



were indentured servants from childhood working in a clay-baking factory for inability to pay an outstanding family debt over a misunderstanding.

As Christians they were easy targets and while cleaning a relative's house they accidentally burned some pages of the Qur'an. This was the excuse used to incite a riot which resulted in the couple being tortured, thrown into the kiln where they worked and burned to death.

Shama was pregnant. They are survived by three children.

Pakistani blasphemy laws are a license for Muslims to kill religious minorities.



Steven Weinberg
(theoretical physicist)

“With or without religion, good people can behave well and bad people can do evil; but for good people to do evil—that takes religion.”

1. The “Christian” Crusades in the Middle Ages

The First Crusade in sacking Jerusalem - indiscriminately killed Muslims, Jews, and fellow Christians.

The famed “Children’s Crusade” of 1212 led to the abuse and death of as many as 30,000 children in the name of God’s glory.

2. Calvin's followers were notorious in their harsh treatment of anabaptists in the 16th cent.

The common treatment was prolonged emersion but in many cases they were burned at the stake, or beheaded as heretics.

3. **Luther in his tract, *On the Jews and their lies*. (the first of a seven point plan)**

"First, destroy all Jewish institutions. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom,"

4. Conservative Protestants defended slavery in the South during the Civil War.

Abolition was largely led by more liberal northern Christians.

5. Puritan treatment of Native Americans.

In one of the Pequot massacres of 1637, after killing all men, women, and children. Captain Underhill claimed the Pequots had sinned against God and man, and thus, "We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings"!

NEW ENGLAND FRONTIER: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675 by Alden T. Vaughan pp. 144-145

Where is this “sufficient light”?



“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.”

Nahum 1:2

Numbers 31

"¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Take **vengeance** on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people." . . . ⁷ They fought against Midian, as the LORD commanded Moses, and **killed every man**. . . . ⁹ The Israelites captured the Midianite women and children and took all the Midianite herds, flocks and goods as **plunder**. . . . 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. ¹⁷ Now **kill all the boys**. And **kill every woman who has slept with a man**, ¹⁸ but **save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man**."



Richard Dawkins

(British evolutionary biologist)

"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty, ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."

Is the Biblical God Ethical?

The GOOD must be what God ordains & does. But does this make God look like a monster or at least inconsistent?

- 1. How can God command genocide in Joshua, Judges, and Numbers?*
- 2. How can God hold people responsible for their eternal fate when He has predestined if from all eternity?*
- 3. How can God torture in eternal hell many who have not heard the Gospel?*

- 4. How can God permit the existence of evil and "unjustified" suffering?*
- 5. How can God command us to love our enemies when He exterminates His?*
- 6. How can God expect us to trust Him when He is so inconsistent in the way He relates to people?*
- 7. How can God expect us to worship Him when He acts like the jealous tyrannical, pagan gods?*
- 8. If we treated our children the way God treats His would we not be in jail?*

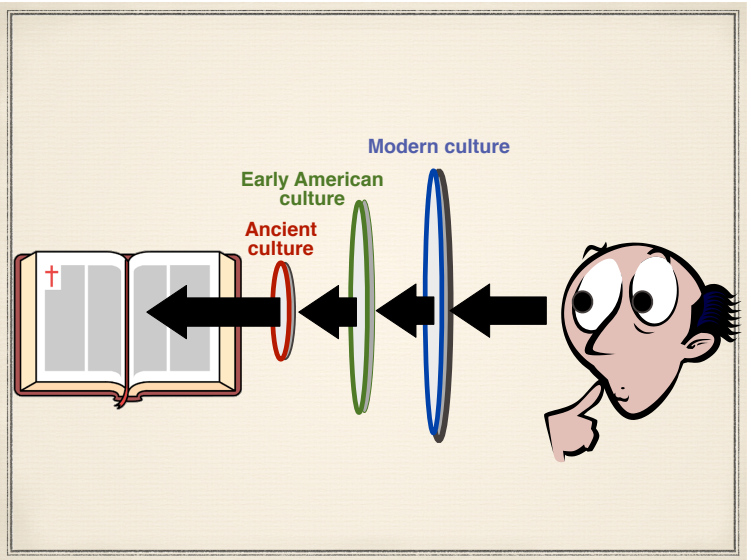
To get God's wrath wrong means to get almost everything else wrong as well.

