

## God's Wrath in the Bible

How we understand God's wrath is foundational to how we perceive the atonement, the end of sin and sinners, Jesus' intercession, and many other teachings of Christianity. If God is angry and hostile toward sin and sinners, ready to punish sinners, and if in His holy antagonism against sin, He must be reconciled, then the atonement necessarily involves appeasement of His anger. If on the other hand, we are the ones who are hostile, angry, and fearful of God, and God is wholly love itself, then atonement is about God winning back our love and trust. And in the latter scenario, then, what is the nature of God's wrath?

The Old Testament alone contains some 15 different root words for wrath or anger; the New Testament has only six, the most common of which are *orgē* and *thumos*. Out of the 968 times these words are used, between 550 and 561 times the wrath is God's. But not all of the 968 times do the words mean "wrath" or "anger." For instance, one of the words used for "wrath" also means "nose." Thus about 155 uses of these words should be subtracted from the total (968-155), equaling 813 total of which 550-561 refer to God's wrath.

If we believe that inspiration is a the process of the Holy Spirit imbuing the mind of the Bible writers with thoughts, ideas, and symbols to write these in their own words, then the words are human and thus do not fully convey the divine mind. To define biblical words by a lexicon (or dictionary) that reflects what all the nations around Israel believed is helpful for understanding the Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context, but it will not give us the truth adequately through God's eyes. To get to that truth, it is necessary to study all the places a concept is referred to in order to find keys—key passages that will help us get behind the words to the truth the Holy Spirit intended.

This study will focus on God's wrath, looking for keys by which to define and describe it. It will look at the Bible in its finished form, the canon, and attempt to see how the term developed and to ascertain why God seems so angry in the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets.

### God's Wrath as Giving People the Results of Their Choice or Hiding His Face

Genesis – Where is God's wrath mentioned in the book of Genesis? Why?

God's wrath is not associated with creation, antediluvian societies, or any measures He seems to take normally associated with wrath  
In the case of the flood, He is grieved, not angry. Is this significant?

Exodus 4:14 – This is the first canonical instance of God's anger. Why is God angry? What does He do to Moses when He gets angry?

Numbers 11:10 – The people murmur against manna, angering the Lord; in response He gives them what they want—quail meat and it makes them ill.

Numbers 11:33 – God's anger against them for eating the meat led to their death because He did nothing to protect them from the consequences of their rejection of Him.

Numbers 12:9 – Note the sequence here; the text does not state that God gets angry when He hears what Aaron and Miriam are saying to Moses; He gets angry when he departs. Then what happens?

Numbers 32:10 – God’s anger is kindled at Kadesh-Barnea because the people refused to go into the Promised Land so God “refused” to let them go in.

Numbers 32:13-15 – God’s anger leads Him to abandon Israel: you [the Reubenites] will destroy all this people

Deuteronomy 32:16-22 – Note the key verses (19, 20): “spurned them” “I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be.”

Judges 2:12-14 – the people forsook the Lord . . . and He gave them over to plunderers

Judges 2:20 – God refuses to drive out the Canaanites from before them to test them

Judges 3:8 – God sold Israel into the hand of a Mesopotamian king (what was God’s payback?)

1 Kings 14:15, 16 – The Lord will uproot Israel and scatter it among the nations; He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam...

2 Kings 13:3 – The Lord gave them continually into the hand of Hazael, king of Syria...

2 Kings 23:26 – I will remove and I will cast off this city which I have chosen.

2 Chronicles 28:9-11 – Note the contrast between God’s wrath and the rage of Samaria? What is the difference?

2 Chronicles 36:16 – the wrath of God rose up against his people: there was no remedy

Psalms 74:1 – cast off: anger smokes

Psalms 78:58-62 – full of wrath: utterly rejected His people; abandoned his dwelling; handed over his power; gave people to the sword

Psalms 106:40-41 – anger kindled: gave over to the nations

Isaiah 54:8 – God hides his face in overflowing wrath; cf. 57:17.

Isaiah 64:4/5 – God hid his face leading people to sin

Jeremiah 7:15-20 – Read the entire passage: excellent example!

Jeremiah 7:29 – “The Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath” (RSV).

