



Sinners in the Hands of an  
Angry God

What is “Sinners in the  
Hands of an Angry God”?

It was a famous sermon  
given by  
Jonathan Edwards  
at Enfield, Connecticut,  
July 8th, 1741

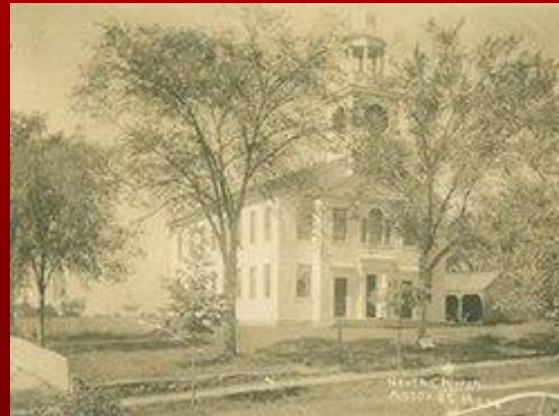


# Childhood

- Born October 5, 1703
- One of eleven children
- Built dens in the woods and held prayer meetings
- Attended Collegiate School when he was not even 13
- Graduated top of class

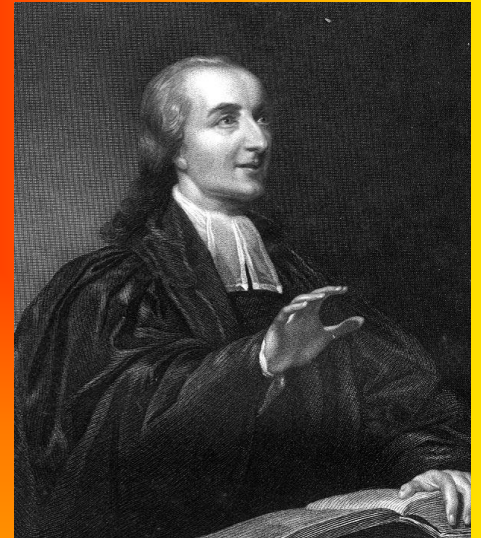
# His Twenties

- 1723-1726 minister of Presbyterian congregation in New York
- 1727 married Sarah Pierrepont
- 1729 took over grandfather's congregation in Northampton

