

## THE IMBALANCED GOD

*"Consider the Bible writers. Their image of God as the most powerful person imaginable was modeled on an Iron Age Chief or King who wielded absolute power over his subjects and who was beyond accountability." (Tarico)*

There are ample citations from the Postmodernist affirming that he believes in a spiritual supernatural reality that impacts earthly existence. This is evidenced by television programming where supernatural elements are common. Unfortunately the supernatural portrayed by current media is founded in paganism and not the biblical truth. There is an admission of "god" but tragically this spiritual reality is presented with dualism. In Postmodernism the spiritual reality that impacts earthly life is not "one" but two or more "forces." Included in this pantheon of the modern polytheism are two major "gods." The first supernatural "force" is seen as benevolent and absent of any "negative" aspects. The second "force" is seen as dark and evil. Within each of these two categories are a number of lesser spiritual influences.

Postmodernism often ignores the "dark side" of their spiritual world. Instead of attributing any evil on earth to spiritual forces, the Postmodernist suggests that such results only from mankind's arrogance. Thus there is no "sin." There is no "angry God" punishing man.

By ignoring the "anger" of God, Postmodernism only acknowledges a God of "love." This is significant in understanding why modern mankind can live in sinful practices and applaud sinful lifestyles—they believe anger at such behavior is not a governing "reality" of their god.

The concept of god in the Postmodern Period is restricted to the imaginations and "personal realities" of individuals. Instead of one, sovereign, almighty God that rules all human behavior there are myriads of individual "personal" gods. Thus, as the above quote reveals, any mention of God's anger is explained away as human imagination fabricating a dualistic "god" whose character is marked only by negatives. The Scoffer suggests that the biblical image of God has been invented as a means to provide a control over the masses. Of course this suggestion is validated without objective facts but embraced with existential feelings.

This effort is illustrated by the recognized quip from Karl Marx that undergirded the atheism of the USSR, "Religion is the opium of the people."

The biblical image of God as both benevolent and retributive is angrily rejected by today's civilization. With this twist of philosophical focus the anger of the Scoffer dismisses the anger of Jehovah God. Scoffers have suggested that the concept of God evolved from the angry chieftain motif of the Old Testament and, as man's intelligence developed, the angry chieftain motif mutated into the benevolent deity of the New Testament narratives.

The anger of the Scoffer increases as he fiercely reacts to any suggestion that his "tolerant god" would be censorious toward man's actions. This blasphemy is real and explodes in outbursts of intolerance that are unparallel with those maintaining the biblical truth of God's anger. This is visible in the emotions of those spurning the biblical truth of the anger of God—these are violent in their angry rejection.

This viciousness is revealed in their comments: "Absolute power allows caprice and cruelty. It (the image of an angry God) always is maintained in part by fear, a level of fear that is virtually impossible to perpetuate without anger's unpredictability...The angry God has been replaced in part by a God who has a wonderful plan for your life or who seeks a personal relationship with you " (Tarico).

### **Reviewing the Treacherous Transition**

It is critical to understand the whys and how's by which we have the Postmodernist decision-making matrix governing our culture.

Our first lesson surveyed civilization's transition from the governing by an objective reality and absolute truth to that of Postmoderns existentialism ("Just the feelings ma'am, just the feelings!"). This transition cannot be ignored when examining the philosophy that manipulates the decision-making matrix of current culture.

Why do people today make the decisions they do? Because their decision-making matrix is based upon feelings and these feelings have been nurtured by the controlling Postmodern Period. There are those who refuse to follow the piping of Postmodernism but this resistance is from a very few. Scripture asserts that there is always a "remnant" that remains loyal to God (1 Kings 19:18) and this truth is observed in our culture where Jehovah God has been neutralized as a decision-making factor.

This transition has infected every aspect of earthly life. If one does not admit this transition then he is incapable of "understanding the times" as did the sons of Issachar. You may not like it. You may want to deny it because friends and families have damned themselves by denying God and accepting the position that their "personal reality" choices are superior to God's revealed directions. You may wish to think about their past actions and ignore their present and refuse to think of their future. But, however you react to the transition you are still living in the Postmodern Period and you have to accept the painful truth that many have deliberately and blasphemously rejected God. They may be religious but are religiously wrong—eternally wrong!

The transition's timeline establishes how and why our civilization moved from a fact based criteria for governing truth to a feeling based criteria for governing truth. The final appeal in many disagreements is often a statement such as this: "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me." Consequently all morality is defined on a personal level validated by the personal god that each follows. Civility and religious devotion is governed on a personal level. The decision of whether something is right or wrong is determined only on a personal level.

This is a denial that a common reality structures society's mores. The removal of a common governing reality results in anarchy (As we noted this cultural situation is described very well in Hosea 4).

History validates this transition of the modern civilization and reveals the devilish design for convincing mankind to reject the absolute existence of God and follow the emptiness of atheism.

The cunning strategy is to deceive mankind so he does not "love the truth." But this development is not as "new" as the Postmodernist wishes to think. Consider these words, "(W)ith all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-13).

This text presents an undeniable absolute of reality—those who reject the truth of God *will perish* (either nationally or personally). This absolute is repeatedly confirmed by the historical realities of previous civilizations. Regardless of Postmodern dreams of erasing this fact and believing that their new philosophy is the savior of civilization, this fact remains undeniable—*IF mankind rejects God's truth then mankind suffers God's anger.*

The anger of God is the control of civilization's behavior. If Satan can erase the divine anger then he succeeds in his dastardly objective of removing any behavior control. His hatred for mankind culminates in the devastation of civilization. In promising a total freedom from God's restrictive anger, Satan lures mankind into a freedom that has gone too far and results in civil, emotional, and spiritual anarchy. The practical consequences of a civilization erasing God's anger are chaos, crimes, corruption, and crises!

Once again it is important to remember that this devilish strategy is not new. Its roots are from the beginning of mankind. Its operational methodology is consistent throughout civilization's tragic history.

Today's vocabulary describes the philosophy of this historic evil as "Postmodernism." Mankind naively thinks this is a new way of thinking and analyzing ideas. The masses believe this new thinking has been validated by the "intellectuals." It deceptively promises a "utopia" where a perfect harmony exists between the forces of life.

This new methodology has thrust us into a new era of civilization (This is rather oxymoronic as it suggests the possibility that one can actually call the behavior of this period as "civilized"). The emotionally based decision-making matrix of Postmodernism has replaced the fact based decision-making matrix of previous generations. No longer must a decision "make sense." The only criterion for "making sense" is what each one "feels" to be right (This was aptly summed up in the popular 1980s song by Debby Boone "You light up my life" containing this stanza, "It can't be wrong when it feels so right").

Inoculated with this thinking, the modern decision-making matrix quickly discards any governing that does not "feel right."

This decision-making matrix dominates the world. Its presence is forced upon civilization in newspapers, on television, in advertisements, in classrooms and especially via the entertainment sectors. Every facet of civilization has been used to advocate this philosophy. The buzz words and catch phrases used to dupe modern culture's acceptance of this philosophy include "tolerance," "political correctness," and "multiculturalism." These terms have become the governing vocabulary in today's sociology.

Consequently the total governing for many today is "feeling good." No control is permitted that restrains pleasure. This is the same philosophy that governed Samson. When it came to his personal choices and behavior, Samson refused God's law and trusted in his "personal reality." Although this behavior is demonstrated throughout his life it is succinctly stated in Judges 14:3 when he wanted to marry outside of God's law: "But Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, for she looks good to me.'"

This is the progressive's agenda—to destroy or minimize any governing that says actions, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, morality, truth can be absolutely right or wrong. Previous mores of culture are scorned but the bitterest defiance is reserved for the issues involving biblical morality.