Jeremiah 33:5 – “The Chaldeans are coming in to fight and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall smite in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness.” (RSV)

Jeremiah 42:18 – “As my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so my wrath will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt.” How?

Ezekiel 8:18 – The terms—“my eye will not spare” and “I will not hear them”—belong to the general mix of metaphors that suggest God stepping back and allow people to suffer the inevitable consequences of their choices.

Ezekiel 21:31/36 – Does “pour out my indignation” (metaphor) and “blow upon you with the fire of my wrath” (metaphor) equal “I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, skillful to destroy” (plain speech)?

Ezekiel 22:31 – Read this in light of 21:31 above.

Hosea 13:11 – God gave them what they wanted in his anger; He gave them their choice in his wrath. *How* did remove or take away their kings?

[Jeremiah 21:8-12 – good one for natural consequences, but not wrath]

### **Instructive passages**

Exodus 22:22/23-23/24 – How does God kill? What happens when His wrath burns?

Exodus 32:10-14 – God asks Moses to let Him alone so He can get angry? What does this imply? Could anyone stop God from getting angry if He was? Note that Moses does not try to appease God but simply persuade Him to change His mind. Did God have to change His mind? Later Moses does try to make atonement for Israel’s sin (32:30-34). Study this as well. Note how Moses reflects in vv. 19-22 how he sees God. Work through this clear through 34:7 and 34:35.

Deuteronomy 31:17 – Note the sequence of events: divine anger kindled: “forsake them,” “hide my face from them,” “they will become easy prey,” and “many awful troubles will come on them”

Joshua 23:16 – Is there causation here between God’s wrath and what happens? If so, what?

1 Samuel 24:1 – What would we say about a parent who got angry with their child, set the child up to disobey them, then punished the child? Note how this problem is dealt with later by the

Chronicler in 1 Chronicles 21:1. What does this suggest about progression of truth within Scripture?

1 Samuel 28:18 – Saul did not carry out God’s fierce anger against the Amalekites

Ezra 8:22 – This sounds like human-like anger and power, but isn’t it true that those who abandon God leave Him who is love? And then of course His wrath and power is all they have. They did the leaving, not Him. They forfeit His protecting hand.

Nehemiah 13:18 – Who/What did the disaster and wrath come from?

Job 19:11 – Job perceives God as angry because of what has happened to him, but who caused what happened to Job?

Psalms 27:9 – “turn s.o. away,” “cast s.o. off,” “forsake s.o.”

Psalms 59:12, 13 – Note that it is human to want God to “consume them in wrath.”

Psalms 76:10/11 – Note: the word “your” or “thy” is not in the Hebrew. The verse literally reads: “For human wrath will praise you; you will gird about the rest of wrath.”

Psalms 95:11 – If they would not go into His rest [= the Promised Land], what else could He do but give them what they chose?

Psalms 102:10/11 – Read the entire psalm and note how this is the perceptions and feelings of the psalmist. This is how it *feels* to him. See also Psalm 38:4 in its context.

Prov. 22:14 – What does this mean? It makes best sense if we understand that anger is giving people what they want or letting them go to the consequences of their choices.

Isaiah 12:1 – What does it mean that God’s anger is turned away? Does this really mean “appeased”?

Isaiah 48:9 – “defer and restrain anger.” What is God restraining? His own personal anger (I can’t lose control here; I promised . . .)? Or is He restraining the consequences, giving His people more time?

Jeremiah 25:37, 38 – As with many of these places in the prophets, we need to ask the question, What is the cause of the destruction? Cf. Zeph. 1:15

Jeremiah 33:5 – Note the causation between “I strike down...because I have hidden my face”

Lamentations 2:4 – How did God bend His bow? How did He kill? How did He pour out His fury like fire? Cf. Lam. 4:11.

Ezekiel 5: 13 – Read the entire chapter? What actually causes the dire calamities that will fall on Jerusalem?

Daniel 9:16 – Note that divine anger and wrath parallel our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors that brought disgrace. This is a beautiful prayer and needs to be read to verse 19.

Hosea 11:9 – anger = destroy? But note v. 8.

Hosea 14:4 – What causes God to turn away His anger? See vv. 1-3.

Amos 1:11 – Who/what actually caused a fire on Teman that devoured the strongholds of Bozrah?