The wrath of God is the context through which we understand:

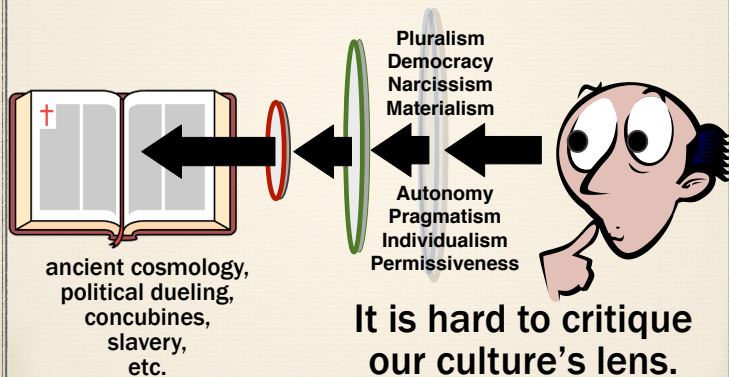
- 1. The Seriousness of Sin*
- 2. The Cross of Christ*
- 3. The Hope of the Gospel*

The two big reason these wrathful texts upset us so.

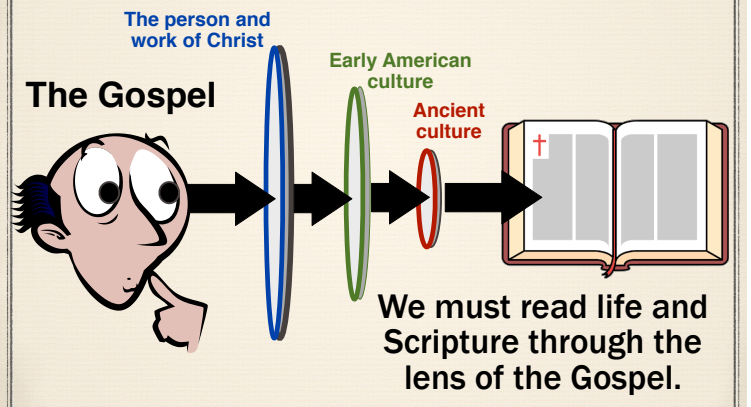
1. We view them through the eyes of modern culture.



When we are blind to our own culture it tends to blind us to all others.

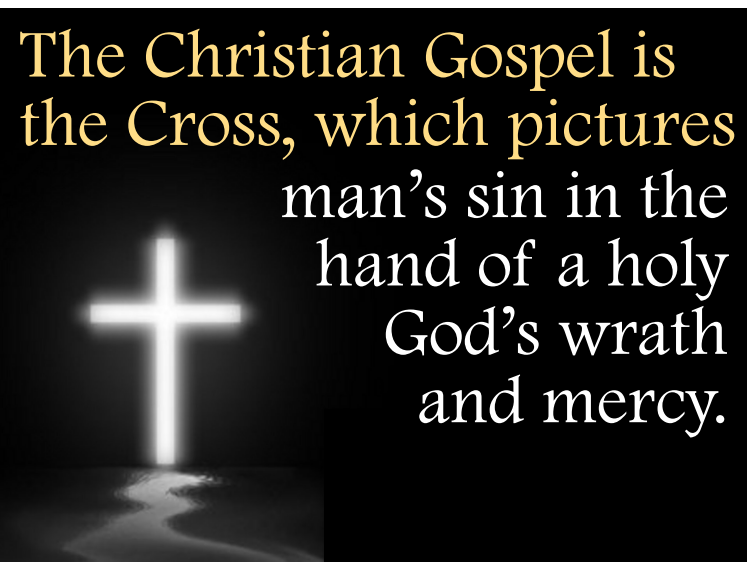


The Gospel tends to open our eyes to the rest of history and Scripture.



The two big reasons these wrathful texts upset us so.

1. *the eyes of modern culture.*
2. **We fail to appreciate the role of God's holiness in the drama of the Gospel.**



Christ is the **full disclosure** of God's nature.

John 1

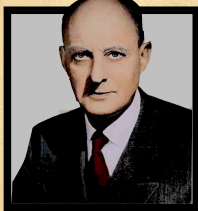
"¹⁶ For of **His fullness** we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained Him.**"

Hebrews 1:3

"He is the radiance of His glory and the **exact representation of His nature.**"

Ephesians 4:15

"but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,**"



H Richard Niebuhr

"The theology of liberal protestantism was a God without wrath who brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

The wrath of God in the Old Testament is a picture of the Cross of Christ in the New Testament.

