

# ***God's Love and Justice***

## ***The Wrath of Divine Love***

Lesson #5 for February 1, 2025

Scriptures: Psalm 78; Jonah 4:1-4; Matthew 10:8; 21:12-13; Jeremiah 51:24-25; Romans 12:17-21; Nehemiah 9:7-33.

1. What is God's wrath? What is God's anger? How does that correlate with God's love?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Though God's compassion is often celebrated, many find the idea of His wrath disturbing. If God is love, they think He should never express wrath. That notion, however, is false. His wrath arises directly from His love.

Some claim that the Old Testament God is a God of wrath and that the New Testament God is a God of love. But there is only one God, and He is revealed as the same in both Testaments. The God who is love does become angry at evil—but precisely *because* He is love. Jesus Himself expressed profound anger against evil, and the New Testament teaches numerous times about the righteous and appropriate wrath of God.

God's anger is always His righteous and loving response against evil and injustice. **Divine wrath is righteous indignation** motivated by perfect goodness and love, and it seeks the flourishing of all creation. **God's wrath is simply the appropriate response of love to evil and injustice.** Accordingly, evil provokes God to passion in favor of the victims of evil and against its perpetrators. Divine wrath, then, is another expression of divine love.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, January 25.<sup>†§</sup>

2. This study will focus especially on: (1) Psalm 78, describing the cycles of Israel's idolatry as they repeatedly abandoned God, so He let them have their way let them go" or "God's wrath"); and (2) Jesus's cleansing of the temple in "righteous indignation" which is also called God's wrath.
3. ***Is God's anger or wrath different from our anger or wrath? In what ways? What leads to God's wrath as described in the Scriptures?***

[BSG:] The God of the Bible loves justice and hates evil. Sin and evil, therefore, provoke Him to passion, a passion expressed on behalf of those oppressed and abused, and even in cases in which one's evil affects primarily oneself. God hates evil because evil always hurts His creatures, even if self-inflicted. In the biblical narratives, God is repeatedly provoked to anger by what biblical scholars refer to as the **cycle of rebellion**. This cycle goes as follows:

**The people rebel against God and do evil, sometimes even horrendous atrocities, such as child sacrifice and other abominations in His sight.**

**God withdraws according to the people's decisions.**

**The people are oppressed by foreign nations.**

**The people cry to God for deliverance.**

**God graciously delivers the people.**

**The people rebel against God again, often more egregiously than before.**

In the face of this cycle of egregious evil and infidelity, however, God repeatedly meets human unfaithfulness, but with unending faithfulness, long-suffering

forbearance, amazing grace, and deep compassion.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, January 26.<sup>†‡</sup>

4. See Judges 1-3 with the record of that repeating cycle. See the handout: “God’s Wrath/Anger [Described] in the Book of Judges and other Books [of the Bible]”<sup>†‡</sup> on [www.theox.org](http://www.theox.org) ([https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart\\_BTGG\\_PDF\\_Gnrl\\_Gods\\_Wrath\\_or\\_Anger\\_16.pdf](https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Gods_Wrath_or_Anger_16.pdf)).

5. What words would you use to describe God’s wrath? Consider these suggestions.

[BSG:] **God’s wrath is His holy and patient response to sin.** God’s wrath is not based on an arbitrary, uncontrollable, or vengeful initiative. Rather, it is always a loving, firm response against evil and injustice. His anger is a response to continuous and rebellious sin, which harms His creation. Divine wrath is another expression of His love, either to punish evil people for their sins or to deliver His people from their grasp. In Scripture, God’s wrath is best understood in the context of its narrative, as in **Psalm 78**. Despite all the signs and wonders performed by God, His people forgot Him, becoming stubborn and rebellious and having unrepentant hearts.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 65.<sup>†‡</sup>

6. One of the best descriptions of God’s interactions with the children of Israel and the results over many years is found in Psalm 78. Read the whole chapter; notice a few verses from that chapter:

**Psalm 78:24-63:** <sup>24</sup> He [God] gave them grain from heaven,  
by sending down **manna** for them to eat.

<sup>25</sup>So they ate the food of angels,  
and God gave them all they wanted....

