

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

by Jonathan Edwards

Wicked men are kept out of hell only by the sovereign pleasure of God, and their condition is one of impending doom.

Duration: 51:36

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:35, Psalm 73:18-19, Proverbs 1:32, Matthew 6:33, John 3:3, Acts 20:26, Hebrews 12:29

Topics: "Audio Books"

Description

The video is a summary of a sermon by Jonathan Edwards titled 'Their Foot Shall Slide in Due Time' based on Deuteronomy 32:35. Edwards emphasizes the wrath of God and the impending destruction of the wicked Israelites who have rebelled against Him. He describes their vulnerability to falling into destruction, comparing it to standing on slippery ground. Edwards urges his audience to recognize the gravity of their sin and the imminent danger of living on the edge of eternity. The video also highlights Edwards' powerful use of extended similes to convey the severity of God's wrath, acknowledging that even his descriptions fall short of the reality.

Transcript

I want to introduce this with just a couple of words about it, and then move immediately into the text, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. I don't suppose there is any real way we can know exactly how Jonathan Edwards preached. We do know that sometimes he preached what they called ex-tempor, sometimes he preached with copious notes, and other times he preached with full manuscript.

Because many of the sermons are published, sometimes it's hard to tell whether he preached them with copious notes or from full manuscript. But I think that we can conclude that Jonathan Edwards, even though he was perhaps not as dramatic as one like George Whitefield, yet he was not what Gilbert Kennett would have called cold and sapless. The subjects with which he dealt do not lend themselves to detached presentation, but I feel that he must have had a good degree of pathos, and a good degree of sanctified drama in his presentation.

This sermon has been called the sermon for which New England never forgave him. I think that's probably true. The wife of Herod never forgave John the Baptist.

It's also been called, or been said to be atypical of the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. The worst thing he ever did, I heard one contemporary theologian say. That is false, it is not atypical.

Just go through and read the titles of Edward's sermons, and you can see that he preaches many sermons that deal with this particular subject. Also, if you would read the content of these sermons, and then read Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, you would see that there are sections of Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God that arise almost verbatim out of other sermons. This is more or less a synthetic presentation, and a condensed presentation of Edwards' view on this subject.

That which makes it so unforgivable on the one hand, and so terrible and unforgettable on the other, is that Edwards had tremendous powers of extended simile. He could describe what something was like, and then let us know that even his most detailed and horrific description fell far short of the reality. He truly was a man who looked for words and analogies and images that would capture as close as possible the reality of the subject about which he was speaking.

It is not an exaggeration. By Edwards' own theology, it would always be an understatement of what the reality was. And it is with a view to let his hearers have as clear a mental perception as possible as to the holiness and the wrath of Almighty God that he presented this sermon.

Their foot shall slide in due time. Deuteronomy 32, 35. In this verse, the vengeance of God is threatened on the wicked, unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people and lived under the means of grace, and who, notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that he had wrought towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed in verse 28, void of counsel, having no understanding in them, and who, under all the cultivation of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit, as is expressed in the two verses preceding the text.

The expression which I have chosen for my text, Their foot shall slide in due time, seems to imply the following things relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to. First, that they were always exposed to destruction, as one who stands or walks in slippery places is always liable to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction being represented by their feet sliding.

The same is expressed in Psalm 73, 18. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castest them down into destruction. Second, it implies that they were always exposed to sudden, unexpected destruction, as he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall.

He cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next, and when he does fall, he falls at once, without warning, which is also expressed in Psalm 73, verses 18 and 19. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castest them down unto destruction. How are they brought down into desolation? As in a moment.

Third, another thing implied is that they are liable to fall off themselves without being thrown down by the hand of another, as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down. Fourth, that the reason why they are not fallen already and do not fall now is only that God's appointed time is not come, for it is said that when that due time or appointed time comes, their foot shall fly. Then they shall be left to fall as they are inclined by their own weight.

God will not hold them up in slippery places any longer, but will let them go, and then at that very instant they shall fall into destruction, as he that stands in such slippery, declining ground on the edge of a pit where he cannot stand alone immediately falls and is lost when he is let go. The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this. There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any 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, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had, in the least degree or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment. The truth of this observation will appear by the following consideration. First, there is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment.

Men's hands cannot 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.

Sometimes an earthly prince meets with great difficulty in subduing a rebel who has found means to fortify himself and has made himself strong by the number of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defense from the power of God.