1. Three great imputations in Scripture
2. The language of Jesus' crucifixion (Isa.53:4-12)
3. The great exchange (2 Cor.5:21)
4. Propitiation (Rom.3:25)
5. Biblical "types" (Col.2:16-17)

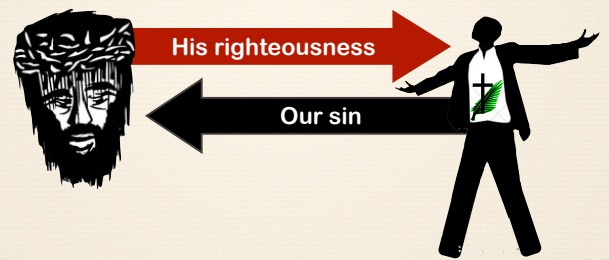
The Gospel story includes three great imputations.



The great exchange

2 Corinthians 5:21

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."



Propitiation

The satisfaction of the just wrath of God.



Propitiation is a two-part act that involves

- 1) appeasing the wrath of an offended person and
- 2) being reconciled to him.

Romans 3

“²⁴ Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith.”

Hebrews 2:17

“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.”

1 John 2:2

“And He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

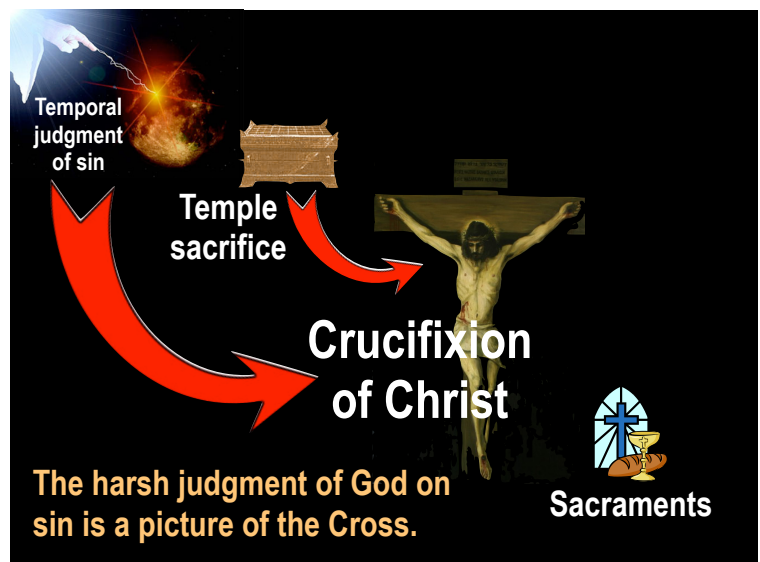
1 John 4:10

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.”

How are we to deal with Biblical “contradictions?”

Paradox (enigma)	Puzzle (mystery)	Paradigm (myth)	Picture (type)
Truths that defy logic	Truths that are logical once all the information is known	Truths that are a story-guide to life	Truths that represent a “shadow of what is to come”
Trinity	Church (Jew & Gentile)	The sin of Adam & Eve	Tabernacle
Accept	Wait	Personalize	Learn

Tabernacle - Temple as Type of the Gospel



The same “wrathful” language is used to describe the fate of Messiah

Isaiah 53

“4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him **stricken by God, smitten by him**, and afflicted. 5 But he was **pierced** for our transgressions, he was **crushed** for our iniquities; the **punishment** that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 . . . the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . 12 . . . For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Luke 24:26

“Was it not **necessary for the Christ to suffer these things** and to enter into His glory?”

Colossians 2

“¹⁶ Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day - ¹⁷ things which are **a mere shadow of what is to come**; but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Hebrews 10:1

“For the Law, since it has **only a shadow of the good things to come** and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.”

What do we get wrong?

- ✓ We believe that modern Western culture sets the standard for ethics. *A merciful, loving God must be above judgmental wrath, which is intolerant, immature, and immoral.*
- ✓ We see the Gospel story of Jesus as the N.T. counterpart to the wrathful God of the O.T. *The Cross of Christ is not about satisfying God's holy wrath against sin but about unjust political oppression.*
- ✓ We foolishly ask - *What gives God the right to be Lord of all without explaining to “our satisfaction”, all the details. We won't believe until God meets our standards.*

Forgotten truths

- ✓ The Cross of Christ is about holy wrath, radical grace, and sacrificial love.
- ✓ Our difficulty in coming to grips with imprecatory texts reflects our resistance to three fundamentals of Christian faith:
 1. The call for holiness before God - the Cross
 2. The covenant exclusivity of faith - Baptism
 3. The corporate identity of the church - Body of Christ
- ✓ The wrath of God in the O.T. is a mockery of our modern PC gods of Permissiveness, Pluralism, & Personal autonomy.



Timothy Keller

“Suffering is actually at the heart of the Christian story.”

