

A healthy faith should be  
**Intellectually convincing**  
**Emotionally satisfying**  
**Morally transforming**  
**Socially connecting**  
**Culturally inspiring**

### **Imprecatory Psalms** **(7,35,55,58,59,69,79,109,137,139)**

**Psalm 55:15** - "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave."

**Psalm 58:6** - "O God, break the teeth in their mouths."

**Psalm 69:28** - "May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous."

**Psalm 109:9** - "May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow."

**Psalm 137:9** - "How blessed will be the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks."

#### **Nahum 1:2**

"A jealous and avenging God is the Lord;  
The Lord is avenging and wrathful.  
The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries,  
And He reserves wrath for His enemies."

**Deuteronomy 7:20**

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations . . . then you must destroy them totally . . . and show them no mercy. Do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them . . . as the Lord our God has commanded you."

**הרם**

**herem**

the law of anathema,

"destroyed" "devoted"

### **Three unacceptable responses**

#### **1. Justification for "holy war"**

- **The Crusades**
- **Treatment of native Americans**
- **Rwanda**

#### **2. An Illustration of primitive religion.**

- **Proving the Bible is not inspired.**
- **Hopelessly indefensible.**

#### **3. Replaced by N.T. teaching**

**Matthew 5**

"39 . . . do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also."

### **A popular misconception #1** **The N.T. God is distinct from the O.T. God.**

**Romans 1:18** "for **the wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"

**1 Corinthians 16:22** "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be **Anathema** Maranatha."

**Galatians 1:8** "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **accursed**."

**Revelation 6:10** "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and **avenge** our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

### **Jesus spoke of God's wrath.**

**Matthew 5:22**

"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, '**You fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.**'"

(**Matthew 5:29, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15,33, 25:41**)

**Matthew 25:41**

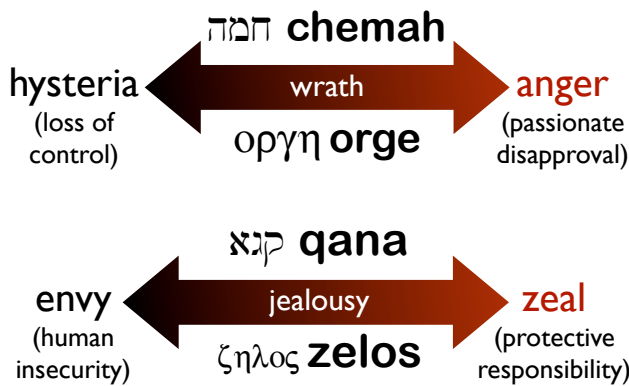
"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, **into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;**'"

**A popular misconception #2**  
**Our present cultural perspective**  
**is the standard of ethical truth.**

Traditional Cultures	Technological Cultures
Mankind is to conform to transcendent authority.	Mankind is responsible and able to define his own destiny.
We find peace through conforming to the supernatural order of things through wisdom and virtue.	We find peace through manipulation of the natural world through science or magic.
Roles and rules are ascribed from above.	Roles are achieved and moral rules are set from within.

**Our culture defines wrath and love.**

Wrath	Love
Wrath is an emotional tirade reflecting insecurity and lack of control.	Love is focused on acceptance, tolerance, and peacemaking.



**What is the nature of God's love?**

- ✓ God's ways are not in service of our man-centered perspectives but serve the **ultimate purposes of His glory**.
- ✓ Jesus' life illustrates that God's love is governed by His **ultimate purposes** rather than our temporal well being or personal agendas.

Wrath is not the opposite of love, hate is, and the final form of hate is indifference.

**We refrain from displays of just wrath because we know God ultimately will judge justly.**

"If I don't believe that there is a God who will eventually put all things right, I will take up the sword and will be sucked into the endless vortex of retaliation."  
*Timothy Keller*

**Partial explanations**

1. A response to the **severity of human depravity**.

**Numbers 31**

"15 Have you allowed all the women to live?" he (Moses) asked them. 16 "They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were **the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD** in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people."

**Partial explanations**

1. A response to the severity of human depravity.
2. An expression of **a gradual disclosure of the divine nature**.

**John 1**

"16 For of **His fullness** we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

## Partial explanations

1. A response to the severity of human depravity.
2. An expression of a gradual disclosure of the divine nature.

### 3. Shared parts of ancient culture.

#### Human Language -

Hebrew and Greek are cultural languages

#### Hebrew Covenants -

Deuteronomy (Suzerainty covenants)

#### The Flood -

The Epic of Gilgamesh (Mesopotamian)

#### Warrior God -

Enuma Elish (Babylonian)

## Partial explanations

1. A response to the severity of human depravity.
2. An expression of a gradual disclosure of the divine nature.
3. Shared parts of ancient culture.

### 4. An example of accommodation to human nature and development.

Matthew 19

"7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

8 He said to them, "**Because of your hardness of heart**, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way."

## Anthropomorphism anthropos (man) + morphe (form)

### Human actions

Genesis 2:2

"And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He **rested** on the seventh day from all His work which He had done."

### Human emotions

1 Samuel 15:35

"And the Lord **regretted** that He had made Saul king over Israel."

### Human forms

Exodus 7:5

"I stretch out **My hand** on Egypt"

## Partial explanations

1. A response to the severity of human depravity.
2. An expression of a gradual disclosure of the divine nature.
3. Shared parts of ancient culture.
4. An example of accommodation to human nature.

### 5. A prerogative that only God can exercise in His wisdom.

Isaiah 55:8

"“for My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord”.”

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

Romans 9

"18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles."

## Partial explanations

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### 6. A part of the bigger story of human redemption.

Luke 24

"45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that **the Christ would suffer** and rise again from the dead the third day. 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations."