



## 2025 God's Love and Justice Lesson 5 The Wrath of Divine Love

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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When you hear the term *wrath* what comes to mind?

Does the law lens one views the Bible and the world through, the law one applies to how one understands justice and injustice, wrath and punishment impact our understanding of wrath?

The Bible speaks of God having wrath:

- The **wrath of God** is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Romans 1:18 NIV84, emphasis mine.

But the also speaks of Satan having wrath:

- Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the **devil has come down to you, having great wrath**, because he knows that he has a short time Revelation 12:12 NKJV, emphasis mine.

Is there a difference between Satan's wrath and God's wrath?

- Do we understand wrath to be the same functionally regardless of who the agent of that wrath is?
- Do we see God and Satan acting in similar ways, using similar powers, and causing similar outcomes?
- Do we differentiate God's wrath and Satan's wrath only by motive—for instance, saying that God wrath is the wrath of passionate love against injustice whereas Satan's wrath is angry selfishness, but they both use power to inflict harm, to punish their enemies?

Is Satan's wrath and God's wrath manifestations of the same power, methods, and actions? Absolutely not! In fact, **the wrath of God and that of Satan are exact opposites!** God's wrath functions exactly the opposite of how Satan's wrath functions, and we can only understand this if we understand reality, which is to understand God's design law.

If we view the world through Satan's system of government, that of a creature who cannot create reality so, instead, makes up rules that are enforced through external punishments, then we understand wrath to be the use of power to punish—to inflict harm upon those whom one is wrathful toward. Satan's wrath is the use of power to harm, to punish, to injure, to destroy.

Throughout human history, God has been shielding us from Satan's wrath. God has been holding back the four winds of strife (Revelation 7:1); He has been warring against Satan and the principalities of darkness (Revelation 12:7; Colossians 2:15); and He has been sending angel armies to shield us (2 Kings 6:17–20). We see this happening all throughout Scripture.

But God's wrath is the opposite—it is when He stops using power to protect us. God is the Creator, the builder of reality whose laws are the template of health and life. Breaking His laws directly causes us harm, and God, in harmony with His character of love, must expend His power, His energy, His resources, to hold at bay the harm that results from breaking His design-laws and to impart the healing solution. **While Satan uses power to injure, God uses power to heal, restore, recreate, renew, and rebuild.**

God's wrath occurs when He respects the choices of rebellious people and gives them what they have insisted upon—freedom from Him, His design laws for life, and His merciful healing power and presence.

This is exactly what Paul describes in Romans:

- The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse Roman 1:18–20 NIV84.

Paul then goes on to explicitly state three times and describe with outcome-based evidence that God's wrath is letting people go to reap what they have chosen when they break away from His protective care. In verses 24, 26, and 28, Paul says that God gave them up, or let them go, or handed them over to what they insisted upon—and the only outcome from breaking away from the Creator and Sustainer of life and health is ruin and death.

The scholarly commentary *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, published by Intervarsity Press, explains these verses beautifully:

- In some sense, God's wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God's structure and establishing our own, in violating God's intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration.

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18–32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the inevitability of human debasement which results when God's will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God's truth (Rom 1:18–20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile

thinking (Rom 1:21–22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24–27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28–32).

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24, 26, 28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves.

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained. ... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, published by Intersity Press p. 543.

God is the God of reality—and His wrath is the exact opposite of Satan’s; yet, sadly, billions believe that God’s wrath is functionally no different than Satan’s. Billions have been led to believe that God’s wrath is when He uses His power to inflict pain, suffering, and torture upon His children as a response to evil and sin. This is a lie!

And this lie is the fruit, the unavoidable result, of believing another lie—that God’s law functions like human law; that is, imposed rules. If one believes that any part of God’s law is like human law, made up rules, then one always believes that God must use power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking, for if there is no punishment in this artificial system, then there is no “justice.”

Read last paragraph,

- God’s anger is always His righteous and loving response against evil and injustice. Divine wrath is righteous indignation motivated by perfect goodness and love, and it seeks the flourishing of all creation. God’s wrath is simply the appropriate response of love to evil and injustice. Accordingly, evil provokes God to passion in favor of the victims of evil and against its perpetrators. Divine wrath, then, is another expression of divine love. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025, God’s Love and Justice* p. 36.

Is God against the perpetrators? Or is God also for them? Does God only want to help the victims or does God want to help the perpetrators? Does God love only the victims and not the perpetrators? Are God’s actions only good for the victims or are they also good for the perpetrators?