<sup>30</sup>But they had not yet satisfied their craving [for meat]  
and were still eating,

<sup>31</sup>**when God became angry with them**  
and killed their strongest men,  
the best young men of Israel....

<sup>38</sup> Many times he held back his anger  
and restrained his fury....

<sup>44</sup>He turned the rivers into blood,  
and the Egyptians had no water to drink....

<sup>51</sup>He killed the firstborn sons  
of all the families of Egypt....

<sup>56</sup>But they rebelled against Almighty God  
and put him to the test.

They did not obey his commandments,

<sup>57</sup>but were rebellious and disloyal like their ancestors,  
unreliable as a crooked arrow....

<sup>62</sup>He was angry with his own people  
and **let them be killed by their enemies.**

<sup>63</sup>Young men were killed in war,

and young women had no one to marry.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Psalm 78:24-63). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup> [Note that many of the gods of the Egyptians were turned into plagues on Egypt. See Exodus 12:12.]<sup>†‡</sup>

7. So, what kinds of things cause God's wrath to be exercised against humans?

[BSG:] **The poetic narrative of Psalm 78 indicates that God's wrath is not an arbitrary initiative nor an uncontrollable reaction. Rather, His wrath is His firm response to continuous and rebellious sin.—Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\* 66.†‡**

[BSG:] **Among the divine commandments, special emphasis is given to the sin of idolatry:** “they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their carved images” (*Ps. 78:58, NKJV*). **It is noteworthy that the wrath of God is described, in this context, in terms of forsaking: “So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh” (*Ps. 78:60, NKJV*) and “gave His people over to the sword” (*Ps. 78:62, NKJV*).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\* 67.†‡§*

8. What about us? We do not worship Baal. So, we are not idolaters. Right?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] .... **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.**—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings\** 177.1.†‡

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.768&index=0>†

9. Note that Satan's whole program is based on selfishness while God's is based on love. What is motivating people today? Selfishness? Or, love? See Jeremiah 6:13 and Matthew 21:13.

10. Another fairly lengthy section describing God's interaction with the children of Israel is found in Nehemiah 9:7-37 in their public prayer after their return from Babylonian captivity. Please read the entire passage, but especially see starting with verse 26.

**Nehemiah 9:26-37:** <sup>26</sup> “But your people rebelled and disobeyed you;

they turned their backs on your Law.

**They killed the prophets who warned them,**

who told them to turn back to you.

They insulted you time after time,

**so you let their enemies conquer and rule them....** [God's wrath in action.]

<sup>37</sup>What the land produces goes to the kings

that you put over us because we sinned.

They do as they please with us and our livestock,

and we are in deep distress!”—*Good News Bible.\*†‡*

[BSG:] According to the Bible, love and justice are intertwined. Divine anger is the proper response of love against evil because evil always hurts someone whom God loves. **There is no instance in Scripture where God is arbitrarily or unfairly wrathful or angry.**

And while God's people repeatedly forsook and betrayed Him, over the centuries God continued patiently to bestow compassion beyond all reasonable expectations (*Neh. 9:7–33*), thus demonstrating the unfathomable depth of His long-suffering compassion and merciful love. Indeed, according to Psalm 78:38, God, “being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them. Yes,

many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath” (NKJV).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, January 26.†§

11. Think of the **story of Jonah**. He tried to run away from God, was tossed overboard, was swallowed by a fish/whale, was vomited up on the shore, and, finally, was called again and went to Nineveh with the hopes of destroying that evil and wicked city. Then, when the king and the people repented and Nineveh was not destroyed, notice these words from Jonah:

**Jonah 4:1-4:** <sup>1</sup> **Jonah was very unhappy** about this and became angry. <sup>2</sup>So he prayed, **“LORD, didn’t I say before I left home that this is just what you would do?”** That’s why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to **change your mind** and not punish. <sup>3</sup>Now, LORD, let me die. I am better off dead than alive.”

