

A THE CYCLICAL ANGER

- ❖ The manifestation of divine wrath responds to a cycle of interaction with His people:
- ❖ The wrath of God is manifested in situations of serious sin, in order to stop sin.
- ❖ In Psalm 78, Asaph includes several examples of this cycle:

- God divides the sea and brings water from the rock. → The people ask for meat. → God is angry (v. 13, 16-18, 21-22)
- If he put them to death, they sought God → but rebelled again (v. 34, 38, 41)
- God gave them Canaan, → the people made idols → God is angry (v. 54-55, 58-59)
- Shiloh was destroyed, → the people cried out, → God freed them and sent David (v. 60-61, 65-66, 70-72)



- ❖ Divine wrath is the appropriate response of love against evil, because evil always hurts someone whom God loves.

B THE SLOW ANGER

- ❖ The story of Jonah clearly shows how we understand divine wrath: we want God to immediately burn those who harm us (without realizing that we also harm others.)
- ❖ But God's wrath is not like that. First, it does not come without warning. Because God seeks repentance, not destruction.
- ❖ On the other hand, God's anger—as Jonah himself acknowledges—is slow (Jonah 4:2.) Literally, God is “long-nosed.” This Hebrew expression implies that God takes many deep breaths before becoming angry.
- ❖ God loves us and gives us grace. But He cannot tolerate or justify sin. God is angry with sin, but He loves the sinner. He will only show anger toward the sinner when this is the only way to bring him to repentance, or when the sinner has completely rejected the call of the Holy Spirit.

C THE RIGHTEOUS ANGER

- ❖ When is anger justifiable? Is it right to act against another person out of anger or indignation?
- ❖ On a human level, we get angry when we see injustice, and that anger leads us to act to prevent it. Think, for example, of a person who is suffering a physical attack. We get angry at the aggressor, and we act to stop the attack.
- ❖ Outraged at the desecration of the Temple, Jesus became enraged and took a whip, drove out the sellers and animals, and overturned the money-changers' tables (Jn. 2:15.) Angry Jesus? Where is His love?
- ❖ His love for God led Him to be angry with those who dishonored Him. His love for children made Him angry with His disciples (Mark 10:13-14.) His love for a sick person and His sadness at the hard-heartedness of those present filled Jesus with anger (Mark 3:1-5.)
- ❖ The wrath of Christ is the just wrath of love, the same wrath attributed to God in the Old Testament.

D THE IRREMIABLE ANGER

- ❖ God's righteous anger is always directed against those who harm the beings He loves. If there were no evil, God would not be angry.
- ❖ In the history of Israel, God's wrath was manifested cyclically, always waiting for the people to repent and return to Him.
- ❖ On all these occasions, God “gave up” His people, that is, He withdrew His protection, and the inevitable happened (Judg. 2:13-14; Ps. 106:41-42.)
- ❖ But the stakes grew higher and higher, until “there was no remedy,” and Jerusalem was destroyed (2Chr. 36:16.)
- ❖ Ultimately, God's wrath will destroy unrepentant sinners (Ps. 21:9.) Let us not play with God's wrath, for the time will come when it will manifest itself irremediably.

E THE COMPASSIONATE ANGER

- ❖ God's wrath is terrible, and His vengeance is terrible (Heb. 10:30-31.) But it is not immoral or contrary to love. In fact, God expresses His wrath against evil because of love.
- ❖ For this reason, God's most loving expression will be manifested in his wrath. It is out of compassion—toward sinners and righteous alike—that he will eradicate every trace of evil from the universe (Rev. 20:7-9.) At that time, anger and wrath will also disappear, because injustice and wickedness will no longer exist.
- ❖ Until that moment arrives, and although it is correct that, at times, we express our anger to avoid a violent or sinful act “in situ,” the Bible prevents us from taking revenge for the damage received.
- ❖ We must leave vengeance to God. God's vengeance is always just, but our vengeance is never proportional to the harm received. Instead of taking revenge, we are encouraged to do good to those who harm us (Rom. 12:17-21.)