

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Lesson 4 - Period 1 - Part 2

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

Edwards has helped to show us that immediately after the fall the work of redemption began, as Christ stepped into the role of Mediator performing the functions of our _____ (proclaiming to us the gospel), _____ (presenting an acceptable sacrifice unto God for the remission of sins), and _____ (rescuing those who had been taken captive from the devils evil clutches and even carrying the soul of righteous Abel to glory was a mark of Christ’s victory already). Continuing to look at the advance of the plan of redemption prior to the flood, we now turn our attention to Gen. 4:26.

“We cannot suppose the meaning is, that then first men performed the duty of prayer. Prayer is a duty of natural religion, and a duty to which a spirit of piety does most naturally lead men. Prayer is the very breath of a spirit of piety; we cannot suppose therefore, that holy men before, for above two hundred years, had lived without prayer.”

Edwards comments that while we cannot be entirely sure what this verse is telling us we can be sure of two things: 1. It is not referring to the practice of _____ to God & 2. It is referring to something _____ in terms of the working of the Spirit (the first revival so to speak in history).

“We see by experience, that a remarkable pouring out of God’s Spirit is always attending with such an effect, a great increase in the performance of the duty of prayer. When the Spirit of God begins to work on men’s hearts, it immediately sets them to calling on the name of the Lord...And when it is said, ‘Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,’ no more can be intended by it, than that this was the first remarkable season of this nature that ever was.”

The Lord was here showing that this work of redemption would be wrapped up in the working of the Spirit in drawing men to call upon the name of the Lord. Salvation is the work of the Spirit and He chooses to work at certain times in _____ numbers.

“It may here be observed, that from the fall of man, to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable communications of the Spirit of God. Though there be a more constant influence of God’s Spirit in some degree attending His ordinances; yet the way in which the greatest things have been done towards carrying on this work, always have been by remarkable effusions, at special seasons of mercy...and this in the days of Enosh, was the first remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God that ever was. There had been a saving work of God on the hearts of some before; but now God was pleased to bring in a harvest of souls to Christ.”

In all of this we see the work of redemption _____. Then we come to Enoch in Genesis 5:21-24. Twice it is mentioned that Enoch walked with God.

“The next thing I shall notice, is the eminently holy life of Enoch, who we have reason to think, was a saint of greater eminency than any that had been before him; so that in this respect the

work of redemption was carried on to a still greater height...his soul, built on Christ, was built up in holiness to a greater height than any preceding instance. He was a wonderful instance of Christ's redemption, and of the efficacy of His grace."

Genesis 5 is not the only place in Scripture where the godliness of Enoch is mentioned. He is also mentioned in Jude 14-15 as one who _____ of the coming of Christ.

"In Enoch's time, God more expressly revealed the coming of Christ than he had before done...Here Enoch prophesies of the coming of Christ. It does not seem to be confined to any particular coming of Christ; but it has respect in general to Christ's coming in His kingdom, and is fulfilled in a degree in both His first and second coming; and indeed in every remarkable manifestation Christ has made of Himself in the world, for the saving of His people, and the destroying of His enemies."

"And though it is not unlikely that Enoch might have a more immediate respect in this prophecy to the approaching destruction of the old world by the flood, which was a remarkable resemblance of Christ's destruction of all His enemies at His second coming, yet it doubtless looked beyond the type to the antitype."

Edwards quickly pauses to taken note of how the pattern of God's work of redemption is _____ to the pattern of Christian growth in the life of the saints. Sometimes there will be marked times of growth and gospel clarity and other times it will appear as if grace is fading.

"Sometimes the light shines brighter, and at other times more obscurely; sometimes grace prevails, at other times it seems to languish for a great while again. But in general grace is growing: from its first infusion, till it is perfected in glory, the kingdom of Christ is building up in the soul."

Continuing on with Enoch, Edwards takes note of Enoch being taken away (body and soul) as another progression in work of redemption as now it was being made known that salvation involves not only the taking of the soul to glory but also of the _____ of the saints being raised with their souls into the presence of the Lord.

"There had been many instances of restoring the soul of man by Christ's redemption, but none of redeeming and actually saving the body, till now...the first instance of all was this of Enoch...And as this was a clearer manifestation of a future state than the church had enjoyed before, so it was a pledge or earnest of that future glorification of all the saints which God intended through the redemption of Jesus Christ."

The last thing Edwards notices before the flood is the general preserving of the _____ from which Christ would come when the world at large had all fallen away.

"The church of God, in all probability, was small, in comparison with the rest of the world, from the time that mankind began to multiply...it seemed to be deluged with wickedness then, as it was with water afterwards...And now Satan made a most violent and potent attempt to devour the church of God; and had almost done it. But yet God restored it in the midst of all this flood of wickedness and violence. He kept it up in that line which Christ was to proceed."