

LECTURE 15: The Emotivity of God

"I Jehovah love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity"; "that cheers God and man", "Grieve not the Holy Spirit"; "well-pleasing to God", "the wrath of God"; "the peace of God" (Isa.61:8; Judg.9:13; Eph.4:30; Phil.4:18; Rom.1:18; Phil.4:7)

III. The Absolute Affection of God: God's Emotivity

Introduction: We now examine God's absolute capacity to feel, his "*emotivity*." Our texts epitomize the divine affections. God feels both anger and gratification, "*for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*" (Rom.1:18), "*a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God*" (Phil.4:18). He feels not only delight and love, but also hate and detestation, "*I Jehovah love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity*" (Isa.61:8). He senses both grief and joy, "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit*" (Eph.4:30), "*that cheers God and man*" (Judg.9:13). He has incomprehensible peace, "*the peace of God, which passes all understanding*" (Phil.4:7). *First*, we state and briefly explain the CONCEPT of God's emotivity; *second*, uncover its biblical and theological FOUNDATION; *third*, survey its manifold DISPLAY; and *fourth*, summarize its practical APPLICATION.

A. The Concept of God's Emotivity

When we define God's supreme capacity to feel, we are in uncharted water. Though Reformed theologians acknowledge that God feels, they do not pay as much attention to this faculty as to his mind or will. Thus, defining God's emotivity precisely involves greater difficulty. Thus, I offer my definition with fear and trembling. Nevertheless, we may define God's emotivity as follows:

God's emotivity is his supreme capacity to act responsively and sensorially; to feel pure and principled affections¹ of love and hate, joy and grief, pleasure and anger, and peace²; in accord with his supreme, spiritual, and simple Being and impeccable virtue³

This definition features its: (1) general nature; (2) specific expressions; and (3) distinguishing traits.

1. In its **general nature**, God's emotivity is "*his capacity to act responsively and sensorially*." God feels spiritual sensation. He is not the "unmoved mover" of Greek philosophy. He reacts and interacts with genuine concern. In eternity, he responds emotively to inter-Trinitarian reality; upon creation, to created reality; upon the fall into sin, to immorality and its baneful fruits; upon the exercise of grace, to redemptive reality. Persons and things leave their impress upon him. Events influence, stir, stimulate, and move him to action. He lives, not a life of apathy, but of concern. The true God has, not merely a mind and will, but a heart. In his heart he feels "*pure and principled affections*." I call God's feelings "affections", rather than "emotions", to avoid misconception. Webster (New Collegiate Dictionary, p.369) defines an emotion as, "a psychic and physiological reaction (as anger or fear), subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involving changes that prepare the body for immediate action." Divine affections, like human emotions, are "reactions" and "sensations." Yet human emotions involve the body (physiological) as well as the soul (psychic). We see a face "blanched with fear", or "flushed with anger." Since God has no body, he does not experience the physiological aspects of an emotion. Thus, I don't explicitly define his emotivity with the word "emotions." Further, Webster (*New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.19) defines affection as "the feeling aspect of consciousness", or as "a mild feeling." Since "affection" describes only the psychic (spiritual) aspect of an emotion, not its physiological (material) aspect, it is a far superior term for God's feelings. It probably also refers to a mild human emotion because a mild feeling, unlike a strong feeling, does not involve a noticeable degree of bodily change. Yet, by using the term, I do not mean to imply that God only has mild feelings. Further, divine affections are "*pure and principled affections*." "Pure" distinguishes divine feeling from carnal impulsiveness and evil passions, such as a fit of "blind" rage; "principled" from sentimentality. Webster (New Collegiate Dictionary, p.1048) defines sentimental as "marked or governed by feeling", "resulting from feeling rather than reason or thought." His affections are not unprincipled sentiments.

2. The **specific expressions** of his emotivity are his, "*love and hate, joy and grief, pleasure and anger, and peace*." God responds emotively to beauty, beneficiality, propriety, and security. Beauty

and beneficiality evoke delight and joy; Moral propriety, delight, joy, and pleasure; supreme security and invulnerability, absolute peace. Conversely, disarray and harm arouse detestation and grief. Moral wrong provokes anger, hate, and grief in his heart.

3. Its *distinguishing traits* spring from the fact that his being and virtue regulate it. First, he feels "*in accord with his supreme, spiritual, and simple Being.*" God's spirituality insures that his affections, unlike human emotions, lack a physiological aspect. His simplicity demands that he feels with his whole being. His supremacy (infinity, eternity, immutability, ideality and aseity) guarantees that his affections do not render him dependent or vulnerable, mar his infinite perfection, or make him mutable. For example, God feels nothing akin to the fear which vulnerable creatures often feel. One of my students once observed that Scripture predicates an aspect of fear to God, in the sense that God perceived a threat to his reputation, and responded out of concern to surmount it. Though God does have such concern, yet he is never in danger, but invulnerable. He can't be startled, or overthrown, or even assaulted. No calamity can touch or hurt him. Nor can he feel anxiety about unfulfilled need, for he has no need of creatures or support. Further, he calms our fears by assuring us that he is with us. What comfort is that if he too is vulnerable and afraid? Again, immutability and aseity imply that God's emotive capacity is independent of his creatures and unalterable. Nevertheless, God responds differently to saints and sinners (Ps.5:5). When man sins, God's relation and response to him change accordingly. He is not the untouchable and apathetic "absolute" that enters no relations. Though Greek philosophy venerates such a "god", Scripture does not know him. Berkhof (*Systematic Theology*, p.59) corrects this false notion, "The divine immutability should not be understood as implying *immobility*; as if there were no movement in God...The Bible teaches us that God enters into manifold relations with man, and as it were, lives their life with them. There is change round about Him, change in the relations of men to Him, but there is no change in His Being, His attributes, His purpose, His motives of action, or His promises." Second, he feels in accord with his "*impeccable virtue.*" Every divine affection is holy, good, just, and faithful. Thus, we see similarity between human emotion and divine affection, because man is the image of God. Yet, we also see a profound difference between them. God does not feel human emotion, for he is the exalted, impeccable Creator, man but a lowly, flawed creature.

B. The Foundation of God's Emotivity

We show that Scripture and Reformed theology support this concept.

1. Biblical support for God's emotivity

We have already seen that the capacity to feel is an essential property of every spirit and that God's emotive faculty is supreme and spiritual. We now collate support around our definition.

God's emotivity is his supreme capacity to act responsively and sensorially¹; to feel pure and principled affections of love² and hate³, joy⁴ and grief⁵, pleasure⁶ and anger⁷, and peace⁸; in accord with his supreme⁹, spiritual¹⁰, and simple¹¹ Being and impeccable virtue¹².

1. Gen.6:6; Judg.10:16; Isa.1:14
2. Deut.7:13, 10:15; Ps.18:19, Prov.11:1, 12:22, 15:8; Isa.42:1, 61:8; Jer.9:24; John 17:24
3. Pss.5:5, 11:5; Prov.6:16; Isa.1:14, 61:8
4. Deut.28:63, 30:9; Judg.9:13; Neh.8:10; Pss.16:11, 60:6, 104:31; Isa.62:5, 65:19; Jer.32:41; Zeph.3:17; Luke 15:7,10; John 15:11, 17:13
5. Gen.6:6; Judg.10:16; Pss.78:40, 95:10; Isa.63:10; Eph.4:30; Heb.3:10,17
6. Num.23:27, 24:1; 1 Kings 3:10; Pss.69:3, 149:4; Prov.16:7, Eccles.7:26; Ezra 10:11; Rom.8:8; Phil.4:18; Col.3:20; 1 Thess.4:1; Heb.11:5,6, 13:16,21
7. Num.11:10, 22:22; Deut.4:25, 6:15, 7:4, 9:18,19, 13:17, 29:20; Josh.7:1; Judg.2:12,14,20, 3:8, 10:7; Pss.2:12, 7:11, 78:49, 85:3, 90:11, 103:8, 145:8; Jer.4:8; Rom.1:18, 2:5,9, 9:22, 12:19; Eph.2:3, 5:6; Col.3:6; 1 Thess.1:10, 2:16, 5:9; Heb.3:11; Rev.6:16,17, 14:10,19, 15:1,7, 16:1,19, 19:15
8. Ps.23:4; John 14:27; Rom.15:33; Phil.4:7,9; 1 Thess.5:23; 2 Thess.3:16; Heb.13:20
9. Ps.90:11; John17:24; Eph.3:19
10. Isa.31:3; Luke 24:37-39; John 4:24; Col.1:15
11. 1 John 4:8,16
12. Jer.9:24; James 1:13

2. Theological and dogmatic support for God's emotivity

Some may think that this teaching smacks of theological novelty. Since Scripture is so plain on this topic, even if it were novel, the fault would not lie with us. Yet other teachers of Reformed theology do not completely miss or deny what Scripture so clearly teaches. Rather, they repudiate the erroneous idea that God is unfeeling, unresponsive, heartless, and apathetic. Hear five witnesses.

a. Hear the testimony of Charles Hodge.

"As power of some kind belongs to every substance, the power which belongs to spirit, to the substance itself, is that of thought, **feeling** and volition...We are not more certain than we exist, than that we think, **feel** and will. We know ourselves only as thus thinking, **feeling**, and willing, and we therefore are sure that **these powers or faculties are the essential attributes of a spirit, and must belong to every spirit...**As **all this** is involved in our consciousness of ourselves as spirit, **it must all be true of God**, or God is of a lower order of being than man." (*Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, pgs.378,9) [emphasis supplied]

"If this be understood to mean that the divine perfections are really what the Bible declares them to be; **that God truly thinks, feels, and acts**; that He is truly wise, just, and good; that He is truly omnipotent, and voluntary, acting or not acting, as He sees fit; that He can hear and answer prayer; then it may be admitted." (IBID., pgs. 373,4) [emphasis supplied]

"The schoolmen, and often the philosophical theologians, tell us that there is no feeling in God. This, they say, would imply passivity, or susceptibility of impression from without, which it is assumed is incompatible with the nature of God...Here again we have to choose between a mere philosophical speculation and the clear teaching of the Bible, and of our own moral and religious nature. Love of necessity involves feeling, and if there be no feeling in God, there can be no love." (IBID., pgs. 428,9)

Though he doesn't expound God's emotivity, Hodge affirms and defends it in the plainest possible terms. He says that God "truly feels", and opposes all speculation to the contrary.

b. Hear the testimony of Morton Smith.

Smith uniquely classifies the attributes of God (*Systematic Theology, Syllabus*, Vol.1). He expounds first, "the essential attributes", spirituality, immutability, and infinity (pgs.130-138); second, "attributes that are chiefly intellectual", omniscience, wisdom and freedom (p.138-140); third, "attributes that are chiefly moral", holiness and righteousness (pgs.140,141); fourth, "attributes that are chiefly emotive", primarily love, but also grace, mercy, and long-suffering (pgs.141-143). Of love he says, "It should be observed that love is emotive in character." He then cites Warfield.

c. Hear the testimony of B.B. Warfield.

