Jonathan Edwards / ParT 2

***The Great Awakening***

**Ephesians 5:14 -** For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

1. A time of spiritual slumber: In the 1730s and 1740s, the slumber of sinners needed to be awakened by the voice of the Good Shepherd. In response, God’s people come forth as the light of the gospel shines on them. This is what took place in The Great Awakening. It began **first** with the church. Whitfield said the church is asleep and only a loud voice will awaken it. Whitfield understood that God’s means to accomplish His ends was the powerful preaching of the Word of God to awaken the body of Christ. During this time, George Whitfield wrote in a letter, “Into which lethargy has the Christian world fallen, and foolish and wise virgins are all slumbering and sleeping. It is high time for all who love the Lord Jesus to lift up their voices like trumpets and give warning that the Bridegroom is coming. Many, I hope, are already alarmed.” This is what happened. Like an alarm in slumber to start the day fresh and anew, a new day had dawned from the New England area and down through the southern colonies.
2. The great awakening reignites, 1740–1749. George Whitfield on his 2ND tour of the colonies receives an invitation from Jonathan Edwards asking Whitfield to come to Northampton to preach at Edward’s church. This is a meeting of the “twin towers” of The Great Awakening. He preaches four times. Under Whitfield’s preaching, Edwards visibly weeps and cries as Whitfield is empowered by the Spirit to preach the Word of God. And the entire Church came under the influence of the preaching of the Word of God. They are in North Hampton; they are visibly moved. They are under Whitfield‘s preaching authority. Whitfield continued on with his preaching journey.
3. Sinners in the hand of an angry God: Edwards would make periodic journeys away from his church, and, on one such occasion, he was invited to go to Enfield, Connecticut. He preached Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God in 1741 at the height of the intensity of The Great Awakening. Preachers were awakened. They are preaching the Word of God in their pulpits. The churches are coming alive, and sinners are coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Edwards preaches from Deuteronomy 32:35 “your foot shall slide in due time“.  This same sermon had ill effect when he preached it at his Church.

* He picks up that sermon and travels the short distance to Enfield to preach it. **Summary of sermon**: God is as angry with sinners on earth as He is with those in hell. And they are being held by God by a thread over the precipice of hell. As Edwards was preaching, people were gripping their pews under such a conviction of sin. In this sermon, Edwards led his listeners to the “door” which is open - come to Me and believe in Me while there is time. The people turned their hearts to the Lord and were dramatically converted.
* One writer indicates that what was distinct about this sermon was the sustained imagery Edwards employed to purify the hearts of the listeners. He focused repeatedly on what it means for sinners to be held in the hands of an angry God with no escape.
* One man writes, “Before the sermon was done, there was a great moaning and crying out throughout the whole house – “What shall I do to be saved?” “O, I’m going to hell!” “What shall I do for Christ?” People were clinging to the pews for fear that they were dropping to hell that very moment. What a powder keg of a sermon it proved to be. It was printed up, and with great impact upon the colonies at this time.

1. CONFLICT WITHIN: The Awakening was creating great conflicts between the “for revival” and the “against revival” groups in the churches. Revivalist preachers were stirring up the people with greater affection and love for God. It was creating quite a contrast with these other staid preachers. There were those who went way too far emotionally in their responses to what was taking place. The churches were split right down the middle – “New lights” versus “old lights”. There is always controversy whenever there is a powerful movement of the Spirit of God in a place.
2. The Distinguishing Marks Of The Spirit Of God. Yale University was split right down the middle. In the providence of God, God designed it so that Edwards would be at Yale at the Board of Trustees meeting with a new school year starting the next day. It had already been appointed that Jonathan Edwards would preach in chapel that next morning. He delivered one of his most famous sermons that he would ever preach. It was entitled, The Distinguishing Marks Of The Spirit Of God. 1 John 4:1-6.

* He listed **10 things that do not necessarily distinguish a true work of Go**d**:** **But in any true work of God there will be these five distinguishing marks of God**:
  1. There is always the exaltation of Jesus Christ when He preached in the in the place of preeminence.
  2. This leads sinners to turn to the righteousness of God. Having seen the Lord Jesus Christ at the center, they become aware of their own unrighteousness. They turn to God in saving faith, and receive the righteousness of God.
  3. There is an increased regard for the holy Scriptures. Not with emotional excesses, but they turn to God through the objective written Word of God.
  4. The Holy Spirit will establish the minds of people to study God’s Word.
  5. There will be an elevated view of God, a love for Jesus Christ, and this love will spill over to their fellow believers.
* This was a masterpiece of a sermon. It was preached in 1741 at the height of The Great Awakening. God had Jonathan Edwards positioned in just the right place at just the right time to give just the right message that would bring just the right definition to this movement of God.

