

Making Sense of Love and Wrath



By Bill Smith



Psalm 103:1-4

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being,
praise his **holy name**.

² Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and **crowns you with
love and compassion**

- ❑ How Can God Be Characterized By Love and Wrath?
- ❑ Does God Get Mad and Fly Off the Handle?
- ❑ Does the Bible Present a Consistent View of God?
- ❑ What Does Jesus Have to Do With These Questions?

God's Love Is Eternal Love

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. This is how God showed **his love among us**: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that **he loved us** and sent his Son as an atonement for our sins.”



8-10

God's Love Is Other-Centered Love

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

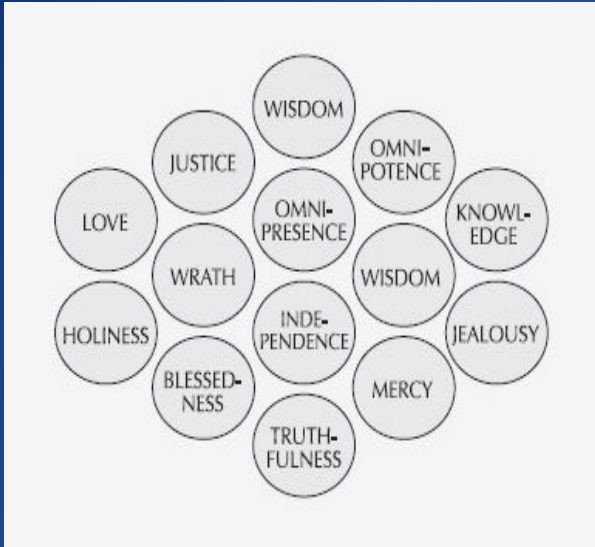


God's Love Is Holy Love

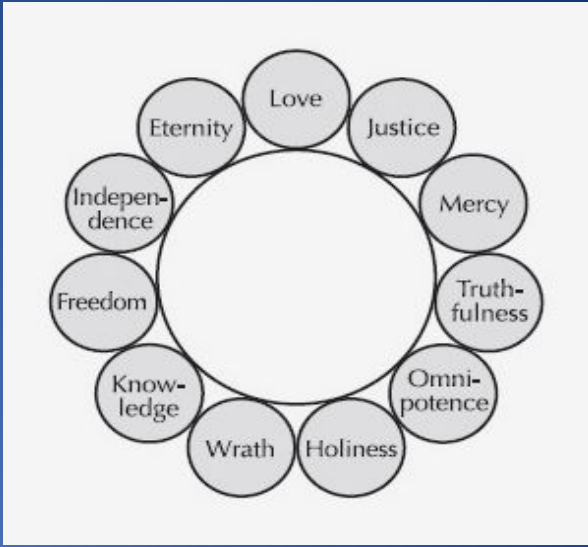
“Righteousness and justice are the foundation
of your throne; love and faithfulness go
before you.” Ps. 89:14

“The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.”