"now the text tells us of...God...that He loves. In itself, before we proceed a step further, this is a marvelous declaration. The metaphysicians have not yet plumbed it and still protest inability to construe the Absolute in terms of love. We shall not stop to dwell upon this somewhat abstract discussion. Enough for us that **a God without an emotional life would be a God without all that lends its highest dignity to personal spirit, whose very being is movement; and that is as much as to say no God at all.**" (*Savior of the World*, p.117, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, p.513) [emphasis supplied]

In his sermon on John 3:16, entitled "God's Immeasurable Love", Warfield explicitly denounces the false doctrine that God is the unmoved absolute, with no emotional life. He says bluntly that such a "god" would be "no God at all." Further, in "*The Emotional Life of our Lord*", he says,

"The moral sense is not a mere faculty of discrimination between the qualities which we call right and wrong, which exhausts itself in their perception as different. The judgments it passes are not merely intellectual but what we call moral judgments; that is to say, they involve approval and disapproval according to the qualities perceived. **It would be impossible, therefore, for a moral being to stand in the presence of perceived wrong indifferent and unmoved. The emotions of indignation and anger belong therefore to the very self-expression of a moral being as such and cannot be lacking to him in the presence of wrong.**" (*The Person and Work of Christ*, p.107) [emphasis supplied]

Warfield uncovers precisely why God's emotivity is so crucial. If God really were an "unmoved mover", he would at best be "amoral", totally oblivious to moral good and evil. Yet God does know good and evil (Gen.3:5,22), and when a being who knows good and evil stands apathetic in the presence of evil, he behaves wretchedly. An unmoved "god", who doesn't feel, wouldn't be holy or just, but "ungodly." Such indifference would make him immoral! Divine emotivity doesn't contradict immutability, but divine apathy would contradict impeccability. When a moral being responds to wrong with anger, he doesn't change his essential nature. Rather, his essential nature

causes him to react appropriately to right and wrong. Any who oppose divine emotivity unwittingly attack his impeccability. Finally, in his article, "God", Warfield refers to God's emotive life as "sensibility",

"Thus we come to know God as a personal Spirit, infinite, eternal and illimitable, alike in his being, and in the intelligence, **sensibility** and will, which belong to him as personal spirit." (*Works*, Vol.9, Studies in Theology, p.111; or *Selected Shorter Writings*, Vol.1, p.71) [emphasis supplied]

Webster (*New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.1047) defines "sensibility" as, "the ability to receive sensations", and "sensation" as "excited interest or feeling." Thus Warfield explicitly asserts that God experiences spiritual sensations, that is, that he feels.

d. Hear the Testimony of Leon Morris.

"There is a consistency about the wrath of God in the Old Testament. It is no capricious passion, but the stern **reaction** of the divine nature **to evil** in man. It is aroused only and inevitably by sin." (*The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p.131) [emphasis supplied]

"Where the term 'wrath' does not occur, we find strong expressions for the divine **hostility** to all that is evil." (IBID., p.163) [emphasis supplied]

Leon Morris, explaining propitiation, expounds the display of God's wrath in the Old (p.129-136) and New (p.161-166) Testaments. He says that God "reacts" to evil. His reaction involves "hostility." Yet, God has pure anger, not blind rage, or capricious passion.

e. Hear the testimony of John Gill.

We have already seen that John Gill, in the assigned reading, groups God's faculties together as his organizing principle (*Body of Divinity*, Vol.1, p.112-148). Among Reformed theologians, he presents the most detailed exposition of God's affections. He expounds God's love (p.112-117), grace (p.117-122), mercy (p.122-128), long-suffering (p.128-131), goodness (p.131-136), anger and wrath (p.136-143), hatred (p.143-146), and joy (p.146-148). He introduces and concludes his exposition as follows:

"Next to the attributes which belong to God, as an intelligent Spirit, to his understanding and will, may be considered those which may be called Affections; for though, properly speaking, there are none in God, he being a most pure and simple act, free from all commotion and perturbation, yet there being some things said and done by him, which are similar to affections in intelligent beings, they are ascribed to him; as love, pity, hatred, anger, &c., from which must be removed everything that is carnal, sensual, or has any degree of imperfection in it." (*Body of Divinity*, p.112)

"Having considered those attributes of God which bear a likeness to affections in men, I proceed to consider those which in them may be called virtues; as holiness, justice, or righteousness, truth, or faithfulness." (IBID., p.148)

Gill expounds divine emotivity with due qualification. Since man is the image of God, human emotions picture divine affections. Yet, God, the Supreme Spirit, does not feel human emotions or sinful affections. Accordingly, Gill depicts divine affections as, "those attributes of God which **bear a likeness** to affections in men." He explicitly denies that God feels human emotion, "for though, properly speaking, there are none in God." He also explains why God cannot feel human emotion, "he being a most pure and simple act, free from all commotion and perturbation." What is "perturbation"? Webster (*New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.849) says that "perturb" means "to throw into confusion." Similarly, Webster (IBID., p.225) defines "commotion" as "noisy confusion", or "mental confusion." Thus, Gill means that God does not feel unprincipled sentiment, or become confused. In the vernacular, God never "looses it" or "goes nuts." Again, Gill delineates how divine affection differs from human emotion, "similar to affections in intelligent beings...from which must be removed everything that is carnal, sensual, or has any degree of imperfection in it." Unlike human emotions, divine affections never display anything "carnal", or "sensual", or "imperfect." Gill correctly guards against attributing sinful passions or the bodily aspects of human emotion to God. Again, while expounding God's long-suffering, on p.128, he speaks of, "the very nature and essence of God, which is free from all passion and perturbation, from all suffering, grief, and pain." God's affections do not involve carnal passions, or mental confusion, or the grief of bodily suffering. Finally, on p.137, Gill defends the notion that God feels anger,

"anger belongs to God, or may be predicated of him. This is denied by some philosophers of the Cynic and Stoic sects, because it is a passion; they allow grace, good-will, and beneficence in God toward men, but not

anger; this they suppose to be a weakness, and even a sort of madness...The Epicureans deny that either is in God; neither favour and good-will, nor anger and wrath; for they imagine he has no concern in the affairs of men...and so is neither pleased or displeased with them; and is neither kind and favorable to them, nor is angry with them, nor resents what is done by them. But the Scriptures everywhere ascribe anger to God."

C. The Display of God's Emotivity

Introduction: We now build on the solid foundation laid by our fathers in the Reformed faith. We unfold how Scripture displays God's seven primary affections: love, hate, joy, grief, pleasure, anger, and peace. We introduce this display with two general observations. *First*, Scripture displays distinct and contrasting pairs of divine affections: "*I Jehovah love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity*" (Isa.61:8). It also contrasts joy with grief, and anger with gratification. Only Divine peace stands alone, since its counterpart would be fear. *Second*, Scripture displays divine affections absolutely and relatively. We could distinguish "*absolute affections*", experienced when only God was, from "*relative affections*", experienced in relation to creation, fall, and redemption. This would parallel the distinction between infinity and omnipresence. Like infinity, emotivity is an absolute attribute. He did not need to create or save in order to experience spiritual sensation. This distinction helps us to think clearly about affections such as God's anger. Anger is an attribute of God in the same sense that omnipresence is an attribute. Anger is not an absolute, but a relative divine affection. Though God never changes, he did not feel anger in eternity, before there was sin. Nor did God feel grief before there was suffering, or hate before there was evil. Nevertheless, anger is necessary in consequence of sin. God could no more cease to respond to sin in anger than he could cease to be omnipresent in space. Thus, before the world was, God experienced only delight, joy, pleasure, and peace, in inter-Trinitarian fellowship. The Father, Son, and Spirit, perceiving divine beauty, felt pure delight; divine beneficiality and blessedness, unmingled joy; divine virtue, perfect gratification; divine security and stability, absolute peace. Upon the occurrence of sin, God experienced spiritual sensations of anger, grief, and detestation in relation to fallen creatures. Scripture places priority on the eternal affections of delight, joy, pleasure, and peace. Thus we first survey these, then their negative counterparts. We conclude with God's peace.

1. Behold the biblical display of God's delight and love.

Love oft denotes a sensation of delight, experienced from contact with someone or something that the soul regards as beautiful, pleasant, or attractive. In this emotive sense, it describes Isaac's delight in savory meat (Gen.27:4) and Amnon's in Tamar (2 Sa.13:4,15). Sometimes, it depicts voluntary attachment and loyalty, as opposed to rejection. Thus, Leah, hoping Jacob would dwell with her, said: "*now will my husband love me*" (Gen.29:32-34). Thus the Lord calls voluntary cleaving to a master love: "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other*" (Matt.6:24). Sometimes, with a moral connotation, it refers to the virtue of goodwill and unselfish giving, in contrast to malice and evil doing. In this sense Scripture commands us to love the Lord (Deut.6:5), our neighbor (Lev.19:18), and even our enemies (Luke 6:27). Our duty to love our enemies discloses that goodwill does not always coalesce with delight. Nor is the feeling of love necessarily joined to the virtue of love, as Amnon's mistreatment of Tamar confirms. In some relations love is emotional, volitional, and moral. In godly, conjugal love, a husband and wife feel delight in, voluntarily cleave to, and display goodwill for each other. Similarly, God delights in his people, cleaves to them, and has goodwill to them. Therefore, God's love illustrates an inherent weakness in my arrangement of God's attributes. In one respect God's love for his saints is a feeling; in another, a virtue. Gill also sensed the difficulty this poses for our approach. He lists goodness as a virtue, but never distinctly expounds it as such. He blends it with his treatment of God's affections (*Body of Divinity*, Vol.1, p.51, 136). How do we proceed? We focus here on God's feeling of delight and survey texts that feature it. In Lecture 17 we expound God's goodness to his saints in whom he delights and to the wicked that he detests. Since love bridges God's feeling and virtue, we suffer some overlap. We collate this testimony around five primary objects: Christ, his creative genius, his justice and mercy, moral virtue and righteous men, and the society of his people.

a. Scripture features God's delight in and love for Christ.

Ps.22:8, "*Let him rescue him, seeing he delights in him*"

Isa.42:1, "*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delights*"
 John 17:24, "*for you loved me before the foundation of the world*"

In Ps.22:8 Christ's enemies use sarcasm. In arrogant blindness, they dare to presume that God finds Jesus Christ as detestable as they do. The word translated "*delights in*" is צַפֵּחַ (CHAPHETS). This very word often depicts God's will (e.g. Ps.51:6). This shows the close connection between the good pleasure of his will and his feelings of delight. In Isa.42:1, the Father affirms his delight in the incarnate Christ. Here he employs the word רָצִיחַ (RATSAH), which means to be pleased with, or satisfy. This word also displays the same connection, since RATSON, translated "*will*" in Ps.40:8, comes from it. RATSAH also displays the close connection between God's delight and his pleasure (the opposite of anger). When the Father beholds Jesus, he experiences a sensation composed of intense delight and gratification. He finds in Jesus nothing repulsive or morally wrong. In John 17:24 Jesus traces God's love for him to its eternal source. This love surely includes divine feeling, volition and virtue. The Father has only goodwill toward the Son, and stands eternally committed to the Son in bonds of inter-Trinitarian loyalty. Yet, even from eternity, this love includes the spiritual sensation of delight. Jesus appeals to this eternal love when he prays for his people. John Flavel captures this wonderful truth in his excellent sermon on Christ's primeval glory,

"these delights of the Father and the Son in one another knew not a moment's interruption, or diminution: thus did these great and glorious persons mutually let forth their fullest pleasure and delight, each into the heart of the other; they lay as it were embosomed in one another, entertaining themselves with delights and pleasures ineffable, and unconceivable. Hence we observe, Doct. *That the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and most unspeakable delight and pleasure, in the enjoyment of his Father*" (*Works*, Vol.1, pgs.43,44).