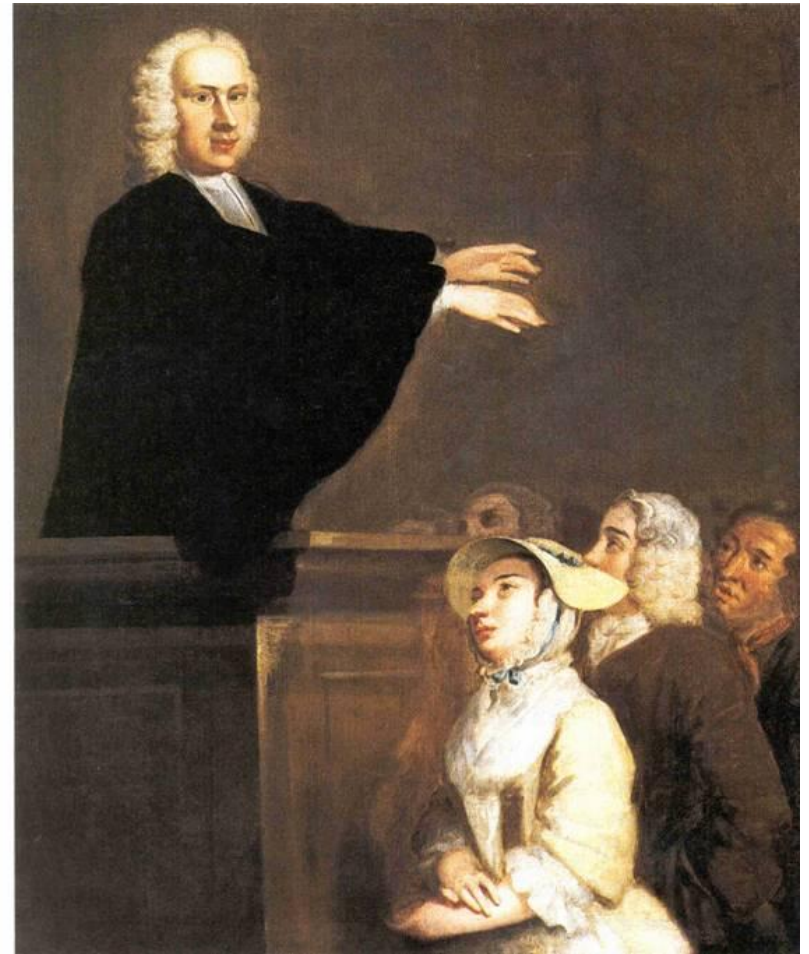


# Revivals

- Began in 1734
- Lasted 6 months
- 300 converts
- He preached many times
- He also published books
- Subsided by the time “Sinners in the Hands” was preached







# Rocky Times

- Dismissed from church in 1750
- Went to Stockbridge to work with Housatonic Indians and a small church
- 7 year period
- Wrote a series of works that now lead many to consider him one of the greatest theologians born in North America



# End of Life and Randomness

- Became President of Princeton
- Died of smallpox due to a vaccine
- First four children born on Sundays
  - Forklore said that a child was born on the same weekday it was conceived
- Loved to drink chocolate as a beverage in the mornings

# The Sermon

The Purpose of the speech was like that of any sermon. Jonathan Edwards was speaking to encourage them to acknowledge God's wrath and power over their lives, and if they did not, hell was the consequence. He did so using vivid detail and fear. Another purpose of sermons such as these, was to prepare the congregation for their death.

Real-life footage

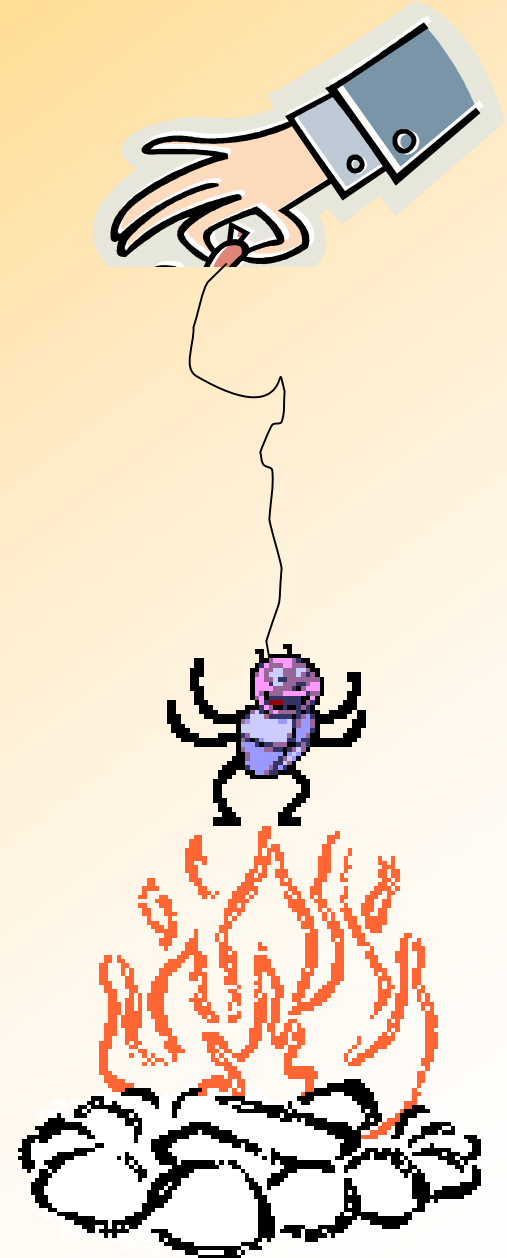
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX3cefFG5bM>