From a practical perspective this is why Postmodernism advocates the legalization of drugs. The advocates of the legalization of marijuana illustrate how this campaign to discard the old authority progresses. The advocate for legalization discards any pretense hiding the Postmodern agenda. Advocates seek a total release of all control and use the "medical" farce as their fulcrum for moving society further away from God's absolutes. By persuading an allowance on the basis of "medical" needs the camel's nose is in the tent! They have sacrificed the absolutes of God's truth for the instability and insecurity of feeling good.

These are those described by Paul. They will "perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-13). Please note the absolute reality—they *WILL PERISH!*

And the greater tragedy...*no one confronts them with their contemptible treatment of the absolute truth of God's revelation.* These are allowed to proceed further into their damnable beliefs and actions while those who do believe in God's absolutes remain silent because they do not want to "hurt the feelings" and drive the spiritual anarchist "away." And, if anyone dares to offer a comment on these and their evil actions he is instantly stigmatized as "unloving, scornful, and legalistic."

For an interesting parallel of the current cultural war on God's absolute truth read the narrative of the conflict between Amos and Amaziah in Amos 6:10-16. Also note the Apostle Paul's attitude refusing to remain silent when he was aware of the sinful choices, beliefs, and actions of those surrounding him: Galatians 4:16, "So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" Such silence is excused by "love" for the anarchist and as an attempt not to hurt his feelings. But such is "loved" straight into Hell as his ungodly decision-making matrix is unchallenged. It is not true love that is demonstrated by silence regarding his error.

This "feel good" philosophy was sown and germinated by the worldly philosophies of Nietzsche and Sartre and birthed in the USA by the "Woodstock generation" with its "folk" songs of rebellion to authority. Those bewitched by this satanic philosophy make remarks that denigrate the respect a governing authority deserves. The antinomian attitudes became visible in individual lives as they rebel against all authority making a spectacle of their refusal to submit to godly rules—these will scoff, and scorn and comically heap disrespect upon God's long established truth.

Sadly, the rebellious hearts of these blasphemers are not confronted but applauded!

The feel good Postmodernist believes his blasphemy is acceptable. But even though his personal reality and belief confirms his rejection of God's absolutes, he continues to have a nagging problem that pesters his comfort zone.

### **The Pestering Presence**

No matter how controlling the addiction to chemicals or obsessive the pursuit for immorality or how advanced the educational level or how many are targeted in the blame game there is dissatisfaction. This is a "personal reality" from which one cannot escape. This fuels the obsession for "more" relief, "more" pleasure, and "more" satisfaction, but all is "futility...chasing after the wind." God's satisfaction has been replaced with man's counterfeit and life becomes meaningless and empty.

Why is life so empty? The Postmodernist explains that such results because there is a barrier which must be removed before this "feel good" decision-making matrix can be fully satisfying. This is the persistent and onerous dogma that the Almighty God becomes angry with behavior contrary to His revealed will.

If the "feel good" Postmodernist philosophy is to become an uncontested governing in civilization, then God's anger has to be neutralized and censored. The desired end is the total erasure of God's anger from mankind's consciousness.

So mankind has to decide what to do with God's anger. This is the issue discussed in this lesson.

When I was about ten I was taught by a retired man who went by the title of professor. A decade or so later I met him again. He had studied theology in the heyday of liberalism. When we met he was questioning some of his beliefs. "Where is the God of love in the Old Testament?" he asked. A few minutes later he asked again, "How can you believe in a God of love with so much suffering in the world?" What he did not seem to notice was that the Old Testament and empirical reality cohered; it was his sentimental liberal concept of the love of God that was out of step. Or, as Goethe put it, the whole course of history shows that the God of providence and the severe Jehovah of the Hebrews are one and the same. The dilemma faced by the professor is typical of that faced by so many in the West today. The sentimental view of the love of God proclaimed almost without respite by the Western churches may appear very attractive, but it is not in the last resort credible (Lane).

The postmodern dichotomy of God (dividing Him into two separate entities with contradictory attributes and thus impossibly applicable in a monotheistic faith) is total nonsense! Even when one attempts to look at this dichotomy with the postmodern perspective saying that logic and sensible thinking do not count in forming one's personal reality—this is still TOTAL NONSENSE!

Those marching to Postmodernism's thinking have an imbalanced God. According to their philosophy God must be either all love or all anger. They refuse to consider that these two emotions are complimentary and dependent upon each other.

The efforts to bind this imbalanced perspective of God upon society are made with statements that can be supported only by total ignorance.

Those, seeking to delegitimize the God of Scriptures have realized that God's holy anger must be removed if mankind is to accept a god-less existence. Consequently the following statements are presented to urge the "feel good generation" to accept the position that it is absurd for the biblical God to possess anger. These blasphemers present a contrived supernatural god that only has "love" as His nature.

Valerie Tarico composed a list of *"Eleven Kinds of Verses Bible-Believers Like to Ignore"* in order to present her feel-good "logic" for scorning the anger of God. In a web post on May 30, 2014 these alarming comments are made when discussing two of these eleven points:

*God's temper tantrums.* Modern Christians may talk about God as a loving father, or even a Jesus buddy, the kind you'd want to play golf with, but in reality Bible-God goes out of his way to be

intimidating. Worse, he appears to lose control of his temper at times, lashing out like an oversized thwarted three year old; and his earthly representatives, the prophets—including Jesus—do the same.

*Times when the Bible God is worse than Satan.* In the Bible, Satan is described as a roaring lion who prowls the earth, seeking whom he may devour. But if you actually read the stories, Satan doesn't do much other than to tempt people into disobeying the dictates of Yahweh, who acts like a heavenly dictator with borderline personality disorder. God, by contrast, professes his undying love, kindness and mercy, but then commands his minions to commit brutal atrocities when he isn't up for it himself. Some of the stories are so bad even Hollywood, with its passion for glorious biblical sex and violence, won't touch them, especially the plentiful Bible stories about sexual slavery and human sacrifice.

As modern mankind struggles with the question of God impacting society he often asks, "Is God Angry? Loving? Wrathful? Kind? Just? Merciful? Or is He NONE of the above?" According to Postmodern consensus there is neither right nor wrong answers.

Everyone is to have an answer that is "personally meaningful" to him. This personally meaningful answer is the ONLY correct answer because there is no transcending truth from a sovereign, autonomous God who rules and reigns universally (Remember that today's world views Jehovah God as only a spiritual mirage fashioned by a local cultural context. This is illustrated by the pagans in 1 Kings 20:23, "Now the servants of the king of Aram said to him, 'Their gods are gods of the mountains, therefore they were stronger than we; but rather let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we will be stronger than they'.").

Addressing this point is an article posted by Matt Moore on September 17, 2015 titled "*Is God Angry With Me Because Of My Sin?*"

Some whisper softly of a god who loves us so deeply that our sin doesn't even register on his radar. "Every person is his dearest and most cherished child," they say, "and he loves them so much he can't help but to overlook their mistakes and hiccups in life!" Sure, he wishes we would do better sometimes, but he knows we're not perfect and doesn't expect us to be. This version of god doesn't seem to care too much about our sins as he easily forgives them all without batting a divine eyelash. As long as we believe he's real and try our best to be decent people, all is well in his book.

Others speak harshly of a god who, yes, saves sinners – but only sinners who get their (xxxx) together and maintain squeaky clean, moral lifestyles. They tell of a rigid, justice-only sort of god who has zero patience toward imperfect people and explodes in anger over every sinful stumble. These folks love to hit the street corners with their signs about the damnation of god that's surely coming for homosexuals, whores, liars, and cheats. Their biblical vocabulary seems to be restricted to three words: sin, repentance, and judgment. This god they portray seems totally unapproachable and as if he could really care less about us.

