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; the fire pent up in their own
hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any
Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any
security to them.

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.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and
pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and
plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best
contrivance, 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. . .

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 more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You
have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand
that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go
to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep.
And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning,
but that God's hand has held you up. 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. 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.
1. What do you think was the purpose of Edwards’ sermon?

2. How do you think most people in his audience responded?

3. How would you have responded if you were in the audience?

4. What parts of the sermon are the most striking to you? Why do they stand out or grab your attention?

“Students in the Hands of An Angry Principal”

Imagine that our school has just hired a new principal. Using Jonathan Edwards’ sermon as a model, write a modern day speech that this principal might make in front of an audience of students. Imagine that the new principal views all students as potential troublemakers and is addressing our student body in the auditorium, with language designed to intimidate them and frighten students into being good.

- Use strong & appropriate language
- Choose a specific “sin” (e.g. skipping class) to focus on
- Include powerful, emphatic opening & closing statements
- Incorporate figurative language (e.g. simile, metaphor)
- Should be about 1 page (take it and run with it!!)
Oh wayward students! Your wicked and lazy ways have brought you to the edge of a fiery pit of failure. Not only failure in this course, or failure in high school, but failure in your life.

Your performance in school this year, in the classroom, in the rehearsal studios, and on the practice fields have been mediocre, distracted, effortless, and timid. Your grades have dipped as your tardiness has soared!

You have been warned, reminded, cautioned, and counseled. You have been pleaded to, pushed, prodded, and begged. You have answered our cries with indifference, boredom, blank stares, and apathy.

This message may be a wakening call for some, but most of you have already heard this many times before. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it.

Your Judgment Day is now upon you. You can no more avoid your fate than a spider’s web would have to stop a falling rock. The devil is waiting for you, his flames gathering and flashing around him, waiting to take hold of you and swallow you up.

You must repent now, you must repent fast, and you must repent with sincerity. For should you not, then the principal’s wrath will rain down on you like a fiery river of molten punishment. You have nowhere to hide, and must rely on the unlikely forgiveness of your angry principal. And before him you hang on a slender, fraying thread, with the flames of your destruction enveloping you, nothing to keep off the turbulent demise you have brought upon yourself!