When we think through design law we understand reality—that after Adam sinned, humanity, the species, Adam and Eve, from whom all humans are descended, became infected with a terminal condition and that without the Messiah promised in Genesis 3:15, no human could be saved from sin.

Thus,

- But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 NIV84.

Did Christ die for the righteous or for the unrighteous—to provide the means of turning the unrighteous into the righteous?

- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84.

So, God acted to destroy the world in the Flood—for whose benefit? Was that action good only for Noah, his family, and the righteous through history?

Could any human being be saved from sin without Jesus? No! What was the purpose of the Flood? It was to keep open the avenue for the Messiah. At that time in human history only one man and his family were still willing to work with God. The rest of the entire population were hardened against God. God's actions were not against sinners, they were for sinners.

But was it good for those individuals who died in the Flood?

Didn't God warn, through Noah, for 120 years of a coming flood, of their sinfulness, of their need to repent, of their need to turn to Him for salvation? How did they respond to the message of Noah? Ridicule and rejection.

What would allowing the flood to occur over a period of time (rain, fountains of water breaking through, etc.) allow for? Would it allow for some people to reflect and to reconsider? Would the evidence of what was transpiring confirm to them that Noah was right? Would that give the people outside the ark the opportunity to repent? Whether they actually repented or not isn't the question I'm asking here; rather, I'm saying that wouldn't a God of love give every opportunity for repentance even if that opportunity was rejected? And if so, then was the flood against them or for them, giving them one more evidence of the truth, one more opportunity to repent and be saved eternally?

Did the thief on the cross have many truths presented to him throughout his life—yet persistently rejected God, pursuing a sinful life until he ended up in a state of suffering leading toward death? Did that situation give him opportunity to reflect and repent, even though he was destined to die at that point? And didn't the other thief have the same opportunity at the Cross but rejected it? I think this represents the people who died in the Flood.

Thus, the Flood was a therapeutic action by God to not only keep open the avenue for the Messiah, but because God was still *for* those people who died in the Flood and He gave them every possible opportunity to choose life.

## SUNDAY

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Read first section of the lesson,

- The God of the Bible loves justice and hates evil. Sin and evil, therefore, provoke Him to passion, a passion expressed on behalf of those oppressed and abused, and even in cases in which one's evil affects primarily oneself. God hates evil because evil always hurts His creatures, even if self-inflicted. In the biblical narratives, God is repeatedly provoked to anger by what biblical scholars refer to as the cycle of rebellion. This cycle goes as follows:

The people rebel against God and do evil, sometimes even horrendous atrocities, such as child sacrifice and other abominations in His sight.

God withdraws according to the people's decisions.

The people are oppressed by foreign nations.

The people cry to God for deliverance.

God graciously delivers the people.

The people rebel against God again, often more egregiously than before. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God's Love and Justice p. 37.

This is well said and described. And what is revealed in this description? What kind of law is in operation? How does God's love function? Why does it function this way?

And why does God hate sin? For the same reason doctors hate disease—it destroys.

And if a person had a brain disease, encephalitis, dementia, that caused that person to act irrationally, impulsively, destructively, even say ugly things would we hate the person with the disease? Would we hate the disease and want to eradicate it?

This is exactly God's attitude—He hates sin and wants to eradicate it. And His anger is against sin, not sinners.

- Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. Isaiah 1:24-25 NIV84.

Read the second to last paragraph,

- According to the Bible, love and justice are intertwined. Divine anger is the proper response of love against evil because evil always hurts someone whom God loves. There is no instance in

Scripture where God is arbitrarily or unfairly wrathful or angry. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God's Love and Justice p. 37.

How do you understand God's love and justice being intertwined?

It is absolutely true that God is not arbitrary and not unfair, but why is it necessary to state this?

Is it because God has been presented as being arbitrary? What does arbitrary mean? Made up because one has the ability to make it up—these are all the laws of creatures, they are arbitrary. It is arbitrary to choose red for stop and green for go. It is arbitrary to choose speed limits at 55 instead of 65. There may be a rationale, or reason one imposes such laws, but they are still arbitrary—not inherent in the fabric of reality.

God's laws are not like our laws, they are the laws built into the fabric of reality and thus they are not arbitrary. They are how things work.

