

Discussion Questions for "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards

- ◆ What does your knowledge about the audience tell you about the piece as a whole?
- ◆ What is Edwards's central idea? How do you know? How does the central idea develop throughout the sermon?
- ◆ Does Edwards address and define counterclaims? What impact does addressing counterclaims have on the piece?
- ◆ Does Edwards use words with strong connotation? Where are they? Words with a weaker connotation? Where are they? What impact do those words have on the piece?
- ◆ Does Edwards maintain a formal or informal speech? Why would he choose to maintain formality or informality? What impact do the levels of formality have on the piece?
- ◆ Does Edwards have a mix of longer and shorter paragraphs, or are they about the same? What impact does paragraph length have on the piece?
- ◆ What comes first? What comes after? How is it built? Does the sermon follow a sequential time-line, a logical sequence, a problem-solution-resolution? How are ideas divided? How is the message arranged?
- ◆ What does the structure reveal about the Edwards's overall message?
- ◆ Do the ideas of this sermon remind you of another text, either narrative or expository? What connections can you make? Does this text deepen your understanding of another text?
- ◆ Consider the images and analogies utilized by Edwards throughout the sermon. What are the prominent themes communicated by the images and analogies that Edwards employs?
- ◆ What is the purpose of this sermon? How are people meant to respond? How does this piece translate today? How might it have been received in 1741?
- ◆ What are Edwards' sources of authority or credibility? How does he elicit a response from his listeners?
- ◆ Consider your prior knowledge of Puritan life and belief systems. In what way might this sermon further support that knowledge? In what way does it change your perception of the Puritan culture?
- ◆ What are the most striking parts of the sermon (for you)? Why do they stand out/grab your attention?
- ◆ Does the text make the audience feel content about the world, or does the text make the audience want to alter, fix, or change the world? What about you?
- ◆ Does the end of the piece circle back to the beginning? What impact does circling back have on the audience?