

# The Sermon by Jonathan Edwards, ‘Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God’



**ABOUT THE READING** Religion was important in the lives of English colonists. Many of them had come to America for religious freedom. Beginning in the 1730s a religious revival swept the colonies. This period was known as the “Great Awakening.” One of the most important Christian ministers of this time was Jonathan Edwards. He thought of God as powerful and not always kind. He wanted people to feel what it was like to be at God’s mercy.

## VOCABULARY

**wrath** anger

**induce** convince

**unregenerate** unconverted

**execute** act out

**discourse** lecture or sermon



*As you read note how Edwards focuses on the importance of being saved.*

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of **wrath**, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God . . . You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you have ever done, nothing that you can do, to **induce** God to spare you one moment.

Consider this, you that are here present that yet remain in an **unregenerate** state. That God will **execute** the fierceness of his anger implies that He will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the . . . extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportionate to your

**Your life hangs by a thread that can be burned up by God’s anger, and there is no one who will help you.**

**Even when God sees that you are suffering more than you can bear, He will not feel sorry for you.**

strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; He will have no compassion upon you, . . .; He will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful . . . should [you] suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires.

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the 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 subject 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. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If they 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! . . . How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! . . .

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in 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 from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to Him who 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

**Anyone who has not been reborn to faith in God is in danger of suffering for all eternity.**

**Everyone would cry for the sake of even one person who was in danger of being punished by God.**

**Many former sinners from all over are being saved by the love of Christ.**

left behind at such a day! . . . How can you rest one moment in such a condition?

**WHAT DID YOU LEARN?**

1. How does Edwards speak to people who think they are safe from God's anger?

---

---

2. How does Edwards try to convince his listeners to become saved?

---

---

3. How does Edwards contrast Christ with God?

---

---