Though hand join in hand, and though vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light shaft before the whirlwind, or large quantities of dry stubble before the devouring flame. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth.

So it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that anything hangs by. So easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we that we should think to stand before him at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down? They deserve to be cast into hell, second.

So that divine justice never stands in the way. It makes no objection against God using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice says of the tree that brings forth such evil fruit, cut it down! Why cumbereth it the ground? Luke 13, 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will that holds it back.

Third. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness which God has fixed between him and mankind, has gone out against them and stands over against them, so that they are bound over already to hell.

John 3, 18. He that believeth not is condemned already, so that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell. That is his place.

From thence he is. John 8, 23. Ye are from beneath, and thither he is bound.

It is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law assign to them. Fourth. They are now the objects of that very anger and wrath of God that is expressed in the torment of hell.

And the reason why they do not go down to hell in a moment is not because of God, in whose power they are, is not at present very angry with them. As angry as he is with many of those miserable creatures whom he is now tormenting in hell, and who do there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath, yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers who are now on earth, though it may be that 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 does not resent it that he does not loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as himself, though they may imagine him to be so.

The wrath of God burns against them. Their damnation does not 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 wet and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them. Fifth, the devil stands ready to fall upon them and sees them as his own at whatever moment God shall permit him. They belong to him.

He has their souls in his possession and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his goals. Luke 11, 21, the devils watch them.

They are ever by them at their right hand. They stand waiting for them like greedy, hungry lions that see their prey and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls.

The old serpent is gaping for them. Hell opens its mouth wide to receive them, and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost. Sixth, there are in the souls of wicked men these hellish principles reigning that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire if it were not for God's restraint.

There is laid up in the very nature of carnal men a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles in reigning power in them and in full possession of them that are the seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceedingly violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out.

They would flame out after the same manner as the same corruption and the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah 57, 20. For the present, God restrains their wickedness by His mighty power as He does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.

But if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul. It is destructive in its nature, and if God should leave it without restraint, they would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable.

The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury, and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pinned up by God's restraint. Whereas if it were let loose, it would soon set on fire the course of nature, and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so if it were not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven or a furnace of fire and brimstone. Seventh, it is no security to wicked men for one moment that there are no visible means of death at hand.

It is no security to a natural man that he is now in hell and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, or that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means are innumerable and inconceivable.

Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering in which are innumerable places so weak that they will not bear their weight and that are also unseen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday. The sharpest sight cannot discern them.

God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell that there is nothing to make it appear that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle or go out of the ordinary course of His providence and to destroy any wicked men at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world are so in God's hands and so universally and absolutely subject to His power and determination that it does not at all depend, the 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. Eighth.

Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own life or the care of others to preserve them do not secure them for a moment. Divine providence and universal experience bear testimony to this. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death.

That, if it were otherwise, we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world and others with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death. But how is it in fact? Ecclesiastes 2.16 How doth the wise man? As a fool. Ninth.

All wicked men's pain and contrivance to escape hell while they continue to reject Christ and so remain wicked men do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell flatters himself that he shall escape it. He depends upon himself for his own security.

He flatters himself in what he has done and what he is now doing and what he intends to do. Oh, everyone lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation and flatters himself that he contrived well for himself and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved and that the greater part of men that have died here before are gone to hell.

But each one imagines that he manages better for his own escape than others have done. That he does not intend to go to that place of torment. He says within himself that he intends to take such care as shall be effectual and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

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 greater part of those who 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 contrive matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. It was if it were so that we could come and speak with them and inquire of them one by one whether they expected when alive and when they used to hear about hell ever to be the subject of that misery we doubtless should hear one and another reply No, I never intended to come here.

I had managed matters otherwise in my mind. I thought I should contrive well for myself. I thought my scheme good.

I intended to take effectual care but it came upon me unexpectedly. I did not look for it at that time and in that manner. It came as a thief.

Death outwitted me. God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness.

I was flattering myself and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter. And when I was saying peace and safety then sudden destruction came upon me. 10.

God has laid himself under no obligation by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promise either of eternal life or of any covenant of grace. The promises that are given in Christ in whom all the promises are yea and amen but surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant and who do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant and have no interest in the mediator of the covenant so that whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking it is 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 hands 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 who are actually suffering the execution 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 to 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 hold to all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will and uncoveted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God application. The use of this may be to awaken unconverted persons to a sense of their danger.