# Language

- “Rhetorically, ‘Sinners’ is stunning: it recalls a then-current style of sermons preached to condemned criminals just before their execution, during which the minister would stress their imminent encounter with God and exhort them to repent. Such sermons were often published, so most would have recognized the genre.”
- <http://www.ctlibrary.com/6343>

# Similes

- “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” (par. 1)



# Metaphors

- For hell:
  - “fire”
  - “furnace of wrath”
  - “wide and bottomless pit”
  - “fire of wrath”
  - “flames of Divine wrath”
  - “great wrath”
  - “infinite misery”



# Hyperbole

- “You are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours”



# Descriptive Words

- God:
  - “abhors”
  - “is dreadfully provoked”
  - is “offended”
  - is “solemn”
  - has “wrath”
  - has “fierceness”
  - is “Almighty God”
  - has “merciless vengeance”
  - has “anger”





# Repetition



- Paragraph one:
  - “that you did not go to hell”
  - “why you have not dropped into hell”
  - “why you have not gone to hell”
  - “drop down into hell”
- Repetition of the word hell



The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this. -- "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of **hell**, but the mere pleasure of God." -- There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into **hell** at any moment. He is not only able to cast wicked men into **hell**, but he can most easily do it. Thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to **hell**. They deserve to be cast into **hell**; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to **hell**. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to **hell**. So that every unconverted man properly belongs to **hell**; They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of **hell**. And the reason why they do not go down to **hell** at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in **hell**, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. 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, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of **hell**. The old serpent is gaping for them; **hell** opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost. There are in the souls of wicked men those **hellish** principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into **hell** fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of **hell**. There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of **hell** fire. Unconverted men walk over the pit of **hell** on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to **hell**, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it does not depend at all the less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to **hell**, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case. All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape **hell**, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from **hell** one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of **hell**, flatters himself that he shall escape it

They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to **hell**; The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to **hell** If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about **hell**, ever to be the subjects of misery: we doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of **hell** one moment. So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of **hell**; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in **hell**, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, **hell** is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; there is **hell**'s wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and **hell** but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up. You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of **hell**, but do not see the hand of God in it; Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards **hell**; and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of **hell**, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in **hell**, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it. The God that holds you over the pit of **hell**, much as one holds a spider It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to **hell** the last night; And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into **hell** since you arose in the morning There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to **hell**, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into **hell**. 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, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in **hell**. *fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*" But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in **hell**? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in **hell** in a very short time, Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of **hell** longest will be there in a little time! You have reason to wonder that you are not already in **hell**. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved **hell** more than you, And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to **hell**, And let every one that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of **hell**, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. and will wish that you had died and gone to **hell** before you had seen it.

Deuteronomy 32:22	For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.
2 Samuel 22:6	The sorrows of <b>hell</b> compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;
Job 11:8	It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than <b>hell</b> ; what canst thou know?
Job 26:6	<b>Hell</b> is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.
Psalms 9:17	The wicked shall be turned into <b>hell</b> , and all the nations that forget God.
Psalms 16:10	For thou wilt not leave my soul in <b>hell</b> ; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Psalms 18:5	The sorrows of <b>hell</b> compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.
Psalms 55:15	Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into <b>hell</b> : for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.
Psalms 86:13	For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest <b>hell</b> .
Psalms 116:3	The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of <b>hell</b> gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
Psalms 139:8	If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in <b>hell</b> , behold, thou art there.
Proverbs 5:5	Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on <b>hell</b> .
Proverbs 7:27	Her house is the way to <b>hell</b> , going down to the chambers of death.
Proverbs 9:18	But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of <b>hell</b> .
Proverbs 15:11	<b>Hell</b> and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?
Proverbs 15:24	The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from <b>hell</b> beneath.
Proverbs 23:14	Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from <b>hell</b> .
Proverbs 27:20	<b>Hell</b> and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.
Isaiah 5:14	Therefore <b>hell</b> hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.
Isaiah 14:9	<b>Hell</b> from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
Isaiah 14:15	Yet thou shalt be brought down to <b>hell</b> , to the sides of the pit.
Isaiah 28:15	Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with <b>hell</b> are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:
Isaiah 28:18	And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with <b>hell</b> shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.
Isaiah 57:9	And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto <b>hell</b> .
Ezekiel 31:16	I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to <b>hell</b> with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

