

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Lesson 3 - Period 1 - Part 1

“The work of redemption is a work that God carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world”

Edwards sees all human history as being able to be divided into _____ stages or periods. All three of these stages can then be broken into parts.

Period 1-*“The great works of God in the world during this whole space of time, were all preparatory. There were many great changes and revolutions in the world, and they were all only the turning of the wheels of providence to make way for the coming of Christ, and what He was to do in the world.”*

Part 1-From the Fall to the Flood-*“Though this period was the most distant from Christ’s incarnation; yet then was this glorious building begun.”*

As soon as the Fall happened the work of redemption began. As soon as man became a sinner there was need of someone to stand _____ God and man. If Christ would not have begun His work as Mediator immediately, the wrath of God would have consumed Adam and Eve.

“As soon as man fell, Christ entered on His mediatorial work...He stood engaged with the Father to appear as man’s mediator, and to take on that office when there should be occasion, from all eternity. But now the time was come...He immediately stepped in between a holy, infinite, offended Majesty, and offending mankind. He was accepted in His interposition; and so wrath was prevented from going forth in the full execution of that amazing curse that man had brought on himself.”

Why was it that when the angels sinned, they were immediately cast into the abyss but when men sinned there was mercy? The angels have no _____. There was no “God-Angel” to stand between those sinful beings and the Almighty. However, the plan of God was to have a Mediator for sinful men- The Lord Christ Jesus. All mercy between sinful men and God comes to us only through the office of Christ.

“It is manifest that Christ began to exercise the office of mediator between God and man as soon as ever man fell, because mercy began to be exercised towards man immediately. There was mercy in the forbearance of God, that He did not destroy him, as He did the angels when they fell. But there is no mercy exercised towards fallen man but through a mediator.”

Not only was the work of Christ as Mediator necessary to protect from the wrath of God but His work was also necessary to protect humanity from being immediately consumed by the _____.

“If God had not in mercy restrained Satan, he would immediately have seized on his prey. Christ began to do the part of an intercessor for man as soon as he fell; for there is no mercy exercised towards man but what is obtained through Christ’s intercession...When Satan, the grand enemy, had conquered and overthrown man, the business of resisting and conquering him was committed to Christ...He was then appointed Captain of the Lord’s Hosts, the Captain of their salvation..”

After the Fall God acted only through a _____ toward sinful men.

“And therefore, when we read in sacred history what God did, from time to time, towards His church and people, and how He revealed Himself to them, we are to understand it especially of the second person of the Trinity. When we read of God appearing after the fall, in some visible form or outward symbol of His presence, we are ordinarily if not universally, to understand the second person of the Trinity.”

Edwards now takes some time to look at both the _____ promise (3:15) and the _____ promise (3:21) that was given by the Lord to Adam and Eve after the Fall.

_____ **Promise-** *“Presently upon this the gospel was first revealed on earth in these words, Genesis 3:15...In those words of God there was an intimation of another surety to be appointed for man, after the first surety had failed. This was the first revelation of the covenant of grace; the first dawning of the light of the gospel on earth.”*

“This intimation of mercy was given, even before sentence was pronounced on either Adam or Eve, from tenderness to them, lest they should be overborne with a sentence of condemnation, without having anything held forth whence they could gather any hope.”

_____ **Promise-** *“Soon after this, the custom of sacrificing was appointed, to be a standing type of the sacrifice of Christ till He should come, and offer up Himself a sacrifice to God. Sacrificing was not a custom first established by the Levitical law, for it had been a part of God’s instituted worship from the beginning.”*

“It was God that gave them clothing...The righteousness with which we are clothed is of God. It is He only that clothes the naked soul.”

All three offices of Christ’s mediatorial work are here seen. Christ declares the promise (_____). He institutes the shedding of blood for the remission of sins (_____). He actually saves from the power of the devil (_____).

“This promise there is reason to think, they (Adam and Eve) believed and embraced...Thus it is exceeding probable, if not evident, that as Christ took on Him the work of mediator as soon as man fell; so that He now immediately began His work of redemption in its effect, and that He immediately encountered His great enemy the devil, whom He had undertaken to conquer, and rescued those two first captives out of his hands; therein baffling him, soon after his triumph over them, whereby he had made them his captives.”

“And in him (Abel) the elect angels in heaven had the first opportunity to see so wonderful a thing as the soul of one of the fallen race of mankind, that had been sunk by the fall into such an abyss of sin and misery, brought to heaven, and in the enjoyment of heavenly glory, which was a much greater thing than if they had seen him returned to the earthly paradise. Thus they saw the glorious effect of Christ’s redemption, in the great honor and happiness that was procured for sinful, miserable creatures.”