

Chapter 1 : Beverley Harper Books List; Complete Beverley Harper Bibliography (7 Items)

Echo of an Angry God As always Beverley Harper delivers - a well written, interesting story set in Malawi and on the tourist island of Likoma on Lake Nyasa. Her cast of characters are well-drawn and the pace of Echo of an Angry God never slackens!

Kreider if we could post it on the Biblical Studies Foundation website. I was delighted when he agreed. Critics of Edwards and the Puritans find this sermon an appalling example of all that is wrong with Calvinism and Puritan theology. Most anthologies of American literature perpetuate this stereotype by quoting the most graphic and striking imagery of the sermon, often without much context. The spider becomes our guide not only to the intentions of Calvinism but to its problems as well. Who can resist trembling before the frightening image of sinners dangled by a vengeful God like loathsome spiders over flames, or of treading on a paper-thin, rotting canvas, not knowing at what moment you might plunge into the abyss and face a just and judging God? The words echo through time in their haunting description of the plight of the damned. To be sure, some eighteenth-century people did doubt traditional views of hell, even in New England. Yet Edwards spoke to his audience as though such a denial were not an intellectual option. That he would do so is itself revealing. It suggests how immense the gulf of assumptions is that separates most modern readers from the world of the original auditors. Few today, including many who affirm traditional Christian doctrines, have the sympathies to take seriously some of these deepest sensibilities of ordinary eighteenth-century colonials. Although the sermon does describe God as angry and his anger is particularly directed toward sinners, we must not ignore the other major category of divine attributes Edwards emphasizes. Marsden says it well: God in his amazing long-suffering is still giving you a chance; his hand is keeping you from falling. He is often used, positively and negatively, as an historical example of one who believed in hell as a place of fire. In the second section of the sermon, Edwards articulates a statement of doctrine developed from the biblical text, followed by rationale and reasons to support it. Third, the preacher then applies the sermon to his audience. He does not explain the context of this verse. In fact, he does not even indicate that he has selected only one phrase from the verse, which is part of a song of Moses cf. He perhaps knows his audience well enough to know that they are so familiar with the biblical text that he can select this one phrase about impending judgment and develop a theological sermon around that concept. He then enumerates several implications of this text: At that time, God will release the wicked so that they will experience that which is justly deserved, eternal destruction. The Doctrine of the Sermon From the text, read with the implications listed above, Edwards articulates this doctrine: If he wanted to cast the wicked into hell he has sufficient power to accomplish his will. The wicked are already condemned, the righteous judge has already pronounced them guilty. He will not become angrier with them in hell than he is already now angry with them. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth, yea, doubtless with many that are now in this congregation, that it may be are at ease and quiet, than he is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell. The fires of hell are already burning in the souls of the wicked. All the contriving and scheming of the wicked to escape hell, apart from Christ, are doomed to failure. God is under no obligation to prolong the life of any wicked person for one instant. In summary, Edwards concludes: In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of, all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted unobliged forbearance of an incensed God. It is almost startling to see how brief his exposition of Scripture and defense of the doctrine is. It is apparent that he wants to devote sufficient time and space to making application for his congregation. If it is merely the grace of a sovereign God which keeps the wicked from their just punishment in hell, how ought they to respond? This sermon contains no explicit application for the righteous. Edwards lists an extended series of exhortations directed to the unregenerate. But this sermon only has one application: This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it. He portrays the horrors of hell and the impending doom of the wicked in graphic terms, using several different metaphors. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the

sovereign hand of him who had subjected it in hope. The sovereign pleasure of God for the present stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. Perhaps what precedes the fire is a terrible storm, or perhaps there is both a raging thunderstorm and burning lake of fire, or perhaps the fire is a result of a lightning strike, but it seems more likely that Edwards is using two different metaphors for destruction. Further, he describes hell as a bottomless pit, which seems to be a different analogy than either fire or storm. The interpreter need not find some way to make the metaphors fit together. Rather, it seems better to recognize that the preacher is stressing the horror of the destruction which is, apart from the sovereign pleasure of God, imminently threatening the wicked. Edwards continues with another metaphor for divine destruction, one which is even more difficult to reconcile with the description of hell as a bottomless pit of fire. The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given, and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. Rather, this master communicator clearly appears to be using a variety of metaphors to stress the horrors of the destiny of the wicked, not intending to describe the actual nature of that destruction. One might even surmise from the multiple metaphors that Edwards finds the language itself limiting, that hell is much worse than any of the analogies he can find in the natural world. That it is horrible and perhaps even too horrible for words seems to be his penultimate point. Ultimately, however, the sermon stresses the grace of God who, for reasons known only to him, has to this point kept the wicked from experiencing this horrible destruction which they deserve. This passage is often read by critics of Edwards as if God is pictured as a cruel and sadistic child taking perverse pleasure in the torture of a helpless insect. That is certainly to push the analogy too far, to fail to understand the literary use of the figure, to launch the interpretation past the edge of propriety. But, more significantly, it is to miss the clear declaration of divine grace even here. That the sinner has not yet fallen into the fire of hell, which he justly deserves, is due only to the mere pleasure of a sovereign and gracious God. Here is the passage: The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: Consider the fearful danger you are in: The critics of Edwards are correct in noting that he stresses the fierceness and fury of the wrath of God. Without hesitation or apology, he argues from the lesser to the greater. The time is coming when it will be withheld and only his wrath will be poured out on the unregenerate. Edwards explains, It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. In this extended passage, the compassionate heart of the pastor is clearly heard. There is no hint of glee in speaking of hell. There is no flippancy in describing the punishment that awaits the wicked. There is no cold-hearted cruelty in his words. There is, rather, a tone of godly sorrow and compassion as he speaks what he knows to be the truth. When delivered originally to his church in Northampton, Edwards is addressing a congregation he knows very well and his pastoral heart is grieved as he looks over the audience. How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath, and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation; that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old. There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have: If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! Instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it be a wonder if some that are now present, should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some person that now sits here in some seat of this meetinghouse in health, and quiet and secure, should be

