

WEDNESDAY**God Does Not Afflict Willingly**

- God of divine love = hates sin = sin is ABSENCE of love.
 - Prideful / Selfish / Rebellious / Perverse / Self-harming
- Never takes place in vacuum—consequences of one person’s sin
 - always harms another = violating their rights.
- When someone sins against us / one of our loved ones / or vulnerable person / we become angry, don’t we?

ABSG QUOTE Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly displays **His passion** in favor of the downtrodden and the oppressed and His corresponding righteous indignation against the victimizers and oppressors. **If there were no evil, God would not be angry.** His anger is only and always against that which harms His creation. **UNQUOTE**

- When someone sins against us / one of our loved ones / or vulnerable person
 - our sense of fair play cries out for justice, doesn’t it?
- God’s love demands justice = justice requires **judgment**
- Author Lamentations = most scholars believe/ Jeremiah
 - called weeping prophet [wept over Judah’s judgment/ Babylonian captivity] – **Lam 1:12** “which the Lord has inflicted in the day of His fierce anger”
- God repeatedly sent His prophets to warn people – if they did not repent = He would withdraw His protections
 - permit them = to be overtaken by their enemies
- Refused to listen = Kingdom principle = poor choices/impact lives
 - Wrong actions = have consequences = reap what you sow
- God delayed His judgment = warning them over/ over again
 - 840 years after Mt. Sinai, taken into Babylonian captivity

ABSG QUOTE According to Ezra 5, after the people persistently and unrepentantly provoked God to anger, He eventually withdrew and

“gave” the people “into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon” (*Ezra 5:12*). But God did so only after there was “no remedy” (*2 Chron. 36:16*), and God later judged Babylon for the excessive devastation it inflicted upon Judah...**UNQUOTE**

- Lord allowed His people to go into captivity
 - act of redemptive love = turn them back to Him
- Midst of lamenting/breaks forth w/praise = considers grace of God

Lamentations 3:22–23 ²²Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:32–33 ³²Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies. ³³For He does not afflict willingly, Nor grieve the children of men.

- Hebrew = God does not afflict us willingly “from the heart:
- Not God’s desire to hurt people –His intention = to lead them to salvation. **2 Peter 3:9** God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”
- Called to His people in exile = **Ezekiel 33:11** Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’
- **No please = no delight in afflicting people**
- As perfect loving Father = He corrects us by allowing consequences for our actions
 - Not as stern Judge = but as loving parent
 - “this hurts Me, more than hurts you”

Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.

- His steadfast love allows grief = when all other remedies to remove sin had failed, he permits affliction = uses it like surgeon's knife to cut away sin

Psalm 103:13–14 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

Hosea 11:4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.

Jeremiah 31:20 Is Ephraim [10 tribes of northern kingdom] My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, **I earnestly remember him still; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.**

ABSG QUOTE Many other judgments that Scripture describes as brought about by God are explained as instances where 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. **UNQUOTE**

- **How does the fact that God does not want to bring judgment against anyone affect your understanding of divine anger and wrath?**
- **If God is slow to anger, should we not be more patient and longsuffering with those around us?**
- **How can we do so while also protecting and caring for the victims of wrongdoing?**