

**First Presbyterian Church  
Southampton, New York**

**Excerpts from:  
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”**

**By Johnathan Edwards  
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**Deuteronomy 32:1 – 36**

**Amos 9:2 – 3**

**Luke 12:1 – 12**

**18<sup>th</sup> Century-Era Worship Service**

**May 17, 2015**

The Observation from the biblical Words that I would now insist upon is this, of an angry God. There is nothing that keeps wicked Men at any one Moment, out of Hell, but the mere Pleasure of God. By the mere Pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign Pleasure, his arbitrary Will, restrained by no Obligation, hindered by no manner of Difficulty.

The Truth of this Observation may appear by the following Considerations. 1) There is no Want of Power in God to cast wicked Men into Hell at any Moment. Men’s Hands can’t be strong when God rises up: The strongest have no Power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his Hands. He is not only able to cast wicked Men into Hell, but he can most easily do it.

There is no Fortress that is any Defense from the Power of God. Though Hand join in Hand, and vast Multitudes of God’s Enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in Pieces: They are as great Heaps of light Chaff before the Whirlwind; or large Quantities of dry Stubble before devouring Flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a Worm that we see crawling on the Earth; so ‘tis easy for us to cut or singe a slender Thread that any Thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God when he pleases to cast his Enemies down to Hell.

2) 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. Yea, on the contrary, Justice calls aloud for an infinite Punishment of their Sins. The Sword of divine Justice is every Moment brandished over their Heads, and ‘tis nothing but the Hand of arbitrary Mercy, and God’s mere Will, that holds it back. They are now the Objects of that very same Anger & Wrath of God that is expressed in the Torments of Hell.

3) 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. So that it is not because God is unmindful of their Wickedness, and don’t resent it, that he don’t let loose his Hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The Wrath of God burns against them, their Damnation don’t slumber, the Pit is prepared, the Fire is made ready, the Furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the Flames do now rage and glow. The glittering Sword is whet, and held over them, and the Pit hath opened her Mouth under them,

All the Means that there are of Sinners going out of the World, are so in God's Hands, and so universally absolutely subject to his Power and Determination, that it don't depend at all 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. But the foolish Children of Men do miserably delude themselves in their own Schemes, and in their Confidence in their own Strength and Wisdom; they trust to nothing but a Shadow. The bigger Part of those that heretofore have lived under the same Means of Grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to Hell: and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive: it was not because they did not lay out Matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape.

If it were so, that we could come to speak with them, and could 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 that Misery, we doubtless should hear one and another reply, ' No, I never intended to come here; I had laid out ' Matters otherwise in my Mind; I thought I should ' contrive as well for my self; I thought my Scheme ' good; I intended to take effectual Care; but it came ' upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that of an angry God.'

So that whatever some have imagined and pretended about Promises made to natural Men's earnest seeking and knocking, 'tis plain and manifest that whatever Pains a natural Man takes in Religion, whatever Prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of Obligation to keep him a Moment from eternal Destruction. 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 'em up one moment; the Devil is waiting for them, Hell is gaping.

It is hoped that the use of this information may lead to the Awakening of unconverted Persons in this Congregation. This that you have heard is the Case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That World of Misery, that Lake of burning Brimstone is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful Pit of the glowing Flames of the Wrath of God; there is Hell's wide gaping Mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, not any Thing to take hold of: there is nothing between you and Hell but the Air; 'tis 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 don't see the Hand of God in it, but look at other Things, as the good State of your bodily Constitution, your Care of your own Life, and the Means you use for your own Preservation. 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. Were it not the sovereign Pleasure of God, the Earth would not bear you one Moment; for you are a Burden to it; the Creation groans with you; the Creation is made Subject to the Bondage of your Corruption. The Wrath of God is like great Waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, & rise higher and higher, and the longer the Stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is it's Course, when once it is let loose.

The Bow of God's Wrath is bent, and the Arrow made ready on the String, and Justice bends the Arrow at your Heart, and strains the Bow, and it is nothing but the mere Pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any Promise or Obligation at all, that keeps the Arrow one Moment from being made drunk with your Blood. Thus are all you that are never passed under the

great Change of Heart, by the mighty Power of the Spirit of God upon your Souls; all that were never born again, and made new Creatures, and raised from being dead in Sin, to a State of new, and before altogether unexperienced Light and Life, you are thus in the Hands of an angry God; 'tis nothing but his mere Pleasure that keeps you from being this Moment swallowed up in everlasting Destruction.

O Sinner! Consider the fearful Danger you are in: 'Tis 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. 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 ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one Moment.

(But) now God stands ready to pity you; this is a Day of Mercy; you may cry now with some Encouragement of obtaining Mercy: but when once the Day of Mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous Cries and Shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God as to any Regard to your Welfare; God will have no other Use to put you to but only to suffer Misery; you will be a Vessel of Wrath fitted to Destruction; and there will be no other Use of this Vessel but only to be filled full of Wrath. Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted State, if you continue in it; the infinite Might, and Majesty and Terribleness of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable Strength of your Torments.

It would be dreadful to suffer this Fierceness and Wrath of Almighty God one Moment; but you must suffer it to all Eternity: there will be no End to this exquisite horrible Misery: When you look forward, you shall see a long Forever, a boundless Duration before you, which will swallow up your Thoughts, and amaze your Soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any Deliverance, any End, any Mitigation, any Rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long Ages, Millions of Millions of Ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless Vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many Ages have actually been spent by you in this Manner, you will know that all is but a Point to what remains.

Oh who can express what the State of a Soul in such Circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble faint Representation of it; 'tis inexpressible and inconceivable: for who knows the Power of God's Anger? 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; with their Hearts filled with Love to Him that has loved them and washed them for 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? Are not your Souls as precious as the Souls of the People at Suffield, where they are flocking from Day to Day to Christ? 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.

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. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his Elect

in all Parts of the Land; and probably the bigger Part of adult Persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little Time, and that it will be as it was on that great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the Apostles' Days. If this should be the Case with you, you will eternally curse this Day, and will curse the Day that ever you was born, to see such a Season of the pouring out of God's Spirit; and will wish that you had died and gone to Hell before you had seen it.

Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the Days of John the Baptist, the Ax is in an extraordinary Manner laid at the Root of the Trees, that every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit, may be hewn down, and cast into the Fire. Therefore let every one 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: Let every one fly out of Sodom: Haste and escape for your Lives, look not behind you, escape to the Mountain, lest you be consumed.

Please stand, and let us pray...