

Righteous Indignation

I. THE DEFINITION

- A. **Righteous.** Of actions: Characterized by justice or uprightness; morally right or justifiable.
- B. **Indignation.** Anger at what is regarded as unworthy or wrongful; wrath excited by a sense of wrong, or by meanness, injustice, wickedness, or misconduct; righteous or dignified anger.
- C. God has righteous indignation – holy anger, fury, and jealousy – at sinners (Ps 69:24; 78:49; Isaiah 30:27,30; 34:2; Jeremiah 10:10; Ezekiel 21:31; 22:31; Nahum 1:6; Malachi 1:4; Micah 7:9; Habakkuk 3:12; Zephaniah 3:8; Zechariah 1:12; Romans 2:8; Heb 10:27; Rev 14:10).
- D. God hates the wicked and is angry with them at all times (Ps 5:4-6; 7:11-13; 10:3; Matt 7:23).
- E. God may have righteous indignation at His own sinful people (Deut 32:15-25; Heb 10:30).
- F. Men may have natural indignation at mean acts inciting disgust (II Kgs 3:27; II Sam 10:1-7).
- G. Men may have righteous indignation against their own sins (II Cor 7:11; Je 31:19; Eze 20:43).
- H. Men may have unrighteous indignation against good men (Esther 5:9; Dan 11:30; Mark 14:4; Luke 13:14; Acts 5:17) or with hypocritical judgment (Genesis 38:24; II Samuel 12:5).
- I. Righteous indignation is anger and hatred for evil that pleases God (Ex 32:19; Ps 45:7; 97:10; 101:3; 119:128,163; 139:19-22; Prov 8:13; Am 5:15; Mark 3:5; Rom 12:9; Ep 4:26; Heb 1:9).
- J. Until you have righteous indignation against all sin, then you have not known God (Ps 97:10).
- K. Until you have righteous indignation against all sin, then you have not repented (II Cor 7:11).
- L. Do we have holy anger and hatred for sin and sinners that pleases God? May God give it us!

II. The BASIS

- A. The true God is a God of wrath (Deut 9:19-20; 32:35-43; Ps 7:11; Nah 1:1-6; Rev 11:17-19).
- B. The true God is a terrible God of judgment (Ps 9:16-17; 37:28; 66:5; 89:14; 99:4; II Co 5:11).
- C. The true God is a God of hatred (Prov 6:16-19; Is 1:12-14; Rev 2:6,15; Psalm 5:4-6; 11:4-7).
- D. Jesus knew anger (Mark 3:5), called names (Matthew 23), and promised judgment (Matt 23).
- E. Saints love judgment (Ex 15:1-21; Ps 52; 58:10-11; 64:7-10; 68:1-2; 107:31-43; Pr 11:10).
- F. Saints show great zeal against evil (I Sam 11:7; 15:33; II Kgs 10:16; 23:1-25; II Chr 15:8-16).
- G. Saints in heaven desire and celebrate God's judgments (Rev 6:9-11; 15:3-4; 18:20; 19:1-6).

III. The EXAMPLES

- A. Moses had righteous indignation against Israel for worshipping the golden calf (Ex 32:19-29).
 - 1. His anger waxed hot when he witnessed Israel dancing before a golden calf (19).
 - 2. He cast the tables of stone from God on the ground and broke them to pieces (19).
 - 3. He took the calf, ground it to powder, put it in the water, and made them drink it (20).
 - 4. He angrily confronted Aaron for this heinous act of sin against the Lord (21-24).
 - 5. He drew a clear line of zealous commitment to the Lord and demanded zealots (25).
 - 6. He charged his fellow Levites to kill their closest relatives and companions (25-29).
- B. The Levites had righteous indignation against their closest relatives for the calf (Ex 32:25-29).
 - 1. When Moses called for zealots for the Lord, the sons of Levi came to him (25-26).
 - 2. When charged to kill their closest relatives and companions, they did it (27-28).
 - 3. They were consecrated to God by this glorious act of righteous indignation (29).
 - 4. God and Moses later remember this holy zeal for the Lord in a blessing (Deut 33:9).
 - 5. They fulfilled a warning and commandment God would later give (Deut 13:6-11).

