

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Introduction-Part 1-Lesson 1

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is considered by many to be one of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church. This book is actually a series of sermons preached in 1739 by Edwards to his congregation in Northampton that were published together as a book about 15 years after his death. His son, Jonathan Edwards the younger, saw to it that these sermon manuscripts were published so that God might be glorified and the Church might be edified by them.

Men come and men go. Generations rise and generations fall, yet the earth remains. No man can lengthen the days of his life, nor can a man create with his hands anything that is eternal or everlasting. Human history continues on with or without us. What is the point of it all? Where is time headed? Is there any _____ to all the ages and generations of men?

This book starts with a quotation from Isaiah which sums up the _____ of humanity.

“For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.”-Isaiah 51:8

“The design of this chapter is to comfort the church under her sufferings, and the persecutions of her enemies; and the argument of consolation insisted on, is the constancy and perpetuity of God’s mercy and faithfulness towards her, which shall be manifest in continuing to work salvation for her, protecting her against all assaults of her enemies, and carrying her safely through all the changes of the world, and finally, crowning her with victory and deliverance.”

One of the emphases of Edwards that I find refreshing is on the idea of _____. Here at the very beginning of this book he discusses how this passage was given by God to His church to increase the happiness of the saints on the earth in the midst of trouble. The truths contained here must be meditated upon when the troubles of life seem overwhelming.

“In the text, this happiness of the church of God is set forth by comparing it with the contrary fate of her enemies that oppress her.”

1. How _____-_____ the power and prosperity of the church’s enemies is...”

2. The contrary _____ lot and portion of God’s church...”

-This happiness consists “in God’s righteousness and salvation towards them. By God’s righteousness here, is meant His faithfulness towards His church and people, in bestowing the benefits of the covenant of grace upon them.”

When thinking of our happiness as resting in God’s righteousness this can be confusing because we often think of God’s righteousness as a _____ thing for us as sinners. “So the word righteousness is very often used in Scripture for God’s covenant faithfulness; as in Nehemiah

9:8, 'Thou hast performed they words, for thou art righteous.' So we are to understand righteousness and covenant mercy for the same thing."

Our happiness lies in God's _____ towards us. "Of these two, God's righteousness and His salvation, the one is the cause, of which the other is the effect. God's righteousness, or covenant mercy, is the root, of which His salvation is the fruit. Both of them relate to the covenant of grace. The one is God's covenant mercy and faithfulness, the other is accomplished in the fruits of it. For salvation is the sum of all those works of God by which the benefits that are by the covenant of grace are procured and bestowed."

-These verses in Isaiah not only teach us what our happiness consists of but also the _____ of this happiness. In these verses both phrases "will be forever" and "to all generations" show the length of this salvation.

"The work of salvation itself toward the church shall continue to be wrought till then: till the end of the world God will go on to accomplish deliverance and salvation for the church, from all her enemies; for that is what the prophet is here speaking of. Till the end of the world; till her enemies cease to be, as to any power to molest the church...It is from generation to generation, throughout all generations; beginning with the generations of men on the earth, and not ending till these generations end."

Doctrine-The main doctrine then that these verses teach us is this: "The work of redemption is a work that God carries on from the _____ of man to the _____ of the world." The rest of this book is going to be using Scripture and church history to show the truthfulness of this statement of doctrine.

Terms-Before jumping in Edwards wants to define the key terms in the above statement.

"Redemption"-Edwards uses the word "redemption" in its _____ sense here as referring to "all that God accomplishes tending to this end; not on the purchase itself, but also all God's works that were properly preparatory to the purchase, and accomplishing the success or it. So that the whole dispensation, as it includes the preparation and purchase, the application and success of Christ's redemption, is here called the work of redemption."

"The work of redemption and the work of _____ are the same thing. What is sometimes in Scripture called God saving His people, is in other places called His redeeming them. So Christ is called both the Savior and the Redeemer of His people."

"All that Christ does in this great affair as Mediator, in any of His offices, either of prophet, priest, or king; either when He was in the world, in His human nature, or before, or since. And it includes not only what Christ the Mediator has done, but also what the Father or the Holy Ghost, have done, as united or confederated in this design of redeeming sinful men; or, in one word, all that is wrought in execution of the eternal covenant of redemption. This is what I call the work of redemption in the doctrine; for it is all but _____ work, one design."