But, when we teach God's laws functions like human law, then we teach God's laws are arbitrary and God's punishments are arbitrary. For instance, why is it that the punishment for sin is death? Under the imposed law model—it is because God said so; He warned them, they sinned, justice requires God keep His Word, and impose the death penalty. But why is death the punishment, why not being locked out of Eden until repentance, or a severe spanking until repentance, why death?

Under design law, we know this is not arbitrary, we know death is the natural result of breaking the laws God built life to operate upon—and salvation requires removing that breach, that infection of fear and selfishness which causes one to sever their connection with God, who is the source of life. As Scripture teaches—the wages of sin is death Romans 6:23; sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15; those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction Galatians 6:8.

This is what Paul is teaching when he wrote,

- The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 1 Corinthians 15:56 NIV84.

Sin, which breaks God's design law for life causes the sting of death, but the power that causes sin to cause death is the law, which is not imposed rules, but is design law, the protocols life is built upon by God. For instance, if one ties weights on their legs and jumps into the ocean, they are breaking the law of respiration, and the sting of that is death, what is the power to cause death? The law of respiration—one cannot live outside of that law. This is design law and it is not arbitrary, it is why Jesus had to die, to restore His living law of life into our hearts and minds. Just as the new covenant teaches.

There is nothing arbitrary about the punishment for sin, because the punishment, eternal death, is the natural result of what sin does—unless remedied, healed, by our Creator and Savior Jesus Christ.

But the imposed law model doesn't understand this and in fact teaches many arbitrary things.

## MONDAY

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Read the last two paragraphs,

- The Hebrew phrase translated “slow to anger” or “longsuffering” could be literally translated “long of nose.” In Hebrew idiom, anger was metaphorically associated with the nose, and the length of nose metaphorically images how long it takes for one to become angry.

References to God as “long of nose,” then, convey that God is slow to anger and long-suffering. While it does not take long for humans to become angry, God is exceedingly long-suffering and patient, and bestows grace freely and abundantly, yet without justifying sin or turning a blind eye to injustice. Instead, God Himself makes atonement for sin and evil via the cross so that He can be both just and the justifier of those who believe in Him (Rom. 3:25, 26). *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 38.

How do we understand atonement and God’s justice and God justifying sinners?

What is atonement?

What law model do we explain it through?

If we have the human law model, atonement is appeasement, paying an appropriate penalty to turn away the wrath or anger of the one offended, in this case God. But any such teaching is pagan; it is not the truth of the Bible.

When we worship God as Creator, we recognize that when Adam sinned, God did not get changed, God’s law did not get changed, the condition of Adam changed such that rather than loving and trusting God, Adam distrusted God, was filled with fear and selfishness, and separated himself from God, fleeing from Him.

If God did not intercede and pursue Adam in love, Adam would have died from what sin does to the sinner. But Jesus is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Jesus stepped in and became our substitutionary Savior, taking upon Himself a condition that was not naturally His own to provide us an outcome that is not naturally our own, not naturally what we would experience from our inheritance from Adam.

And what is our inheritance from Adam? A life, also known as a spirit, of fear, of selfishness, which is out of harmony with God’s law of love and trust. Thus, we are born in sin, conceived in iniquity because after Adam sinned, he only had a spirit of fear and selfishness to procreate with. Thus we are born dead in trespass and sin, we are not born legally guilty, we are born terminal. This is why God sent His Son to take up this condition and eradicate the spirit of fear, the cause of death, and replace it with a spirit of love and trust.

God's justice is doing what is right or just, and when we have design law of love, we recognize it is right and just to eliminate the cause of death, to destroy sin, to eradicate disease, to save and to heal, to restore to righteousness. Thus, God is just in applying His living law of truth, love, freedom through Jesus Christ who became human and was tempted in all points like we are and as a human chose only the path of love and trust and thus destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness that His humanity inherited from Adam through Mary and restored the perfect sinless spirit of love and trust into the species created in Eden.

God was right and just in doing this for this is what is right, what love does. And in doing this He also provides the remedy to our sin condition. We can exchange our spirit of fear and selfishness for a new and holy spirit, a new heart and right spirit of love and trust. We can be reborn through trust and be animated, live a new life, no longer our old fearful selves living, but Christ living in us. Thus, with Christ's life, spirit, reproduced in us by the Holy Spirit we are set right, put right, with God, which is justification. God justified or put the species right with Himself in the person of Jesus Christ and God puts individual sinners right with Himself when those sinners are won to trust and surrender their lives, their spirits of fear and selfishness and are reborn with a new life of love, the life of Christ.