Here are two, of many articles, expressing the Postmodern Period's view of the imbalanced God of today's culture. This position rejects any anger, divine expectations for behavior, and restrictive inspired commands. The very thought of "rules and regulations" incenses the animosity of this mindset (Note: Although these are quick to dismiss the idea that God's commands should be cast aside they are insistent that we must obey God's command to "love one another." This reveals much about the idiocy thinking that one is able to select and reject God's commands with impunity!).

Tragically the fact that anger and justice can be associated with God is comically dismissed. However, as persistently and vociferously as the postmodern mind seeks to dismiss God's anger, the reality of the divine wrath remains a pestering presence.

And this really irritates the "feel good" sheeple!

### **The Twisted, Tortured Logic**

There is a sad irony in the lives of those governed by the Postmodern philosophy—they claim certainly to know there is nothing for certain! Postmoderns say there are no absolutes except the personal realities of each individual. There is contempt for logic and the science of reasoned study. They say there is no real truth so

there can be no real conclusions. Life is perceived as a mixture between a nebulous mirage and a vacuous existence. There are no concrete realities.

Todd Kappelman examined this social environment and observed:

There appears to be a general malaise among many people today, and a certain uneasy feeling that the twentieth-century has entered a new phase. Additionally, most believe that this new phase is not a very good one. Many diverse new "communities" such as feminists, gays, pro-choice advocates, pro-life advocates, conservatives, liberals, and various other groups, both religious and non-religious, make up the global village we now live in. These various groups are frequently at odds with one another and more often than not there is a breakdown in communication. This breakdown can be attributed to the lack of a common frame of reference in vocabulary and, more importantly, in views about what constitutes truth.

This removes everything that provides stability. All becomes dysfunctional. Nothing is definite. Nothing is able to provide the urgent answers for mankind's yearnings. All is unstable chaos. So each "group" pursues its own personal realities. The amazing absurdity observed is that each "group" has its own truth but they do not have satisfaction because they reject the idea of objective truth.

It is a vicious cycle that feeds insecurity. It brings only emptiness and personal meaninglessness to earthly existence.

By repudiating the absolute truth of God's revelation the Postmodernist has taken a blind leap into the unknown and has found nothing! Total helplessness! Total meaninglessness! Total misery!

It is a tragic comedy.

Even more astonishing is the way Postmoderns accept this rejection of the absolute. When asked to explain their beliefs and convictions all they can say is something like this: "I would like to give you my take on this, but understand that I'm in no way dogmatic on my position, nor do I expect you to agree with me. But I would ask that you consider what I have to share..." Any WHY should we consider what such uncertainty has to share? It is not based upon absolutes. It has no overarching truth. WHY accept the words of meaninglessness and emptiness? The commendation of those in Berea is in stark contrast to the one "searching for truth" today (Acts 17:11).

An invitation was posted asking for people to say what they wished "Christians" would stop saying to them, here are some of the responses. These reveal the in-roads that postmodernism has made into society (Shore):

1. "An 'angry God' is reprehensible."
2. "Religion always seemed too personal for me to take advice about it from people I don't know."
3. "My 'god' is one that does not get angry and that accepts and tolerates and NEVER condemns! My 'god' wants me to be happy and rich and pleased and never inconvenienced!"
4. "The very thought of 'God' commanding specific action or condemning certain action just doesn't fit with my reality. So I choose not to believe that and pity those poor people who believe such a contorted philosophical deity."
5. "I wish Christians would resist their aggressive impulses to morph others into Christians as THEY think they should be. Didn't Jesus preach that we should all love one another and just accept each other as they are?"
6. "We accept that there are many paths to God, and believe that no one religion can lay sole claim to the truth or to God's favor. Each person is free to find his or her own way. To Christians I would say: Practice your religion as you wish. There is no need to try and influence others."
7. "There are about a million things I'd like to say to Christians, but here's the first few that come to mind: Please respect my right to be the person I've chosen to become. Worship, pray and praise your God all you want—but please leave me, and my laws, and my city, and my school alone. Stop trying to make me, or my

children, worship your god. Why do we all have to be Christians? Respect my beliefs; I guarantee they're every bit as strong as yours. Mostly, please respect my free will. Let me choose if I want to marry someone of my own sex. Let me choose if I want to have an abortion or not. Let me choose to go to hell if that's where you believe I'm going."

Some attempt to escape the meaninglessness of our Postmodern world by erasing the anger of God. These present a "god" wholly of love consistent with the Postmodern theology (*IF* it is possible to present anything consistent with a theology whose major tenet is chaos from non-structure).

Here is a comment from one affirming that anger is not an attribute of God. He labors to show that the only attribute of God is love and therefore dismisses the concept of God's anger.

While God's anger and wrath apparently seems to show up a lot in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, it doesn't necessarily follow that (anger and wrath) are among His attributes...Interestingly, the Bible doesn't seem to devote any space to explicitly defining God's attributes, other than to imply that "His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead..." (Rom.1:20)...So, we need to ask the question. Does anger and wrath fit these descriptions of God's character and inherent nature...

Strictly speaking, wrath is not an attribute of God. For something to be an attribute of God, it has to be something that God exercises before all worlds. It would be more appropriate to say that the wrath of God is the manifestation of the holiness of God in the context of the sinfulness of man...within the Trinitarian relationship holiness is expressed but not wrath.

In other words, whatever is not expressed between the Father, Son and Spirit before and apart from His creation is NOT an attribute of God. This is why my position is that wrath and anger cannot be said to be attributes of God.

I believe Scripture tells us that God has only one unchanging attitude toward humanity. That one attitude is LOVE. To know God is to know love (1 John 4:7-16). All of His other attributes, like His holiness, His justice, His infinite knowledge and power, flow from and are subsumed in His unchanging love...We know that Scripture does explicitly tell us that God IS love, and we know that He eternally expresses love between the Father and Son and Spirit "before all worlds" (John 17:24).

While this is true about love, God does not eternally express anger and wrath within the Godhead. He is not angry or wrathful apart from His creation, therefore these cannot be attributes of God.

So then, how are we to look at all the verses about God's anger and wrath since they're all over the Bible? Ignore them? Tell people God's not mad anymore? No, that would be scripturally dishonest. We seek to understand this language in the context of God's love, not by trying to "balance God out," attributing anger and wrath to His character or essence (Wild).

If the above reasoning is correct and the only attributes are those aspects of God "that God exercises before all worlds, within the Trinitarian relationship" then even the cherished attribute of "love" falls victim to this argument. The above fails to observe that Revelation 13:8 states that the Lamb was "slain before the foundation of the world." Such shows the propitiation was "*expressed between the Father, Son and Spirit before and apart from His creation.*" This then, according to the above position, validates anger as an attribute of God.

*The position stated above seeks to erase God's anger but unwittingly erases God's love!* Both love and anger existed prior to the creation and if you erase one the other is also removed. The above insight also fails to explain how holiness is not incensed with evil and how a "love" that is lacking anger is consistent with true love.

The above explanation is shamefully shallow!

There are many attempts to provide an explanation that God is "only love." But in attempting to support their position there is a willful refusal to address the fact that the basis of his God-is-only-love theology is also the

very basis that establishes the anger and wrath of God. The Postmodern mind seizes God's love but ignores God's wrath and anger. And there is neither the slightest hesitation in so-doing nor realization that such presents a flagrant inconsistency!

One more illustration reveals how some preach an unbalanced god of all love and no anger. The following is an observation by Ronald Rolheiser who is a Catholic priest and member of the "Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate." He is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. A man in his position has great influence in theological matters for his church. He explains God's anger with these comments:

There's a haunting text in the Book of Revelation where poetic image, for all its beauty, can be dangerously misleading. The author there writes: "So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and cut the earth's vintage. He threw it into the great winepress of God's fury." A fierce angel cleansing the world! God in a boiling anger! What's to be understood by that?