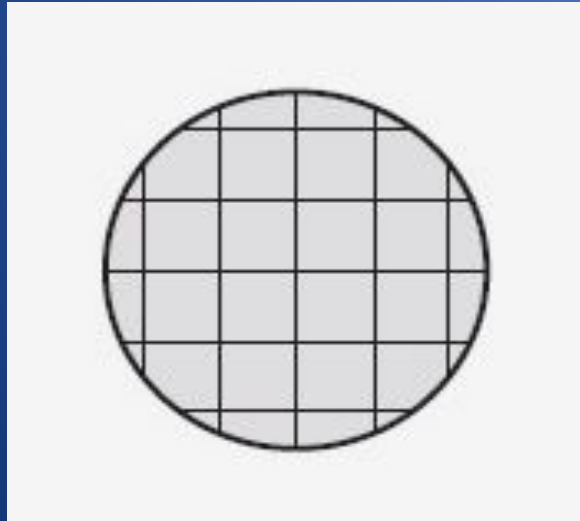




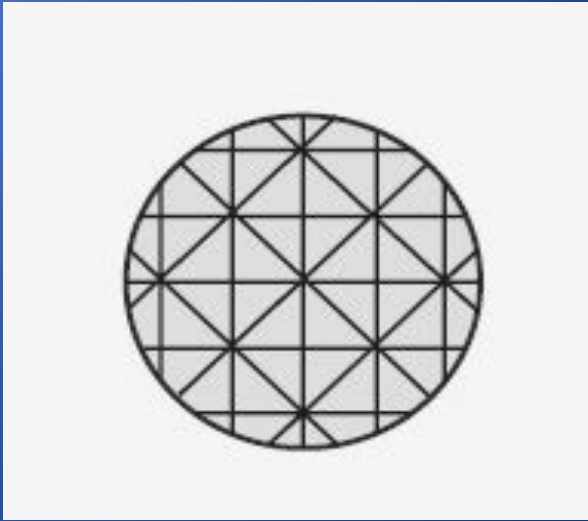
NOT a Group of Independent Attributes



NOT a Collection of Attributes Added Together



Holiness and Love United



All Attributes United

“First things first: the ‘love of God’ in Scripture usually refers to God’s love for humanity rather than human love for God. A human being *has* love but God *is* love (1 Jn. 4:8). . . ‘We love because he first loved us’ (1 Jn. 4:19). God reveals himself to Moses as ‘compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness’ (Ex. 34:6). This puts the lie to the common misconception that the God of the OT is wrathful whereas the God of the NT is loving. God’s steadfast love (*hesed*) stands at the core of his covenant and is on conspicuous display throughout Israel’s history, especially when the people go astray like a faithless wife (see Hos. 1-3). God initiates a new and better covenant with the whole world. God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8;; cf.. Jn. 3:16).

‘God is love’ (1 Jn. 4:8): this claim summarizes the nature and character of the one who brings Israel out of Egypt and pours



Scripture Speaks Repeatedly of the Love and Wrath of God

- ““I have seen these people,”” the Lord said to Moses, ‘and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that **my anger** may burn against them and that I may destroy them. . . .”

Ex. 32: 10

- “So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And **the Lord’s anger** burned against them.”

Num. 25:3



“Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a **jealous God** and **his anger** will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land.”

Deut. 6:13-15



“Now listen to me! Send back your fellow Israelites you have taken as prisoners, for **the LORD’s fierce anger** rests on you.” Then some of the leaders in Ephraim—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai—confronted those who were arriving from the war. “You must not bring those prisoners here,” they said, “or we will be guilty before the LORD. Do you intend to add to our sin and guilt? For our guilt is already great,



“I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom in accordance with **my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD.**” Ezek. 25:14



“Now your impurity is lewdness. Because I tried to cleanse you but you would not be cleansed from your impurity, you will not be clean again until **my wrath** against you has subsided.”

Ezek. 25:13



“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from **the coming wrath.**” Mt. 3:7

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



“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for **God’s wrath remains on them.**” Jn. 3:36

“**The wrath of God** is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.”

Rom. 1:18-19



“All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, **we were by nature deserving of wrath.**”

Eph. 2:3

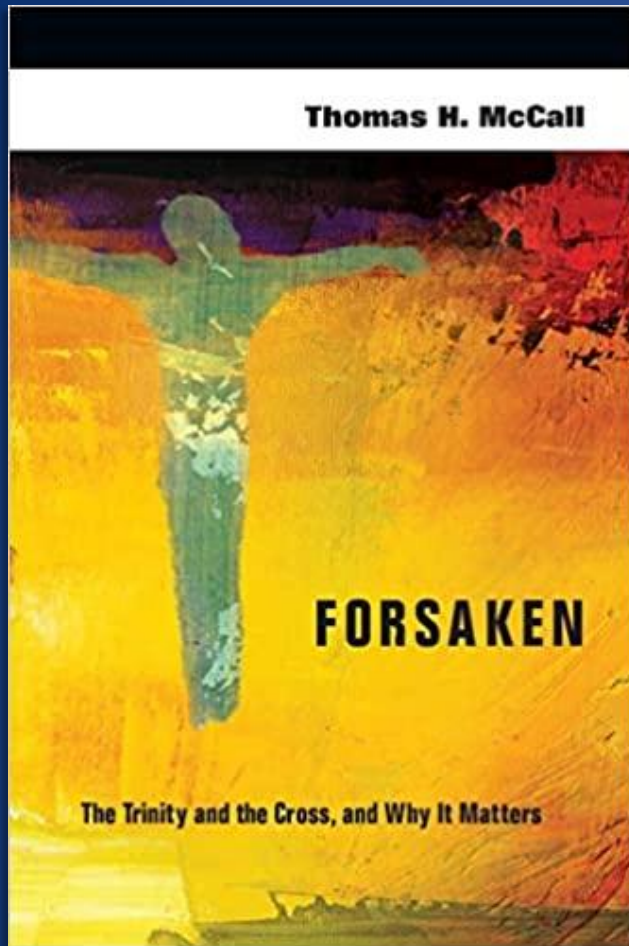


“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the **wrath of the Lamb!** For the great day of **their wrath** has come, and who can withstand it.”