And when that happens, we who were far off are brought back into closeness, into intimacy, into love and trust with God—into at-one-ment (Ephesians 2:13).

That is what atonement is, reconciliation, unity, being at one. And the only way we could be at one with God again is for the barrier, the breach, the dividing wall to be removed and that barrier is sinfulness in us, our fear, our selfishness, our distrust of God. We must internalize the truth, the Word, the bread/flesh of Christ and be won to trust and drink the wine/blood, partake of the life, the spirit of Christ and be reborn. This is how we are reconciled, brought closed, atoned.

Here is my paraphrase of Ephesians 2:13-16:

- But now, you — whose minds were once far away, and who were practicing the principles of selfishness and survival-of-the-fittest — have been enlightened and brought near to God, and are in unity with Christ through the truth revealed when he died. For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility. He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan's lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God's original ideal; and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God... Ephesians 2:13-16 REM.



## TUESDAY

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Read first two paragraphs,

- While there are many inappropriate forms of anger, the Bible also teaches that there is “righteous indignation.”

Imagine a mother watching her three-year-old daughter playing at the playground and then, suddenly, a man attacks her daughter. Should she not be angry? Of course, she should. Anger is the proper response of love in such a circumstance. This example helps us understand God’s “righteous indignation.” *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025, God’s Love and Justice* p. 39.

From this example can you describe the nature of the mother’s anger? Who or what is the focus of her anger?

Is the anger righteous anger? What action would that righteous anger take if it was able, why would it take that action?

What if the man in the story was the mother’s oldest son who was deranged with schizophrenia and in state of psychosis? What if he was her oldest son who was high on drugs? What if he was her oldest son who wanted simply to do evil to his little sister?

Is the focus of the righteous anger different if the man is the son of the mother?

In both circumstances would the mother, if able, stop the man from assaulting the child? Would there perhaps be a motivational change and a shift in goals for the mother if the perpetrator is also her son?

Would the mother have anger in both circumstances? Where is the anger focused if the perpetrator is a stranger? Where is the anger focused if the perpetrator is her son?

Would the righteous anger seek to punish the man?

If the man is able to succeed in assaulting the child and the child does not die and is not physically disabled, but is exploited and abused by this man—who is damaged worse by his actions, him or the child?

I have many patients who were molested and abused as children and the perpetrator was never caught. They were never punished, and my adult patients struggle with chronic anger, resentment, bitterness and desire for vengeance. For my patients’ healing, when the time is right, we must discuss their heart, whether they will forgive their perpetrator or not, for the only way they can truly heal their heart is to, within themselves, forgive. (This is not about seeking out someone and interacting with them.)

Many of my patients struggle because of the question of fairness, of the person never being caught, of the person getting away with it. But no one gets away with it, but most people don’t understand this because most of us are conditioned to think through human law, which is imposed rules and justice is

imposed punishments. Thus, if someone isn't caught and punished, there is no justice, they get away with it.

So, I ask my patients, “who do you think got *damaged* worse when your uncle molested you; you or your uncle?” All of my patients say, they did. So I give them this scenario, where God takes them to heaven and gives them one choice between two options. Option one, nothing changes in their lives, they continue their therapy session with Dr. Jennings. Option two, God says to them, “If you want I will let you trade lives with your uncle and you go around molesting kids, but no one will molest you.” Then I ask, whose life do you choose?

All of my patients have thus far chosen their own life. And I ask, “But I thought you got damaged worse?” Then a light goes off. When someone abuses us they can damage our bodies, our minds—the way we think, our emotions, but they cannot damage our souls, our consciences remain clear. But when we exploit and abuse others we damage our souls, sear our consciences, corrupt our characters. This is what sin does and no one gets away with it.

So if you were that mother, and understood this, and the perpetrator was your oldest son—what are you experiencing now?

Every human is God's child, He gets angry at what sin is doing to His children, and especially those who are practicing and choosing to sin—and His anger is focused upon the sin, wanting to eradicate the sin from the heart. And He is angry when the sinner refuses because it didn't have to end with their loss.

## WEDNESDAY

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Read first paragraph,

- Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly displays His passion in favor of the downtrodden and the oppressed and His corresponding righteous indignation against the victimizers and oppressors. If there were no evil, God would not be angry. His anger is only and always against that which harms His creation. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God's Love and Justice p. 40.

What is God's anger against? Is it against a murderer? What about David—was God's anger against David, or was God still for David? Did God send Nathan to David to vent anger upon David, or did God send Nathan to redeem David, to bring David to repentance and save him?