Like so many other things in scripture, this is to be taken seriously, but not literally. Clearly the text, as other texts in scripture which speak of God's jealousy, anger, and vengeance, has something important to teach, but, like those other texts which have God jealous and angry, it can be dangerously misunderstood. What it doesn't teach is that God gets angry, that God is sometimes furious with us...God doesn't get angry, pure and simple...God's ways are not our ways...God doesn't get angry like we do.

Scripture and Christian tradition do, of course, speak of God as getting angry, but that, as Christian theology clearly teaches, is anthropomorphism, that is, it is a projection of human thought and feeling into God. In saying things such as God is angry with us or God is punishing us for our sins, we are not, in essence, saying how God feels about us but rather how we, at that moment, feel about God and how we feel about ourselves and our own actions.

For example, when St Paul tells us that when we sin, we feel "the wrath of God" he is not telling us that God gets angry with us when we sin. Rather we get angry at ourselves when we sin.

It is of interest to our study that the above admits God's anger should be taken "seriously, but not literally." The author also asserts that a naive misunderstanding blinds the minds of those thinking God can become angry. This is a most interesting position. Increasing this incredulous interpretation are the closing words affirming that when we sin and we think we "feel" God's wrath it *is not God* who is angered but it *is ourselves*—we are angry at ourselves! We are simply projecting our anger at ourselves to the celestial deity who "cannot" be angry.

Once again inconsistency is marked—if the only governing for current culture are the "feelings" each has, and if one "feels" the wrath of God because of behavior, how can it be said that such "wrath" does not exist? It has been validated by "feelings"! If the decision-making matrix of feelings does not apply here, how can it apply elsewhere? If a person's "feelings" about God's wrath are invalid then why are his "feelings" justifying other behavior choices valid?

Postmodernism defends personal reality and personal choices as the supreme governing. If my personal reality approves me doing "sin" why should I be angry at myself? Upon what basis can I possibly feel guilty thinking God is angry at me when it is me being angry at myself?

The lame explanations of Postmodern's theology dismissing the anger of God fail. There is only total failure. These explanations fail to offer any sensible truth; fail to offer a consistent alternative; fail to offer a coherent counsel replacing the reality of God's anger.

Those bewitched by the Postmodern Philosophy have retreated to a position that cannot be explained by reasonable experiences or defended by articulated principles of consistency or advocated by a doctrine of correspondence to objective reality.

Those following the Postmodern Philosophy have become isolated within their own personal reality. In practicality they are "alone." Consequently their meaninglessness and emptiness are increased. Their ability to



enjoy pleasure lessens. Their sorrows and regrets multiply. Tragically an escape from this empty, meaninglessness of earthly life is seen only in suicide.

This hollow existence results because they refuse to believe and internalize and practice (actualize) belief in the anger of God. By seeking to flee God's anger they have found a greater dread—an existence that is inexplicable and a security that multiples insecurities.

### **The Muted Musings**

History verifies that great tragedy results when God's anger is rejected by society. When people are unconcerned about offending the Almighty God they accept any behavior that is pleasing to them. When God is indifferently treated by society those citizens never consider that their religious beliefs and practices, behavior, speech, lifestyle, dress, recreation, morality, marriage, employment or a myriad of other situations, might be offensive to the Lord God of Hosts.

This is an alarming development because mankind believes he has become unable to be offensive to God! This delusional position has been accepted by many "Christians" today. In today's Church there is no restraint; no boundaries; no consideration; no fear and no veneration. Sadly the Church in our Postmodern culture, instead of being the Army of God that marches boldly with the gospel, never retreating but always progressing confronting error and evil, now cowers in captivity to fear that its message will hurt the feelings of those in the world. There is only a muted silence.

This problem has historical roots. Again we reference Hosea prophesying to God's people who had "hushed" the teaching about the Almighty God. In Hosea 4 somber words were spoken to a society where lawlessness was rampant because there was "no knowledge of God" (4:1). The cause attributable to effecting this deplorable godless environment was the fact "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...You have forgotten the law of your God" (4:6). Hosea announces that because of Israel's rebellion against the absolute truth of God, the nation would face the anger of God. The hushed silence that neglected to teach the truth of God was condemned. Those who remained silent would face God's anger just as those who rejected God's truth!

Most Churches today will admit the anger of God but will not accept the anger of God. God's anger is admitted with a whispered hush. It is felt that God's anger must never be alluded to because it is, in an inexplicable way, shameful and out of step with the feelings of modern society. We have been convinced that God is only love and this means that anger and wrath have nothing to do with His character.

In today's Postmodern Period's religious world God is only love. This means that God is infinitely tolerant; He is everything opposite of anger. Many embarrassingly admit that "anger" is part of the biblical narrative regarding God but it is one of those biblical points that we must ignore.

God's anger is admitted but neither accepted nor presented.

The hushing of God's anger by the contemporary Church is seen in four ways.

*The Church denies the anger of God.* This is teaching that God's anger does not exist. This option is unacceptable because there are hundreds of references in the Bible to God's anger. Another form of denial that is more common is an implicit denial. This ignores the inconvenient topics and preaches and teaches the more favorable topics. God's anger is denied by ignoring the texts that speak of anger and by emphasizing the texts that speak of the love of God.

*Second the Church uses a theological approach and states there were two Gods of the Bible.* (This was suggested by the heretic Marcion. According to his teaching there was the wrathful God of justice revealed in the Old Testament and the merciful God of love revealed in the New Testament). While the modern Church does not advocate Marcion's full heresy it does remove the righteous anger from the Almighty and replace it with a permissive love.

Contemporary preaching heralds a better "god," one neither offended nor angry nor inflicts punishment; one who has no fire warming up in hell, and no outer darkness where there is pain filled gnashing of teeth.

According to pulpits today "god" is only kind, merciful and loving. By removing the reality of God's anger one removes the boundaries of righteous living.

Such an "unangry" god forbids you to sin, but this command is only words; he lays down commands but will not require performance, or punish transgressions. Such a god is incapable of rendering a discerning judgment and cannot be offended by sin (if there is such an action that can be called a "sin").

*The third way is more subtle and undermines any serious threat from the wrath of God by the Church reinterpreting the concept of anger.* This new paradigm suggests that God's anger is NOT toward man but toward the ruin of His creation. This is the same maneuver by which the pro-homosexual explains the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The pro-homosexual exegete suggests these cities were destroyed not because of sexual perversion but because of inhospitality! They assert the divine anger was directed at the act and not the person. Hence, it is impossible for God to be angry at individuals (we will discuss this later as we consider the quip "God loves the sinner but hates the sin").

The point discussing Rolheiser's perspective above is applicable here. Basically the proponent hushes any possibility of God's anger by maintaining the "sin" is of no concern to God. The anger of God is only an inconvenience to the one committing the sin IF he is made to feel guilty. Remove the inconveniences and placate the devotee's conscience and there is no sin just as there is no divine anger.

*The fourth way does not deny God's anger and even recognizes it but all is only lip service.* It is believed that in practice the anger of God is inconsequential in behavior. In preaching and teaching God's anger is ignored. Those who still believe in the wrath of God say little about it. It is recognized that the subject of divine wrath has become taboo in modern society, and Christians have accepted the taboo and conditioned themselves never to raise the matter.

There are a number of disturbing illustrations where the righteous anger of God has been silenced. Abby Stocker provides one illustration in the Presbyterian Church's refusal to include in its hymnbook a popular worship song.

A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) committee desired to add "In Christ Alone" to the denomination's new hymnal, *Glory to God*, set to be released in the fall of 2013. But it first requested permission to avoid theological controversy by altering the modern hymn's lyrics from "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the wrath of God was satisfied" to "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the love of God was magnified." However, authors Keith Getty and Stuart Townend rejected the proposal. So the committee voted six to nine to bar the hymn.

