

# The First Great Awakening

Essential Questions:

- Who were the significant leaders of the First Great Awakening?
- How did the First Great Awakening influence religion in America?

(8.11)

# Bell Ringer

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- Describe a few examples of how religion has influenced American culture throughout history.

# Background- The Enlightenment

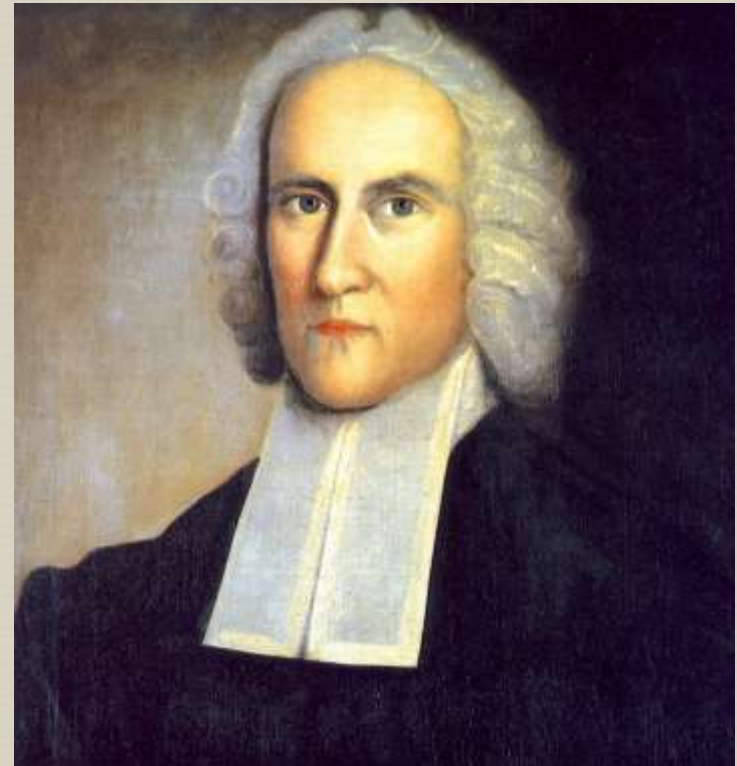
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- ☞ The Enlightenment was a time period where a great emphasis was placed on scientific and analytical thinking (The Age of Reason)
- ☞ Many thinkers of the Enlightenment were skeptical of religion since so many religious concepts could not be explained scientifically
- ☞ Not all ministers were caught up in the Age of Reason and many began to call for a religious revival in the colonies



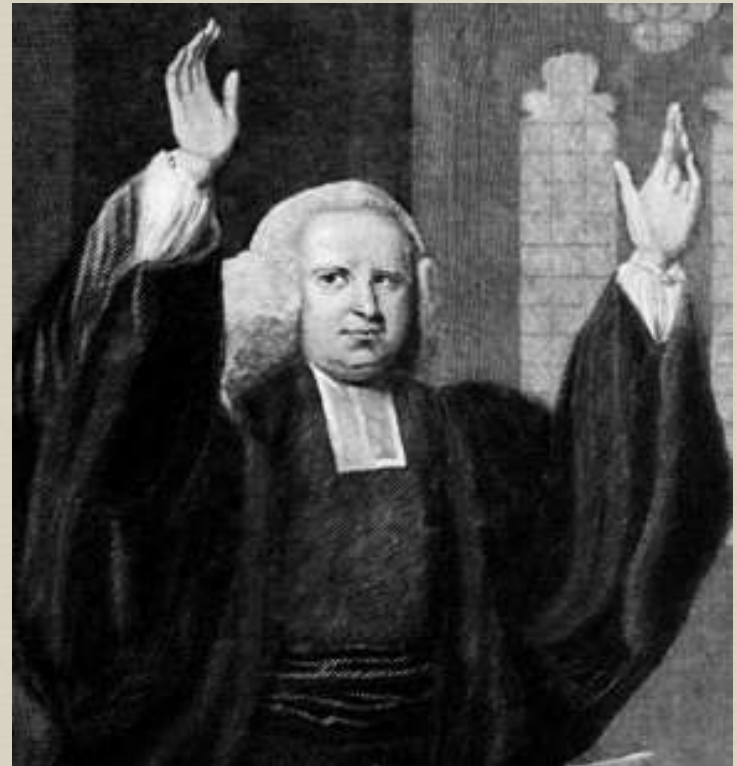
# Jonathan Edwards

- ☞ Credited with preaching the first sermon of the Great Awakening
- ☞ Called for a return to faith
- ☞ People flocked to hear his powerful sermons
- ☞ Believed people in New England were becoming too concerned with worldly things
- ☞ Most famous sermon was “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
  - ☞ Only the will of God can save the soul of people



# George Whitefield

- ☞ Traveling evangelist(a preacher that travels from town to town instead of staying at one church) that preached from in every colony.
- ☞ He would shout during his sermons and weep with sorrow
- ☞ He was a powerful preacher who drew thousands
- ☞ Converted slaves and Native Americans to Christianity
- ☞ He even convinced Ben Franklin to give all of his money in an offering
  - ☞ Franklin was an Enlightenment thinker



# John and Charles Wesley

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- ❧ Founders of the Methodist movement
- ❧ Like Whitefield, they traveled and preached outdoors
- ❧ They attended Oxford University in England.
- ❧ Both were ordained priests in the Anglican Church.
- ❧ Very rarely allowed to preach in churches because of their evangelical style.



