

God is Very Angry at the Sins of Children: Their Hearts Are Naturally Full of Sin

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Jonathan Edwards Messages

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Bible Text: 2 Kings 2:23-24; Psalm 58:3

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Jonathan Edwards

To the children of a private meeting,
February, 1740

2 Kings 2:23-24,

23 And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. 24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

Observation 1: Who they were that were here spoken of. They were children.

Observation 2: The sin they were guilty of. They carried themselves contemptuously and proudly towards Elisha, a holy man and a prophet of God. As Elisha was going by the way, the children that were playing in the street, instead of paying respect to him and doing him reverence as he went along, they mocked him saying, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."

Observation 3: How they brought the curse of God upon themselves by it.

Observation 4: The dreadful effect of God's anger and curse.

Doctrine: God is very angry at the sins of children. I would observe,

1. That children are guilty of a great deal of sin. Persons are guilty of a great deal of sin when they are children. Their hearts are naturally full of sin. They don't naturally incline to God. They have no love to God by nature. They have no delight in religion. They hate God's ways. They hate Sabbath and prayer. They don't wholly mind what God says to them. They are naturally senseless, proud, full of malice and hatred, inclined to wicked thoughts, have nothing good in them.

Psalm 58:3,

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

They commit an abundance of actual sins and they live in neglect of prayer. They are regardless of sin. They live in neglect of Christ without any love to him. They have an abundance of sin on Sabbath days and timed to the worship of God. They disobey God and not seek him for their salvation. They have wicked thoughts and wicked desires. Many tell many lies which is a sin dreadfully threatened. Revelation 21:8, "all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." They have an unsuitable carriage to their parents, hating their parents, hating one another. They quarrel with their brothers and sisters. Multitudes of kinds of wickedness children are guilty of. They serve the devil, behave themselves like the devil's children.

2. God is very angry with them for their sins. He is very angry to see their hearts so full of sin, to see them of so wicked a disposition. He hates to see these things. It is loathsome to him and abominable in his sight. He is not only angry enough to correct them but to cast them into hell to all eternity. They deserve to burn in hell forever. Their being children doesn't excuse them. Though they don't have so much knowledge, yet they do know better, especially those children that live under the light of the Gospel. Wicked children are in God's sight like young serpents. We hate young snakes. They're the children of the devil, God hates the devil so he abhors his children. The devil is the old serpent and wicked children are his children, 2, though children have not so much knowledge and neither have they so many temptations as grown persons.

3. God is angry with them because they give the first part of their lives to the devil when God has but lately made them to take themselves away from God and give themselves to the devil. God is so angry that he sends many children to hell for these things. Many he won't suffer to live until they grow up. He cuts them off while they are children and he is so angry at the sins of children that he won't suffer the earth to bear them if they serve the devil. The devil shall have them. He is so angry with them that they are never converted. God will surely punish them. Though they should live to be old, God never will forget the sins they are guilty of when they are children.

Application: The uses. To exhort the children that are here present to seek that you may be converted and seek an interest in Christ that your sins may be forgiven.

You all have precious souls. Had not I known that, I should not have called you together today. You are all naturally in a miserable state and condition. In a little time, you will be in eternity. Some will be there sooner and some later. Therefore now consider what you have heard of the anger of God at the sins of children. Consider what feeble creatures you are therefore you that are out of Christ, God is angry with you. How dreadful is that to have God thus angry with you? There is no other way to be delivered but by Christ therefore seek an interest in him. Consider you can't bear the wrath of God, you cannot endure eternal burning. How dreadful will it be to be in hell-fire amongst devils and know that you must be there to all eternity. God will have no mercy upon you. If you cry to him, he won't hear you.

Consider how it will be when you come to die and are uncovered. Consider how it will be at the day of judgment. Consider what you will see then. Then you will see. You that are now mates together, you that have often played together, you that have gone to school together, how dreadful it will be to be separated then. How will you bear then to have some taken up into eternity and how dreadful will it be to be altogether in misery? Then you won't play together anymore but you'll be damned together. You will cry out with weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth together. Then you will torment one another instead of playing together.

I hope that most of you have godly fathers and mothers that are concerned for the good of your souls and have often given you good counsel and have often prayed for you. How will it be at the day of judgment to see them? If then you don't have an interest in Christ, your godly fathers and mothers will praise God for his justice in your damnation. They won't be grieved for you. Now they long for your salvation and are grieved for you, but then they will rise up and witness against you and tell Christ how often they warned you and all your godly neighbors will rise up and witness against you. If you won't hearken to counsel and so should die without an interest in Christ, your minister that now often preaches to you and warns you, must rise up in judgment against you.

'Tis my duty now earnestly to seek your salvation. I am your pastor. Christ has committed the care of your souls to me. Christ commands his ministers to feed the lambs of his flock but if you won't hearken, if you will not earnestly seek your salvation but will spend away your time in sin, I must rise up in judgment against you and declare to Christ how often I warned you. If you won't hearken, this opportunity will rise up in judgment against you.

Children that are converted will hereafter be a crown of joy and rejoicing to their truthful ministers in the day of judgment. How joyful would it be both to you and to me at the day of judgment if you might be my crown of rejoicing at the day of judgment? If you and I that have been your minister and have preached to you and warned you, might stand together at the day of glory at Christ's right hand and might say to Christ, "Here am I and the children which you have given me"? How joyful would that be if you and your godly parents may meet in glory hereafter? But if it should be otherwise, if you refuse to hearken to counsel and so should never get an interest in Christ or should be at the left hand and should be turned into hell with the devils, how will you cry out of your

foolishness and say, "O, that I should be such a fool!" How will you then remember this opportunity.

I am concerned for you. I know you have precious souls and that as long as you are not converted, you are every day in danger of dropping into hell. I am afraid lest your souls should be lost. I desire that every one of you may be saved. I desire that at the day of judgment you may all appear mounting up as with wings as eagles and not some of you rejoicing and others crying. I am afraid lest the devil will beguile and deceive you and destroy many of you and this is the reason that I have called you together at this time. I know you will all die in a little time, though some sooner than others. 'Tis not likely you will all live to grow up therefore now let me call upon you all to improve your time. Consider the good opportunity you now have.

Proverbs 8:17, "thoe that seek me early shall find me." And it may be some of you are under your first convictions. I would now invite you all to come to Christ. If you will come and give your hearts to him, he is willing to receive you. What a lovely sight will it be to be children holy and devoted to Christ. What a pity it is at the beginning in warning of life should be given to the devil and spent in his service. In some countries, it is a custom for parents to offer up and give many of their children in sacrifice to the devil. Will you offer up yourselves in sacrifice to him? If you obtain an interest in Christ, you will be happy children. Holy children are happy children. What comfortable living it will be.

Consider therefore what you will do. Will you hearken? Will you set about your souls concerned in good earnest? You have precious souls, consider what will you do for them. Will you let them perish for want of your care? Will you go away and serve the devil first or will you hearken to Christ and seek God and your own salvation? Don't hearken to Satan but hearken to Christ and all of you with one consent improve the time of your youth to seek your salvation. Let those that have no hope of their being converted give themselves no rest until they have obtained one, and don't let them that have and hope think that their work is done, and let all strive and press forward in rays of religion now and don't backslide but seek and work to the end. That will be the way to obtain a crown of life.

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