"The song has been removed from our contents list, with deep regret over losing its otherwise poignant and powerful witness," committee chair Mary Louise Bringle told *The Christian Century*. The "view that the cross is primarily about God's need to assuage God's anger" would have a negative impact on worshippers' education, according to Bringle.

Did you read where the anger of God is classified as a negative "theological controversy"?

Tragically alarmed voices have been muted, hymns have been censored, sermons have been neutered, and Christians' sensitivities to the Almighty's anger have been calloused. Today's postmodern opinion is that any reference to the anger of God is "negative." Upon what authority standard is this decided?

### **The Explanation for the Erasure**

Why does the fact of God's anger arouse so many vitriolic responses today? Why does the Postmodernist seek to censor such teaching? There are at least three explanations by which the anger of God offends the Postmodernist mindset and is henceforth is vigorously denied.

*First, the Postmodern faith only has room for "Self."* There is no room for a transcending God whose sovereignty compels and commands a denial of self and submissive obedience to rules and regulations. A God that "limits" man's freedom is unwanted. A god who serves man's every wish, coddles his every evil yearning and tolerates his most vile behavior is the kind of god Postmodernism idolizes.

Remember the only reality for many today is one's "personal reality." Consequently one must accept a god that is personally practical. A concept of God based upon biblical theocracy is intolerable. Such requires boundaries and personal inconveniences that are loathed by the Postmodernist lifestyle. The god of Postmodernism functions only to validate mankind's personal choices and blesses only selfish pleasures.

*Second, from the first point it logically follows that any "god" accepted today must be a tolerant god respecting human rights and the a priori personal reality of individuals.* This god must serve mankind with a permissive applause regardless of whatever choice is made.

*Third, Postmodern minds believe in a god who relishes the sentimentality of the moment.* Postmodernism preaches feeling and not facts. Therefore one's personal feelings trump anything else in life.

Legal justice, morality, humanitarian efforts, etc., are all hostage to this authority of "feeling."

This means that God cannot possibly display anger or wrath or righteous justice because that is a harsh emotion and makes one "feel bad." Instead we are told that a god of total love and blind acceptance and endless toleration is a god that makes one "feel good."

The Postmodern pulpit preaches the health, wealth and success theology that comes from the god who loves and not from the god who can be angry. Such a god gives birth to behavior that is an unrestrained practice because it removes man's responsibility and accountability. Consequently modern minds think we ought to "love" the reprobate and tolerate the intolerable because it is the loving thing to do.

### **The Compatibility and Complementary**

The biblical perspective is that Jehovah God is a God of love and anger and these attributes are not contradictory but are complimentary, compatible and consistent. Without these two emotions God would be distorted and His holy actions would be impossible.

God is indeed love. But a love that does not contain an intense hatred of evil is not the love of which the Bible speaks. The "love" of today's society is totally passive—no judgment, no discipline, no accountability, nothing that makes one "feel" bad about choices and actions. If this distorted "love" defines God then He would condone and tolerate the heinous acts that have resulted from evil's temptations. True love is demonstrated by discipline. True love sets boundaries for the benefit of the ones loved. True love demonstrates displeasure when the objects loved are mistreated or misdirected. The two attributes (love and anger) are not rivals. They are complimentary. Without wrath God cannot be love!

R.P.C. Hanson has observed, "(T)he contemporary rejection by Christians of the biblical doctrine of the wrath of God is a typical example of our allowing secular, non-Christian ideas to creep into our understanding of the Christian faith in such a way as to distort it."

To be very blunt...If one attempts to isolate God's love and censor God's anger, he is perverting the gospel!

The message of the gospel balances God's love and anger. To attempt to deny either of these attributes is to commit blasphemy. Ignore the idea of the wrath of God and the central concept of the gospels vanish that Jesus Christ came to be the propitiation for man's sin and reconcile erring man with the righteous anger of God. Christ's sacrifice was a demonstration of the love of God (1 John 2:1). Without accepting the anger/wrath of God one can never accept the great mercy/grace of God.

The love of God is illustrated by the cross of Christ. Conversely, the cross of Christ illustrates the anger of God! Think on this truth...

The fact that many see the cross as "love" illustrates the very point of our current series—many do not want to accept God's anger. They will admit God's anger but not accept God's anger.

- ✓ The cross was accepting the anger of God (Hebrews 10:9).
- ✓ The cross provided the "propitiation" (1 John 2:1) a term referring to appeasing anger.
- ✓ The cross "reconciled" (Colossians 1:22) a term indicating that without the cross we would not be in a peaceful relationship with God.

- ✓ The cross removed the “enmity” (Ephesians 2:11-16) a term referring to the fact that mankind, while in sin, is a hateful enemy to God. Only by the cross can the haters of God be transformed into the lovers of God. The estranged relationship can change only through the cross.
- ✓ The cross “rescues” us from the wrath of God that is coming but only when we change our decision-making matrix (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Colossians 3:1-17).

When the cross of Christ is viewed in biblical context it is realized the cross was *the only means for the only sacrifice* that would appease the divine anger. The Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed the ultimate sacrifice (the cross) that would atone for sins and appease the wrath coming because of sin.

In considering the fact that the cross is symbolic of propitiation it is interesting to see that even the most devout pagan adherent will get a cross tattoo on his body or wear the cross as jewelry. He does this thinking that such action “shows” his respect for God’s love.

In reality they are wearing a symbol they have repudiated and which will damn them because of their refusal to obey. They fail to accept the anger of God (See Matthew 7:21-23).

The cross reflects the divine desire to provide the obedient a method of escaping God’s anger. And that escape is available only through Christ Jesus. Those who do not obey this offer are damned (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9). Those rejecting the gospel (cross) and those who once obeyed the gospel but now deny it will not escape the anger of God (“dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction...”). There is no way the cross is exclusively “love” in this verse. When one looks at the cross he must factor in God’s anger.

And then there is the type/antitype mentioned above. The Old Testament sacrifices were offered to appease the holy anger because of sin. The animal sacrifices continued until the perfect sacrifice was made (Hebrews 7:26). Without these sacrifices there was no escape from God’s anger. These sacrifices reveal that divine love provided the means of escaping the divine anger. The cross offered the perfect “once for all” sacrifice that appeased God’s anger. To all who obey the gospel the cross provides an escape from the anger of God.

The cross was necessary to answer the anger of God and is an appropriate visual of how God’s love and anger are complimentary and not contradictory.

The Postmodern mind finds the anger of God inconvenient. So it seeks to explain that discomfort away or deny it or redress it according to their individual tastes. Gene Veith observes that Postmodernism takes religious symbols and does not repudiate but trivializes them. In this way the message and morality communicated are reduced to opinions and personal preferences. By this manipulation religious symbols (especially the cross) are employed without reference to their original meaning and are drained of their significance.

The uncomfortable fact for the Postmodernist is that even though the cross has become the universal symbol for love it continues to stress that the righteous anger of God must be answered. God’s anger cannot be evaded by mortal men. The cross speaks forcefully and balances equally God’s anger and love!

### **The Impact and Intrusion**

The Scriptures are an absolute, objective authority designed to provide mankind with a perfect governing system on earth. The Scriptures are founded upon sensible truth, unerring consistency in application and offer a transcending and coherent counsel suitable to any geographical region, language, ethnicity, culture or epoch. As such, biblical doctrines apply equally to mankind globally.

This poses a pressing query...How does the biblical doctrine of God’s anger impact mankind?

*God’s anger impacts the object of God’s wrath.* The biblical doctrine of the anger of God reveals that God feels a personal, vigorous opposition both to evil and to evil people. This divine anger is God’s revulsion to evil and all that oppose Him. It is His displeasure at sin and the demonstration of that displeasure. God’s anger is his passionate resistance to every person that is set against him and who practices sin (and “sin” IS “evil”).

