

# [Sinners in the hands of an angry god analysis](https://assignbuster.com/sinners-in-the-hands-of-an-angry-god-analysis/)

Metaphors: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God “ Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” by Jonathon Edwards is an important piece of early American literature. The purpose of this sermon, written in 1741, was to persuade congregations to devote themselves fully to Puritan beliefs. It is characterized by the author’s use of emotional language, strong imagery and intense metaphors to paint a horrifying picture of eternal damnation for unsaved individuals.

Through these techniques, Edwards effectively creates a vivid picture for the audience, depicting Hell and God’s wrath if they do not repent. In the writing, three strong metaphors in particular exemplify the sharp tone of the author. The first example of a strong metaphor used to great effect in creating a vivid visualization for the audience is: “ The God the holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than 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…” In this segment, Edwards’ goal is to gain hold of the congregation’s emotions. He goes on to describe how poorly God thinks of those unconverted individuals, comparing them to nothing more than “ spiders and loathsome insects” and “ venomous serpents”. It is a simple comparison used to evoke a complex response from his congregation. The audience is fearful that, like the spider or insect, they are small and helpless against the vengeful God.

Also in this section, Edwards compares God’s wrath to that of a fire. This statement is used to create a visual connection with the intensity of a fire to God’s intense wrath. Edwards is saying that God is not kind or forgiving to humans living in sin. By wording the statement this way, the audience can actually feel the flame of God’s wrath burning and heat of Hell. Another metaphor that Edwards uses is: “ The wraths of God are great waters that are damned for the present…” In this passage, Edwards is communicating the vast expanse of God’s power. It is significant because it relates to the overall theme of this lecture: that no matter the situation, no man wants to suffer the wrath of God.

The goal is to make the audience feel God’s vast water rising higher and higher around them. As the water continues to flow, it becomes stronger until it overcomes the lives of the unsaved. It is effective visual imagery. The audience would see themselves treading water in a large ocean struggling to stay afloat.

Edwards’ intention is to scare the listener in order for them to fear God and follow the beliefs of the Puritan society. Finally, the following metaphor is used by Edwards to describe the urgency of his message: “ The bow of God’s wrath is bent and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart…” This passage reflects the purpose of the sermon, specifically, that at an unexpected moment God will execute justice against mankind. It is, in essence, Edwards’ warning and a call to action for his congregation. God’s “ bow” is pulled tight and the “ arrow” is the wrath that will be delivered. The metaphor means that God is ready and waiting to release that arrow which, effectively noted, is aimed at the listener’s heart. The audience is reminded of the fragility of their existence and how swiftly the may meet their maker.

The purpose of this line is to make the audience react quickly to repent and gain God’s forgiveness before it is too late. Through these, and many other metaphors contained within Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, audiences are persuaded through visual imagery. This visual imagery is still very much relevant in our country today. Similar to the time when this speech was first delivered, the United States is undergoing a major transition in government and foundation.

If delivered by a charismatic, but stern individual, these metaphors, and the overall message, have the potential of being as powerful and effective as they were over 200 years ago. In reading the sermon today, it still is effective in creating the same imagery and fear of an uncertain afterlife. In conclusion, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God is a great example of early American literature. John Edwards created a powerful work and painted a terrifyingly visual picture for his audience that is still through provoking in this day.

The emotional language, strong imagery and metaphors will continue to prove effective for centuries to come.