<sup>4</sup>The LORD answered, “What right have you to be angry?”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

12. Clearly, we see in this passage Jonah’s own hardheartedness and, in contrast, the fact that he understood God’s compassion and gracefulness.

[BSG:] The Hebrew phrase translated **“slow to anger”** or **“longsuffering”** could be literally translated **“long of nose.”** In Hebrew idiom, anger was metaphorically associated with the nose, and **the length of nose metaphorically images how long it takes for one to become angry.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, January 27.†‡

13. And what has God been trying to demonstrate through His interaction with the Israelite nation and the Jewish people and, then, the Christian church since the times of Jesus?

**Romans 3:25-26:** <sup>25-26</sup>God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people’s sins are forgiven through their faith in him. **God did this in order to demonstrate that he [God] is righteous.** In the past he was patient and overlooked people’s sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate his [God’s] righteousness. **In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡ [Jesus’s main goal was to demonstrate the righteousness of God!]‡

14. Are there really different kinds of anger? The Bible seems to describe something called **righteous indignation**. What does that mean?

[BSG:] While there are many inappropriate forms of anger, the Bible also teaches that there is **“righteous indignation.”**

Imagine a mother watching her three-year-old daughter playing at the playground and then, suddenly, a man attacks her daughter. Should she not be angry? Of course, she should. Anger is the proper response of love in such a circumstance.

**This example helps us understand God’s “righteous indignation.”**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, January 28.†‡

15. There are two stories from the Gospels which raise a lot of people’s questions about God’s wrath and anger. **Twice Jesus cleansed the temple because of the corruption that was occurring there.** How should we understand those stories?

**John 2:13-17:** <sup>13</sup> It was almost time for the Passover Festival, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables. <sup>15</sup>So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the

cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; <sup>16</sup>and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, “Take them out of here! **Stop making my Father’s house a market place!**” <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that the scripture says, “My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [This was early in Jesus’s ministry. He just looked at them!]<sup>‡</sup>

**Matthew 21:12-13:** <sup>12</sup> Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the stools of those who sold pigeons, <sup>13</sup>and said to them, “It is written in the Scriptures that God said, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer.’ **But you are making it a hideout for thieves!**”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [This was near the end of His life.]<sup>‡</sup>

16. Was it appropriate for God to react in this way against the religious leaders who were extorting and stealing from the common people? They believed that they were in charge of the temple!

17. Note these words from Ellen White about Jesus’s interaction with the “thieves” in the temple.

[EGW:] The dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the animals sold, and they shared their profits with the priests and rulers, who thus enriched themselves at the expense of the people. **The worshipers had been taught to believe that if they did not offer sacrifice, the blessing of God would not rest on their children or their lands. Thus a high price for the animals could be secured;** for after coming so far, the people would not return to their homes without performing the act of devotion for which they had come.

A great number of sacrifices were offered at the time of the Passover, and the sales at the temple were very large. The consequent confusion indicated a noisy cattle market rather than the sacred temple of God. There could be heard sharp bargaining, the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, mingled with the chinking of coin and angry disputation. So great was the confusion that the worshipers were disturbed, and the words addressed to the Most High were drowned in the uproar that invaded the temple. The Jews were exceedingly proud of their piety. They rejoiced over their temple, and regarded a word spoken in its disfavor as blasphemy; they were very rigorous in the performance of ceremonies connected with it; but the love of money had overruled their scruples. They were scarcely aware how far they had wandered from the original purpose of the service instituted by God Himself.

When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, the place was consecrated by His presence. Moses was commanded to put bounds around the mount and sanctify it, and the word of the Lord was heard in warning: “Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live.” Exodus 19:12, 13. **Thus was taught the lesson that wherever God manifests His presence, the place is holy.** The precincts of God’s temple should have been regarded as sacred. But in the strife for gain, all this was lost sight of.

