

No Matter What...God Is Not Mad At You!

Weylan Deaver • June 2007

On the way home the other day, I came up at a stoplight behind a vehicle sporting a bumper sticker I hadn't seen before. In white letters on a black background, it read (complete with exclamation mark), **"No Matter What...God Is Not Mad At You!"** I couldn't help but think that someone has a misconception about the nature of God. In fact, this person may as well have had a bumper sticker that said instead, "Can You Believe How Little I Know About God?"

Now, it is true that God does not get mad like men often do, by losing his temper, becoming flustered, and turning red in the face. In the heat of an angry moment, many a man has done a thing he later regretted. God does not do that. God is always in complete control, always takes the right action, always acts in harmony with his infinite nature (which includes his love, mercy, holiness and justice). If God were ever to get angry, you can know that it would be a perfect anger, resulting from just reasons, executed in a perfect way. God does not throw temper tantrums.

But, is it possible for God to be mad? A quick word search reveals that the phrase, "anger of the Lord" occurs 36 times in the Old Testament. The similarly worded "wrath of the Lord" is found 14 times in the Old Testament. In the first person, God speaks of "my wrath" 44 times and "my anger" 31 times in the Bible. Speaking of God's anger in the third person, "his wrath" occurs 20 times. "Wrath of God" occurs 11 times in the New Testament. In Jeremiah 49:37, God even refers to "my fierce anger." Doubtless there are other passages that express the same idea, though worded differently. Surely this is enough for us to get the idea there is such a thing as divine anger at a man or mankind.

I'm not sure of the reasoning behind the misguided bumper sticker, but it highlights ignorance for which there is no excuse. Many want to perceive God as a grandfatherly figure in the sky who is rather harmless and doesn't have the will to mete out genuine punishment which lasts for eternity. They think like that, not because the Bible teaches it, but because *they do not know what the Bible teaches*. The New Testament puts us on guard against such delusions. Every right-thinking man wants to "avoid God's wrath" (cf. Rom 13:5), and living every day as a Christian is the only way to do so. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31), "for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).