

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Lesson 14 - Period 2 - Part 1

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

We now move to the glorious time of the incarnation of our Lord. This was the moment in time that all the world had been waiting for. Everything had been _____ to this and yet we find a mystery, that in the wisdom of God, His coming is largely concealed.

“This is the most remarkable article of time that ever was or ever will be. Though it was but between thirty and forty years, yet more was done in it than had been done from the beginning of the world to that time...And it may also be observed, that all which was done before the beginning of time, in the eternal counsels between the persons of the Blessed Trinity, chiefly respected this period.”

“Though many things had been done in the affair of redemption, though millions of sacrifices had been offered; yet nothing was done to purchase redemption before Christ’s incarnation. No part of the purchase was made, no part of the price was offered till now. But as soon as Christ was incarnate, the purchase began. And the whole time of Christ’s humiliation, till the morning that He rose from the dead, was taken up in this purchase. Then the purchase was entirely and completely finished. As nothing was done before Christ’s incarnation, so nothing was done after His resurrection, to purchase redemption for men.”

Edwards spends this section showing various aspects of the incarnation. He will speak of its _____, timing, greatness, circumstances, and concomitants (accompanying events) of this world defining moment.

First let’s think about the necessity of this event. Why did the Eternal Son have to take to Himself human flesh? Remembering that this is a sermon we see Edwards answer this question in a simple and straightforward way. The Son had to take to Himself human nature to accomplish the redemption necessary for _____.

“Christ became incarnate or, which is the same thing became man, to put Himself in the capacity for working out our redemption. For though Christ, as God was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to His being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that He should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, He would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not either capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering; for it is infinitely above all suffering (divine impassability). Neither is it capable of obedience to that law which was given to man. It is as impossible that one who is only God, should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that He should suffer man’s punishment.”

“It was needful in order to answer the law, that the very nature to which the law was given, should obey it.”

“It was needful to answer the law that the nature that sinned should die.”

“God saw meet, that the same world which was the stage of man’s fall and ruin, should also be the stage of his redemption.”

Before moving on Edwards wants to stress two elements of the true humanity of Christ.

1. Christ was formed of the _____ of the body of Mary by the power of the Spirit.
2. He was conceived by the power of the Spirit, without sin, but _____ in the womb as a normal baby.

Secondly let’s take notice of the _____ of the incarnation. The world was made ready for the coming of the Son of God.

“It came to pass at a time, which in infinite wisdom was the most fit and proper...It was the will of God that His Son should make His appearance in the world in the time of the Roman, the greatest and strongest monarchy, which was Satan’s visible kingdom in the world; that, by overcoming this, He might visibly overcome Satan’s kingdom in its greatest strength and glory, and so obtain the more complete triumph over Satan himself.”

Third, we must consider the _____ of this event. Nothing that happened in the history of the world compared with this event. Nothing since this has compared with the greatness of this event.

“The creation of the world was a very great thing, but not so great as the incarnation of Christ. It was a great thing for God to make the creature, but not so great as for the Creator Himself to become a creature. We have spoken of many great things that were accomplished between the fall of man and the incarnation of Christ: but God becoming man was greater than all. Then the greatest person was born that ever was or ever will be.”

Fourthly, the _____ surrounding this event are quite remarkable. Christ was not born to riches, surrounded by an expecting people, in a palace fit for such a person.

“He was born of a poor virgin; a pious holy person, but poor...And this poor virgin was espoused to a husband who was but a poor man.”

Fifth, this great event was accompanied by many marvelous things. Such as a great _____ out of the _____ (as in the life of Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, and Anna)

“The next concomitant of Christ’s incarnation is, the great notice that was taken of it in heaven, and on earth. How it was noticed by the glorious inhabitants of the heavenly world, appears by their joyful songs on this occasion, heard by the shepherds in the night. This was the greatest event of providence that ever the angels had beheld.”