Behold Christ's unfathomable goodwill to us. He lays aside, for a while, his glorious sensation of divine delight, to endure human hatred, bodily suffering, and divine abandonment.

b. Scripture features God's delight in his creative genius and wisdom.

Prov.8:30, "*Then I was by him, as a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*"

The word translated "*delight*" is שִׂשׂוּן (SHASHUA), which means "enjoyment", "pleasure", or "delight." It comes from the verb שָׂאָה (SHAA), "to look upon with complacency", "to dandle", "to delight in." This shows us the close connection between divine delight and joy. This text personifies wisdom. Wisdom speaks as the subject, in the first person. The text views divine wisdom in its creative genius, designing, forming, and establishing the universe. When the Lord contemplates his wisdom displayed in his creation, he experiences a sensation of delight. Some (For example, John Flavel *Works*, Vol.1, pgs.42,3) regard this passage as a reference to God the Son prior to his incarnation. Clearly, the Son mediates creation (John 1:3,4), and Paul calls him "*the wisdom of God*" (1 Cor.1:24,30). Thus, even if this text does not refer to him explicitly, it at least implies that God rejoices in Christ, the Word, as "the wisdom of God" through whom all things were made.

c. Scripture features God's delight in his justness and mercy.

Jer.9:24, "*I am Jehovah who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, says Jehovah*"
 Mic.7:18, "*Who is a God like unto you, that pardons iniquity...he retains not his anger for ever, because he delights in lovingkindness*"

Both passages translate CHAPHETS as "*delight*." Scripture underscores that God's delight in redemptive mercy is closely bound to the free and unconstrained good pleasure of his will. When God shows mercy to sinners, pardons their iniquity, and puts away his anger, he experiences a sensation of delight. Again, when he exercises justice and kindness toward men, he experiences delight. When God redeems men from sin, he redeems them justly. He punishes sin when he pardons sin. When he sees the sins of believers punished and pardoned, he experiences delight. No sin goes unpunished, not even the sins of Christians, but some sins, the sins of the damned, go unpardoned. In their case, he delights in the justness of retribution, though he does not experience a sadistic sensation of delight, pleasure, or gratification in their death (Ezek.18:23,32, 33:11).

d. Scripture features God delight in moral virtue and in righteous men.

1 Sam.15:22, "*Has Jehovah as great **delight in** burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?*"
 Ps.11:7, "*Jehovah is righteous; he **loves** righteousness*"
 Ps.18:19, "*He delivered me, because he **delighted in me***"
 Ps.33:5, "*He **loves** righteousness and justice*"
 Ps.37:23,4, "*A man's goings are established of Jehovah; And he **delights in** his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down*"
 Ps.37:28, "*Jehovah **loves** justice, and forsakes not his saints*"
 Prov.11:1, "*A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah; but a just weight is his **delight***"
 Prov.12:22, "*Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his **delight***"
 Prov.15:8, "*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; but the prayer of the upright is his **delight***"
 Isa.61:8, "*I Jehovah **love** justice, I hate robbery with iniquity*"

Of these ten texts, three use a form of CHAPHETS for "*delight*" (1 Sam.15:22; Pss.18:19, 37:23,4). Three use RATSON (Prov.11:1, 12:22, 15:8). The other four texts use אָהַב (AHAB) translated, "*love*", to describe his delight (Pss.11:7, 33:5, 37:28; Isa.61:8). These text place stress the delight that God feels when he beholds justice and righteousness (Pss.11:7, 33:5, 37:28; Prov.11:1; Isa.61:8), obedience (1 Sam.15:22), and godly devotion (Prov.15:8). They stress that he feels delight in righteous men, who love him, fear him, seek him, and walk in his ways (Pss.18:19, 37:23,24; Prov.12:22, 15:8). This delight moves him to deliver and protect the righteous, hear their prayer, and reward their obedience. This should encourage sincere Christians. Dear Christian, beset with much trouble, does God feel disgust when you pour out your heart to him in prayer? Absolutely not! Think of it Christian. When you pray, God experiences a sensation of delight (Prov.15:8). Similarly, he delights in your just and faithful dealings with your fellow men (Prov.12:22). This calls us to live so that when God sees our actions, his soul reverberates with a spiritual sensation of delight.

e. Scripture features God's delight in the society of his people: in their fathers, their obedience, and their capital, Zion.

Num.14:8, "*If Jehovah **delight in** us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us*"
 Deut.7:12,13, "*because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, that Jehovah your God will...**love** you, and bless you, and multiply you*"
 Deut.10:15, "*Only Jehovah had a **delight in** your fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them*"
 Ps.87:2, "*Jehovah **loves** the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*"
 Isa.62:4, "*You shall no more be termed Forsaken...but you shall be called Hephzibah...for Jehovah **delights in** you*"

Of these five texts, two render CHAPHETS as "*delight in*" (Num.14:8; Isa.62:4). In Deut.10:15, the word אָהַב (CHASHAQ), which means "to cling to", or "to join", or "to love", is translated "*delight in*." In the other two texts, AHAB is translated "*love*" (Deut.7:13; Ps.87:2). This very word describes Amnon's intense feeling of delight in Tamar in 2 Sam.13:4,15. In Num.14:8, Joshua and Caleb express their hope in God's favor in the midst of the fear and unbelief of their brethren. They use God's delight in his people to motivate their cynical countrymen to confidence that the Lord will bring them safely into Canaan. In Deut.7:12,13 Moses motivates the Israelites to obey God by encouraging their desire to bring him delight. When his people obey, God feels delight in them. When God thus delights in them, he blesses and multiplies them. Thus, since his love for his obedient people involves the feeling of delight in them, theologians sometimes refer to it as God's "*complacent*" love. In Deut.10:15 Moses describes the Lord's delight in and attachment to the patriarchs, which moved him to select their posterity as his people. In Ps.87:2 the sons of Korah extol the Lord's special delight in and preference for Zion, the city in which he chose to dwell. In Isa.62:4 the Lord promises that someday Zion will be blessed with restoration to her special place as the object of God's delight. Though once forsaken, he promises to delight in her again. This promise he fulfills wondrously under the new covenant by the coming and ministry of his Son and Spirit.

2. Behold the biblical display of God's detestation and hate.

The Bible displays God's feelings of detestation, loathing, disgust, abhorrence, and hate with a variety of terms and expressions. It often contrasts his detestation with his delight and love: "*I Jehovah **love** justice, I **hate** robbery with iniquity*" (Isa.61:8), "*I **hate**, I despise your feasts, and I will take no **delight** in your solemn assemblies*" (Amos 5:21). Further, whatever the Lord hates and loathes is called an abomination to him, "*for every **abomination** to Jehovah, which he **hates**, have they done unto their gods*" (Deut.12:31). Scripture also displays divine

detestation merely by negating his delight, "you did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I **delighted not**" (Isa.65:12). Sometimes, Scripture asserts that God rejects and detests specific persons or things: "But you have cast us off and **rejected**, you have been wroth with your anointed. You have **abhorred** the covenant of your servant" (Ps.89:38,39); "I **abhor** the excellency of Jacob, and **hate** his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein" (Amos 6:8); "Esau I **hated**, and made his mountain a desolation...the people against whom Jehovah has indignation forever" (Mal.1:3,4). In these instances, God's hatred has a broader connotation, which includes rejection, an act of the will, and detestation, a feeling. Notice the primary terms for God's feeling of revulsion. The Hebrew word translated "hate" is נָשָׂא (SANE), sometimes rendered "odious." In the passages listed below it occurs ten times: Deut.12:31, 16:22; Ps.11:5; Prov.6:16; Isa.1:14, 61:8; Jer.44:4; Amos 5:21; Zech.8:17; Mal.2:16. Its New Testament counterpart, μισεω (miseo), depicts God's hate in Rom.9:13. The term for "abomination" in the New Testament is βδελυγμα (bdelugma), found in Luke 16:15. Its Old Testament counterpart is תֵּבַחָהּ (TOEBAH), "something disgusting." It occurs twenty times in the passages listed below: Deut.7:25, 12:31, 17:1, 18:10-12 (2), 23:18, 24:4, 32:16; Prov.6:16, 11:1,20, 12:22, 15:8,9,26, 16:5, 17:15, 20:10; Isa.1:13; Jer.44:4. It comes from טָאַבָּ (TAAB), "to loathe" or "to detest." This word occurs in Ps.5:6, where it is translated "abhors." Three other terms are rendered "abhors" in the passages below: גָּאַל (GAAL), "to detest", in Lev.26:30; נָאָטָה (NAATS), "to scorn", in Deut.32:19; and מָאַסָה (MAAS), "to spurn", in Ps.78:59. Scripture dwells on two objects of his hatred: false religion, and the wicked with their deeds. We now focus on each of these.

a. Scripture emphasizes that God hates false, vain, and hypocritical religion.

Lev.26:30, "And I will destroy your high places, an cut down your sun-images, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols; and my soul shall **abhor** you"

Deut.7:25, "the graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire...for it is **an abomination** to Jehovah your God"

Deut.12:31, "for every **abomination** to Jehovah, which he **hates**, have they done unto their gods"

Deut.16:22, "Neither shall you set up a pillar, which Jehovah your God **hates**"

Deut.17:1, "You shall not sacrifice unto Jehovah...a sheep wherein is a blemish, or anything evil; for that is **an abomination** unto Jehovah your God"

Deut.18:10-12, "There shall not be found with you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that uses divination, one that practices augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever does these things is **an abomination** unto Jehovah: and because of these **abominations** Jehovah your God drives them out from before you"

Deut.23:18, "You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah your God for any vow, for even both these are **an abomination** unto Jehovah your God"

Deut.32:16,19, "they moved him to jealousy with strange gods; with **abominations** they provoked him to anger...Jehovah saw it, and **abhorred** them"

Ps.78:58,59, "and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this he was wroth, and greatly **abhorred** Israel"

Prov.15:8, "The sacrifice of the wicked is **an abomination** to Jehovah; but the prayer of the upright is his delight"

Isa.1:13,14, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is **an abomination** unto me...Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul **hates**; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them"

Isa.66:4, "they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I **delighted not**"

Jer.44:4,5, "Oh, do not this **abominable** thing that I **hate**. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods"

Amos 5:21, "I **hate**, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies"

Luke 16:15, "You are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knows your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is **an abomination** in the sight of God"

When God beholds false religion and idolatry, he experiences a sensation of intense revulsion and disgust. He absolutely abominates and hates idolatry (Jer.44:4,5, etc.). It provokes him to anger and wrath (Lev.26:30; Ps.78:59). This displays the close connection between his revulsion and anger. Further, he responds to the occult, not with indifference, as though it were a harmless novelty, but with a sensation of loathing (Deut.18:10-12). We should respond to it accordingly. Further, God also hates all hypocrisy and perversion in religion (Deut.17:1, 23:18; Prov.15:8; Isa.1:13,14; Amos 5:21; Luke 16:15). He even detests all man-made and worldly innovations in his worship (Deut.12:31). Let us take this to heart. Let us worship him sincerely, in faith and holiness, with pure hearts and clean hands. Let us worship him biblically, only according to what he requires in his Word. Let us worship in such a way that God experiences delight, rather than disgust and revulsion.

b. Scripture emphasizes that God hates moral wickedness and its perpetrators.