This presents a question—“Is God angry with evil or with evil people?” The Bible teaches that God is angry at both. The fact that God’s anger is directed toward people is evident in the Scripture: Genesis 18:32; Numbers

16:22; 22:22; 25:3; Deuteronomy 9:20; etc. In the bluntest possible way of stating God's anger is directed to persons is the statement that God "hates" those practicing sin (Proverbs 6:16-19).

God's wrath is directed against evildoers because of the evil that they do. Their evil (sin) opposes the divine plan for mankind's happiness and makes them partners with Satan.

Postmodernism has coined a cliché seeking to mitigate the anger of God toward individuals—"God hates the sin but loves the sinner"? Like most clichés this is a half-truth. However the prevailing culture in religion is very eager to accept this phrase.

This point will be further discussed in Lesson 6 as we examine three specific texts focusing on this cliché. But we briefly consider this quip here. God loves sinners in the sense that he seeks their salvation in Christ. While His attitude toward sinners, as long as they remain sinners, is antagonism and wrath, his good will toward them actively seeks their conversion and forgiveness (John 3:16-21).

This is illustrated by the Prodigal's father who kept watch for the wasteful son's return (Luke 15:11-24). While the son remained in sin he was unable to share the father's love. The father did not coddle the son's sin and enable the son's lifestyle by doing *anything* for the wasteful son. The father did not go and wallow in the pig's sty with the son. The father neither lessened the accountability nor absolved him because of the "bad things that happened" to the son. The father remained distant *UNTIL* the son repented. Once the son came to his senses and returned and confessed his sin, he was received back and restored *but as long as he remained in the pig's pen* he was lost and separated from the father's love.

The anger of God is mitigated by the sinner's response to God.

- ✓ *If* the sinner continues in his sinful choices *then* he remains the object of God's anger. God's love has provided a means by which the sinner can change his relationship.
- ✓ *If* the sinner repents and forsakes sin *then* he escapes God's anger because he has changed his situation (Ephesians 5:6-8).
- ✓ *If* the sinner continues his evil practices contrary to God's commands, even if he claims to call upon God, *then* he will not escape being the object of God's anger because he refuses to change his situation.

A new slogan might be "God hates the sin and is angry with the sinner." Therefore it is urgent for the sinner to do whatever is necessary to escape being the object of God's anger! He is to STOP sinning!

*God's anger impacts mankind by instilling a fear of God.* Postmodernism has successfully convinced mankind that he should not "fear" God (How often have you heard this stated in religious gatherings?). A study of the religious teaching and preaching from the past 50 years reveals the great amount of energy expended to change the meaning of "fear" as it relates to God. When the "fear" of God is modified then the anger of God is diminished and the Postmodernist accomplishes his devilish mission.

To say that one should not "fear" God is another half-truth. God does not seek man's response from a dreaded, onerous compliance but from a joyful, eager response (1 John 5:3). What needs to be understood is that the shift from fear to an eagerness to obey is a product of growth.

Such is illustrated by the parent/child analogy. In the early years children need to be disciplined and that involves some degree of fear. If the discipline is successful and the parental teachings are internalized the child behaves appropriately. That which initially was done to avoid parental disapproval or punishment is eventually done freely and willingly because the motivation to please the parent is not a fear of punishment but a reluctance to do anything that causes hurt to the parent. The proverb reminds us that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10), and while the term "fear" here embraces much more than the fear of God's anger, it does not exclude it.

*God's anger impacts mankind by validating the doctrine of Hell.* The Postmodernist mind cannot accept the reality of a place of everlasting suffering for those who are not reconciled with God (basically because this validates that there is only one way to obey God). The popular reality of Postmodernism defines "hell" in a number of ways BUT NEVER does it teach Hell is a literal reality.

Today "Hell" is a job that is loathed, a marriage that is empty or an emotional distress that is terrifying. "Hell" is comically portrayed as having to sit in the "home section" of the rival team when your team plays so horribly that it would have been better if they had not showed up to play. Sadly "Hell" has become a profane word used so often that it has ceased to communicate the seriousness of the biblical reality.

The Postmodern society accepts "Hell" as an assignment of God's wrathful judgment upon those who are "criminal." It wishes "Hell" for those committing the most heinous crimes.

The Postmodern view of God's judgment sees "Hell" as resulting from the consequences of behavior but it is not eternal. Hence the drug addict "lives a personal hell" because of addiction not because of the sin of drug use. Even though the modern mind admits this "reality" of hell, it views "hell" only as an assignment made reluctantly and sorrowfully by God.

Thus those enslaved by immorality (addictions, behaviors, etc) are pitied but not expected or required to leave their immoral situation. Their misbehavior is blamed on culture and not because of their choices. The modern minds think, "After all, these are now in their own private hell so they do not need people to pile on more negatives. Just show them love and pray they will survive."

Again we hear a half-truth. The Bible testifies to God's reluctance in executing judgment (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). God is certainly sorrowful when mankind spurns His offered blessings and rejects the divine love (Genesis 6:6). However there is more to hell than God's "sorrow."

Hell, according to the Postmodernist presents the inconvenience of God's anger. It paints the image of a god that is only a projection of man's insecurities. Hell is viewed as non-literal. This conclusion is thus expressed:

In stories from the Bible, both Old Testament and New, God gets angry and does things that strike us as a rather big fuss...In all of these stories, what jumps out at most of us is a sense of disproportionality. God's reaction seems so out of scale with the transgression...We expect God to not be the kind of guy who needs anger management classes. He shouldn't need to breathe deep and leave the room lest he, heaven forbid, do something he will regret...We expect God to be good at emotional regulation...Another way of saying this is that we expect God to have a very high "E-Q" (Emotional Quotient). When this seems to be violated, we experience dissonance, and we may laugh, question our beliefs, or make intellectual moves to restore a sense of consistency...It is far too easy to take this same template and project it onto the universe and the supernatural. The Bible writers' belief in an angry God may be, essentially, an artifact of human information processing. That is interesting, but not entirely satisfying. When we talk about God, most of us are trying to glimpse a reality that is external to us, not trying to learn something about the architecture of our own minds. Are we sinners in the hands of an angry god or sinners in the hands of angry humans?" (Tarico).

Read again this comment: "The Bible writers' belief in an angry God may be, essentially, an artifact of human information processing." Thus "hell" is (as noted above) the projection of guilt as the sinner punishes himself. This presents a one-sided perspective. This view is exclusively earthly wisdom and ignores the spiritual wisdom.

God's role in judgment is not merely passive. God is actively involved in the final judgment of individuals. The final judgment involves God's wrath as well as his sorrow (Romans 2:5, 8; 1 Thessalonians 1:10).

Here is an unwanted, absolute fact for the Postmodernist. God actively excludes those who wish to be included but whose behavior and beliefs did not obey "all" of God's commands (Matthew 7:21-23; 22:11-13; Luke 13:24).

Those failing to accept this aspect of God's anger will not be prepared for the life that follows earthly life! God's love extends an offer for man to escape eternal punishment but God's anger stresses the danger of ignoring God's invitation until it is too late (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 2:40; 25:1-13; Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 22:17).

*God's anger impacts mankind by the Cross.* As noted above, Postmodernism has convinced mankind that Christ's death on the cross is exclusively a demonstration of God's love. So convincing has this campaign been

that any association of God's anger with the cross is instantly denied. This is illustrated by the rejection of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to include in its hymnal the song "In Christ Alone." The denomination's postmodern censors sought to change the focus from "the wrath of God" to "the love of God." The explanation is the dominant belief today that the cross of Christ is to be viewed only as "God's love" and not as "God's wrath."