So, what is God's anger against? It is against sin, not sinners. God's anger is like the anger of a physician whose child has cancer and the physician has a radiation knife that can cut out the cancer, that can burn out the cancer, that can completely destroy the cancer—and the father wants to do that with a vengeance. But the father is not angry at the child—even if the cancer is a brain tumor that causes the child to act in all kinds of inappropriate and even destructive ways. The father knows if it

wasn't for the cancer the child would never act that way, and the father knows if he can remove the cancer and restore health the child will be back to their loving self.

God wants to destroy sin out of the hearts and minds of people and restore in them the living law of love, the motivating spirit of love, the character of God, the mind of Christ and He knows that when this happens it results in us being restored back to His design and we will be loving and healthy beings reconciled to God.

But the Bible does use language that seems to suggest God does get angry at people: "The Lord's anger burns against his people" (Isaiah 5:25 NIV84).

What does this mean? Is this different than what the Bible describes here?

- "Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" (Psalm 27:4 NIV84).
  - Is God cruel? Some present Him as such, is God's anger cruel or something else?
- "Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger" (Proverbs 29:8 NIV84).
  - If God gets angry is He not wise or is God's anger different in some way than human anger?
- "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NIV84).
  - If God gets angry is He now foolish or is God's anger the result of wisdom?

The Bible tells us to get rid of anger:

- "**Get rid of all** bitterness, rage and **anger**, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31, 32 NIV84).
- "Now you must **rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger**, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips" (Colossians 3:8 NIV84).

How do we make sense of anger? How can we be instructed to get rid of all anger—and that anger is unwise and for the fools—yet God is described as getting angry?

The issue is the motive and the focus of the anger:

Righteous anger is always **motivated by love for people** and focuses on destroying the disease of sin in order to heal and save people.

Sinful anger is **motivated by selfishness** and focuses on punishing, hurting, exploiting, abusing, or destroying people, while perpetuating sin and selfishness.

Here is a simple example: Doctors have righteous anger toward pathogens (measles, polio, Ebola) and diseases (cancer, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, etc.). They seek to destroy all disease and pathology to heal and save people. But doctors do not have anger toward sick and dying patients.

Of course, doctors do get angry at activities that spread disease, especially when it is purposely spread—HIV-infected individuals who spread the disease with dirty needles or unprotected sex. But doctors still love the addict or prostitute who is spreading the disease. It's just that, while seeking to cure those currently infected, doctors also want to prevent the spread of the disease to protect all who are not yet infected.

Doctors also offer remedies for HIV and methods to stop its spread, but when a person refuses to take the remedy and to use methods that prevent infecting others, doctors get angry not only at the disease, but they also get angry at the refusal of the person who rejects the treatment. And how much greater the anger when the person who refuses lifesaving treatment is the doctor's own son or daughter?

Why are the doctors angry? Because they love the dying person and know they can save them, if the terminal individual would only let them.

This is righteous anger—never seeking to harm the person, but always motivated by love to heal and save, even when a person refuses healing and chooses paths that destroy themselves and others. This is the anger that God expresses:

As the Holy Spirit says:

- “Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds as you did in the rebellion in the desert, during the opportunity to partake of God's cure, where your fathers broke my heart by trying their own remedies and rejecting the truth which I brought and for forty years patiently tried to heal them. That is why I was so angry with what happened to that generation, and said, ‘Their minds continually reject the healing truth, and they refuse to practice my ways of health and live.’ So I granted them their persistent choice and said, ‘Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well’” (Hebrews 3:7–11 The Remedy).

Jesus also expressed anger at the hardness of heart that obstructed His healing love, but He still loved those whose hearts were hard:

- He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored (Mark 3:5, 6 NIV84).

And what does righteous anger, which is a manifestation of love, do to those who persistently refuse healing? It acts to restrain and to protect until the point that the person is healed or no further intervention will be helpful—and then love let's go, with sadness, and allows the person to reap what they have chosen: pain, suffering, and death. But it never retaliates. Love is angry, because it didn't

have to be this way! Righteous anger doesn't act to torture, inflict harm, or cause suffering and torment.

When Israel persistently rejected God and insisted on damaging their hearts, minds, and characters by engaging in idol worship, God—like a loving doctor whose patient refuses rehab and insists on injecting themselves with harmful substances—set them free to reap what they chose. Without God's protecting presence, enemies of all sorts came in and attacked them; they reaped what they had chosen, a life separated from God.