Prov.6:16, "There are six things which Jehovah **hates**; yea, seven which are an **abomination** unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that devises wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that utters lies, and he that sows discord among brethren"

Deut.24:4, "her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is **abomination** before Jehovah"

Ps.5:5, "The arrogant shall not stand in your sight: you **hate** all the workers of iniquity"

Ps.11:5,6, "the wicked and him that loves violence his soul **hates**...Jehovah **abhors** the bloodthirsty and deceitful man"

Prov.11:1, "A false balance is an **abomination** to Jehovah; but a just weight is his delight"

Prov.11:20, "They that are perverse in heart are an **abomination** to Jehovah; but such as are perfect are his delight"

Prov.12:22, "Lying lips are an **abomination** to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his delight"

Prov.15:9, "The way of the wicked is an **abomination** to Jehovah; but he loves him that follows after righteousness"

Prov.15:26, "Evil devices are an **abomination** to Jehovah"

Prov.16:5, "Every one that is proud in heart is an **abomination** to Jehovah"

Prov.17:15, "He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an **abomination** to Jehovah"

Prov.20:10, "Diverse weights, and diverse measures, both of them alike are an **abomination** to Jehovah"

Isa.61:8, "I Jehovah love justice, I **hate** robbery with iniquity"

Zech.8:17, "let none of you devise evil in your hearts against your neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I **hate**, says Jehovah"

Mal.2:16, "I **hate** putting away, says Jehovah, the God of Israel, and him that covers his garment with violence, says Jehovah of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously"

Men frequently tell us that God "hates wickedness, but loves the wicked." In the light of this overwhelming witness to the contrary, how can anyone claim to take the Bible seriously and say such things? In our sample, at least seven texts assert that God detests and abominates both wickedness and the wicked. He hates, not merely haughtiness, but "*haughty eyes*"; not merely lies, but the "*lying tongue*" which tells them; not merely the shedding of innocent blood, but the "*hands that shed*" it; not merely wicked purposes, but the "*heart that devises*" them; not merely running to mischief, but the "*feet*" swift to do it; not merely false testimony, but the "*false witness*" who utters it; and not merely discord sown among brethren, but him "*that sows*" it (Prov.6:16). When God beholds wicked men, he experiences a sensation of intense revulsion, not delight. This hatred of wicked men is universal. He hates "*all the workers of iniquity*" (Ps.5:5). Yet, these texts also repeatedly affirm that God only hates the wicked, not the righteous. When he beholds the righteous, he feels delight (Prov.11:20, 12:22). He feels different sensations in response to the wicked and the righteous. He does not feel the same thing for everyone. These texts also stress that God detests every form of moral evil. He chiefly loathes, arrogance, treachery, murder, perversion, theft, injustice, and lies. Scripture also underscores that he especially detests and punishes sexual perversion (Lev.20:23, with v.8-22). This calls us to put away from our lives everything that God hates. It also calls us to deal faithfully with our fellow men regarding how God feels about them.

3. Behold the biblical display of God's joy.

Deut.28:63, "And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah **rejoiced** over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will **rejoice** over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you, and you shall be plucked from the land whither you go in to possess it"

Deut.30:9,10, "And Jehovah your God will make you plenteous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, for good: for Jehovah will again **rejoice** over you for good, as he **rejoiced** over your fathers; if you shall obey the voice of Jehovah"

Judg.9:13, "And the vine said to them, Should I leave my new wine, which **cheers** God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees?"

Ps.60:6, "God has spoken in his holiness: **I will exult**; I will divide Shechem"

Ps.104:31, "Let the glory of Jehovah endure forever; Let Jehovah **rejoice** in his works"

Isa.62:5, "as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God **rejoice** over you"

Isa.65:19, "I will **rejoice** in Jerusalem, and **joy** in my people; and there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying"

Jer.32:40,41, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from following them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me. Yea, I will **rejoice** over them to do them good"

Zeph.3:16,17, "Fear not; O Zion, let not your hands be slack. Jehovah your God is in the midst of you, a mighty one who will save; and he will **rejoice** over you with **joy**; he will rest in his love; he will **joy** over you with singing"

Luke 15:7,10, "I say to you, that even so there shall be **joy in heaven** over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance...Even so, I say, there is **joy** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents"

“Sadly”, John Gill is the only Reformed theologian who expounds God's joy systematically (*Body of Divinity*, Vol.1, pgs.146-148). In these texts, Scripture uses a rich variety of expressions to paint a remarkable picture of God's sensation of joy. In the Old Testament, in four texts, the word שׂוֹשׂ (SUS), "to make mirth", "to be bright", is translated "*rejoice*" (Deut.28:63, 30:9,10; Jer.32:41; Zeph.3:17). In Isa.65:19, it is translated "*joy*." The word שָׂמַח (SAMACH), "to brighten up", "to make merry", "to rejoice", occurs in two of these texts. It is translated "*cheers*" in Judg.9:13, and "*rejoice*" in Ps.104:31. The picturesque Hebrew language, in its graphic beauty, relates light with gladness, and darkness with gloominess. In the vernacular, we say, "lighten up." In Ps.60:6, the word קָלַץ (ALAZ), "to leap", "to jump for joy", is translated "*exult*." In Isa.62:5, the word מָשׂוֹשׂ (MASOS), "joy" or "mirth", is translated "*rejoice*." In Isa.65:19, the word גָּלַל (GUL), literally "to spin", is translated "*rejoice*." It pictures someone "reeling with delight." It is translated "*joy*" in Zeph.3:17. The word שִׂמְחָה (SIMCHAH), "blithesomeness", or "glee", is also translated "*joy*" in Zeph.3:17. In the New Testament, the word χαρά (chara), "cheerfulness", refers to heavenly "*joy*" in Luke 15:7,10. It often also describes human joy (Matt.2:10, 13:44, 28:8; Luke 24:52). Scripture asserts that God experiences joy over his creative works and when his creatures enjoy his benefits (Judg.9:13; Ps.104:31). It places greater emphasis on the joy he feels in his people and their redemption (Deut.28:63, 30:9,10; Isa.62:5, 65:19; Jer.32:41; Zeph.3:17). It reserves superlative honor for the joy God feels when a sinner turns from sin to him (Luke 15:7,10).

Consider God's joy in his creation. This joy is like the sensation of satisfaction, exuberance, and fulfillment men feel when they do a job well, "*Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion*" (Eccles.3:22). Again, when Scripture asserts that wine "*cheers*" both the creature and the Creator, it evidently doesn't mean that the Lord occasionally takes a drink of alcohol. Rather, the point is that the Creator rejoices when his creatures enjoy the good gifts that he has richly bestowed on them. Though drunkenness grieves the Lord (Eph.4:17,18), he rejoices when men enjoy alcohol in moderation. We must not think that God is a "spoil sport", or ascetic, or caustic, or grim, or oppressive. He does not frown even at men's most meager enjoyment, but to the contrary, experiences a sensation of joy when he sees men enjoy creation to the full. Could it be that, in this respect, some of us need to become more like our God, and less like monks and Pharisees? Are some of you, even as you read, becoming angry with me for writing these things? Put away your judgmental anger, and submit your mind to God's Word, "*Should I leave my new wine, which cheers God and man.*"

Consider God's joy in his people. Under the old covenant, his rejoicing over them cuts two ways. When his people walk in obedience to his law, he rejoices in blessing them. If, on the other hand, his people, as a society, break his covenant and serve other gods, then he rejoices in their punishment (Deut.28:63). This indicates that God experiences joy in being faithful to covenantal commitments, whether that faithfulness involves inflicting its curses or bestowing its blessings. Yet, he promises them that a better day will come, in which he morally transforms his people, so that, under a new covenant, he forever rejoices over them to do them good (Deut.30:9,10; Jer.32:41). Scripture foretells the glory of that joy. It likens it to the intense sensation of exuberance, exhilaration, and satisfaction which a groom feels when he weds his bride, "*as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you*" (Isa.62:5). Scripture encourages God's people to confidence and diligence with that joy, "**Fear not; O Zion, let not your hands be slack.** *Jehovah your God is in the midst of you, a mighty one who will save; and he will rejoice over you with joy*" (Zeph.3:17). Further, Scripture even says that the Lord conveys his own joy, in some measure, to his people, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*", "*that they may have my joy made full in themselves*" (John 15:11, 17:13). The Lord closely associates his joy with his personal and inter-Trinitarian relationship with his Father (John 17:23,4,6). Scripture also closely associates Christian joy with the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, "*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom.14:17). Thus, by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, God enables Christians to

experience some measure of that spiritual sensation of blessedness which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always felt. Though the explicit disclosure of this marvelous truth awaits the coming of the Son and Spirit, yet even the Old Testament points us in this direction, "*the joy of Jehovah is your strength*", "*You will show me the path of life: in your presence is fullness of joy; in your right hand there are pleasures for evermore*" (Neh.8:10; Ps.16:11).

Consider God's joy over penitent sinners. The Lord affirms that when a sinner repents, joy is experienced in heaven, "*I say, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents*" (Luke 15:10). The Lord does not explicitly name the one who rejoices. Possibly, he means to say that the angels themselves rejoice when a sinner repents. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that this is so. What then? Shall we conceive of angels brimming with a sensation of exuberance over God's redemptive work while the Redeemer himself, who performed the work, who gave the sinner repentance unto life, sits on his throne glum and morbid, unmoved, experiencing no sensation of exhilaration and satisfaction? Preposterous! Yea, rather, outrageous! To the contrary, God's joy over a penitent sinner surpasses the exuberance he feels when he beholds one hundred righteous men.

Finally, Prov.8:30 deserves special mention because it points, at least implicitly, to the eternal joy of the Trinity, "*I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.*" I'm not comfortable either with Flavel's explanation of the text, or with completely disregarding it. Nor does Gill ignore the text (*Body of Divinity*, Vol.1, p.148). This text pictures divine wisdom as a person, and describes his eternal experience. Even if this is a literary device, it is an inspired one, which points implicitly to Christ. Christ is a Person, called God's Wisdom and Word, who always existed. He was the object of God's eternal delight, the very delight of which wisdom, speaking as a person, claims to be the object. Are we "careless exegetes" because we see some correspondence between the eternal joy actually felt by Christ and the eternal joy which wisdom, speaking as a person, claims to have felt? The text describes wisdom's eternal rejoicing with the word שָׂחָה (SACHAQ), "to laugh." It depicts a wonderful combination of delight and exuberance. It is translated "to rejoice", or "to sport." It pictures a child playing and having fun in front of its father, while the father looks on with intense delight. If you have children, you can probably remember blessed occasions when they frolicked around you as you watched with delight. Thus, Scripture uses domestic bliss to portray the intense sensation of exhilaration and satisfaction that the triune God felt from all eternity. What a privilege that we, in Christ, should to some degree enter into that joy.