**Divine wrath autonomous or metaphorical for consequences or international strife**

Leviticus 10:6 – . . . and you will not die and wrath will [not] strike the congregation

Numbers 1:53 – . . . that there may be no wrath on the congregation

Numbers 17:11 – . . . for wrath has gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun

Numbers 18:5 – . . . so that wrath may never again come on the Israelites

Joshua 9:20 – . . . so that wrath may not come upon us

2 Kings 3:27 – and great wrath came upon Israel

2 Chronicles 24:18 – Therefore wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. Cf. 2 Chronicles 32:25; 2 Chr. 32:26 – is this autonomous or elliptical? See also Josh. 22:20

Isaiah 10:5 – God’s wrath is letting a larger nation use weapons against a smaller nation

Isaiah 10:24, 25 – Here divine anger seems synonymous with one large, powerful nation beating up a smaller nation and then suffering the same itself.

Isaiah 26:20 – “The wrath” seems to be a personification of terrible things to happen.

Ezekiel 23:25 – Note how God must direct his indignation against His people so that the Babylonians can decimate them. This fits very well with the idea that God must let people go (i.e., stop protecting them or stop restraining their enemies) before the enemies can do their destructive work.

Daniel 8:19 – “Period of wrath” seems to objective wrath instead of personalize it.

Daniel 11:36 – Divine wrath seems objective here, not an emotion at all or a reaction

\*Psalm 85:4 – You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.

\*Note: Throughout the ancient Near East (especially in the Semitic cultures such as the Babylonians, Assyrians, Ugaritians, people of Mari, Syrians, Amorites, etc.), calamitous events were viewed as manifestations of divine anger so that the term “anger” itself could refer to these events. In a similar way, Americans refer to calamities as “acts of God” in insurance terms.

### **God is slow to anger [Hebrew: long of nose]**

Psalm 30:6/5; Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15; Num. 14:18; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Psalm 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Nah. 1:3; Psalm 145:8

### **Human anger**

1 Sam. 20:7 – If the king gets angry, then people know that he determines evil against them.

Psalm 124:3 – enemy anger a metaphor for war

Proverbs 6:32-34 – One of the ancient social settings of human anger?

Proverbs 16:14 – What does this verse tell us about the possible origin of ancient understandings of divine anger? Cf. Proverbs 19:12; 20:2.

Proverbs 21:14 – What does this verse tell us about the social origins of ancient understandings of divine anger?

Proverbs 27:4 – Jealousy is more to be feared than anger (overwhelming) and wrath (cruel)?

Ecclesiastes 10:4 – If a ruler’s anger comes up against you, don’t leave your post, for calmness will undo great offenses.

Esther 2:1 – The Bible speaks frequently of God’s wrath being turned away or His turning away His wrath. Apparently this is not what happens to humans: here the king’s wrath is abated.

### **Biblical Injunctions for humans not to be angry**

Genesis 49:7 – Levi and Simeon’s wrath is cursed because it was cruel and severe

Psalm 37:8 – Refrain from anger (*’aph*), and forsake wrath (*chēmah*)

Prov. 14:17 – He who is quick-tempered acts foolishly (opposite of slow to anger).k

Prov. 14:29 – He who is slow to wrath has great understanding but he who is impulsive exalts folly.

Prov. 15:1 – A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.

Prov. 15:18 – A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.

Prov. 16:32 – He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Prov. 19:11 – Those with good sense are slow to anger (*'aph*). Read the rest!

Prov. 19:19 – One who is violent in temper will pay the punishment [the Hebrew is uncertain].

Prov. 25:15 – By long forbearance, a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

Prov. 29:22 – Someone with a temper creates strife; the angry person causes others to transgress

Prov. 30:33 – For as the churning of milk produces butter and as wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife.

Eccl. 7:4 – Don't be quick-tempered, for anger resides in the bosom of fools.

Isaiah 14:6 – The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers, and that struck down the peoples in wrath . . . that ruled the nations in anger.

### **For discussion**

Numbers 25:3-13 – God is angry at the Israelites for having illicit sex with Moabite women. He orders Moses to take all the leaders of the people and kill them in broad daylight “so that the Lord's anger turns away from Israel.” Phineas slays an Israelite man and Midianite woman engaged in sex and so turns God's anger away from Israel.