And God was angry, because it didn't have to be that way! Read last paragraph,

- Many other judgments that Scripture describes as brought about by God are explained as instances in which God “gives” the people over to their enemies (Judg. 2:13, 14; Ps. 106:41, 42), in accordance with the people's decisions to forsake the Lord and serve the “gods” of the nations (Judg. 10:6–16, Deut. 29:24–26). God's anger against evil, which will finally culminate in the eradication of all evil once and for all, stems from His love for all and from His desire for the final good of the universe, which itself has a stake in the whole question of sin and rebellion and evil. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God's Love and Justice p. 40.

This is well said.

But selfish anger is not motivated by love for others, nor is it angry at the suffering that sin is causing others. Rather, selfish anger is anger about the wrongs we experience—done to us or to what we value—not for love for others. Examples of this include:

- Anger at not getting our way
- Anger at having our ideas challenged or refuted
- Anger at having our projects and pursuits interfered with
- Anger at having our self-promotion thwarted or name maligned
- Anger at being assaulted, injured, robbed
- Anger at having been embarrassed
- Anger of envy—someone else getting what we have wanted
- Anger of perceived unfairness—someone else having more than we do
- Anger when someone questions our authority, disobeys, or disrespects us
- Anger at having not lived up to the family standard

This type of anger leads to selfish acting out—seeking to take from another, hurt another, make another person pay for the wrong they have done to us, even killing another in order to protect self, advance self, or promote self. It wants to ensure the wrong is punished, not remedied. This is the anger of sin and selfishness.

Actions that impair our higher cortical functions (the part of the brain behind our foreheads, where we reason, think, and love) increase our vulnerability to selfish anger—such things as intoxication, sleep

deprivation. Furthermore, having false beliefs that incite fear—including lies about God—increase the likelihood of sinful anger. Why? Because we process emotions and impulses in this area of the brain, and when this part of the brain is not operating at peak efficiency, we are more vulnerable to moments of angry outbursts, feeling it is the right and proper response to a perceived wrong. This gives insight into much of the Bible’s counsel on avoiding drunkenness, getting appropriate rest, eating healthy foods, forgiving others, avoiding physical conflict, and the importance of knowing God as Jesus revealed Him to be.

So if you find yourself angry, first inquire, with what am I angry? Is it because you love someone and you see them injuring themselves, or something injuring them, and you are angry at the pathology or process that is causing harm? Or are you angry at some wrong, actual or perceived, happening to you? Is your motive to act in love in order to save or heal another, or is your motive to act in vengeance—to punish or harm another?

When we find that our anger is selfish in nature, then we must go to God in prayer and ask for a new heart and new motives—to give us love and help us change your perspective and replace the selfish motive with the motive of love.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read the first paragraph,

- While divine wrath is a “terrible” thing, it is by no means immoral or unloving. On the contrary, in the Old and New Testaments, God expresses wrath against evil because of His love. Divine wrath is terrible because of the insidious nature of evil in contrast to the pure goodness and splendor of God. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 41.

Thoughts? What is meant by “terrible”? Do they mean it is just a bad thing, it would be terrible to experience God’s wrath, or do they mean that terrible is a quality of God’s wrath, it is terribly severe, it is terribly intense, it is terribly powerful?

Read the second paragraph,

- In this regard, love is essential to God; wrath is not. Where there is no evil or injustice, there is no wrath. In the end, God’s most loving action of eradicating evil from the universe also effectively will eliminate anger and wrath. And that is because never again will there be any injustice or evil. Forevermore, there will be only the eternity of bliss and justice in a perfect love relationship. There will never again be divine wrath because never again will there be the need for it. What a wonderful thought! *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 41.

How does God get an eternity of bliss and perfect love? How can God get a universe where there is no sin, no death, no rebellion, no fear, no exploitation? Can God get such a universe by force, by external law and law enforcement, by inflicting external punishments for sin? Why or why not?

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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Bob Lorren, long time member of Come and Reason class passed away Sunday morning Jan 12 from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. He leaves behind his wife Johnnie Lorren, who wrote our Domestic Violence Bible Study Guide, 3 children and 2 step children. Bob and Johnnie were good friends and strong supporters of Come and Reason Ministries. The family has asked that remembrances be made to Come and Reason Ministries. Bob was a loved example of Gods character in all he did. He will be greatly missed.

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