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When the Wicked Shall Have Filled Up the Measure of Their Sin - posted by savannah, on: 2019/8/20 7:49

When the Wicked Shall Have Filled Up the Measure of Their Sin, Wrath Will Come Upon Them to the Uttermost

by Jonathan Edwards
(Dated May, 1735)

1 Thessalonians 2:16

To fill up their sins away; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Subject: When those that continue in sin have filled up the measure of their sins, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost.

IN verse 14, the apostle commends the Christian Thessalonians that they became the followers of the churches of God in Judea, both in faith and in sufferings. In faith, in that they received the Word, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God. In sufferings, in that they had suffered like things of their own countrymen, as they had of the Jews. Upon which the apostle sets forth the persecuting, cruel, and perverse wickedness of that people, "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have," says he, "persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved." Then come in the words of the text; "To fill up their sins away; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

In these words we may observe two things:

1. To what effect was the heinous wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews, viz. to fill up their sins. God hath set bounds to every man's wickedness. He suffers men to live, and to go on in sin, till they have filled up their measure, and then cuts them off. To this effect was the wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews. They were exceedingly wicked, and thereby filled up the measure of their sins a great pace. And the reason why they were permitted to be so obstinate under the preaching and miracles of Christ, and of the apostles, and under all the means used with them, was, that they might fill up the measure of their sins. This is agreeable to what Christ said, Mat. 23:31, 32, "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers."

2. The punishment of their wickedness. "The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." There is a connection between the measure of men's sin, and the measure of punishment. When they have filled up the measure of their sin, then is filled up the measure of God's wrath.

The degree of their punishment, is the uttermost degree. This may respect both a national and personal punishment. If we take it as a national punishment, a little after the time when the epistle was written, wrath came upon the nation of the Jews to the uttermost, in their terrible destruction by the Romans; when, as Christ said, "was great tribulation, such as never was since the beginning of the world to that time," Mat. 24:21. That nation had before suffered many of the fruits of divine wrath for their sins; but this was beyond all, this was their highest degree of punishment as a nation. If we take it as a personal punishment, then it respects their punishment in hell. God often punishes men very dreadfully in this world; but in hell "wrath comes on them to the uttermost."

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