

THE ANGER OF THE LORD (JESUS)

Text: Mark 3:5

INTRO: Well over 100 passages in the O.T. make reference to the "anger of the Lord." In addition, the N.T. has quite a bit to say about the "wrath of God."

Most of these passages speak of what might be called (for lack of a better term) the judicial wrath of God, that is, the settled retribution that God must make purely because of the nature of things, & with which the emotions have little or nothing to do.

But a few O.T. passages apparently do involve the emotional anger or displeasure of God. We all are quite aware that all men have a certain capacity for anger. Did it ever occur to you to ask where that capacity comes from? I suggest that it is one of the many things that is involved in man's being made in God's image. God has a capacity for anger.

The best basis we have for understanding the nature of God is to see Him as He is revealed to us in Christ. To know something of the emotional anger of God, let us look into the N.T. for a picture of the anger of the Lord Jesus.

I. WHEN THE JEWS TRIED TO PREVENT HIM FROM HOWING MERCY ON THE SABBATH.

Mark 3:1-5, And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that

they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

A. Jesus respected & observed God's laws concerning the Sabbath. He kept it holy.

Luke 4:16, So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, & stood up to read.

B. He had encouraged His followers to keep the commandments, including the Sabbath. After His burial:

Luke 23:56, Then they returned & prepared spices & fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

C. But the Jews had many man-made doctrines which caused them to refrain from practicing mercy & kindness on that day. Matthew's account shows that

their traditions allowed them to extend mercy to farm animals, 12:11-12, on the Sabbath but not to humans.

D. Their hypocrisy, inconsistency, & attempt at lawmaking stirred the anger of Jesus.

II. WHEN HIS OWN DISCIPLES TRIED TO FORBID PEOPLE FROM BRINGING CHILDREN TO HIM TO BE LESSED.

Mark 10:13-16, Then they brought young children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brot them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased & said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

NOTE: ASV & NASB use the word "indignant."

III. THERE ARE OTHER OCCASIONS WHERE NO WORD FOR ANGER IS FOUND IN THE TEXT, BUT IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED, WE CAN SEE BY THE ACTION OF JESUS THAT HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION HAS BEEN STIRRED.

A. On two separate occasions He cleansed the temple--one at the beginning of His ministry, the other at the end of His personal ministry, John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12-13.

B. He came near to the end of His patience with His disciples when they attempted to perform a miracle & failed because of a lack of sufficient faith on their part.

Matt 17:14-17, And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him & saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic & suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire & often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered & said, "O faithless & perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

C. His stinging rebuke of the scribes & Pharisees in Matt. 23 seems to be another indication of His indignation.

IV. WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT ANGER.

A. His personal teaching.

Matt. 5:22, But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...

B. Thru His apostles.

Eph. 4:26, Be angry & do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANGER OF THE LORD JESUS.

A. The motive behind it were never selfish.

1 Peter 2:21-23, For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

B. His anger always led to helpful action: healing the lame, blessing children & using them to teach a lesson in humility, restoring the temple to its intended purpose.

C. He never allowed His anger to cause Him to violate God's will. Never took God's name in vain, never stooped to the level of personal vengeance, etc.

Heb. 4:15, ...[He] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

CONCLUSION: There is, & always has been such a thing as holy anger or righteous indignation. There are times & circumstances when Christians have

every right, even a duty to be angry--and sin not.
Seeing someone mistreated by those who ought to
show mercy, seeing holy things belittled & abused-
-these & many other things may be Scriptural
grounds for anger, & such anger is not sinful when
it spurs us to implement Scriptural solutions to
problems of daily living.

La Porte, TX, March 18, 1979

Exton, PA, June 8, 1986

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 24, 2002