

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Rom. 3:19.)

"THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS," by Jonathan Edwards, who also preached this sermon at the Great Awakening, 1733-1735. This may be a good place to write about the Great Awakening of early America, which many historians credit with America's greatness today. The Spaniards settled South America, seeking gold; England settled North America, seeking God. See how God has blessed us compared to South America.

John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the Revolutionary War. The Great Awakening was a spiritual renewal that swept the American Colonies, particularly New England, during the 18th Century. Revivalism crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the American colonies through the likes of George Whitefield, who came to Boston in 1740. He and the American Jonathan Edwards became fast friends and co-laborers in the Lord's vineyards, otherwise known as the Great Awakening.

Edwards wrote and preached a now-world-famous sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God," which shortly became something of a Battle Cry of the Great Awakening — containing such powerful passages as the following; to wit:

“Their foot shall slide in due time.”(Deut. 32:35)

“In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people, and who lived under the means of grace; but who notwithstanding all God's wonderful works towards them, remained void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of Heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; the expression 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 to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

*1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed, **Psa. 73:18.** ‘Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.’*

2. 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.

3. Another thing implied is that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery grounds needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is that God's appointed time has not yet come. For it is said that when that due time, or appointed time, comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined, by their weight. God will not hold them up in these 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, he cannot stand alone, when he is let go, he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon, is this — ‘There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment, out of Hell, but the mere pleasure of God.’ I mean, His mere 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 may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into Hell at any moment. Mens’ 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 a great deal of difficulty to subdue 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 vast multitudes of God’s mighty enemies combine and associate, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light chaff 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 ground before us. So it is for us to cut or singe a tiny thread of cloth. Thus is it easy for God, when He pleases, to crush out and easily destroy His enemies in 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?

*2. They deserve to be cast into Hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God’s using His power any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, ‘**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.*

*3. 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 that God has fixed between Him and mankind, has gone out against them, and stands 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 person properly belongs to Hell, it is his place, it is where he is from. **John 8:23** ‘**Ye are from beneath,**’ and there he is bound, it is the place that justice, and God’s word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law, assigned to him.*

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them, as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, and who they feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yes, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; doubtless with some that are now in this congregation, who may be at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell. So, it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they 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 whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

5. *The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what 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 goods, **Luke 11:12**. 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.*

6. *There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out unto hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid 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 seeds of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding 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 corruptions, 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;**' (**Job 38:11**) 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, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin were not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.*

7. *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 health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by an apparent accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows this is no evidence that a person is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen and unthought of ways and means God takes a person suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted persons walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are countless places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are unseen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different and unsearchable ways to take wicked persons out of the world and straight to hell, that it requires no miracle, but just his providence unfolding at any moment. All of those methods of dealings are in God's hands and absolutely subject to his power and determination, and requires only the mere will of God, and sinners shall at any moment go to hell.*

8. *Natural person's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them for even a moment. Devine providence and universal experience bears witness to this. The evidence is clear that men's own wisdom is no*

security to them from death. The so-called wise men of this world and the leaders are dealt with in the same means as the lowest persons, and they all are subject to an early and unexpected death. **Ecc 2:16 'How dieth the wise man? Even as the fool.'**

9. All wicked person's pains and contrivance which they use to pretend to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them one moment from hell. Almost every natural person 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, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters of his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he does well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that but few are saved, and that the greater part of men that have died are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail. But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in 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 who are now alive; or because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their escape. Since we speak to them, daily, warning them, we know that they pretend that there is no hell, and they are exempt from hell. But those in hell, pretend it came too quick, it was as a thief; that death outwitted them. But, they may say Oh my cursed foolishness! I was flattering and, lying to myself, pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I wanted and demanded of God, paying lying preachers to tell me 'Peace and safety; then sudden destruction came upon me.' (1 Thess. 5:3)"

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, (and Westboro Baptist Church) neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."(Luke 16:19-31)