

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD [2]

INTRODUCTION: (Review first sermon.) What a person thinks in his heart of God directly affects his feelings about God and his obedience to God. We often have a distorted view of our Creator because we have been misinformed about His holy nature. Our thoughts of what God approves, and disapproves, may be just as erroneous as the thoughts of the wicked whom God addresses in Psalm 50:16-23. They mistakenly thought that God was like them.

Are you making God in your image? Are you bringing God down to your standard of judgment? Many make God in their own image by thinking that God:

I. DOES NOT LOOK UPON SIN AS TERRIBLE

- A. Some want to engage in sinful activities, but they do not want their conscience to bother them so they decide that God will not punish them for their sins because He either approves, or at least is indifferent, to their sins
- B. Some are gravely mistaken about God when they conclude that He is corrupt like themselves because He doesn't punish them immediately for their sins (Psa. 50:21)
 - 1. *The Pulpit Commentary* states, "Because God did not interpose openly to punish the sins committed, the transgressor dared to imagine him to be indifferent to sin, 'such an one as himself - no holier, no purer, no more averse to evil... How is self-deceiving hypocrisy possible? Through false thoughts of God. Men persuade themselves that he does not mean what he says; will not hard on them; is too indulgent really to punish sin. Not only a fatal error, but one that adds to other sins that of insulting the Most High! Terrible to think that men may set up an idol in their own thoughts - a false view of God's character and dealings...". (Vol. 8, pp. 387-388)
 - 2. These wicked men were in grave danger of God tearing them in pieces like a wild animal would its prey and "*there be none to deliver*" (Psa. 50:22)
- C. Many want their "god" to let them do as they please!
 - 1. We live around sin so much that we may not think of it as something which is very horrible (Example: Watching immoral TV programs; seeing people wear immodest clothing; using God's holy name in vain; lying; etc.)
 - 2. We may think, "Since everyone is guilty, then God will not care if I practice this sinful thing in moderation."
- D. God wants us to strive to be perfect in holiness (Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet 1:13-17)
- E. Sin is so repulsive to God that He allowed His Son to die so we may have a way of removing it from our soul (Matt. 26:28)
- F. Sin separates us from the fellowship of God by corrupting the pure soul that God made (Isa. 59:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:5-6) (Illustration: I was looking at the innocent faces of the children at an elementary school and was saddened by the thought that most of them will not grow up to imitate Christ, but will be corrupted by society.)
- G. God must be greatly grieved in His heart as He sees those whom He created with pure souls become corrupted with wickedness
- H. We should hate sin! (Rom. 12:9; 6:23; Eph. 5:11; Psa. 119:104; 97:10)

II. IS MEAN, CRUEL, AND DELIGHTS IN PUNISHING MAN

- A. Because God's wrath has come down upon man in times past, some falsely conclude that God enjoys inflicting pain and suffering (Gen. 7: 19; Heb. 10:31)
 - 1. Some think that God wills there to be violence and destruction
 - 2. Some have cruel parents and they think God is like them
- B. What a perverted view of the loving, kind, merciful, patient heavenly Father (Neh. 9:17; Psa. 103:8; Eph. 2:4-10; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Jn. 4:7-21)
- C. God will punish us if we don't repent, but He would much rather forgive us so we can be reconciled to Him
 - 1. To this end, He sent Jesus to die on the cross to bring about this reconciliation (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-19)
 - 2. God has "*no pleasure in the death of the wicked*" (Ezek. 33:11)
 - 3. He teaches His children, "*Do not rejoice when your enemy falls...*" (Prov. 24:17)
- D. God wants all to be saved from the torments of hell (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9)

III. IS SO FULL OF LOVE THAT HE WOULD NOT PUNISH ANYONE ETERNALLY IN A LAKE OF FIRE

- A. Some say, "I wouldn't punish someone for that sin and I don't think God would either."
 - 1. "As Dr. Robert Sculler, the pope of the New Age gospel, has said, 'I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive of human personality and hence, counterproductive for the evangelism enterprise that the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition.'" (*Wendell Avenue Bulletin, Vol. 24, No. 49, by Allan Turner*)
 - 2. John the Baptist boldly rebuked the Jews for their sins (Matt. 3:7-12)
 - 3. Jesus often called the scribes and Pharisees, "*Hypocrites*" (Matt. 23)
 - 4. Peter charged the Jews with the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:22-24, 36-37)
- B. I heard a man, who didn't believe in the existence of hell, try to prove that there was no hell with the following line of reasoning, "No matter how awful your children had acted, would you throw your children in a lake of fire to bum eternally? No, you wouldn't! Then, how could you believe that Jehovah, whose love far exceeds ours could throw His children in eternal fire?"
- C. This argument is a classic example of making God in man's image!
- D. Jesus warned of the horrible punishment that awaits the ungodly in hell (Mk. 9:42-49; Matt. 25:30,41,46)
- E. If our names are not written "*in the Book of Life*" we shall be "*cast into the lake of fire*" (Rev. 20:15; 21:8)
- F. Denying what God has said about the punishment of the wicked will not remove this horrible punishment
- G. God wants the sinner to be warned about the eternal punishment waiting for him after the judgment so he will be motivated to obey God's conditions of forgiveness and not experience the horrors of hell!

CONCLUSION: The Bible gives an accurate description of your Creator and Redeemer.

Get to genuinely know Him! Don't make the grave mistake of making up your mind of what God is like without first reading about Him in the Bible! God will not change for He is perfect (Mal. 3:6; Matt. 5:48) You must change your ways, thoughts and character to conform to His. If you will, heaven will be your home. If you will not, you will be cast into the lake of fire!

~ Don Hastings ~