4. Behold the biblical display of God's grief.

Gen.6:5,6, "*And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*"

Judg.10:16, "*And they put away the foreign gods from among them, and served Jehovah; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*"

Ps.78:40, "*How oft did they rebel against him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*"

Ps.95:10, "*Forty years long was I grieved with that generation*"

Isa.63:10, "*But they rebelled, and grieved his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them*"

Eph.4:30, "*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption*"

Heb.3:10, "*I was displeased with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart*"

Heb.3:17, "*And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?*"

Scripture contrasts joy and grief, "*No chastening for the present seems joyous but grievous*", "*that they may do this with joy, not with grief*" (Heb.12:11, 13:17). Esth.9:22, John 16:20, and 2 Cor.6:10 confirm this contrast. In eternity, and in creation, God experiences only joy. Now, however, since man has brought sin into the world, and with sin, suffering and death (Rom.5:12-14), even God now experiences the sensation of grief. However, Scripture speaks of a grief which only men feel, which accompanies bodily pain and suffering. The word מַכּוֹבָה (MAKOBAH) frequently describes this human grief. Scripture never uses that word to depict divine grief. It never ascribes to God either bodily suffering or the inward grief which accompanies it. Yet, in Exod.3:7, God expresses sympathetic understanding toward his people when they suffer in this way, "*I know their griefs.*" In these passages, Scripture describes God's grief with several terms. The Hebrew word אֲטָבָה (ATSAB),

literally "to carve", occurs in Gen.6:6, Ps.78:40, and Isa.63:10. It is translated "grieve", "vex", "hurt", or "make sorry." It paints a graphic picture of a heart cut and fashioned by a sense of wrong and harm. The word קָצַר (QATSAR), literally to "curtail", or "to harvest", occurs in Judg.10:16. It is translated "cut down", "discourage", "shorten", or "grieve." It pictures the heart "cut short", like harvested grain, by dire circumstances. The word קָטַע (QUT), "cut off", occurs in Ps.95:10. It is translated "detest" or "grieve." The Greek word λυπέω (lupeo), "to distress", occurs in Eph.4:30. It is translated, "grieve" or "cause sorrow." The word προσοχθίζω (prosochthizo), "to be vexed with something irksome", or "to be indignant at", occurs in Heb.3:10,17. It is translated "grieved" or "displeased." Thus, God's grief is the sensation of spiritual anguish and dissatisfaction which he experiences when he beholds harm (Judg.10:16) and moral wrong (Isa.63:10). Thus, Scripture closely associates God's grief with his anger and displeasure (Ps.95:10; Heb.3:10). Among men too, anger often accompanies the sensation of being grieved. For example, Christ responds to the cruel legalism of the Pharisees with a mingled sensation of anguish and indignation, "*And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he says to the man, Stretch forth your hand*" (Mark 3:5). Scripture especially associates God's grief with four things: (1) the incessant and universal wickedness of fallen men (Gen.6:5,6); (2) the suffering of his people, even under his judgment for their sin (Judg.10:16); (3) the aggravated rebellion of the wilderness generation of Israel (Pss.78:40, 95:10; Isa.63:10; Heb.3:10,17); and (4) unmortified malice and rebellion in a temple of the Holy Spirit, whether in a Christian church or a Christian heart (Eph.4:30).

Consider God's grief over incessant human wickedness. This grief is so intense that before the flood God actually felt sorry that he made man, "*And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*" (Gen.6:6). When God watched sin spread like cancer through the human race, he felt an intense sensation of spiritual dissatisfaction and anguish. What caused God to feel such regret? Incessant human wickedness, "*And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen.6:5). In God's holy sight, wicked men do nothing morally good. Everything they think, feel, purpose, say, and do is wicked and evil. Day after day, month after month, year after year, he sustains and provides for creatures who cause him to feel incessant moral revulsion. Thus, after centuries of provocation, God says in the days of Noah, "*I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground*" (Gen.6:7). He determines to redress his constant sensation of anguish and dissatisfaction. Yet, in his mercy, he shows favor to Noah and his family (Gen.6:8ff). We owe our very existence to that favor. Note the close connection between God's feeling of grief and his virtue of long-suffering. God, displaying his goodness and long-suffering, endures anguish while Noah prepares the ark (1 Pet.3:20). Again, after the flood, he covenants that he will never again destroy the earth with water. Even now he waits, "*enduring with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath*", for he is "*not willing that any should perish*" whom he has selected for glory (Rom.9:22; 2 Pet.3:9). While he forestalls the final conflagration and judgment, we behold his great goodness as he endures his sensation of anguish and dissatisfaction over human sin.

Consider God's grief over the suffering and affliction of his people. Judg.10:16 says that "*his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.*" When he beholds their suffering and hardship, he feels a sensation of anguish over their misery. This grief moves him, not to destroy his people, but to deliver them from their misery. God himself sent this very affliction and misery upon his people for their sin. When they provoke him to anger by serving other gods, he afflicts and punishes them. When they sincerely humble themselves, put away their false gods, and plead with the Lord for help, then his heart feels anguish for them. Then he grants their request and rescues them from their enemies.

Consider God's grief over the aggravated rebellion of the wilderness generation. Those men and events stand as the chief biblical monument to God's grief over the rebellion of his people. Five of our texts mention this rebellion (Pss.78:40, 95:10; Isa.63:10; Heb.3:10,17). The word "aggravated" best characterizes their notorious behavior. They rebelled against God repeatedly, "*these ten times*" (Num.14:22), and in the face of numerous and stupendous miracles, both in Egypt and in the wilderness, "*How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?*" (Num.14:11). Scripture posts their unbelief and its punishment as a warning for us, "*Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our*

admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor.10:11). The writer to Hebrews also presses this admonition on our consciences (Heb.3:7-4:1). Let us take heed and keep a tender conscience. Let us not reject light from God's Word. Let us learn the lesson of the wilderness generation.

Consider God's grief over unmortified carnality in a temple of the Holy Spirit. Scripture says plainly, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph.4:30). In the context Paul exhorts the church to mortify vices that grieve the Holy Spirit and to cultivate their opposing virtues. He calls upon them to put away dishonesty and cultivate transparency (4:25), to resolve their grievances quickly (4:26), to put away thievery and cultivate considerateness (4:27), to put away unprofitable talk and cultivate edifying speech (4:29), and to put away malice and bitterness and cultivate goodwill and kindness (4:31,32). He then calls the church to conduct their fellowship in a climate of holy love, not in sexual lust (5:1-14). Take this to heart. If we grieve him we will know less of his presence and power as Comforter, Sanctifier, Spirit of Truth, and Spirit of Adoption. If we grieve him, our sins grow strong, our graces weak; our prayer turns feeble, the heavens to brass; our Bible grows dim; our peace and joy shrivel. Brethren, let us not grieve God's Spirit.

In closing, some may think that this teaching is incompatible with God's immutability and transcendence, or with his infinite perfection. We should not think that we can wrap God's emotive life into neat packages. We must not deny, either God's infinite joy and blessedness, or his incessant grief over human sin. Someone may object that these texts just contain a figure of speech, since God can't really feel sensations of anguish. If so, why does Scripture ascribe this feeling to God? What truth does it actually tell us about him? All such objections fly in the face of the clear teaching of Scripture. Remember that all sound doctrine is just a fence around the mystery.

5. Behold the biblical display of God's gratification or pleasure.

1 Kings 3:10-12, "And the speech **pleased** the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life, neither have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice; behold I have done according to your word"

Ps.51:19, "then you will **delight in** the sacrifices of righteousness"

Ps.69:30,31, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. And it will **please** Jehovah better than an ox"

Prov.16:7, "When a man's ways **please** Jehovah, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him"

Eccles.7:26, "And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are bands: whoso **pleases** God shall escape from her"

Luke 3:22, "You are my beloved Son; in you I am **well-pleased**"

Rom.8:8, "and they that are in the flesh cannot **please** God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you"

Phil.4:18, "But I have all things and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, **well-pleasing** to God"

Col.3:20, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is **well-pleasing** in the Lord"

1 Thess.2:4, "so we speak; not as **pleasing** men, but God who proves our hearts"

1 Thess.4:1, "Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord, that, as you received of us how you ought to walk and to **please** God, even as you do walk,-that you abound more and more"

Heb.11:5,6, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he has had witness born to him that before his translation he had been **well-pleasing** to God, and without faith it is impossible to be **well-pleasing** unto him"

Heb.13:16, "to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is **well-pleased**"

Heb.13:20, 21, "That now the God of peace...make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is **well-pleasing** in his sight, through Jesus Christ"

1 John 3:22, "and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are **pleasing** in his sight"

God's pleasure is the spiritual sensation of gratification that he feels when he sees what is morally good and acceptable in his sight. In 1 Kings 3:10, the phrase יָטַב בְּעֵינָיו (YATAB BeEYNEY) is translated "pleased." Literally, it means "to be right, sound, or beautiful in the eyes of." Whatever seems proper in God's eyes pleases him. In Ps.69:31, YATAB is again translated "please." Here the phrase is literally, "it will be right, or beautiful to Jehovah." In Prov.16:7, RATSAB is translated "pleases." This shows the close association of God's sensation of moral satisfaction with his preceptive will. When men obey his preceptive will, he feels pleased. In Eccles.7:26 the expression

טוֹב לִפְנֵי (TOB LIPeNEY) is translated "*pleases*." This phrase literally means, "the one good before the face of." In the New Testament, two major word families describe God's feeling of moral satisfaction. First, Scripture uses the verb εὐαρεστοῦμαι (euaresteo), the adjective εὐαρεστος (euarestos), and the adverb εὐαρεστῶς (euarestos). The verb, which means "gratify entirely", is translated "*please*", or "*be well-pleasing*" (Heb.11:5,6, 13:16). The adjective, which means "fully agreeable", is translated "*acceptable*" (Rom.12:1, 14:18; 2 Cor.5:9; Eph.5:10) or "*well-pleasing*" (Phil.4:18; Col.3:20; Heb.13:21). The adverb, used only in Heb.12:28, is translated "*acceptably*." Second, Scripture uses the verb ἀρεσκω (aresko), its cognate noun ἀρεσκεία (areskeia), and the adjective ἀρεστος (arestos). The verb, which means "to be agreeable", is translated "*please*" (Rom.8:8; 1 Thess.2:4, 4:1). The noun, which means, "complaisance", "that which pleases", is translated "*pleasing*", "*to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*" (Col.1:10). The adjective, which means "agreeable", is translated "*things that please*" or "*are pleasing*" (John 8:29; 1 John 3:22). In addition, Scripture occasionally uses the verb εὐδοκεῖω (eudokeo), which means to "seem good", to describe this feeling. In this connection, it is translated "*be well-pleased*" (Matt.3:17, 12:18, 17:5; Luke 3:22). This underscores the connection between the good-pleasure of God's will and his sensation of satisfaction with moral good. These passages teach that no wicked man can ever please God (Rom.8:8). Even their benevolent deeds or acts of devotion don't please him because "*without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him*" (Heb.13:6). Thus, it is possible for believers, even in this life, to please the Lord. Scripture stresses that God is pleased with both with the impeccable virtue of his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, and with the evangelical virtue of those who believe in him.