The sacrifice on the cross combined the love of God and the anger of God. The love of God provided the means by which man's damnation from God's anger could be forever changed. Thus the excited exclamation of Inspiration:

*And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest: but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory (Ephesians 2:1-9).*

The cross reveals the anger of God because of the evil of man's disobedience. This truth is amazingly twisted by the Postmodernist mind as the cross is revised to be a superstitious amulet channeling God's love. Hence it is worn as a piece of "blessed jewelry" or boastfully tattooed onto the body and foolishly believed that this will somehow "sanctify" the wearer.

There is recognition of the cross but this recognition reveals ignorance instead of devotion! They are wearing a symbol they have repudiated and which will damn them because of their refusal to obey. They fail to accept the anger of God. Instead of showing respect for God they show Him utter profanity!

A number of texts depict how the cross reveals the divine desire to provide the means for man to escape God's anger. Hence we see divine love and divine anger are complimentary and not contradictory.

The offer for man to escape eternal torment is referenced in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9. In this text there is a pointed application to two groups. First are *those who do not obey the gospel*. These are damned. A second group is *those who once accepted the gospel's offer but now deny it*. Neither will they escape the anger of God ("dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction...").

Another troubling text for those seeking to evade the biblical requirement of steadfast obedience is found in Hebrews 6:4-8. Inspiration says that some have allowed their minds to become so corrupt that their behavior is beyond change, "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame" (verse 4). Although these boast in "loving God and Jesus" they despise the cross which offered atonement!

They are *beyond the hope and scope* of salvation! This heartbreaking conclusion is taught in Hebrews 10:26-29: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

There is absolutely NO way the cross is exclusively "love" and incongruous with "anger." The fact that the cross has become the universal symbol for love and glosses over the anger of God exposes the tragic condition of the Postmodernist mind—God's anger has been erased!

From a sociological perspective the transition of how people view the cross is an interesting study. The image of the cross today has become a symbol exclusive of God's love. As such it has become a powerful internalized emotion that renounces any attribute except the love of God (and this consequence is applauded by the Postmodernist mind).

In honest study one will have to admit the cross is not exclusively a symbol of God's love but perhaps more of a symbol of God's anger. Sadly, although this symbol is biblically rooted it has become culturally manipulated to erase God's anger. And, very few raise the slightest objection.

A presentation of the cross as reflecting both God's love and God's anger is critical. If we presented God's anger in some way that does not personalize it to the human mind then those studying God's anger will only admit the presence of a supernatural wrath. Even the heathens admit this fact as their polytheism enshrines various gods of natural forces. A violent storm presents heavenly anger from "nature" which is perfectly agreeable to the savage. But it does not present a graphic internalizing the reality of God's anger and thus the motivation to conform to God's teaching in order to escape the wrath that is coming. The cross does this.

Communicating the anger of God as consummating in the cross of Christ provides an intense, internalized, emotional response. It is this response that strikes the sensitive hearts of those sincerely seeking to obey the great God of heaven (Acts 2:37).

The cross is the most engaging symbol of Christianity. Consequently there has been a great deal of energy directed to transition the cross away from the anger of God and define it exclusively as the love of God. Modern man wants the accepting love of God without any hint of God's angry disapproval and discipline. The Postmodernist's view of the symbolism of the cross accomplishes this objective.

Modern minds view the cross as exclusively God's love. And, if there is any hint of God's anger it is felt that such a topic will have a "negative impact" upon the worshipper. Such thinking structures our worship, our preaching, our teaching and the Church's outreach.

This amazing development in the worldview of Christianity has gone largely unnoticed. The religious faith of the Postmodern Period has successfully morphed the biblical God into a supernatural Being exclusively characterized by love. The cross has been distorted and the divine anger has been erased!

### **The practical challenge—accept a balanced view of God**

The fact that God's love and anger are equally essential and fully compatible causes perplexity to some. This is well illustrated by the following excerpt from an article in *Christianity Today* (Lamb):

"Whenever you read from the Old Testament, God is always crabby and snarky to everyone, but the New Testament isn't about anger at all—it's about love." This observation is made by Sam to her mother (Boopsie) in a 2009 *Doonesbury* comic strip (May 31) after she heard Rev. Sloan reading from the Bible about the wrath of God.

Sam's statement captures the essence of the supposed conflict between the anger of Yahweh in the Old Testament and the love of Jesus in the New Testament. As we look at Old Testament passages focused on anger and love, we will have to decide whether Sam listens badly, Rev. Sloan reads badly, or Yahweh behaves badly. So, is the God of the Old Testament really angry, crabby, and snarky?

Yahweh is primarily concerned with love, but the Old Testament also speaks frequently about Yahweh becoming angry and sometimes even killing people in his anger. Doesn't that undermine the idea of Yahweh as loving?

This expresses the perplexity voiced by many today..."we will have to decide whether Sam listens badly, Rev. Sloan reads badly, or Yahweh behaves badly. So, is the God of the Old Testament really angry, crabby, and snarky?" This confusion results because the Church has been silent about the anger of God.

The truth that God possesses a justifiable and righteous anger is inconvenient to a civilization wishing for a deity governed by tolerance and who coddles the selfish choices of its adherents. The Lord's Church exists



today in this kind of culture. Unfortunately it must be admitted that, in this kind of environment, the Church has failed its mission!

The Church today is to preach the gospel's message of sin, atonement and eternal existence (Luke 24:45-47). This message is unwelcomed because our postmodern culture does not "feel good" about such preaching. We are told such messages do not offer a sensible truth in the context of today's thinking. The Church that dares to preach and teach the blunt message of biblical truth is scorned by those deluded by modern culture and context.

Opponents to the New Testament pattern derogatorily say the Church has lost its relevance and the "old ways" must be reformatted. One of the first reformatted features of today's relevant church is the erasure of God's anger and in its place is the focus upon a divine coddling, permissive love. These opponents fail to offer a coherent counsel replacing the reality of God's anger.

They forsake the anger of God and abandon civilization to the anarchy of some nebulous "love" that tolerates everything and censors nothing except the absolutes of the Bible.

### **The Straw Man Fails**

God's love and God's anger are not contradictory. These are not opposing forces. These are not accepted on an "either/or" balance. God's anger is evidence of God's love. Consider these points that show how the Postmodernist fails to present an imbalance of God's love and anger. The position that God cannot be both loving and angry is conveniently contrived so it can erase the reality of God's anger.

*First, there is no true love without wrath.* The Apostle Paul commanded that love be sincere and then followed that by the command to hate what is evil (Romans 12:9). The combination of these emotions (love/hate) is significant. Such shows they are not mutually exclusive. Failure to hate evil implies a deficiency in love. Can one be "good and loving" if he does not "hate and seek justice" for evil actions (Isaiah 1:17)? The intensity of one's emotions (anger) toward evil actions reveals the intensity of one's love toward that which is good. If one claims God has an absence of anger he is also claiming that the Almighty has a lack of love.

"Absolute love implies absolute purity and absolute holiness: an intense burning light....Unless God detests sin and evil with great loathing, He cannot be a God of love" (Watson).

In the cross we see the reality of holy wrath combined with the reality of the divine love. In this sense the love of God is understood only in the light of the cross!

*Second, there is revealed a comprehensive model of God's character.* Postmodernism wants to define God only with the term "love." But the Postmodernist NEVER defines this "love"! Its "love" remains some nebulous concept that is "felt" differently by each person. Thus once again the mantra, "Well that is how YOU look at things and this is how I look at things. That's ok to have differences."

God is not defined by some indefinable, "better-felt-than-told" philosophy. God is understood in the absolute reality of the context of good and evil. In this context the one beginning to define God must begin with the term "holiness." It is the holiness of God that separates Him from the efforts of humanism.

