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Sinners Analysis

Jonathan Edward’s sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” tries its hardest to scare people back to the church. Johnathan uses the vivid image of “falling into the fire” to try to make the audience fear for their lives as they “hang from a slender thread.” People are terrified of extreme pain and suffering, so he links that to not following god. This is used to great effect, considering his audience generally believes what he’s talking about. Jonathan also threatens them with suffering for “all eternity” with no escape from the “exquisite horrible misery.” When the focus shifts, its to show how all of these terrifying things will last forever, to scare them to act now. If you dangle the threat of eternal torture in front of your audience, it makes them want to change how they act. Afterwards, he says that all this can be avoided because “Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open.” Juxtaposing the eternal suffering and torture of hell with the pleasure of heaven is a good strategy to get people to do what you want them to do. He shows how great heaven will be if you only follow what Jesus wants. Johnathan uses threats of punishment and promises of pleasure to get his traditional Puritan audience to come back to the church.