**The priests and rulers were called to be the representatives of God to the nation; they should have corrected the abuses of the temple court.** They should have given to the people an example of integrity and compassion. Instead of studying their own profit, they should have considered the situation and needs

of the worshipers, and should have been ready to assist those who were not able to buy the required sacrifices. But this they did not do. **Avarice [geed] had hardened their hearts.**

There came to this feast those who were suffering, those who were in want and distress. The blind, the lame, the deaf, were there. Some were brought on beds. Many came who were too poor to purchase the humblest offering for the Lord, too poor even to buy food with which to satisfy their own hunger. These were greatly distressed by the statements of the priests. The priests boasted of their piety; they claimed to be the guardians of the people; but they were without sympathy or compassion. The poor, the sick, the dying, made their vain plea for favor. Their suffering awakened no pity in the hearts of the priests.

**As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who thought that [Notice that they “*thought*” that.] without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins.** He saw the outer court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange.

Christ saw that something must be done. **Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import.** The worshipers offered their sacrifices without understanding that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice. And among them, unrecognized and unhonored, stood the One symbolized by all their service. He had given directions in regard to the offerings. He understood their symbolical value, and He saw that they were now perverted and misunderstood. Spiritual worship was fast disappearing. No link bound the priests and rulers to their God. Christ’s work was to establish an altogether different worship.

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. **With prophetic eye He looks into futurity, and sees not only years, but centuries and ages.** He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners, and men will make merchandise of His grace. **As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. They cannot withdraw their gaze. They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, [He can!] and discovers their hidden motives. Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes.**

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds. **Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity.** The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day,—not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, but with the same power to read the soul. His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and **a divine light illuminates His countenance.** He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice—the same that upon Mount

Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing—is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: “Take these things hence; make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 155.2-158.1.†† [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.684&index=0>]+

18. Ellen White noted that in those experiences of twice cleansing the temple, “divinity flashed through humanity.” Clearly, the thieves saw something. What did they see?

[EGW:] Overpowered with terror, the priests and rulers had fled from the temple court, and from the searching glance that read their hearts. In their flight they met others on their way to the temple, and bade them turn back, telling them what they had seen and heard. Christ looked upon the fleeing men [the religious leaders] with yearning pity for their fear, and their ignorance of what constituted true worship. In this scene He saw symbolized the dispersion of the whole Jewish nation for their wickedness and impenitence.

And why did the priests flee from the temple? Why did they not stand their ground? He who commanded them to go was a carpenter’s son, a poor Galilean, without earthly rank or power. Why did they not resist Him? Why did they leave the gain so ill acquired, and flee at the command of One whose outward appearance was so humble?

Christ spoke with the authority of a king, and in His appearance, and in the tones of His voice, there was that which **they had no power to resist**. At the word of command they realized, as they had never realized before, their true position as hypocrites and robbers. **When divinity flashed through humanity, not only did they see indignation on Christ’s countenance; they realized the import of His words.** They felt as if before the throne of the eternal Judge, with their sentence passed on them for time and for eternity. **For a time they were convinced that Christ was a prophet; and many believed Him to be the Messiah. The Holy Spirit flashed into their minds the utterances of the prophets concerning Christ. Would they yield to this conviction?**

**Repent they would not. They knew that Christ’s sympathy for the poor had been aroused.** They knew that they had been guilty of extortion in their dealings with the people. Because Christ discerned their thoughts they hated Him. His public rebuke was humiliating to their pride, and they were jealous of His growing influence with the people. They determined to challenge Him as to the power by which He had driven them forth, and who gave Him this power.

Slowly and thoughtfully, but with hate in their hearts, they returned to the temple. But what a change had taken place during their absence! **When they [the priests] fled, the poor remained behind; and these were now looking to Jesus,** whose countenance expressed His love and sympathy. **With tears in His eyes, He said to the trembling ones around Him: Fear not; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. For this cause came I into the world.**

The people pressed into Christ’s presence with urgent, pitiful appeals: Master, bless me. His ear heard every cry. With pity exceeding that of a tender mother He bent over the suffering little ones. All received attention. **Everyone was healed of whatever disease he had.** The dumb opened their lips in praise; the blind beheld the face of their Restorer. The hearts of the sufferers were made glad.