Rev. 6:15-17



“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” **He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.** On his robe and on his thigh he has this name



“Arguably the New Testament (when compared with the Old) heightens and strengthens the witness to both the wrath of God and the love of God. It emphasizes the everlasting consequences of divine wrath, and it grounds the love of God within the triune life of God in a way that goes beyond the Old Testament. But in neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament do we see the love of God and the wrath of God as polar opposites.”



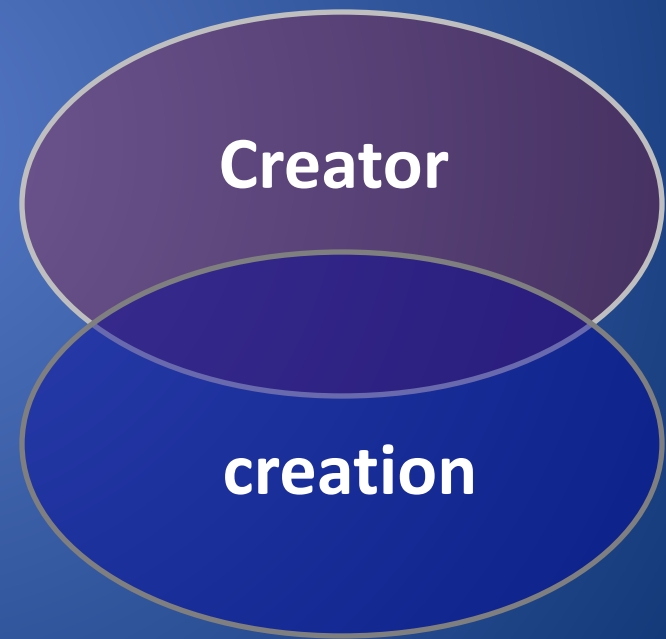
What is the Wrath of God?

God's wrath "... is the inevitable and the necessary **reaction** to evil by a holy God who is a **person**—to that which **opposes his will** and to that which is **destructive to human persons or to His good creation**. His wrath is a **reaction**. . . 'The Force' of Star Wars movies does not care what

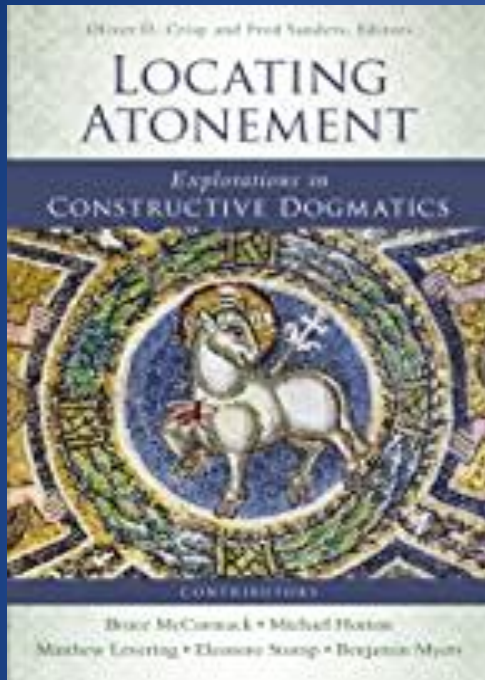
Dr. John Oswalt

Keep In Mind God is Holy!

- Transcendence
- Righteousness
(Moral purity)



“Since God’s first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from irreparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that take



“So out of love for the victims of wrongdoing, God must restrain, discipline, and sometimes severely punish wrongdoers to protect not only the victims but also potential future victims. However, God’s actions also seek to benefit the offender, with the hope that seeking the bad or separation from the wrongdoer may eventually lead that individual to restoration and reconciliation with other human beings and ultimately with God.”

The Wrath of God Revealed

(Rom. 1-5)

- The righteousness of God is revealed from “faith to faith” (vs. 17).
- The wrath of God is revealed against the Gentiles (1:18-32).
- The Jews are sinful as well subject to God’s wrath (2:1-3:8).
- All of humanity (Jew & Gentile) are sinful and in need of salvation (3:9-20)



“But now a righteousness from God, apart from the Law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. . .”

Rom. 3:21-31

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!” Rom. 5:9