Ezekiel 31:17	They also went down into <b>hell</b> with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.
Ezekiel 32:21	The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of <b>hell</b> with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.
Ezekiel 32:27	And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to <b>hell</b> with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.
Amos 9:2	Though they dig into <b>hell</b> , thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:
Jonah 2:2	And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of <b>hell</b> cried I, and thou heardest my voice.
Habakkuk 2:5	Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as <b>hell</b> , and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:
Matthew 5:22	But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of <b>hell</b> fire.
Matthew 5:29	And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into <b>hell</b> .
Matthew 5:30	And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into <b>hell</b> .
Matthew 10:28	And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in <b>hell</b> .
Matthew 11:23	And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to <b>hell</b> : for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.
Matthew 16:18	And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of <b>hell</b> shall not prevail against it.
Matthew 18:9	And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into <b>hell</b> fire.
Matthew 23:15	Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of <b>hell</b> than yourselves.
Matthew 23:33	Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of <b>hell</b> ?
Mark 9:43	And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into <b>hell</b> , into the fire that never shall be quenched:
Mark 9:45	And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into <b>hell</b> , into the fire that never shall be quenched:
Mark 9:47	And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into <b>hell</b> fire:
Luke 10:15	And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to <b>hell</b> .
Luke 12:5	But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into <b>hell</b> ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.
Luke 16:23	And in <b>hell</b> he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
Acts 2:27	Because thou wilt not leave my soul in <b>hell</b> , neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Acts 2:31	He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in <b>hell</b> , neither his flesh did see corruption.
James 3:6	And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of <b>hell</b> .
2 Peter 2:4	For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to <b>hell</b> , and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Revelation 1:18	I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of <b>hell</b> and of death.
Revelation 6:8	And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and <b>Hell</b> followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.
Revelation 20:13	And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and <b>hell</b> delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
Revelation 20:14	And death and <b>hell</b> were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

## Grand Totals:

Number of Times the word “hell”  
is mentioned in this sermon:

**51**

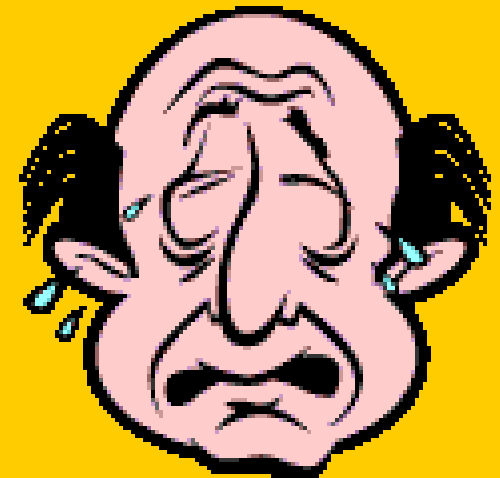
Number of Times the word “hell”  
is mentioned in the entire Bible:

**54**



# Effects of the Speech

- After its initial presentation, the audience was so moved that many attendees were found openly weeping.
- There were also a number of reports of swooning, outcries, and convulsions from audience members.
- Edwards also actually had to ask the audience to quiet down so he might finish his sermon.





# The Meetinghouse

First built by Puritans

Built in the center of town by the towns people.

Used as a church but also as a place to hold town meetings and other functions.

Was often at the center of what was happening in the town.





# 18<sup>th</sup> Century Great Awakening

- **The Great Awakening was a religious movement during the 1730's and 1740's in which fiery ministers presented powerful messages of salvation which provided early Americans with a greater sense of nationality. This religious movement also had a lasting effect upon how the people in the American colonies viewed themselves, their relationships with each other, and their faith. The Great Awakening and its “fire” of spiritual enthusiasm started in Connecticut Valley and Western Massachusetts. One of its first points of origin was in the Connecticut River Valley under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards.**