

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

Answer Key

- Jonathan Edwards uses many poetic devices in his sermon. Find and write down five similes in the piece. Yes, I want you to write down Edwards' actual wording that includes each simile.
Students' answers will vary, but here are five similes to get you started:
 - "Your wickedness makes you as if you were heavy as lead..."
 - "...your righteousness, would have no more influence...than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock."
 - "...your destruction would come like a whirlwind..."
 - "...wrath of God is like great waters..."
 - "...God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire..."
- Additionally, Edwards builds on one of his similes to create an extended analogy. First, find the paragraph that serves as one long comparison between two things. Then, write the first six words of that paragraph to show me that you've found it. Do you think this analogy is effective? Explain your answer. The extended analogy is the fifth paragraph and it begins, "The wrath of God is like..." Students' opinions will vary as to the effectiveness of the comparison between God's wrath and dammed waters.
- According to Edwards, what do healthy, strong members of that town foolishly believe? Why do they think this? He says that people who are physically robust foolishly believe that they are healthy and successful because they are in God's favor. They are deceiving themselves and think they see outward signs of God's favor, when, in fact, God is not pleased with them.
- Edwards argues that the sun, earth, air, and animals are not here for our enjoyment. What, according to Edwards, is the purpose of these natural elements? Write the line of text that shows this. Edwards says that these things were not put here for us, but for us to use in service and devotion to God. The line is in the fourth paragraph: "God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose..."
- Personification is used when an author gives human traits to a non-human element or item. Find and record two examples of personification in the sermon.
Students' answers will vary, as there are several examples, but here are two:
 - "...the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts..."
 - "...God...keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood..."
- Alliteration is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words, such as, "Sally sells seashells by the seashore." Find and write two of Edwards' alliterative phrases.
Students' answers will vary, but here are two:
 - "...the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury..."
 - "...the stoutest, sturdiest devil..."
- Thinking about the overall purpose of Edwards' piece, would this sermon be effective in making you want to become further devoted to his church? Explain your answer. Students' answers will vary, but many students say they do not appreciate Edwards' scare tactics. Religious devotion, many say in our class discussions, should be a source of comfort and strength, not fear.

Quiz for Excerpt from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

True/False

- _____ 1. According to Edwards, the pleasure and hand of God holds people out of hell.
 - _____ 2. Edwards offers no way of escape from hell in his sermon.
 - _____ 3. God's view of man's sin is compared to the way humans view a rotting animal carcass.
 - _____ 4. God's wrath is compared to black clouds hanging over people's heads.
 - _____ 5. God's wrath is compared to great waters that are held back by a dam for the time being.
 - _____ 6. Edwards speaks to people of all ages in his sermon, even children.
 - _____ 7. Mankind's sin is compared to a team of horses out of control running towards a cliff.
 - _____ 8. Hell's mouth is waiting to swallow up unconverted men.
 - _____ 9. Hell is compared to the burning hot coals used by blacksmiths to make horseshoes.
 - _____ 10. Edwards preaches about how good deeds will help sinners avoid hell.
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Quiz B

Name: _____

Quiz for Excerpt from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

True/False

- _____ 1. Edwards preaches about how good deeds will help sinners avoid hell.
- _____ 2. Hell's mouth is waiting to swallow up unconverted men.
- _____ 3. God's wrath is compared to black clouds hanging over people's heads.
- _____ 4. God's view of man's sin is compared to the way humans view a rotting animal carcass.
- _____ 5. Mankind's sin is compared to a team of horses out of control running towards a cliff.
- _____ 6. Hell is compared to the burning hot coals used by blacksmiths to make horseshoes.
- _____ 7. God's wrath is compared to great waters that are held back by a dam for the time being.
- _____ 8. Edwards offers no way of escape from hell in his sermon.
- _____ 9. Edwards speaks to people of all ages in his sermon, even children.
- _____ 10. According to Edwards, the pleasure and hand of God holds people out of hell.