# Methodist Movement

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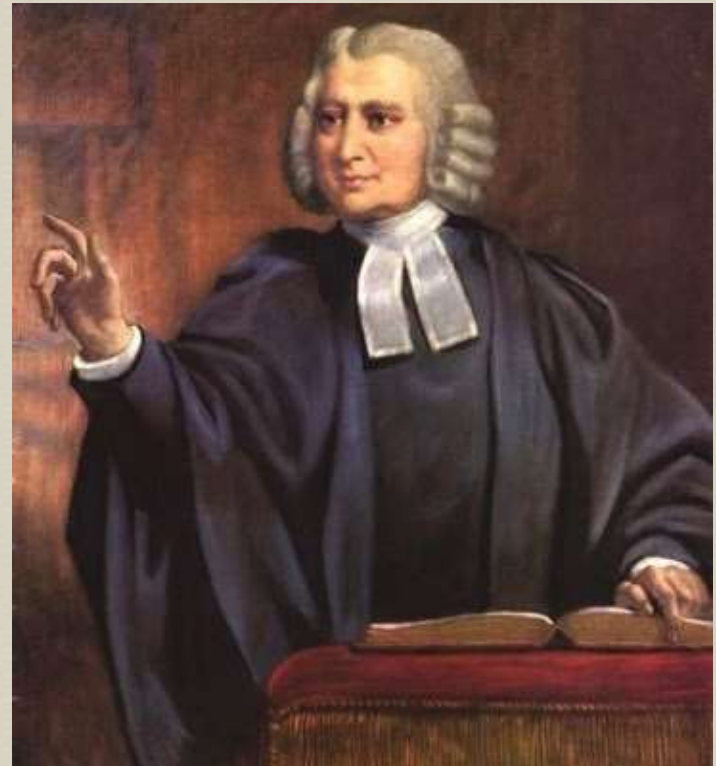
✧ The Wesleys formed a club while at Oxford University with their good friend, George Whitefield. The club became known as the Methodists.

✧ Club members were responsible for visiting the sick and conducting worship services for prisoners. This was unordinary for college age men to do.



# Methodist Movement

- ❧ Wesleys came to America in 1735 and settled in Georgia.
- ❧ Although both had returned to England by 1737, the Methodist went on to become the second largest denomination in the U.S.A.
- ❧ Charles wrote over 6,500 hymns, including "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing".





# A key argument in the Great Awakening- Calvinists vs Arminians

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## Calvinists

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- ☞ Believed in predestination
  - ☞ The idea that God has chosen an elect few to go to heaven
  - ☞ Edwards and Whitefield

## Arminians

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- ☞ Rejected predestination
  - ☞ Believed that humans have free will to accept or reject the gift of God's grace
  - ☞ The Wesley Brothers

# “Old Lights” vs “New Lights”

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## “Old Lights”

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- ☞ Traditional style of worship
- ☞ Did not agree with revivals
- ☞ Against sensational styles of preaching

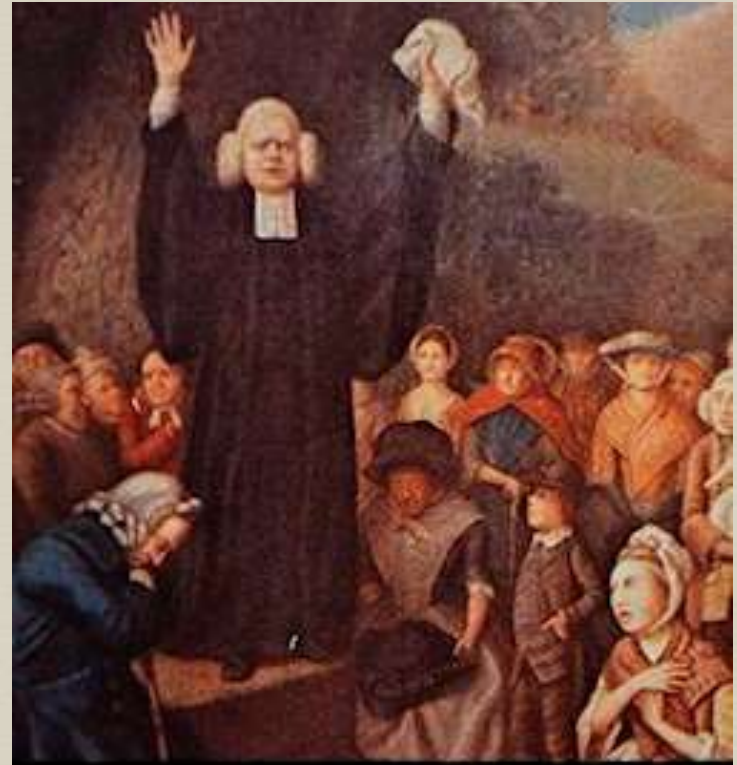
## “New Lights”

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- ☞ Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesley brothers
- ☞ Emotional, powerful, sensational sermons
- ☞ Spread revivals throughout the colonies

# Results of the Great Awakening

- ✧ Religious diversity and tolerance
- ✧ Because of disagreements between “Old Lights” and “New Lights,” many different denominations were created
- ✧ No one denomination would dominate
- ✧ People accepted the free exercise of religion



# Results of the Great Awakening (cont)

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- ☞ First event that took place on a national level. Colonists began to see themselves as one group.
- ☞ Because there was no similar religious movement in Europe, colonists began to see themselves as being different from England.



# Summarizer

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The minute paper.

In 1 minute, describe the most meaningful thing you have learned today.

# Extension Activity

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Write a poem about the Great  
Awakening.

# Bell Ringer Day 2

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Finish the following analogy:

The Great Awakening is as important to American history as \_\_\_\_\_ is to \_\_\_\_\_.

# Extension Activity

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You are writing a newspaper article about the Great Awakening, and you have the opportunity to interview an "Old Light" and a "New Light". The primary source documents provided will act as the people you are interviewing. Using the list of questions provided, conduct your interview and write a one page newspaper story that highlights the differences in perspective of the two men.