Judges 6:39 – Does idolatry lead to seeing God as angry?

1 Chronicles 13:10 – Did God's anger kill Uzzah? What did?

2 Chronicles 25:10 – What does God do here when He gets angry?

Job 19:29 – How does wrath bring the sword?

Psalms 78:44 – How shall we interpret this?

Psalms 78:49-51 – Note the verbs in this passage.

Psalms 88:6, 7/7, 8 – Note the verses before and after. Did God really do these things? Cf. Ps. 38.

Psalms 90:3-12 – Is it true that when we die we are under God's wrath? In what way?

Isaiah 13:5 – Read the entire chapter to answer the question, *How* does God execute His wrath?

Isaiah 27:2-5 – What is this passage really saying? How does it support other clear passages about God's wrath?

Jeremiah 32:31-41 – How would God remove Jerusalem from His sight? Cf. 44:8; cf. 7:19 above

Ezekiel 7:5-20 – How will God strike? How will He pour out His wrath?

Ezekiel 16:42 – Does God have to vent His wrath on people so He can be calmed?

Note: one word for anger also means grief.

### **Anger in metaphorical terms or as a metaphor**

Deut. 29:19 – The Lord's anger and passion will smoke against them (unwilling to pardon them).  
Cf. Psalm 74:1; 104:32; 144:5.

Isaiah 30:30 – anger revealed in a storm

Lam. 2:3 – anger symbolized by captivity

Isaiah 13:9 – Day of the Lord; destruction of Babylon

Job 14:13 – Job's situation

Isaiah 30:27 – name of the Lord comes burning with anger

Isaiah 42:25 – equated with heat, war, fire

Isaiah 66:15 – chariots of fire, like a whirlwind

Psalm 78:38 – God often has restrained his anger and not stirred up all his wrath

Psalm 18:9/8 – Smoke in his nose went up (context: divine anger)

Psalm 21:10 – The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath.

Isaiah 13:5 – and the weapons of his indignation to destroy all the earth

Job 21:20 – Job: and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty

Ezek. 7:8 – soon now I will pour out my wrath upon you (cf. v. 14); cf. 22:22;

Ezek. 13:15 – Thus I will spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who smeared it with whitewash

2 Chr. 12:7 – my wrath shall be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak



2 Chr. 34:25 – my wrath shall be poured out on this place and will not be quenched (prophet to Josiah)

Isaiah 63:3 – I tread them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their juice spattered on my garments, and stained all my robes

Isaiah 63:6 – I trampled down peoples in my anger; I crushed them in my wrath and I poured out their life blood on the earth

Ezek. 13:13 – In my wrath, I will make a stormy wind break out, and in my anger there will be a deluge of rain, and hailstones in wrath to destroy it.

Ezek. 22:20 – As one gathers silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into a smelter, to blow the fire upon them in order to melt them; so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you.

Isaiah 51:17 – You who have drunk . . . the cup of his wrath . . . , the bowl of staggering (cf. vv. 13, 19)

Nehemiah 1:6 – Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire . . .

Psalms 78:38 – Often he restrained his anger and did not stir up all his wrath.

Job 6:4 – The arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their wrath/poison.

Psalms 76:11/10 – Human wrath serves only to praise you, when you bind the last bit of your [sic!] wrath around you. (cf. v. 8/7)

2 Sam. 22:8 – Then the earth reeled and rocked; the fountains of the heavens trembled and quaked, because he was angry; see v. 9: smoke went up from his nostrils and a devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals came forth from him.

Ezekiel 16:42 – Therefore I will satisfy my fury on you, and my jealousy shall turn away from you; I will be calm, and will be angry no longer.

Ezekiel 22:21 – I will gather you, and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted with it.

Hosea 5:10 – pour out wrath like water

Joel 2:10 – (re: soldiers) earthquake, heavens trembling

Note: Not once, in all of the descriptions of God's *character*, does the OT suggest that anger or wrath are part of His nature. The only exception is jealousy: in the Ten Commandments, God is a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the parents upon their children to the third and fourth generation but showing mercy to thousands of them who love Him and keep His commandments. What do you think this "jealousy" refers to?