Consider God's gratification over the impeccable virtue of his Son. In the Old Testament God foretells being pleased with Christ (Matt.12:18). After the incarnation at Jesus' baptism (Matt.3:17; Luke 3:22) and transfiguration (Matt.17:5) the Father says with an audible voice from heaven that he pleases him. Jesus, aware of his sinless perfection, asserts that he always pleases God (John 8:29). Paul calls Christ's impeccable virtue in God's eyes "*the righteousness of God*" (Rom.1:17, 3:21,22, 5:18,19, 10:3; 2 Cor.5:21). Christ's virtue stems from his perfect obedience to God's will in his moral law (Ps.40:7,8) and in his messianic commandment about the cross (Matt.26:39,42; Heb.10:7-10).

Consider God's gratification over the evangelical virtue of those in Christ. Although no Christian can ever attain sinless perfection in this life, or ever perform even one completely sinless act, nevertheless, Scripture boldly declares that all Christians please God when they obey God's commandments evangelically (Phil.4:18; Heb.13:16,21; 1 Thess.4:1; 1 John 3:22). Think of it! When God sees our sincere and Spirit-wrought efforts to obey him, even though our remaining corruption clings like leeches to them, he feels, not revulsion or anger, but gratification. Our evangelical obedience moves him, not to chide and avenge, but to commend and reward. God himself enables his people thus to obey and please him (Heb.13:21). Thus he deserves all the glory and credit. When we thus please God, he protects us (Eccles.7:26) and grants us the desires of our hearts (1 John 3:22). Again, though God feels revulsion when he beholds the worship of the wicked, he is gratified with the sincere and godly worship of believers (Pss.51:19, 69:30,31; Phil.4:18; Heb.12:28, 13:15,16). Although our ministries fall far short of the whole-hearted devotion and loyalty he deserves, God feels satisfaction, not revulsion and anger, over the faithful ministries of righteous men (1 Kings 3:10; 1 Thess.2:4). Finally, when little children who believe in Christ obey their parents with evangelical obedience, God feels pleased (Col.3:20). Therefore take heart. Pleasing God is not impossible. In whatever we do, let us make it our aim to be well-pleasing unto him (2 Cor.5:9).

6. *Behold the biblical display of God's anger, wrath, and displeasure.*

In this fallen world God also responds emotively to moral evil. Webster defines "anger" as "a strong feeling of displeasure and usu. of antagonism" (*New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.43). God's anger is the intense sensation of dissatisfaction and indignity, or affront, which he experiences when he beholds moral wrong. Scripture closely associates God's wrath and anger (Rom.2:8). Webster defines wrath as "strong vengeful anger and indignation" (*Ibid.*, p.1343). They also observe, "WRATH may imply either rage or indignation but is likely to suggest a desire or intent to revenge or punish" (*Ibid.*, p.43).

God's wrath is his vengeful anger. His settled intention to avenge and punish sin accompanies his intense displeasure and affront at sin.

I list the major terms for God's anger and wrath in the Old and New Testaments. I list the Old Testament terms alphabetically with their basic meaning and the texts where they explicitly describe God's anger. I list 24 Hebrew terms, 20 of which sometimes depict God's anger. I have recorded at least **433** clear references to God's anger in the Old Testament, **26** in the New, for a total of **459**. I have not included several obscure passages that possibly refer to God's anger. Nor have I catalogued important secondary terms associated with God's anger, like "jealousy" and "vengeance." Nor have I listed idiomatic expressions. Leon Morris confirms the mammoth proportions of this material: "There are more than 20 words used to express the wrath conception as it applies to Yaweh (in addition to a number of other words which occur with only reference to human anger). These are used so frequently that there are over 580 occurrences to be taken into consideration. Now, this constitutes such a formidable body of evidence that we cannot hope to deal with it fully, and can only indicate in general terms the result of a detailed examination" (*The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p.131). I hope this list imparts a sense of how seriously God takes sin.

MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT TERMS

אַנָּפִּי (ANAPH), literally, "to breathe hard", "be enraged", from the rapid breathing associated with anger, translated, "be angry", "displeased"; used of God's anger **14** times: Deut.1:37, 4:21, 9:8,20; 1 Kings 8:46, 11:9; 2 Kings 17:18; 2 Chron.6:36; Ezra 9:14; Ps.2:12, 60:1, 79:5, 85:5; Isa.12:1

אַף (APH), the term most frequently translated "anger" in the OT; In Exod.34:6, Num.14:18, Ps.86:15, Jer.15:15, translated "longsuffering"; derived from ANAPH; literally "nose", "nostril" (Gen.2:7); used of God's anger at least these **168** times: Exod.4:14, 22:24, 32:10,11,12; Num.11:1,10,33, 12:9, 22:22, 25:3,4, 32:10,13,14; Deut.6:15, 7:4, 9:19, 11:17, 13:17, 29:20,23,24,27,28, 31:17, 32:22; Josh.7:1,26, 23:16; Judg.2:14,20, 3:8, 6:39, 10:7; 1 Sam.28:18; 2 Sam.6:7, 24:1; 2 Kings 13:3, 23:26, 24:20; 1 Chron.13:10; 2 Chron.12:12, 25:15, 28:11,13, 29:10, 30:8; Ezra 8:22, 10:14; Neh.9:17; Job 9:13, 14:13, 16:9, 19:11, 20:23,28, 21:17, 35:15, 42:7; Pss.2:5,12, 6:1, 7:6, 21:9, 27:9, 30:5, 56:7, 69:24, 74:1, 76:7, 77:9, 78:21,31,38,49,50, 85:3,5, 90:7,11, 95:11, 103:8, 106:40, 110:5, 145:8; Prov.24:18; Isa.5:25(2), 9:12,17,21, 10:4,5,25, 12:1, 13:3,9,13, 30:27,30, 42:25, 48:9, 63:3,6, 66:15; Jer.2:35, 4:8,26, 7:20, 10:24, 12:13, 15:14, 17:4, 18:23, 21:5, 23:20, 25:37,38, 30:24, 32:31,37, 33:5, 36:7, 42:18, 44:6, 49:37, 51:45, 52:3; Lam.1:12, 2:1(2),3,6,21,22, 3:43,66, 4:11; Ezek.5:13,15, 7:3,8, 13:13, 20:8,21, 22:20, 25:14, 43:8; Dan.9:16; Hos.8:5, 11:9, 13:11, 14:4; Joel 2:13; Jon.3:9, 4:2; Mic.5:15, 7:18; Nah.1:3,6; Hab.3:8,12; Zeph.2:2(2),3, 3:8; Zech.10:3

זָעַם (ZAAM) (verb), "to foam at the mouth"; translated "be angry", "have indignation"; in Num.23:8, translated "denounce"; used of God's anger **5** times: Ps.7:11; Prov.22:14; Isa.66:14; Zech.1:12; Mal.1:4

זָעַם (ZAAM) (noun), "froth"; translated, "anger", "indignation", "rage"; used of God's anger at least these **16** times: Ps.38:3, 69:24, 78:49, 102:10; Isa.10:5,25, 13:5, 30:27; Jer.10:10, 50:25; Lam.2:6; Ezek.21:31, 22:31; Nah.1:6; Hab.3:12; Zeph.3:8

זָעַף (ZAAPH) (verb), "to boil up", translated, "be wrath"; used only of men's anger; 2 Chron.26:19

זָעַף (ZAEPH) (adj), translated "displeased"; used only of men's anger: 1 Kings 20:43, 21:4

זָעַף (ZAAPH) (noun), "anger"; translated, "indignation", "rage", "wrath"; derived from the verb ZAAPH; used **twice** of God's anger: Isa.30:30; Mic.7:9

חַמָּה (CHEMAH), "heat"; translated, "hot displeasure", "fury", "rage", "wrath"; used of God's anger at least these **85** times: Lev.26:28; Num.25:11; Deut.9:19, 29:23,28; 2 Kings 22:13,17; 2 Chron.12:7, 28:9, 34:21,25, 36:16; Job 21:20; Pss.6:1, 38:1, 59:13, 78:38, 79:6, 88:7, 89:46, 90:7, 106:23, Isa.27:4, 34:2, 42:25, 51:17,20,22, 59:18, 63:3,5,6, 66:15; Jer.4:4, 6:11, 7:20, 10:25, 18:20, 21:5,12, 23:19, 25:15, 30:23, 32:31,37, 33:5, 36:7, 42:18(2), 44:6; Lam.2:4, 4:11; Ezek.5:13(2),15, 6:12, 7:8, 8:18, 9:8, 13:13(2),15, 14:19, 16:38,42, 20:8,13,21,33,34, 21:17, 22:20,22, 24:8,13, 25:14,17, 30:15, 36:6,18, 38:18; Dan.9:16; Mic.5:15; Nah.1:2,6; Zech.8:2

חָרָה (CHARAH), "to glow, blaze"; translated, "be angry", "be incensed", "be wrath"; often used with a word for God's anger and translated "be kindled" or "wax hot", "my wrath shall wax hot" (Exod.22:24), "so will the anger of Jehovah be kindled" (Deut.7:4), etc.; used by itself of God's anger **5** times: Gen.18:30,32; 2 Sam.22:8; Ps.18:7; Hab.3:8

חָרוֹן (CHARON), "a burning"; derived from CHARAH; translated "displeasure", "fury", "wrath"; often used with a word for God's anger and translated "fierce", or "fierceness", "the fierce anger of Jehovah" (Num.25:3), "the fierceness of his anger" (Deut.13:17), etc.; used by itself of God's anger at least these **6** times: Exod.15:7; Neh.13:18; Pss.2:5, 88:16; Ezek.7:12,14

חָרַר (CHARAR), "to glow"; translated "be angry", "burn"; only of man's anger, Song of Sol.1:6

כָּעַס (KAAS) (verb), "to trouble"; translated, "provoke to anger", "be angry", "grieve", "enrage", "vex", "have indignation"; used of God's anger **43** times: Deut.4:25, 9:18, 31:29, 32:16,21; Judg.2:12; 1 Kings 14:9,15, 15:30, 16:2,7,13,26,33, 21:22, 22:53; 2 Kings 17:11,17, 21:6,15, 22:17, 23:19,26; 2 Chron.28:25, 33:6, 34:25; Pss.78:58, 106:29; Isa.65:3; Jer.7:18,19, 8:19, 11:17, 25:6,7, 32:29,30,32, 44:3,8; Ezek.8:17, 16:26; Hos.12:14

כַּעַס (KAAS) (noun), "vexation"; derived from the verb KAAS; translated "anger", "provocation", "wrath"; used of God's anger 6 times: Deut.32:19; 1 Kings 15:30, 21:22; 2 Kings 23:26; Ps.85:4; Ezek.20:28

כַּעֲשׂוֹ (KAAS) (noun), "vexation"; also derived from the verb KAAS; form used only in Job; translated "wrath", "indignation", used **once** of God's anger: Job 10:17

