

THE HOLINESS OF GOD BY R C SPROUL

CHAPTER 9: GOD IN THE HANDS OF ANGRY SINNERS

References (Black book, White book, Kindle)

I. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God (211, 171, 1764)

A. The Sermon

1. Perhaps the most famous ever preached in America
2. “Filled with graphic images of the fury of divine wrath and the horror of the relentless punishment of the wicked in hell.”
3. This type of sermon does not fit with our upbeat generation

B. Our thinking

1. If God, not holy
2. If holy, not just
3. If just, not angry
4. We are convinced love and mercy will override justice
5. “But if God is holy at all, if God has an ounce of justice in his character...how could he be anything else but angry with us”

C. Jonathan Edwards’s thinking

1. “He understood the nature of God’s holiness...His consuming need was to preach about God’s holiness; to preach it vividly, emphatically, convincingly, and powerfully” not to frighten but out of compassion.
2. “He was not concerned with laying a guilt trip on his people but with awakening them to the peril they faced if they remained unconverted.”
3. He uses graphic images from the Bible
 - a. Walking on slippery places
 - b. Walking across hell on a rotten bridge
 - c. Arrows that fly at noonday
 - d. God’s bow bent and aiming the arrows of His wrath sinful hearts
 - e. Rushing water behind floodgates

D. The Application

1. God’s wrath is divine (not human), God’s wrath is fierce, (not moderate) God’s wrath is everlasting (no end)

E. The Tragedy

1. We continue to be at ease about the future punishment of the wicked, despite the clear warnings of Scripture and the sober teaching of Jesus

F. Our Reaction

1. Fear? Anger? Scorn?
2. “If we hate the wrath of God, it is because we hate God Himself.”
3. A loving God with no wrath is not God but an idol we create

II. God in the Hands of Angry Sinners (217, 176, 1814)

A. Our hatred (“Men Naturally God’s Enemies”)

1. We are enemies of God, inwardly sworn to His ultimate destruction
2. If we loved God, the central theme of the New Testament would not need to be reconciliation

B. Our hostility

1. Revealed in our lack of:
 - a. Esteem for God
 - b. Devotion to God
 - c. Delight in God
 - d. Worship of God
 - e. Closeness with God
 - f. Meditation on God

C. Our attitude

1. Not mere indifference but malice toward God
2. “By nature, the love of God is not in us.”

D. Our Enemy

1. “God is our *mortal* enemy because He represents the highest possible threat to our sinful desires.”
2. We would destroy Him if we could, as evidenced by Christ’s malicious murderers
3. We protest that as Christians, we are lovers of God
4. But we must remember that we still struggle against our natural human natures which were not annihilated

E. Types of theology

1. Pelagianism – does not believe in miracles, Christ’s deity, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension, or the Second Coming
2. Semi-Pelagianism – salutes the holiness of God and says it believes in God’s sovereignty but entertains delusions that we can make the decision to be born again
3. Augustinianism – sees grace as central to its theology because “we are spiritually impotent without the assistance of a merciful God”

F. Our love

1. “Loving a holy God is beyond our moral power.”
2. “To love a holy God requires grace strong enough to pierce our hardened hearts and awaken our moribund souls.”