

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Lesson 12 - Period 1 - Part 6 (From the Babylonian Captivity to the Coming of Christ)

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

As we continue to look at this time, Edwards would have us notice how the _____ of the Babylonian empire at the hands of the Medes and Persians was God’s vengeance on the enemies of His people. We have in that event a foreshadowing of the future judgement on all those who are against the Lord and His saints.

“This was a remarkable instance of God’s vengeance on the enemies of His redeemed church; for God brought destruction on Babylon for the injuries they did to God’s children, as is often set forth in the prophets.”

The return from _____ was a great foreshadowing of the redemption that Christ would accomplish. God moved the heart of a pagan king to accomplish His work of bringing His people back to the land. This allowed the temple to be rebuilt and other preparations to be made for the coming of Christ.

During this time of returning from exile the Lord also further _____ the canon of Scripture. The Lord gave His people more prophets to declare the coming glory of Christ.

Another further advance in the work of redemption at this time was the **Spirit’s** outpouring during the time of Ezra. The returned people have a desire to hear God’s Word and to have it explained to them.

“It is observable, that it has been God’s manner, on every remarkable new establishment of the state of His visible church, to afford a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit. So it was on the first establishment of the church of Jews at their coming into Canaan under Joshua; so it was not in this second settlement of the church in the time of Ezra; so it was on the first establishment of the Christian church after Christ’s resurrection...”

During this period and the rise of the synagogue system there was a great _____ of the Scriptures. Copies of the Scriptures were made so that every city could have for themselves the Word of God. The multiplying of the Scriptures further prepared the world for the coming of Christ.

During the time of Esther there was another satanic plot to destroy the people from whom the Messiah was to come but the Lord raised up Esther as a _____.

With the prophet Malachi the spirit of prophecy _____ until the time of Christ. This divine silence was also the Lord preparing the world for the coming of Christ.

“The Old Testament light, the stars of the long night, began apace to hide their heads, the time of the Sun of Righteousness now drawing nigh...the time of the great prophet of God was now so nigh, it was time for their typical prophets to be silent.”

Edwards now moves on to discuss what is commonly referred to as the intertestamental period. The first thing he will notice will be the rise of the _____ empire under Alexander. This was an important development which helped to prepare the world for the spreading of the gospel.

“Besides the ways common to others in this period, there is one peculiar to this revolution, which remarkably promoted the work of redemption; and that was, that it made the Greek language

common in the world. To have one common language understood and used through the greater part of the world, must greatly prepare the way for the setting up of Christ's kingdom."

During this period we also have the writing of the _____ (LXX). This version of the Old Testament was commonly used by the New Testament authors as it was the version that was most widely known and used.

The Lord also during this period sustained and protected His people from being totally destroyed even though tyrants arose that sought their destruction (such as Antiochus Epiphanes).

The massive Greek empire however was not meant to last and the greater _____ empire overthrew it and became the dominant world power. This was the greatest of all earthly kingdoms of the old world.

"And though it was brought to pass more gradually than the setting up of the Grecian empire, yet it far exceeded that, and was much the greatest and largest temporal monarchy that ever was in the world; so that the Roman empire was commonly called 'all the world' as in Luke 2:1."

"For the world being thus subject to one government, it opened a general communication, and so opportunity was given for more swift propagation of the gospel...So the world being under one government, that of the Romans, facilitated the apostles' traveling."

During this period there also was a great rise in worldly _____ and philosophy. The greatest of Greek philosophers lived during this period. Man was seeking to discover the purpose of life and the way in which men could live a happy life.

"What these philosophers in general chiefly professed as their business, was to inquire, wherein man's chief happiness lay, and how to obtain it...God suffered these great philosophers to try what they could do for six hundred years together; and then it proved by the events of so long a time, that all they could do was in vain; the world not becoming wiser, better, or happier under their instructions, but growing more and more foolish, wicked, and miserable."

Right before the coming of Christ the Roman empire rose to its greatest height of glory. Its power, dominion, and glory was unrivaled in terms of human history. The temple of Janus had been shut and world-wide _____ had been ushered in, it was the time of the great Pax Romana.

"Just before Christ was born, the Roman empire was raised to its greatest height, and also settled in peace...Now the heathen world was in its greatest glory for strength, wealth, and learning."

Why would Providence so order events that the glory of His people should _____, and the glory of His enemies would be at their _____ when Christ was to come?

"God did two things to prepare the way for Christ's coming, wherein He took a contrary method from that which human wisdom would have taken. He brought His own visible people very low, and made them weak; but the heathen, His enemies, He exalted to the greatest height, for the more glorious triumph of the cross of Christ. With a small number in their greatest weakness, He conquered His enemies in their greatest glory. Thus Christ triumphed over principalities and powers in His cross."