- C. Phinehas had righteous indignation against an Israelite and his pagan paramour (Nu 25:1-15).
 - 1. God told Moses to hang Israel's leaders' heads up for their whoredom and idolatry to turn away His fierce anger that had brought a fatal plague on the congregation (4-5).
 - 2. When a wickedly bold Israelite brought his Midianite whore to his tent before the whole mourning camp, Phinehas took a javelin and made shish-ka-bob of them (6-8).
 - 3. Do not miss God's great blessing on Phinehas for his righteous indignation (10-13).
 - 4. David praises Phinehas later in a psalm ascribing righteousness to him (Ps 106:28-31).
- D. Jael had righteous indignation against Sisera as a great housewife (Judges 4:12-17; 5:24-31).
- E. Jehu had righteous indignation against Ahab, Jezebel, and Baal worshippers (II Kings 9-10).
- F. Jesus Christ had righteous indignation against religious profiteers in the temple (Jn 2:13-17).
- G. Paul had righteous indignation against the fornicator and church at Corinth (I Cor 5:1-6).
- H. Jehoshaphat was a bad example by not having righteous indignation (II Chronicles 19:1-3).

IV. The NEED

- A. If we should fear God (Luke 12:4-5; I Pet 1:17), we should hate the sin that brings His anger.
- B. If we seek His face, we must repudiate sin and the world (Ps 101; James 4:4; I John 2:15-17).
- C. What is your spirit toward sodomy, abortion, pornography, welfare, integration, strikes, etc?
- D. What is your spirit toward John Paul II, Madame Ohare, Jesse Jackson, Marilyn Manson, etc?
- E. What is your spirit toward AIDS, gang murders, the Titanic, smoking deaths, accidents, etc?
- F. What is your spirit toward excluded brethren, personal enemies, a neglectful spouse, etc?
- G. What is your spirit toward public education, sports, television, news, politics, morality, etc?
- H. What is your spirit toward "victimless crimes" as prostitution, drugs, gambling, occult, etc?
- I. David describes (1) joy at judgment, (2) hatred of things, and (3) hatred of men in Psalm 101.
- J. We need angry preachers (Josh 24:19; I Kings 19:10; Neh 13:23-27; Ezek 20:39; Matt 3:7-12; 7:28-29; I Cor 1:10-16; Gal 1:6-9; 3:1-3; Heb 10:31; 12:29; Jas 4:1-5; Rev 2:15-16; 3:16).

V. The HERESY

- A. It is not politically correct or religiously correct in our effeminate society to have righteous indignation, jealous anger, or hate toward any but Bible-believing, holy-living Christians.
- B. All modern Bible versions condemn any anger by corrupting the words of Matthew 5:22.
- C. The modern mentality is one of compromising accommodation of any sincere behavior.
 - 1. As long as persons are sincere, they have the right to believe and practice anything.
 - 2. The libertarian concept of accommodating "victimless" crimes reflects this serious error.
 - 3. Where is jealousy for God? Where is zeal for the Lord? The victim is God Himself.
- D. This perverse concept of right and wrong reflects the character of the god of this world.
 - 1. If God loves all men equally, then we ought to do the same. But God hates many men.
 - 2. If God accepts the church or conduct you choose, then so should we. But God judges.
- E. It is the perverse mentality of atheists who pity the "innocent victims" of God's judgments.
 - 1. God kills "innocent" infants (Ge 6:21-22; Nu 31:17; Jos 6:21; I Sam 15:3; Lam 2:20).
 - 2. God judges "innocent" heirs (Ex 20:5; 34:7; Ps 109:14; Jer 32:17-21; Mat 23:34-36).