עָבַר (ABAR), "to cross over"; used of a transition; in the Hithpael theme translated, "provoke to anger", "rage", "be wroth"; used of God's anger 5 times: Deut.3:26; Pss.78:21,59,62, 89:38

עֲבָרָה (EBeRAH), "outburst"; derived from ABAR; translated, "anger", "rage", "wrath"; used of God's anger at least these 25 times: Job 21:30, (40:11, by implication); Pss.78:49, 85:3, 90:9,11; Prov.11:4,23 (at least implicitly); Isa.9:19, 10:6, 13:9,13; Jer.7:29; Lam.2:2, 3:1; Ezek.7:19, 21:31, 22:21,31, 38:19; Hos.5:10, 13:11; Hab.3:8; Zeph.1:15,18

עָשָׂן (ASHAN), "to smoke"; translated, "be angry"; twice used with a word for God's anger and translated "smoke", "his jealousy shall smoke against that man" (Deut.29:20), "why does your anger smoke" (Ps.74:1); used by itself of God's anger **once**: Ps.80:4

קָצַף (QATSAPH), "to break off", "to burst forth"; translated, "be angry", "be displeased", "be wroth"; used of God's anger 22 times: Lev.10:6; Nu.16:22; Deut.9:7,8,19,22; Josh.22:18; Pss.38:1, 106:32; Eccles.5:6; Isa.47:6, 54:9, 57:16,17(2), 64:5,9; Lam.5:22; Zech.1:2,15(2), 8:14

קָצַף (QETSEPH), "a splinter", as broken off; derived from QATSAPH; translated "wrath", "indignation"; used with a word for God's displeasure and translated "sore", or "very sore", "Jehovah has been sore displeased" (Zech.1:2), "I am very sore displeased" (Zech.1:15); used by itself of God's anger 23 times: Num.1:53, 16:46, 18:5; Deut.29:28; Josh.9:20, 22:20; 1 Chron.27:24; 2 Chron.19:2,10, 24:18, 29:8, 32:25,26, Pss.38:1, 102:10; Isa.34:2, 54:8, 60:10; Jer.10:10, 21:5, 32:37, 50:13; Zech.7:12

קָצַף (QeTSAPH) (verb), Aramaic word which corresponds to Hebrew word QATSAPH; translated "be furious"; used only of man's anger: Dan.2:12

קָצַף (QeTSAPH) (noun), Aramaic word derived from verb QeTSAPH; translated "wrath"; used **once** of God's anger: Ezra 7:23

רָגַז (RAGAZ), "to quiver"; translated "be wroth", "rage"; used 3 times of God's anger: Job 12:6; Isa.28:21; Ezek.16:43

רוּגֵז (ROGEZ), "restlessness"; derived from RAGAZ; translated, "rage", "wrath"; used of thunder in Job 37:2; used **once** of God's anger: Hab.3:2

רָגַז (ReGAZ) (verb), Aramaic word which corresponds to RAGAZ; translated "provoked to wrath"; used **once** of God's anger: Ezra 5:12

OT COLLATION:

The following table summarizes this Old Testament usage:

WORD	USES	WORD	USES
ANAPH	14	ABAR	5
APH	168	EBeRAH	25
ZAAM (vb)	5	ASHAN	1
ZAAM (n)	16	QATSAPH	22
ZAAPH	2	QETSEPH	23
CHEMAH	85	QeTSAPH	1
CHARAH	5	RAGAZ	3
CHARON	6	ROGEZ	1
KAAS (vb)	43	ReGAZ	1
KAAS (n)	6		
KAAS (n)	1		
TOTAL			433

MAJOR NEW TESTAMENT TERMS

ὄργη (orge), "excitement"; translated, "anger", "indignation", "vengeance", "wrath"; used 19 times of God's anger: Matt.3:7; John 3:36; Rom.1:18, 2:5,8, 9:22, 12:19; Eph.2:3, 5:6; Col.3:6; 1 Thess.1:10, 2:16, 5:9; Heb.3:11; Rev.6:16, 11:18, 14:10, 16:19, 19:15

θυμός (thumos), "breathing hard"; translated "fierceness", "indignation", "wrath"; used 7 times of God's anger: Rev.14:10,19, 15:1,7, 16:1,19, 19:15

The New Testament adds 26 witnesses, bringing the total to 459. Time evidently forbids an exhaustive survey of these 459 texts. No other divine affection even begins to approach this massive testimony. Why this striking emphasis? At very least, this assures us that God takes sin very personally and stands resolutely determined to punish it. Sin not only grieves and repulses him, he regards it as a personal affront which he must avenge, "*Vengeance belongs unto me; I will recompense, says the Lord*" (Rom.12:19). Scripture, pursuing one of its chief ends, warns men to face this truth before it's too late, "*who knows the power of your anger, and of your wrath according to the fear that is due unto you?*" (Ps.90:11). Yet ironically, what Scripture stresses most about God's affections, many seem to value the least. Even in evangelical Christian churches, God's anger and wrath usually receive little if any mention. Though many greatly dislike this truth, try to avoid it, and don't even want to hear it, yet, few things would do the people and churches of America as much good as paying careful and honest attention to God's vengeful anger. Further, the Old Testament pictures God's anger using the physiological changes and bodily traits associated with human anger. For example, it describes an angry God as "breathing rapidly" (168 times, Exod.4:14, etc.), "heated" (85 times, Lev.26:28, etc.), "agitated" (43 times, Deut.4:25, etc.) and even as "frothing at the mouth" (21 times, Ps.7:11, 38:3, etc.). These expressions are "anthropopathisms", which portray his spiritual sensation of anger in terms of the physical aspects of human anger. Though we could offer many plausible outlines of this testimony, I collate it in two major categories. First, the Old Testament places special stress on God's wrath upon his own people. Second, the New Testament especially features God's wrath upon all mankind.

a. Behold God's anger toward his own people.

Scripture testifies to God's anger toward: (1) the entire society of his people; (2) the notorious sinners among his people, and (3) the true saints among his people.

(1) *Consider God's anger toward the society of his people.* We focus on three questions that Scripture highlights. What especially provokes his anger? What punishment does he inflict in his anger? What placates, appeases, and pacifies his anger toward his people?

(a) *The provocation of God's anger toward the society his people: Exod.22:22-24, "You shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If you afflict them at all, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless"; Num.32:10,13, "And Jehovah's anger was kindled in that day, and he swore, saying, Surely none of the men that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham...And Jehovah's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander to and fro in the wilderness forty years"; Deut.7:2-4, "When Jehovah your God shall deliver them [the Canaanites] up before you...you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither shall you make marriages with them...For he will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he will destroy you quickly"; Josh 7:1,12, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the devoted thing...and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel...Therefore the children of Israel can not stand before their enemies...because they are become accursed: I will not be with you any more, except you destroy the devoted thing from among you"; Judg.3:7,8, "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forgat Jehovah their God, and served Baalim and the Asheroth. Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia"; 2 Sam.6:6,7, "Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God"; 1 Kings 14:7-10, "Go tell Jeroboam...you...have done evil above all that were before you, and have gone and made you other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and have cast me behind your back: therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man-child"; 1 Kings 14:15, "Jehovah will smite Israel...and he will root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking Jehovah to anger. And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned, and wherewith he made Israel to sin"; 2 Kings 17:17,18, "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight." Three primary provocations are: false religion, worldliness, and flagrant immorality. Foremost is false religion, serving other gods, and profaning God's appointed worship. The Lord responds in vengeful anger with jealousy like that of a husband. When his people love and attach themselves to the world, he responds in vengeful anger. His people provoke him when they flagrantly disregard the decalogue, oppress their fellow men, and repeatedly disbelieve him and spurn his messengers.*

(b) The infliction of God's anger on the society his people: Num.11:33, "*While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague*"; Num.32:10,13, "*And Jehovah's anger was kindled in that day, and he swore, saying, Surely none of the men that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham...And Jehovah's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander to and fro in the wilderness forty years*"; Ps.106:39,40, "*Thus were they defiled with their works, and played the harlot in their doings. Therefore was the wrath of Jehovah kindled against his people, and he abhorred his inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the nations*"; Deut.29:25-28, "*they forsook the covenant of Jehovah...and served other gods and worshipped them...therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book; and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as at this day*"; Deut.32:16,21,22, "*They moved him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger...They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and burns unto the lowest Sheol*"; 1 Thess.2:14-16, "*the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*" The curses of the covenant with which he inflicts anger on the society of his people include: the plagues in the wilderness; the 40 years wanderings; servitude to their enemies; eviction from Canaan; scattering among the nations; and ultimately rejection of an unbelieving Jewish nation as his people. He inflicted this final judgment when they rejected and killed their God incarnate. Then he took his kingdom away from them and gave it "*to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (Matt.21:43).

(c) The cessation of God's anger toward the society of his people: Num.25:3,4, "*And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up unto Jehovah before the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may turn away from Israel*"; Deut.9:18,19, "*I fell down before Jehovah...because of all your sin which you sinned, in doing evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you. But Jehovah hearkened unto me*"; Ps.85:3, "*You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people; you have covered all their sin. You have taken away all your wrath; you have turned from the fierceness of your anger*"; Isa.54:8, "*In overflowing wrath I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on you, says Jehovah your Redeemer.*" In Num.25:34 civil punishment pacifies his temporal judgment and vengeance. In Deut.9:18,19 intercessory prayer by God's appointed mediator placates and turns away God's vengeful anger. Ps.85:3 reveals that God himself takes the initiative to turn his wrath away from his people. He turns their hearts to seek him. In Isa.54:8 we learn that Christ turns God's vengeful anger away from his people. This involves both his atonement for their sin (Isa.53:10-13) and his moral transformation of their society (Isa.54:10,13,14). Under the new covenant their distinguishing traits as a society are that they know the Lord and have his law written on their heart (Jer.31:31-34). Thus, the new covenant society of God's people enjoys the benefit of Christ's propitiation of God's anger by his shed blood (Rom.3:25).

(2) Consider God's anger upon the notorious sinner among his people: Deut.29:18-20, "*Iest there should be among you a man...saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart...Jehovah will not pardon him, but the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven.*" Under the old covenant those who sinned with a high hand became special objects of God's anger and curse. Their ruin was so striking that they became monuments and warnings to us all. Under the new covenant also the Lord warns his people about flagrant sinning. Notorious and scandalous men experience discipline, punishment, and vengeance (2 Cor.2:6; 1 Thess.4:6). Those who fall away from their profession of faith become special objects of divine vengeance (Heb.10:26-31).

(3) Consider God's anger toward the true saint among his people: Ps.38:1-3, "*Jehovah, rebuke me not in your wrath; neither chasten me in your hot displeasure. For your arrows stick fast in me...There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin.*" This is not the prayer of the wicked, but of the righteous. God's anger toward the righteous is parental anger from a loving Father, not judicial wrath from a Judge. This text depicts God's parental rebuke and chastening of his beloved children for their sins. He does this "*for our profit*", to make us holy (Heb.12:10,11). He chastens his children when we grieve or quench his Holy Spirit. Our protracted unbelief of his Word and promises provokes his parental anger (Exod.4:14). Any unmortified worldliness or immorality provokes his parental reproof and rod. Sometimes, as with Job, he afflicts us and

withdraws his comforts to prove us and display the genuineness of our religion. He at times chastens his children, not with bodily afflictions, but by dwindling our spiritual comforts and graces, as the declension of David tragically displays (Ps.51). God restores the sense of his favor and nearness when he renews our hearts unto repentance (Job.42:6; Ps.51; Rev.3:19,20).

b. Behold God's wrath on fallen mankind.