It is by the cross of Calvary that God makes His holiness and love known simultaneously. Numerous hymns have put into verse how the cross of Christ answered the righteousness of God with the transcendent love of God. These spiritual songs proclaim that the love of God breaks through the wrath of God. Historically our worship songs have heralded the redemptive balance of God's love and God's anger. Such worship music has taught the wonderful security that is personalized when an individual finds spiritual security in a balance of the divine love and anger.

The Postmodern's philosophy of "feelings instead of facts" has erased and replaced this biblical balance.

*Third, there is spiritual security and peace.* Salvation is found when one has been "translated into Christ" by "pure love" and faces "no condemnation" from the righteous "anger." Recognizing the anger of God is propitiated by the love of God one is brought to the point of saving faith and spiritual security. This knowledge is the gospel's objective.

*Fourth, understanding the biblical balance between God's love and anger provides a blessed assurance in the Almighty God's provisions, protection, and providential actions.* There is no love of God that is not holy and there is no holiness of God that does not love. God's love and justice assure struggling Christians of their victory. There will be confidence in the Almighty's providence regardless of the traumas of life. It is this assurance Paul references when he writes, "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel...for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance" (Philippians 1:12-20).

*Fifth, the love and anger of God are complimentary and necessary.* This is illustrated by the metaphor of parenting. The responsible parent who loves his child will render justice so the child's behavior will be regulated and result in real joy and satisfaction (Proverbs 12:1; 13:24). Inspiration utilizes this metaphor to describe God's application of justice upon mankind (Hebrews 12:5-8). Parental discipline mirrors that of the divine love and discipline. Such...

- ✓ Expresses the parent's love for righteousness and unacceptability of cruelty
- ✓ Expresses love for the victim in the form of concern for what has been done
- ✓ Expresses love for the perpetrator in that it is intended as discipline
- ✓ Expresses love for society in the disciplining of the child

All have been the uncomfortable observer of a permissive parent. Such parenting shows a misunderstood "love" for the child. Consequently the child has neither respect for boundaries nor a fear of punishment. Those savage children are eventually loosed on society and bring sorrow to themselves and everyone they touch and eventually populate the correctional facilities because of uncivil behavior. They have not been "loved" by parents.

Extrapolate these tragic consequences into the worldwide population and the reality of Postmodern's imbalanced god of love is exposed. It is not a god of love but a god of monstrous anarchy.

*Sixth, the balance of God's love and anger provides a stable civility.* Inspiration combines these two attributes in the judicial system governing mankind. Peaceful societies result from the balance of law and order (Romans 13:4-5). In cultures where either one of these attributes (love or anger) is imbalanced, there is terror and chaos. In societies where there is a balance of these two attributes there is harmony.

These six points demonstrate the absurdity of the Postmodernist's claim that God's anger and love are conflicting and incompatible. It is wrongly concluded that modern minds must refuse to view God as angry at anything except for the legalistic and exclusive "Bible banger"!

### **The Final Resolution**

It is amazing that modern culture entertains a comment describing God's anger such as: "(I)n reality Bible-God goes out of his way to be intimidating. Worse, he appears to lose control of his temper at times, lashing out like an oversized thwarted three year old; and his earthly representatives, the prophets—including Jesus—do the same" (Tarico).

This position removes the anger of God from man's decision-making matrix. What results when the holy wrath is no longer a governing restriction upon man's beliefs and behaviors? Sadly civilization devolves into chaos. Man will exist in a culture that has exchanged the anger of a righteous God for an anger of a selfish anarchy!

Thus when God's anger and love are confused civilization becomes dysfunctional. Silence in heralding the balance of God's anger and love renders the greatest possible disservice to society. Because of silence an inaccurate picture of God is imbedded in society and the Church.

Because of silence from those who refuse to rebuke this Postmodern concept of God...

- ✓ Antinomianism will reign.
- ✓ Suffering will multiply.
- ✓ Hate will rule and ruin.
- ✓ The devilish strategy to capture the minds and hearts of mankind will succeed (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

In seeking "freedom" civilization finds an unbearable slavery. Peter speaks of this "freedom" as a covering for evil (1 Peter 2:16) and then later adds that such freedom is promised by the worldly minded but its promise is a lie because those making the promises are themselves slaves of corruption and overcome by weaknesses (1 Peter 2:19).

In today's religious culture there is much said advocating "freedom" by the Postmodernists. They demand "freedom" in gender roles, worship actions, lifestyles and all other aspects of life. But the "freedom" they demand is actually an intolerable captivity to selfishness. William Watkins wrote an excellent book titled *The New Absolutes*. Watkins makes this incisive observation about the "freedom" and "liberty" that Postmodern religion offers:

Spiritual liberty was the voluntary submission of one's will to "an objective set of divine and universal ethical standards by which it and license could be carefully distinguished." It was also liberty from sin, Satan, and death, and from being dominated by one's self-interests and passions. Put another way, spiritual liberty was freedom to live morally and the freedom from living immorally.

Only God's Word can provide us with a balanced understanding of God's attributes. Only the Bible can reveal to us the appropriate reaction of mankind to the wrath and anger of God.

Current conceptions within our society, which dominate the thinking of many, betray a failure to assess properly the reality of God's wrath. A general attitude of permissiveness, laxness, and indiscriminate tolerance has blanketed American society... Don't you find it unfortunate that people in our day, in our country, go merrily on their way, out of harmony with God's written words, and consoling themselves with a false view of God's love?

Many people actually conceive of the God of the Bible as grandfatherly gentleman, with a long white beard, who can't bear to punish anyone and who will tolerate any kind of behavior, overlook it, forgive completely. Folks, that attitude has blanketed our society.

People are living life however they choose to live it and consoling themselves with the idea that somehow, some way, God is so gracious and God is so merciful that he is just going to forgive me and overlook my determination to live how I want to live.

We live in a time when people believe and do just about anything and everything imaginable. The ethics of the Bible and New Testament Christianity no longer prevail in American society. Our moral and spiritual foundation is deteriorating...

Even if you are a perpetual optimist, you are forced to face the fact that spiritual, religious and moral chaos have gripped our civilization by the throat and the time has come for us to approach the situation the way the prophets of God did...

We need to warn people about the reality of God's wrath and its inevitable occurrence one day. Indeed, all people one day will know what God's wrath is.

Listen to these words from the inspired apostle: "...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Do you believe that passage? Do you believe those words? Many people are convinced that God and Christ are just going to save most people. They think very few will be lost, very few will be recipients of God's wrath and those few will be those that are just so wicked and degenerate that no one wants to have anything to do with them (Tract).

The impossibility of separating the love of God from the anger of God is evident in one biblical phrase: "The wrath of the Lamb of God" (Revelation 6:16). This phrase combines the two attributes that modern culture wishes to separate. This phrase emphasizes that the Lamb's sacrifice provided the foundation for appeasing God's holy justice. This reality of the Almighty's anger and justice, like the reality of gravity, cannot be ignored!

There is only one appropriate response when the love of God and the anger of God are discussed—complete and unqualified submission. Such is illustrated by those in Acts 2 when they learned of God’s great love in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. But then they realized that they had arrogantly refused God’s offer of propitiation. They were struck immediately with understanding that they were facing the consequences of God’s anger because they refused God’s love.

The situation faced by those in Acts 2 is instructive for mankind in the current time.

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:37-41)

This is the response that modern man must make. It admits the fact that God’s anger is justified because mankind has rejected God’s will for self will. It seeks to appease the anger of God by accepting the only possible propitiation—the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for man’s sins. This response was demonstrated in the first century and is the pattern for modern man to obey God. Will you admit the justice of the anger of God and accept the fact that you are an object of God’s wrath and then submit to the same commands that those in Acts 2 followed so you can escape the holy wrath?

“Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:16-17)

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