VI. The OBJECTS

- A. In the Old Testament, the church and the nation were one and the same, and the law of God was the law of both the religious and civil authority; therefore, the church/nation executed full religious and civil penalties (death, for example) against public sinners as prescribed by God.
- B. In the New Testament, the church and the nation are separate, and God's law is not the law of the land; so the church does not exact civil punishment (as death) against public sinners.
 - 1. Christians sin greatly when burning abortion clinics or killing abortion doctors (Rom 13:1-7; I Cor 5:12-13; Luke 12:14; John 6:15; 8:11; 18:36; Luke 17:21; Rom 14:17).
 - 2. Our duty is to pray and submit to the national authority (I Tim 2:1-3; I Peter 2:11-17).
 - 3. We judge church sinners by various means (Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5:1-13; I Thess 5:14; Jude 1:22-23; II Thess 3:14-15; Eph 5:8-13; Titus 3:10-11; Rev 2:2).
 - 4. Know Paul's ministerial righteous indignation and judgment at some (I Tim 1:18-20; II Cor 10:3-6; I Corinthians 4:17-21; II Cor 13:2,10; II Tim 4:14-15; Titus 1:13).
- C. Minor personal enemies are not proper objects (Proverbs 24:17-18,29; Psalm 7:3-6; 35:11-16; Job 31:29-30; Matthew 5:43-48; I Peter 2:21-23; Romans 12:17-21).
 - 1. Remember our Lord's relative words: turning a cheek is not sacrificing your wife.
 - 2. Giving a cloak does not mean giving away your house and children (Matt 5:38-42).
 - 3. Personal enemies in small matters of offence are not to be hated but rather loved).
- D. Enemies for Christ's sake are not proper objects (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:54-60; I Pet 2:21-23).
- E. Innocent victims relative to ourselves are not proper objects (Prov 17:5; Ezek 25:1-7,15-17).
- F. Saints overtaken in a fault – minor offences without malice – are restored (Gal 6:1; Jas 5:16).
- G. God's enemies are true objects (Ps 139:19-22; 83:1-18; 15:4; 26:5; 31:6; II Chr 19:2; Re 2:6).
- H. Major personal enemies are proper objects (Jer 17:15-18; Psalm 18; 143:12; 109:6-20).
- I. Observe how David divides between major enemies and minor enemies (Psalm 35:1-16).
- J. We must always show the same or greater indignation against our own sins (II Cor 7:10-11).
 - 1. We must hate and repudiate our sins to be righteously angry (Job 33:27; Jer 31:19).
 - 2. God cannot stand the hypocrite who judges others and sins himself as shown below.

VII. The CONDUCT

- A. There are guidelines and limitations to the godly exercise of righteous indignation by saints.
- B. Hypocrisy in judgment is sin (Hos 1:4 cp II Kgs 10:29-31; Ob 1:10-16; Matt 7:3-5; Ro 2:1-3).
- C. Excessive wrath for a case is wrong (II Sam 21:1-2; II Chr 28:9-11; Zec 1:14-17; Mat 7:1-2).
- D. Joab (II Sam 3:39), Jonah (Jonah 4:4), James and John (Luke 9:51-56) had unrighteous anger.
- E. Anger against a brother **without a cause** is wicked, murder, and will be judged (Mat 5:21-26).
- F. Our apostle warns us to keep our anger from sin and to not let personal anger linger (Ep 4:26).
- G. The wise man would instruct us to use prudence in reproving evil to avoid trouble (Pro 22:3).
- H. If the object and purpose are righteous, then joy at God's vengeance (Ps 58:10-11; Judges 5).
- I. If the object and purpose are righteous, pray for God's vengeance (Ps 68:1-2; Rev 6:9-11).
- J. We are to love our personal neighbors and enemies (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 10:25-37).
 - 1. This righteous standard was taught in the Old Testament (Ex 23:4-5; Prov 25:21-22).
 - 2. Note the tender regard of personal enemies (Psalm 35:13-14; Jer 9:1; Luke 19:41-44).
 - 3. These enemies should be understood primarily of minor enemies of personal offence.
- K. We should not fret because of evil men, because God will judge them (Proverbs 24:19-20; Psalm 37:1-20; 73:1-22; 12:5; 140:12; Ecc 5:8; Eze 22:6-14; Amos 8:4-7; Mic 3:12; Mal 3:5).
- L. The apostle Paul could have wished his damnation for the salvation of others (Rom 9:1-3).
- M. Let us always remember to submit our heart and thoughts to the Lord (Psalm 139:23-24).