As the priests and temple officials witnessed this great work, what a revelation to them were the sounds that fell on their ears! The people were relating the story of the pain they had suffered, of their disappointed hopes, of painful days and sleepless nights. When the last spark of hope seemed to be dead, Christ had healed them. The burden was so heavy, one said; but I have found a helper. He is the Christ of God, and I will devote my life to His service. Parents said to their children, He has saved your life; lift up your voice and praise Him. The voices of children and youth, fathers and mothers, friends and spectators, blended in thanksgiving and praise. Hope and gladness filled their hearts. Peace came to their minds. They were restored soul and body, and they returned home, proclaiming everywhere the matchless love of Jesus.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 162.1-163.2.†† [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.709&index=0>]†

19. Was that “loving” wrath of God that Jesus displayed in His cleansing of the temple?

[BSG:] God’s wrath is a loving and righteous indignation. In Scripture we find a vivid description of God’s wrath as a loving and righteous indignation against the oppression and suffering of His people. God actively intervenes to punish evil, given His righteous indignation, which is motivated by perfect goodness and love. **His wrath is the proper response of love against evil**, inasmuch as evil hurts His beloved creatures.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 65.††

20. Previously, we have seen in Hosea 11:1-8 how God feels about those who turn against Him. Notice these words in Lamentations written by Jeremiah during the third siege of Jerusalem.

**Lamentations 3:32-33:** <sup>32</sup> He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong. <sup>33</sup>**He takes no pleasure in causing us grief or pain.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

21. The fact that Judah was conquered by the Babylonians is well known. What did God say?

**Ezra 5:12:** “But because our ancestors made the God of Heaven angry, **he let them be conquered** by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, a king of the Chaldean dynasty. The Temple was destroyed, and the people were taken into exile in Babylonia.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

22. What was the condition of the children of Israel at the time when these things took place?

**2 Chronicles 36:16:** But they ridiculed God’s messengers, ignoring his words and laughing at his prophets, until **at last the LORD’s anger against his people was so great that there was no escape.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

[BSG:] **Many other judgments that Scripture describes as brought about by God are explained as instances in which God “gives” the people over to their enemies (Judg. 2:13, 14; Ps. 106:41, 42), in accordance with the people’s decisions to forsake the Lord and serve the “gods” of the nations (Judg. 10:6–16, Deut. 29:24–26).** God’s anger against evil, which will finally culminate in the eradication of all evil once and for all, stems from His love for all and from **His desire for the final good of the universe**, which itself has a stake in the whole question of sin and rebellion and evil.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, January 29.††§ [Compare Romans 1:18-28!]†

**Judges 2:13-14:** <sup>13</sup>**They stopped worshipping the LORD and served the Baals and the Astartes.** <sup>14</sup>And so the LORD became furious with Israel and **let raiders attack and rob them.** He let enemies all around overpower them, and the Israelites could no longer protect themselves. <sup>15</sup>Every time they went into battle,



the LORD was against them, just as he had said he would be. **They were in great distress.**—*Good News Bible*.\*† [What happens when God leaves His people?]\*‡

**Judges 10:6-16:** <sup>6</sup> Once again the Israelites sinned against the LORD by worshipping the Baals and the Astartes, as well as the gods of Syria, of Sidon, of Moab, of Ammon, and of Philistia. They abandoned the LORD and stopped worshipping him. <sup>7</sup>So the LORD became angry with the Israelites, and let the Philistines and the Ammonites conquer them.... <sup>9</sup>Israel was in great distress.

<sup>10</sup> Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD and said, “We have sinned against you, for we left you, our God, and worshipped the Baals.”