Answer Keys for Both Versions of Excerpt Quiz

Quiz A

Quiz for Excerpt from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

- T 1. According to Edwards, the pleasure and hand of God holds people out of hell.
- F 2. Edwards offers no way of escape from hell in his sermon.
- F 3. God's view of man's sin is compared to the way humans view a rotting animal carcass.
- T 4. God's wrath is compared to black clouds hanging over people's heads.
- T 5. God's wrath is compared to great waters that are held back by a dam for the time being.
- T 6. Edwards speaks to people of all ages in his sermon, even children.
- F 7. Mankind's sin is compared to a team of horses out of control running towards a cliff.
- T 8. Hell's mouth is waiting to swallow up unconverted men.
- F 9. Hell is compared to the burning hot coals used by blacksmiths to make horseshoes.
- F 10. Edwards preaches about how good deeds will help sinners avoid hell.

Quiz B

Quiz for Excerpt from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

- F 1. Edwards preaches about how good deeds will help sinners avoid hell.
- T 2. Hell's mouth is waiting to swallow up unconverted men.
- T 3. God's wrath is compared to black clouds hanging over people's heads.
- F 4. God's view of man's sin is compared to the way humans view a rotting animal carcass.
- F 5. Mankind's sin is compared to a team of horses out of control running towards a cliff.
- F 6. Hell is compared to the burning hot coals used by blacksmiths to make horseshoes.
- T 7. God's wrath is compared to great waters that are held back by a dam for the time being.
- F 8. Edwards offers no way of escape from hell in his sermon.
- T 9. Edwards speaks to people of all ages in his sermon, even children.
- T 10. According to Edwards, the pleasure and hand of God holds people out of hell.

Test on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

A. Multiple Choice - Select the letter of the best answer. (4 points each)

- _____ 1. What religious movement was going on at the time this sermon was delivered?
 A. The Great Revival C. The Great Awakening
 B. The Religious Renewal D. The Church Reunited
- _____ 2. This sermon's tone changes throughout. Which of the following best describes the change?
 A. hopeful to discouraging C. serious to playful
 C. encouraging to disappointing D. angry to hopeful
- _____ 3. Which of the following literary devices does Edwards include in his sermon?
 A. simile B. metaphor C. Personification D. All of these
- _____ 4. Which of the following is an allusion?
 A. "The use of this awful subject may be for the awakening of unconverted persons"
 B. "Let every one fly out of Sodom"
 C. "Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair"
 D. "How awful is it to be left behind at such a day!"
- _____ 5. What is the main purpose of this sermon?
 A. To encourage people to give more to the church.
 B. To convert sinners to Christ.
 C. To discourage gossip in the church.
 D. To preach against sin.
- _____ 6. What technique is used in this statement: "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"?
 A. allusion B. simile C. repetition D. onomatopoeia
- _____ 7. "Your damnation does not slumber" is an example of
 A. simile B. onomatopoeia C. personification D. oxymoron
- _____ 8. "It is great furnace of wrath" is an example of
 A. metaphor B. oxymoron C. simile D. none of these
- _____ 9. "[T]here is hell's wide gaping mouth open" is an example of
 A. simile B. personification C. onomatopoeia D. Allusion
- _____ 10. Which of the following contains NO figurative language?
 A. "There are black clouds of God's wrath hanging directly over your heads"
 B. "Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners"
 C. "The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart"
 D. "However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it."

- _____ 11. In his sermon, Edwards discusses how good works will erase sinful behavior.
- _____ 12. Edwards repeats certain images in his sermon.
- _____ 13. The majority of this sermon is spent discussing punishment and wrath.
- _____ 14. The sermon was delivered to people of all ages - old, middle-aged, and children.
- _____ 15. "Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead" is an example of metaphor.

C. Vocabulary - select the word that best fills the blank. All words will not be used. (4 points each)

wrath abhor eternity omnipotent vengeance loathsome
provoke prudence sovereign transgressed unconverted burden

16. Which word is most similar to the meaning of abhor? _____
17. If a person refuses to change his ways, he will remain _____.
18. The rude kid likes to _____ his classmates by doing the exact thing he knows will get on their nerves.
19. The children who _____ by stealing from the store on the field trip were arrested.
20. The stock broker did not show _____ in his decision to keep his stocks even though they were declining in value.
21. As the criminal was taken away in chains from the courtroom, he vowed _____ on those involved in his prosecution.

D. Writing (16 points)

22. In a developed paragraph, tell 2 techniques Jonathan Edwards uses to impact his audience and explain their impact on that audience. End your paragraph with what writers can learn from Edwards about impacting an audience. (Remember to include a topic sentence in the beginning.) If you need additional space, attach a sheet of notebook paper.