

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.”

Romans 12:19-20

“Vengeance is mine
I will repay says the Lord”

**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.”

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.**”

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.**”

הרמ **herem**

the law of anathema, “destroyed” “devoted”

Does the wrath and jealousy of God suggest that He is -

1. a reflection of culture?
2. insecure?
3. in process?
4. misrepresented?
5. misunderstood?



Christian responses

1. Precedent to justify “holy war”

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

2. Proscribed by N.T. teaching

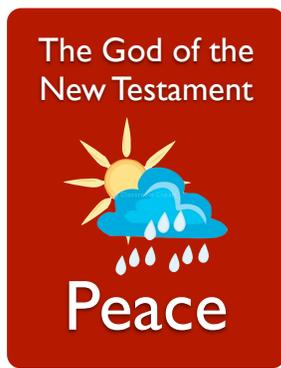
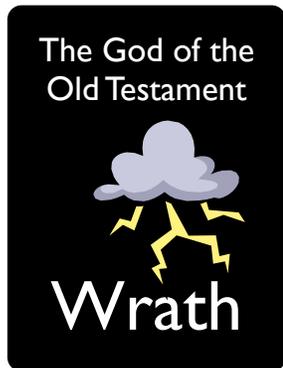
Matthew 5

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

Romans 12

“20 “*But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.*” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

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



The New Testament

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
Biblical words picture God as a “diabolical, insecure, bully.

Romans 1:18

“for **the wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness,”



Exodus 20:5 (NIV)

“You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for **I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God**, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,”



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 fulness** 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 and development.
5. 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.”

Lessons

1. All Scripture is written **for us** but not **to us** or **about us**.
2. The harsh wrath of God in the Bible is not an embarrassing ethical **error** left over from a primitive culture.
3. Nor is it a **guide** for our behavior today.
4. It cannot be fully understood without seeing its relationship to the **crucifixion of Jesus** and the propitiation for our sins. (next week)