



GOD

AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF

IS

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

HOLY

R. C. SPROUL

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

God Is Holy

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THE CENTRALITY OF HOLINESS

I was a new Christian. My conversion had been sudden and dramatic, a replica for me of the Damascus Road. I was consumed with a new passion. To study Scripture. To learn how to pray. To conquer the vices that assaulted my character. To grow in grace. I wanted desperately to make my life count for Christ.

But something was missing in my early Christian life. I had abundant zeal, but it was marked by a shallowness, a kind of simplicity that was making me a one-dimensional person. I was a unitarian of sorts, a unitarian of the second person of the Trinity. I knew who Jesus was, but God

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the Father was shrouded in mystery. He was hidden, an enigma to my mind and a stranger to my soul.

Something happened one winter afternoon that changed all that. That night, something compelled me to get up and leave my dormitory room. I arose quickly and got dressed. In the cold, dark night, I crossed campus, bracing myself against the icy wind, the snow crunching underneath my feet, until I reached the chapel.

At the carpet-covered chancel, I sank to my knees, but I had nothing to say. I was overcome by terror, but it soon passed, giving way to something else: a wave of unspeakable peace. At once I was comfortable. I wanted to linger there, simply to bask in the presence of God.

That moment was life-transforming. Something deep in my spirit was being settled once for all. From that point, there could be no turning back. I was alone with God. A holy God. An awesome God. A God who could fill me with terror in one second and with peace in the next. I knew in that hour that I had tasted of the Holy Grail. Within me was born a new thirst that could never be fully satisfied in this world.

What could make a college student seek the presence of God in the middle of the night? Something happened in a classroom that afternoon that drove me to the chapel.

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It was my philosophy class. It was a course that had held little interest for me. I had chosen to major in Bible, and thought that the abstract speculations that went on in philosophy class were a waste of time. I found no food for my soul, nothing to inflame my imagination, just dull and difficult intellectual puzzles that left me cold.

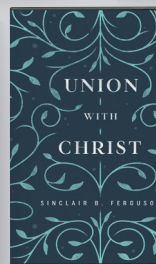
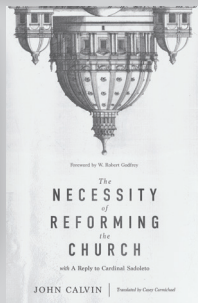
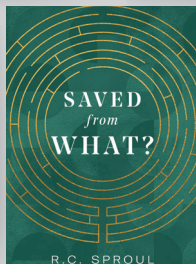
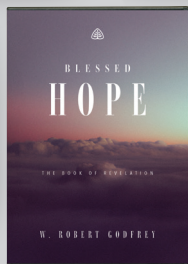
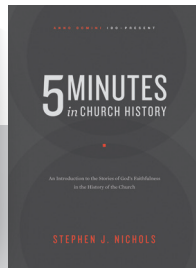
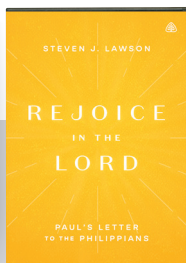
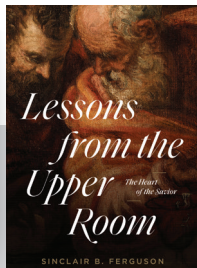
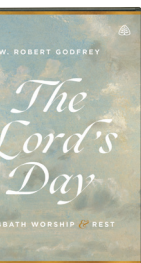
The lecture that day was about a Christian philosopher named Aurelius Augustine, better known as Saint Augustine. The professor lectured on Augustine's views of the creation of the world.

I was familiar with the biblical account of creation. I knew that the Old Testament opens with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But I had never thought deeply about the original act of creation. Augustine probed into this glorious mystery and raised the question, "How was it done?"

"In the beginning. . . ." It sounds like the start of a fairy tale: "Once upon a time." The trouble is that in the beginning there was no time as we understand it to be "once upon." What was there before the beginning of Genesis 1?

Here is where I got a headache in my philosophy class. Before the world began, there was nothing. But what in the world is "nothing"? Have you ever tried to think about

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