 14:10; 16:19). God’s anger is “unmixed.” This means the rebel will face the strongest possible wrath. The contents of the cup are “poured out”— completely emptied. How tragic that such a strong metaphor is casually shrugged off.

“SLIPPERY PLACES”

This refers to the instability in the lives of the Godless. These rejected the stability of God’s clear commands and followed the insecurity of a lifestyle devoted to Satan. These look to pleasure for happiness. But that is only the “temporary pleasures” (Hebrews 10:25). Satisfaction is momentary and then the slavery to sin has to find a greater level.

The anger of God brings only instability, a deep emptiness of the soul’s satisfaction and restlessness in earthly existence (Psalm 73:18; Deuteronomy 32:35).

“Furnace”

A furnace shows the greatest possible intensity. The anger of God is righteous and is meted to those who have been given ample opportunities and provided with detailed instructions as to how to avoid this “furnace” of God’s anger (Isaiah 31:9; Ezekiel 22:20; Malachi 4:1; Matthew 13:42, 50; Revelation 9:2).

It is incredulous to know that some willingly choose this destiny as they seek worldly pleasures and satisfaction rather than live within the boundaries of God’s revealed commands.

“Darkness”

This communicates dreaded, helplessness, and despair by the tortured cries and moans. There is no reprieve for these feelings. All that will be available is an eternity of the emotional terrors that arise when “darkness” engulfs the person (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, and 25:30; Jude 4, 13). The outer darkness is a place of anguish, heartache, grief, and unspeakable suffering (John 3:18, 36). And this tragic eternity was chosen!

“Where the worm does not die”

This metaphor speaks to the emotions as it details the horrors of God’s punishment (Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43-48). Both references present the eternal environment of the disobedient in the worst possible image. The image that is presented combines the greatest personal dishonor and the most revolting situation.

“Thirst”

Thirst is a natural physiological need that provides an excellent teaching metaphor. It is an image that communicates intense yearnings and emphasizes man’s inadequacies (Matthew 5:6; Jeremiah 2:13;

Luke 16:24). God offers mankind the “water of life” (Revelation 22:17). There are those who insult this invitation. They choose to forsake the living waters and try to find satisfaction in “broken cisterns.”

“The Winepress of God’s wrath”

The image of the winepress symbolizes the action of the angry wrath of Jehovah God. Ripe grapes are placed in the winepress and crushed with force and destroyed except for their juice. The righteous Almighty God reigns and those who reject His

commands are crushed (Isaiah 63:2-3; Lamentations 1:15; Joel 3:13, 14; Revelation 14:19).

“A Violent Oppressor”

Lamentations describes God metaphorically as a violent oppressor who has brought destruction upon the city and its people. As Lamentations chapter two closes the reader is left with no doubt as to the cause of the destruction. This sorrowful summary records the tragedy that occurred because God had been rejected and His grace and mercy were casually treated (Lamentations 3:17-18).

ABSOLUTE TAKE AWAYS FROM THIS STUDY

First, God’s anger cannot be erased by claiming the metaphorical images are invalid. The metaphors of the Bible added to the reality of God’s anger.

Second, biblical metaphors communicate that God’s anger is beyond the worst possible pains and torments known in earthly life. The strongest images are selected to prod mankind to accept the anger of God as a reality.

Third, when one understands and accepts the reality of God’s anger he should feel a dreaded fear and immediately do whatever he can to escape the wrath that is to come. The only action that will allow us to escape is turning in obedient faith to Christ Jesus. “Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

HAVE YOU BEEN RESCUED FROM THE WRATH THAT IS COMING!