<sup>11</sup> The LORD gave them this answer: “The Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, <sup>12</sup>the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites oppressed you in the past, and you cried out to me. **Did I not save you from them?** <sup>13</sup>**But you still left me and worshipped other gods, so I am not going to rescue you again.** <sup>14</sup>**Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them rescue you when you get into trouble.**”

<sup>15</sup> But the people of Israel said to the LORD, “We have sinned. Do whatever you like, but please, save us today.” <sup>16</sup>**So they got rid of their foreign gods and worshipped the LORD; and he became troubled over Israel’s distress.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

23. Although, at times, He shows “righteous indignation,” God also shows compassion.

[BSG:] While divine wrath is a “terrible” thing, it is by no means immoral or unloving. **On the contrary, in the Old and New Testaments, God expresses wrath against evil because of His love.** Divine wrath is terrible because of the **insidious nature of evil** in contrast to the pure goodness and splendor of God.

**In this regard, love is essential to God; wrath is not. Where there is no evil or injustice, there is no wrath. In the end, God’s most loving action of eradicating evil from the universe also effectively will eliminate anger and wrath.** And that is because never again will there be any injustice or evil. Forevermore, there will be only the eternity of bliss and justice in a perfect love relationship. There will never again be divine wrath because never again will there be the need for it. What a wonderful thought!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, January 30.†‡

24. If God finds it necessary, at times, to exercise His divine wrath, does that excuse us from exercising our human wrath at times?

**Proverbs 20:22: Don’t take it on yourself to repay a wrong.** Trust the LORD and he will make it right.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Proverbs 24:29:** Don’t say, “I’ll do to him just what he did to me! I’ll get even with him!”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Romans 12:17-21:** <sup>17</sup> If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. <sup>18</sup>Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. <sup>19</sup>Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God’s anger do it. For the scripture says, “I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord.” <sup>20</sup>Instead, as the scripture says: **“If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink;** for by doing this you will make

them burn with shame.” <sup>21</sup>Do not let evil defeat you; instead, **conquer evil with good.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

**Hebrews 10:30:** For we know who said, “I will take revenge, I will repay”; and who also said, “The Lord will judge his people.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Romans 5:8-9:** <sup>8</sup>But God has shown us how much he loves us — it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! <sup>9</sup>By his blood we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God’s anger!—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

25. There is a fantastic discussion about one of the most outstanding episodes involving God’s “wrath” recorded in *Patriarchs and Prophets* pages 315-330 in the chapter “Idolatry at Sinai.” It discusses the consequences of worshipping the golden calf.

[EGW:] **It was necessary that this sin should be punished, as a testimony to surrounding nations of God’s displeasure against idolatry....**

Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that they may not lead others to ruin. **In sparing the life of Cain, God had demonstrated to the universe what would be the result of permitting sin to go unpunished.** The influence exerted upon his descendants by his life and teaching **led to the state of corruption that demanded the destruction of the whole world by a flood....**

**So with the apostasy at Sinai. Unless punishment had been speedily visited upon transgression, the same results would again have been seen. The earth would have become as corrupt as in the days of Noah.** Had these transgressors been spared, evils would have followed, greater than resulted from sparing the life of Cain. **It was the mercy of God that thousands should suffer, to prevent the necessity of visiting judgments upon millions. In order to save the many, He must punish the few.** Furthermore, as the people had cast off their allegiance to God, they had forfeited the divine protection, and, deprived of their defense, the whole nation was exposed to the power of their enemies. Had not the evil been promptly put away, they would soon have fallen a prey to their numerous and powerful foes. **It was necessary for the good of Israel, and also as a lesson to all succeeding generations, that crime should be promptly punished.** And it was no less a mercy to the sinners themselves that they should be cut short in their evil course. Had their life been spared, the same spirit that led them to rebel against God would have been manifested in hatred and strife among themselves, and **they would eventually have destroyed one another. It was in love to the world, in love to Israel, and even to the transgressors, that crime was punished with swift and terrible severity.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*<sup>\*</sup> 325.1-3.<sup>†‡</sup>

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.1447&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.1447&index=0)<sup>‡</sup>

26. ***In conclusion, how do you think God should react when He is faced with injustice, cruelty, open rebellion, and continuous sin among or against His children?***

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