### **God's Wrath in the New Testament**

Matthew 5:22 – If you are angry with a brother or sister you will be liable to judgment.

Matthew 8:10-12 – heirs of the kingdom thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 10:28 – Who are we to fear—God? Satan? ourselves?

Matthew 13:47-50 – furnace of fire is the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 18:23-35 – handed over to be tortured until he should pay his debt

Matthew 21:33-44 – cf vv. 41, 44 with Matt. 8:10-12; Luke 20:9-18

Matthew 22:1-14 – bound hand and foot and thrown into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 23:1-39 – Jesus' woes on the Pharisees (cf. curses); Luke 11:37-54

Matthew 24:45-51 – Note footnote: cut him in pieces vs. cut him off

Matthew 25:14-30 – thrown into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

Mark 3:5 – Jesus looked around them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart

Mark 4:24-25 – note the passive tense (cf. Luke 8:18)

Mark 9:42-48 – What is the worm that never dies and the fire that is never quenched?

Luke 12:46-48 – Who will do the beating? Who will cut in pieces/cut off?

Luke 13:1-5 – How did they perish?

Luke 14:21-24 – This equals God's wrath; note "compel," yet the others are free to choose.

Luke 15:28 – prodigal son is angry with his father; his father goes out to intercede with him

Luke 16:19-31 – How does Jesus make fun of the popular belief in hell in this parable?

Luke 19:27 – Who does the slaughtering

John 3:16 – That whoever trusts in him will not *perish* (middle voice: destroy themselves).

John 3:17-21 – This is the judgment (cf. 12:47-50)

Acts 2:27-31 – Jesus did not go into Hades (Hell)

Acts 5:1-11 – post-cross: nothing about God killing Ananias or Sapphira

Acts 12:23 – How did the angel strike Herod down?

Acts 13:11 – Bar-Jesus the false Jewish prophet goes blind—by what means?

Rom. 1:18-28ff. – Definitive statement and description of God's wrath based on Isa. 53 LXX

Rom. 2:3-11 – Note who stores wrath where; cf. v. 12: *anomos* (apart from the law cf. "under")

Rom. 3:5 – Translate: "However if our injustice recommends the righteousness (*dikaiosyne*) of God, what shall we say—that God is unjust to \_\_\_\_\_ the wrath? We speak in a human way." The blank can be filled in by the following: inflict, bring, pronounce, confer upon, impose on. Note that "of God" is not in the Greek.

Rom. 4:15 – the law works wrath: how? (cf. Rom. 2:3-11 above)

Rom. 5:9 – The words "of God" are not in the Greek.

Rom. 9:12 – wrath, power, objects of wrath made for destruction: how do these terms and

notions fit together with Romans 1? Cf. vv. 11-21.

Rom. 12:19 – The words “of God” are not in the Greek. Note vv. 20, 21.

Rom. 13:4, 5 – how are they servants of God to execute wrath; why must one be subject not only because of wrath but because of conscience?

2 Cor. 12:20 – I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, etc.

Gal. 5:20 – works of flesh are wrath: why? (cf. Rom. 2:3-11 above)

Eph. 2:3 – by nature children of wrath: born angry or born under God’s wrath?

Eph. 4:26 – don’t let the sun go down upon your wrath (Can God get angry but we can’t?)

Eph. 4:31 – put away all wrath (but see 5:6!); cf. Col. 3:6-8 (ditto)

Eph. 6:4 – don’t provoke your children to wrath (cf. Col. 3:12)

1 Thess. 1:10 – who delivered us from the wrath to come

1 Thess. 2:16 – for wrath has come upon them

1 Thess. 5:9 – God has not appointed us to wrath (cf. our problem passage in Rom. 9 above)

1 Tim. 2:8 – holy hands without wrath (vis-à-vis how many theologians believe that God’s holiness is manifested in His displeasure, anger, and exercise of retributive justice)

Titus 1:7 – a bishop must not be quick-tempered.

Hebrews 3:11; 4:3 – God swears in His wrath: “They shall never enter my rest.”