This that you have heard is the case of everyone that is 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 anything to take hold of there is nothing between you and hell but the air and it is only the power and the mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this you find that you are kept out of hell yet you do not see the hand of God in it but you 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 who is suspended in it 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 hold you and to keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock were it not that such is the sovereign pleasure of God the earth would not bear you one moment you are a burden to it the creation groans with you the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption not willingly the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you the light to serve sin and Satan the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lust nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies God's creatures are good and were made for men to

serve God with they do not willingly

subserve any other purpose and groan when their abuse to purpose is so directly contrary to their nature in end and the world would spew you out were it not for the sovereign hand of Him whom you have offended there are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your head full of the dreadful storm and big with thunder and were it not for the restraining hand of God they would immediately burst forth upon you the sovereign pleasure of God for the present stays His rough wind otherwise it would come with fury your destruction would come like a whirlwind and you would be like the shaft of the summer threshing floor the wrath of God is like the great waters that are banked up for the present they increase more and more and rise higher and higher until an outlet is given and

the longer the stream is stopped the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose it is true that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing and you are every day treasuring up more wrath the waters are continually rising waxing more and more mighty and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back that are unwilling to be stopped and press hard to go forward if God should only withdraw His hand from the floodgate it would immediately fly open and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury and would come upon you in omnipotent power and if your strength were ten thousand

times greater than it is yea, ten thousand times greater than the stoutest sturdiest devil in hell it would be nothing to withstand the bow of God's wrath is bent the arrow is made ready on the string justice points the arrow at your heart and strains at 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 of you that have never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls all of you that were never born again and made new creatures and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new life in life altogether unexperienced before however you may have reformed your conduct in many ways and you

may have had religious affections and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets and in the house of God and may be strict in it you are thus in the hands of an angry God it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction however unconvinced you may be now of the truth of what you hear by and by you will be fully convinced of it those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you see that it was so with them for destruction came suddenly upon most of them when they expected nothing of it and while they were saying peace and safety now they see that those things which they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows the God who holds you over the pit of hell abhors

you and is dreadfully provoked his wrath towards you burns like fire and he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire he is of pure eyes and 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, 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 last night that you were suffered to wake again in this world after you close your eyes to sleep and there is no other reason to be given while you have not dropped down into hell since you arose in the morning but that God's hand has held you up there

is no reason to be given why you do not this very moment drop down into hell oh 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 God 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 as thunder and you have no interest in any mediator and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself and nothing to keep off the flames of wrath nothing of your own nothing you have ever done nothing you can do to induce God to spare you one moment consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath which

you are in such danger of first whose wrath it is first whose wrath it is it is the wrath of the infinite God if it were only the wrath of man though it were of the most potent prince it would be comparatively little to be regarded the wrath of kings is very much dreaded especially of absolute monarchs who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their own power to be disposed of at their mere will Proverbs 22 the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion whoso provoketh him to anger fineth against his own soul the subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torment that human art can invent or human power can inflict but the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength and when closed in their greatest

terrors are but feeble feeble despicable worms of the dust in comparison with the great and mighty creator and king of heaven and earth it is but little they can do when most enraged and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury all the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers they are nothing and less than nothing both their love and their hatred are to be despised the wrath of the great king of kings is as much more terrible than theirs as his majesty is greater Luke 12, 4 and 5 and I say unto you my friends be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more they can do but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell yea I say unto you fear him second it is the fierceness of his wrath you are

exposed to we often read of the fury of God as in Isaiah 59, 18 according to their deeds accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries so Isaiah 66, 15 for behold the Lord will come with fire and with his chariot like a whirlwind to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire and so in many other places thus we read of the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God Revelation 19, 15 the words are exceedingly terrible if it had only been said the wrath of God the words would have implied that which is extremely dreadful but it is said the fierceness and wrath of God the fury of God the fierceness of Jehovah oh how dreadful must that be who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them but it is not only said so but the fierceness and fury of

almighty God as though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged and exerted as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath oh then what will be the consequence what will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it whose hands can be strong and whose heart can endure to what a dreadful inexpressible inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this consider this you that are here present and yet remain in an unregenerate state that God will execute the fierceness of his wrath implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity when God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case and sees your

torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength and sees how your poor soul is crushed and sinks down sinks down as it were to an infinite gloom he will have no compassion on you he will not prepare the

execution of his wrath or in the least lighten his hand there shall be then no mercy nor will God then at all stay his rough wind he will have no regard to your welfare nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much than in any other sense than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires nothing shall be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear therefore will I also deal in fury mine eye shall not spare neither will I have pity and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice yet I will not hear them Ezekiel 8 18 now God stands ready to pity

you this is a day of mercy you may cry now with some hope 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 for your welfare God will have no other use to put you to but only to suffer misery you shall be continued in being to no other end for 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 God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him that it is said he will only laugh how awful are these words of the great God I will tread them in mine anger and will trample them in my fury and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments and I will stain all my

raiment Isaiah 63-3 it is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things namely contempt hatred and fierceness of indignation if you cry to God to pity you he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case or showing you the least regard or favor that instead of that he will only tread you underfoot and though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you yet he will not regard that but he will crush you under his feet without mercy he will crush out your blood and make it fly and it shall be sprinkled on his garment so as to stain all his raiment he will not only hate you but he will hold you in the utmost contempt no place shall be thought fit for you but under his feet to be trodden down as

the mire of the streets third the misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to the end that he may show what the wrath of Jehovah is God has had it on his heart to show to angels and men both how excellent his love is and also how terrible his wrath is sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show Nebuchadnezzar that mighty and accordingly commanded that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before doubtless it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that he could produce but the great God is also willing to show his wrath and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies what is God willing to show his wrath and to make his power known endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted

to destruction Romans 9 22 and seeing that this is his design and what he has determined to show how terrible the unmixed unrestrained wrath the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is he will do it to effect there will be something accomplished and brought to pass it will be dreadful with a witness when the great and angry God has written indignation then will God call upon the whole universe to behold the awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it and the people shall be as the burnings of lamb as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in fire hear ye that are far off what I have done and ye that are near acknowledge my might the sinners in Zion are afraid fearfulness has surprised the hypocrite who among us shall dwell with devouring fire who among us shall dwell with everlasting

burning thus it will be with you who 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 torment you shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb and when you shall be in the state of suffering the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on

the awful spectacle that they may see what the wrath and the fierceness of the almighty is and when they have seen it they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty and it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another and from one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me saith the Lord and they shall go forth and look upon the

carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me for their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh forth it is an everlasting wrath 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 and millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty, merciless vengeance.

And then, when you have done so, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point as to what remains, so that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is? All we can possibly say about it gives but a feeble, faint representation of it. It is inexpressible and inconceivable, for who knows the power of God's anger? How dreadful is the state of those who are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery.

But this is the dismal case of every soul that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it whether you be young or old. There is reason to think that there are many who have heard the gospel who will actually be the subjects of this misery to all eternity.

We know not who they are, or what thoughts they now have. It may be that they are now at ease, and hear all of these things without much disturbance, and they are now flattering themselves that they are the persons promising themselves that they shall escape. Oh, if we knew that there was but one person and but one of our acquaintance that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of if we knew who it was.

What an awful sight would it be to see such a person. How might we all lift up a lamentable and bitter cry instead of one? How many of you will like to remember these solemn admonitions in hell? And some may be in hell in a very short time before this year is out, and some that are now in health and quiet and secure may be there before tomorrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition who may keep out of hell the longest will be there in a little time.

Your damnation does not slumber. It will come swiftly and in all probability very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell.

It is doubtless the case of some that heretofore you have seen and known that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope. They are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair, but here you are in the land of the living amidst the means of grace and have an opportunity to obtain salvation.

What would not those poor, damned, helpless souls give up for one day such opportunity as you now enjoy? 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. Many are daily coming from the east and the west, the north and the south, many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, and now in a happy state with a heart filled with love to Him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood and rejoicing in the 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 those who are flocking day to day to Christ? Are there not many who have lived long in this world that are not to this day born again, and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have done nothing ever since they lived but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? O Serge, your case in a special manner is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left in the dispensation of God's mercy? You have need to consider yourselves and wake thoroughly out of sleep.