there before tomorrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell the longest, will be there in a little time! You have reason to wonder, that you are not already in hell. And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God; many are daily coming for the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are in now an happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of Kings? This acceptable year of the Lord, that is a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist: Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over great part of this congregation: Perhaps implicitly, the view of the universal goodness of humanity which permeates the world view of our day has also penetrated into evangelical theology as well. That all humans, including children, would be guilty of sin and therefore deserving of the wrath of God seems harsh and unfair to modern ears. He has instead withheld the judgment from sinners which their sin deserves.

Likoma Island in Lake Malawi is renowned throughout Africa for its exotic and treacherous beauty - and its secret history of human sacrifice, hidden treasure, and unspeakable horror.

On the surface, there is something sassy about Goma. In public spaces, children grin and giggle and come running to greet strangers. Young women balancing heavy baskets on their heads point and laugh at foreigners. Yellow and blue-clad traffic police, often women, offer up enough attitude for a traffic-filled Times Square during Friday rush hour. First there is poverty. On the ground, it is even more surreal. Hotels look as if they have been buried to the second floor in chocolate cake mix. Rusted vehicles stick up out of the mix like nightmarish ornaments. There are other ornaments too – bright signs, red, yellow, green and orange signs that tell locals in French and Swahili crucial information about the mood of their angry, looming neighbor. Most often, the flags on the signs indicate a yellow state of alert, one stage higher than green, which means all clear. You might assume that all the warning anyone needs if they live next to a volcano is, if it starts erupting, run. But there is much more to living with a volcano. With his colleague Roger Omana, Mutombo visited a school recently where the volcano sensitivity program was being introduced to schoolchildren aged from 11 or 12 through 16 and The school is called Ecole Primaire Furoha. Neatly lined up outside the school, the pupils had left their school books on desks inside: Outside, the volcano program was getting under way. Large, colorful posters were held up showing what a volcano looked like from inside. With her was the genial and portly headmaster, Rumbo Buunda. At the same time, other deadly fissures opened up all over the city and surrounding area. Some belch steam, others emit invisible, odorless and deadly carbon monoxide. Recently, French vulcanologist Jaques Derieux dangled a luckless goat into a fissure and trained a video camera on it. For anyone watching the educational video, the lesson is clear: Back at the school, headmaster Buunda said that there were four further lessons after this, the first to take place at his school. Lesson one explained types of volcanoes. Lesson two showed the good things and the bad things about a volcano. They can kill – in , Goma lost only about 45 people in the lava flow, unlike the last serious eruption in , when more than 2, people were killed. But the lava, once it has cooled, is easy to fashion into blocks for building, so Goma literally rises from its own ashes. The lava is razor sharp, but brittle, and within 10 to 15 years it breaks down to extremely fertile, dark soil. Plants were already starting to grow from the lava only one year later. But each one had shoes. Miller has worked in this part of Africa for a number of years. Large families and Catholicism make for extended families that care for orphaned children not even directly related. And there is a distinctive sense of humor and sometimes visitors will get the vague sense that the wool has been deftly pulled over their eyes. Were the children good students? He smiled and looked apologetic.

Chapter 3 : Echo of an Angry God eBook: Beverley Harper: www.nxgvision.com: Kindle Store

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Lewis was angry at God. How, he angrily wondered, could a good God allow such pain and suffering? How could a powerful God not do something to stop such suffering? The angry young man became an atheist. The question of a good God and the reality of suffering is a challenging one for any person of faith. The biblical book of Job seems entirely dedicated to the question. David, in numerous laments, wonders whether God is acting in a just and righteous manner. I grew up and did mission work in southern Africa. I have seen plenty of evidence that this is a cruel and harsh world. Most of the suffering I observed, interestingly, had been caused by human beings; war, dictatorship, lawlessness, all contributed to the suffering of the ordinary citizen. In a world where humans get to choose to serve God or serve themselves, many humans choose badly. At least at some level, it needs to be said, the suffering we witness in our sad, tired world is caused by ourselves, not by God. But, of course, the question still remains: If that is so, then why does God not simply force all humans to choose well. If there was no more sin and cruelty in the world, that would eliminate war, oppression and suffering. These are not simple questions, of course, but one thing is clear: Being forced to choose the good is, by definition, not a choice. Being forced to love God is, as you can see, not genuine love. I always think of the shortest verse in our English Bibles: Beloved, be assured of this: We cannot count on getting our way all the time; not even God gets his way all the time. We can, however, count on his love. In hard times that may not seem like much, but I believe it is enough. The following two tabs change content below. He is the author of four books: Developing Leadership in the Church for the Next Generation. Latest posts by Stan Mitchell see all.

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