James 1:19 – slow to speak, slow to wrath

James 1:20 – anger does not produce God’s righteousness (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8 above)

Rev. 6:16-17 – the wicked want to hide from the wrath of the Lamb

Rev. 11:18 – “The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead.”

Rev. 12:12 – Satan comes down in great wrath

Rev. 14:8; 18:3 – she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication

Rev. 14:9-12 – wrath of God poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation

Rev. 14:19 – angel reaps grapes and throws them into the great wine press of God’s wrath

Rev. 15:5-8 – seven plagues: seven bowls of God’s wrath

Rev. 16:1 – bowls of God’s wrath

Rev. 16:19 – fierceness of his wrath

Rev. 19:15 – sharp sword from his mouth to strike down nations; he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

## **Divine Anger in Babylon**

### Similarities

In both the OT and Babylonian literature, God/the gods turn away from cities in their wrath. In Babylonia, gods placed their anger upon someone and the demons rushed in to bring disquietude (find exact wording under *kammalu*).

### Differences

1. In Babylonian usage, human beings could bear the wrath of the deity or the deity placed his wrath upon them (see *kimiltu*). The most noteworthy case is that of the *šar puhi* who bore the signs (that the gods were angry with the king and would destroy him). In the OT, persons would

bear their *sin*, not God's wrath. Cf. the Day of Atonement when the sins were placed upon the angry-god goat and he was sent away.

2. In Babylonian usage, gods left when angry, but in the OT, more often than not, God did not leave, but his people left him. The notable exception took place (per Josephus) during Jeremiah's time when the Shekinah left the temple and stood on the Mount of Olives for some days until it left altogether. Yet God was still with his people when they went to Babylon as is shown by Ezekiel 1.

3. In Akkadian, two major verbs for wrath exist: *agāgu* and *ezēzu*. Though often used synonymously, the former is used of a "passing emotion," while the latter refers to "an inherent quality." Both are extensively used with the gods as their subject. By contrast, Yahweh's character does not include wrath or terms for power. See Exodus 34:6, 7. The closest one gets to it is the term "jealousy" which refers to Yahweh's marital rights to his people and his desire for loyalty. Of course, v. 7 states, "who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon their children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me." This can be taken as God punishing people for their sins (as do some versions such as the NIV), or it can be understood as referring to the inherent action of that hatred of God and its consequences from generation to generation. In the counterpart in Exodus 20, the comment is made, "but showing mercy to thousands who love me and keep my commandments," a clear inference that anyone can receive mercy if they respond to divine love. There is no place in the entire OT that infers that "wrath" or "anger" is part of God's character in the same way as forgiveness, mercy, compassion, and goodness. CHECK!

5. The Babylonians sought to appease the anger of their gods. Words used for appeasement included *nāhu* and *pašāhu*. The former has a Hebrew counterpart, *nūah*, that can also mean appeasement, but is rarely used of divine wrath. Exceptions in Ezekiel describe God as resting His own anger, rather than being appeased by an external means. The latter has no Hebrew counterpart. Interestingly, the term many scholars believe implies or includes appeasement of God, *kipper* ("to atone"), has an Akkadian cognate, *kuppuru*, that never means "to appease." Its primary sense is "to wipe off, to clean objects, to rub, to purify magically." In Leviticus, *kipper* appears consistently with the prepositional object, "for him," and never with a direct object indicating God. When *kipper* means "to appease," it always has a direct object pertaining to the one appeased such as that person's face or anger. Consider these two examples: 1) In Genesis 32:20/21, Jacob, after sending gifts to placate his angry brother Esau, says, "May I appease his face with the gift that goes before my face;" 2) A proverb states: "A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it." The fact that God (His face, his wrath) never appears as the object of the verb *kipper* suggests strongly that when involving God, *kipper* does not mean "to appease." The verb rather implies expunging of a person's sin and guilt.

6. The many entries containing Akkadian words for anger and wrath pertaining to gods and kings suggests a very real perceptual basis for divine anger in the rise of kingship. A study of these entries shows that the more power kings had in ancient Mesopotamia, the more entries occur with angry kings. The peak seems to be in the Neo Assyrian period. Likewise gods were

seen as increasingly angry. One can easily perceive that if the “great man,” the king, frequently got angry and had to be placated, how much more must the great gods.