You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God. And you that are young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season that you now enjoy when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities and flocking to Christ? You have now an opportunity, but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as it is with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin and are now come to such a dreadful past in blindness of heart. And you children that are unconverted, do you not know that you are going to hell to bear the dreadful wrath of that God that is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be contented to be the children of the devil when so many of the young are converted and become holy and happy children of the King of kings? And let everyone that is yet out of Christ and hanging over the pit of hell, whether old men or 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, this is a day of great mercy to some, but will doubtless be a day of His remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden and their guilt increases apace if they neglect their souls in such a day as this. Now undoubtedly it is as it was in the days of John the Baptist.

The axe is laid at the root of the tree that every tree that brings not forth fruit may be torn down and cast into the fire. Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ now awake and flee from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over every sinner.

Let everyone flee out of solemn haste and escape for your life. Look not behind you. Escape to the mountains, lest you be consumed." It's a powerful prayer.

Our Father teach us that the nature of our sin is indeed indescribable and that the wrath that is described here is only commensurate with the heinousness of our rebellion against you. Father, may we as your people also catch a glimpse of what it means for sinners to be walking over a rotten covering, over the pit of hell which can break at any moment. May we learn to live on the edge of eternity in all of our lives and to see that others also live there.

May we always be ready to rebuke, exhort, correct, to give warnings. May we be able to say with the Apostle Paul, we are free from the blood of all men. May none receive a false impression of the absolute necessity of the new birth, the absolute necessity of coming to Christ, the exclusive way of coming to God through him and justification by faith.

May none ever be deceived as to what the gospel is, hearing it from our lips. Father, we pray that we may come into such a day when people do not regard the things of God and the things of righteousness and holiness, and your fierceness and anger with lightness. We pray that we may have a clear vision of what it means to be laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do and to know that our God is a consuming fire.

Help us to commit our own lives to lives of purity and faithfulness and our lips to be lips that communicate with earnestness and compassion and fidelity the wonders and glories of the gospel. For it is in the name of him who loved us and bore our hell forth that we pray. Amen.

All who hear these tapes need to realize that this conference is not a political movement. It has no design on seeking to run any candidate for any office within any denomination. It is strictly a conference for personal edification of pastors, elders, deacons, and members of Baptist churches.

It is not a political movement of any kind. Neither do we consider it a place for airing negative and critical vendettas against other groups. We are quite aware that there is much that could be said about pagans, Turks, Jews, atheists, Pelagians, semi-Pelagians, Catholics, Arminians, Moderates, Hyper-Calvinists, and people of other theological persuasions, including ourselves, that would not be favorable.

But this conference is designed for a positive presentation. Positive edification is our goal. To embrace the truth with such vigor that error must of necessity fall.

What are we? We are Southern Baptists. We welcome people from other denominations, from other traditions. We cherish the fellowship that we have with them, and we feel that the doctrines around which this conference centers are so broadly evangelical that many people can enjoy them.

But our stated purpose is to provide edification for people within Southern Baptist lines. We affirm our Southern Baptist heritage and desire to recapture it. We affirm the fellowship that is available in the network of all Southern Baptist life, in associations, in state conventions, and desire to sanctify it.

And we affirm the conscientious involvement in a multiplicity of benevolences that is characteristic of Southern Baptist life. We desire to reform it. We affirm the task of the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board, the Brotherhood Commission, the Sunday School Board, the Christian Life Commission.

All of these have good and proper goals and assignments. We desire to see men within these who believe the gospel, and we desire these men to come there, not through political manipulation, but through the individual training of man so that God in his providence may place people who are prepared in those positions. Also, we are Calvinistic.

We do not apologize for that. We believe that Calvinism is the gospel in its purest expression. We could rightly call it Paulinism, but what Christian would not call their doctrine Pauline.

We could rightly call it Augustinianism, but Augustine developed his understanding of the doctrines of grace in a context that was not so aware of the necessity of the doctrine of justification by faith. And so we

call it Calvinism because not only does it have the great Pauline and Augustinian doctrines of justification by faith, but it also sets these in the context of imputed righteousness as our only standing before God as set forth in the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith. And a third thing we are, in addition to being Southern Baptist and Calvinistic, we are experiential.

We do not have the attitude of, those guys out there don't know this. But our attitude hopefully and prayerfully is, this question, has my mind and my heart absorbed and is it being molded by the reality of these doctrines? And it is in this context that we seek to apply all the doctrines of grace. We are happy that you have listened to this tape and pray that God may benefit you in it and perhaps in its providence may lead you to attend one of these conferences.

God bless you.

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