We consider the provocation, infliction, and culmination of God's wrath on every wicked man.

(1) *Consider how all mankind provoke God's wrath:* Rom.1:18, "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in righteousness"; Rom.2:5,6,8, "after your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works...unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish"; Eph.5:6, "no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience"; John 3:36, "He that believes on the Son has eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God abides on him.**" Wicked men provoke God when they suppress what they know from creation and conscience to be true about him (Rom.1:18,19, 2:14,15). They provoke him when they hypocritically condemn others for what they themselves do (Rom.2:2-5). They provoke him when they harden their hearts in a life of rebellion (Rom.2:5). They provoke him when they live in flagrant violation of his moral law (Eph.5:6) and open rejection of the gospel of Christ (John 3:36).

(2) *Consider how God inflicts his wrath upon all mankind:* Deut.29:23, "like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah...which Jehovah overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath"; Ps.78:49-51, "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, a band of angels of evil. He made a path for his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence, and smote all the first-born in Egypt"; Rev.6:16,17, "hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?"; Rev.14:9-11, "If any man worships the beast...he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night." In this life and age, he inflicts his wrath on wicked men with temporal judgments, as he did to Sodom and to Egypt, and by giving them up to their sins (Rom.1:24-31). In the age to come, however, he pours out all his fury upon the wicked. They suffer eternal condemnation and damnation. At their death, their spirits suffer in hell. At Christ's return, they suffer unending torment of body and soul, in the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt.25:31-46; Rev.6:16,17, 14:9-11).

(3) *Consider the culmination of God's wrath upon all mankind:* Matt.3:7, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Saducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come"; Ps.2:12, "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him"; Ps.7:11,12, "God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that has indignation every day. If a man turn not, he will whet his sword"; Jer.23:19, "Behold, the tempest of Jehovah, even his wrath, is gone forth, yea, a whirling tempest: it shall burst upon the head of the wicked." If men die in sin without turning to God, he will forever punish them. Men either believe in Christ or suffer his wrath forever.

Conclusion: Practical lessons from God's anger: Consider three lessons that God's anger teaches all men in general and three additional lessons that it teaches Christians. Three lessons for all men: (1) All men should honestly face God's wrath (Rom.2:4,5; Eph.5:6); (2) All men should immediately flee from God's wrath (Matt.3:7); (3) No man should ever provoke God's wrath (Ps.90:11). Three additional lessons for Christians: Christians should: (1) gratefully praise God for refuge from his wrath in Christ (Ps.2:12; Rom.3:25; 1 John 4:9,10); (2) always defer to God's wrath (Rom.12:19); and (3) earnestly pray about God's wrath by intercession (Deut.29:18:19) and imprecation (Ps.69:21,24,26).

7. Behold the biblical display of God's peace.

Jer.16:5, "I have taken away **my peace** from this people says Jehovah, even lovingkindness and tender mercies"

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; **my peace** I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful"

Phil.4:6,7,9, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And **the peace of God**, which passes all understanding, shall guard your hearts

and your thoughts in Christ Jesus...the things which you both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and **the God of peace** shall be with you"

2 Thess.3:16, "**The Lord of peace** himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all"

Heb.13:20,21, "Now **the God of peace**, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ"

Note the stark contrast between the massive testimony to his anger, and the rather spartan testimony to his supreme peace. In Scripture the antonym of peace is war (Josh.9:15, 10:1; 1 Kings 2:5; Ps.120:6,7; Prov.16:7; Eccles.3:8; Matt.10:34; 1 Thess.5:3). War conjures up both conflict and danger. Where conflict is men have anger, alienation, enmity, and hostility. Where danger is, men feel fear and anxiety. Thus, we should not be surprised that Scripture contrasts peace sometimes with hostility, alienation, and conflict: "*being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God*" (Rom.5:1), and sometimes with fear and anxiety: "*you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you*" (Isa.26:3). The Hebrew word for peace is שָׁלוֹם (SHALOM), which means "safe." It is derived from the verb שָׁלַם (SHALAM), "to be safe", or "make complete." The Greek word for peace is εἰρήνη (eirene), "rest" or "quietness." This word belongs to a family of terms that includes: εἰρηνεύω (eireneuo), "to live in peace" (Mark 9:50; Rom.12:18; 2 Cor.13:11; 1 Thess.5:13); εἰρηνικός (eirenikos), "peaceable" (Heb.12:11; James 3:17); εἰρηνοποιεῖω (eirenopoieo), "to make peace" (Col.1:20); and εἰρηνοποιός (eirenopoios), "peacemaker" (Matt.5:9). The basic meaning and general use of these terms show that peace involves both cessation of hostility and a sense of security from danger. We focus on God's sensation of tranquility. God ever experiences an incomprehensible sensation of absolute calmness and tranquility due to his absolute security, immutability, and invulnerability, his infinite foresight and insight, and his irresistible sovereignty. This supreme tranquility is pure and absolute calmness, completely unmingled with anxiety, alarm, disquiet, or commotion. Nothing ever startles or terrifies him. He never frets with worries about unfulfilled need. However, he anticipates potential threats to his reputation and thwarts them (Deut.32:27).

The dual significance of peace in Scripture makes it difficult to identify and isolate texts that refer to God's supreme tranquility. The expression, "*the God of peace*", sometimes describes his conciliatory influence upon his people. When Paul says, "*the God of peace be with you*" (Rom.15:33), he may primarily be expressing the hope that God's conciliatory presence would check division and controversy in the church. Again, when he says, "*the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*" (Rom.16:20), he may primarily mean that God will soon bring our spiritual conflict to an end by vanquishing our enemy, Satan. Thus, "*the God of peace*", sometimes means "the God who ends hostility", rather than, "the God who experiences absolute tranquility." Still, in some contexts Scripture describes God's tranquility with phrases such as "*my peace*", "*the God of peace*", and "*the peace of God*." The expression, "*my peace*", refers to God's tranquility in Jer.16:5 and John 14:27. In Phil.4:7,9, the expressions "*the God of peace*" and "*the peace of God*" convey the idea. In several other passages, the phrase the "*the God of peace*", or the related phrase, "*the Lord of peace*" probably include God's tranquility (1 Thess.5:23; 2 Thess.3:16; Heb.13:20). Scripture also implicitly discloses God's tranquility: "*Fear not, I am with you*" (Isa.43:5); "*I will fear no evil, for you are with me*" (Ps.23:4). These expressions indicate that God's tranquil presence calms his people's fear. Again, Scripture implies God's tranquility when it teaches that God, by his Spirit, imparts a spiritual sensation of calmness to his people: "*the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom.14:17); "*the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit*" (Rom.15:13). The Holy Spirit, by his powerful influence and special presence, fills his people's hearts with some measure of his own infinite sensation of tranquility and joy.

Under the old covenant, the Lord removed the blessed influence of his tranquility from the society of his people due to aggravated rebellion, breaking his covenant, and serving other gods (Jer.16:5). When he removed his peace from Judah and Jerusalem, he severely judged them for their sins. Thus, we see the close relation between the departure of divine tranquility from his people and his infliction of punishment on them. Yet, even then he shelters the godly among his people and continues to be with them (Ps.23:4). Under the new covenant he incessantly gives and imparts in some measure his own sensation of tranquility and calm to the society of his people (John 14:27; Phil.4:7; 2

Thess.3:16). For this reason the Lord exhorts his disciples not to be fearful or troubled, even in the midst of danger and foes (John 14:27). God's people experience this blessed tranquility in the path of prayer and holiness. When we seek him, and with gratitude cast all our worries on him, then his incomprehensible tranquility guards our hearts (Phil.4:6,7). When, by his grace, Christians do his will, then the God of peace conveys his blessed tranquility to us (Heb.13:20,21). Therefore, let us so pray and obey that the "*Lord of peace*" would impart ever greater measures of his tranquility to us.

Conclusion to the Display of God's Emotivity: In eternity past, God felt only inter-Trinitarian joy, delight, pleasure, and peace in contemplation of his own infinite beauty, virtue, blessedness, and security. When he created all things and creatures, both material and spiritual, he felt delight, joy, and pleasure in his work. When his creatures sinned, he felt detestation, grief, and vengeful anger. The miseries that their sin brought upon them also grieve him. In conjunction with redemption, the Lord feels something akin to what men call, "mixed emotions." His soul is grieved for the affliction of his people, yet he rejoices over them. He delights in his people and is well-pleased with their evangelical obedience, yet he detests their sins and is displeased with their remaining corruption. In the consummation, when his people no longer have any sin or affliction, his anger at their remaining sin and his grief over their present affliction will pass away. Throughout eternity, in the new heavens and earth, he will feel unmingled delight, joy and pleasure in his people. Yet, throughout eternity, he will incessantly detest the wicked and pacify his vengeful anger with their unending punishment. Finally, from eternity to eternity, he feels uninterrupted and absolute tranquility.

D. The Applications of God's Emotivity.

God's affections inspire ardent devotion, warrant careful imitation, and demand diligent attention.

1. God's affections inspire our ardent devotion.

We should bless and praise God for his delight in justice and the righteous, and for his detestation of wickedness and the wicked. We should magnify his anger over sin and his pleasure at the impeccable virtue of Christ and evangelical virtue of his people. We should bless him for caring so much about us that he grieves over our afflictions. We should praise him for imparting his joy and peace.

2. God's affections warrant careful imitation.

God himself furnishes a flawless example of wholesome emotive life after which we should pattern our own feelings. We should love what he loves, and hate what he hates. We too should detest sinners and their sin, and delight in the righteous and their godly ways (Ps.139:21). We should never delight in wickedness or in the company of the world (1 John 2:15). We should never detest Christians or Christian churches in whom the Lord delights. We too should grieve over the sufferings of God's people, and rejoice with them in their spiritual blessings (Rom.12:15). We too should rejoice with the Lord over one sinner that repents, not grumble with pharisaic anger (Luke 15:7,10). We should be displeased with sin and pleased with the evangelical obedience of his saints. Finally, what time we are afraid, we should trust in the Lord, cast all our anxiety on him, and strive to know ever greater measures of his incomprehensible peace (Phil.4:6,7).

3. God's affections demand diligent attention.

We must pay careful attention to how God feels. We must live in such a way that he feels delight, joy, and pleasure in us. We must never do what he detests, or grieve him, or provoke him to anger and jealousy (Eph.4:30). We should fear his anger and flee from it. We should never take our own revenge, but always defer to his vengeful anger (Rom.12:19). We should plead with him to turn his anger away from his people and inflict it on the wicked (Rev.6:10). We should plead with him swiftly to usher in the new heavens and earth, in which he himself shall wipe away every tear from our eyes. We must not deny or neglect God's affections. We should embrace this truth wholeheartedly, live conscientiously in its light, and proclaim it faithfully and courageously.