1. Religious Affections: In 1746, Edwards wrote an all-time classic: a very large treatise entitled Religious Affections. This became the most important and accurate analysis of religious experience ever written by Edwards. It became an even more defining, more discriminating statement on what constitutes a true work of the Spirit of God, as opposed to a false work spiritually generated by a false spirit. Edwards was not the only the preacher of the revival. Yet his preaching produced The Great Awakening. As a theologian, he framed what was taking place. He gave clarity so that people could understand that this was a genuine work of God.
2. Edwards’ Home Ministry: Edwards was very large hearted; he opened his home to young men entering the ministry. The home of Edwards became something like a seminary/dormitory. The men who lived there became leading influences in the next generation to carry out what had begun in The Great Awakening. Edwards was investing his time very wisely in these other men.

* **David Brainerd** was one of the strongest, most committed believers of that generation. He was a young, passionate man for God who became a missionary to the Indians. He gave his life to reach them with the gospel. Through Brainerd, The Great Awakening spilled over to the mission field there in New Jersey and in Delaware. David Brainerd so gave himself for the Lord that he contracted TB. At age 29, he came to Edward’s house to die. Edward’s own daughter became Brainerd’s nurse. She contracted TB, and a short time after Brainerd’s death, she died. The two are buried side-by-side today in North Hampton.
* Edwards edits Brainerd’s diary. It will become an all-time devotional, Christian classic. Edwards’ will write Brainerd’s biography and include it in this diary. To this day it’s never been out of print. Missionaries will read it in the next century, and it will help launch missionaries to places like China, India, Burma, Africa.

1. THE PAINFUL SEPARATION: In 1750, Edwards comes under conviction at the heart of The Great Awakening that the emphasis needs to be that believers must be born again. Pastor Stoddard had started the practice of encouraging unbelievers to come to the Lord’s table so that they might come to know Jesus Christ through this ordinance. By virtue of their membership in the Church, he thought they could come to know Christ. Stoddard was blurring the lines of distinction between those who knew the Lord and those who did not know the Lord. Stoddard made the church a place for unconverted people, and communion became an open communion in that he encouraged unbelievers to come and take the Lord’s supper. This was unbearable for Edwards. After 22 years of being the pastor at this Church, Edwards became deeply convicted that there had to be a change. Edwards was convinced that only believers could come to the Lord’s Table. He turned it into a closed communion available only to believers. They must come in a worthy manner.

* This created a fire storm in the Church at Northampton. Even though Jonathan Edwards had been the pastor at this Church for 22 years, the membership of the Church voted him out over this issue. 90% of the votes were cast in favor of removing him. Powerful families within the church conspired to get Edwards thrown out.
* **The Farewell Sermon**: Edwards preached this sermon on June 22, 1750. His text was 2 Corinthians 1:14. He preached that there is coming the day of Jesus Christ at the final end of the age when we all gather before the Lord. We will stand together as a church family before the Lord and states Edwards’, “I will give an account to the Lord for how I have shepherded you and you will give an account to the Lord for how receptive you have been to my shepherding ministry. God will make the deciding judgment of who was in the right and who was in the wrong in this great deciding matter. He will bring the judgment upon us in our meetings here. Edwards stayed to be the interim pastor until they could find a permanent replacement for him. This was a mark of his selflessness and a willingness to suffer terrible public embarrassment for the sake of the gospel. He continued to love these people and ministered to the very people who rose up against him, utterly refused him, and rejected him.

1. STOCKBRIDGE MISSIONARY: 1751-1757 - Invitations as far as away as London arrived asking him to be their pastor. Edwards remembered David Brainerd who had all but died in his arms for those 11 weeks, the last of his life. Brainerd‘s influence first had its impact on Edwards himself. He decides to avoid all the glamorous offers. He decided he will go to the mission field. He will continue the ministry that David Brainerd began. Edwards becomes a missionary to the Indians in Stockbridge. He will preach to them at what is no higher than a fifth grade education level. There were so many families angry at Edwards that they followed him to the mission field as “Judases” there in Stockbridge. Accusations of financial mismanagement were made. They accused him of taking money from the Indians who basically had no money.
2. A TIME FOR STUDY: Edward dedicated time to study and to give deep thoughts to the things of God. He writes what is arguably the three most profound works that would ever come from his pen:

* **The Freedom of the Will**. Affections are the leading influencers upon the choices of the will. God must change the heart for the will to be changed. The will is the handmaiden of the heart and will never act in contradiction to the affections of one’s emotions. The will always follows the desires of the heart.
* **The End For Which God Created The World**: You need to know the end of the world before you start the journey - for His own glory. Man needs to know what are the intervening pieces that lead to the highest end. From before the foundation of the world, God appointed the highest end which is His own glory. He has also foreordained all of the means that will be used by Him to promote and to exalt His own glory.  Edwards understood that there was no competition between that which glorifies God and that which is in our own good. When we pursue the glory of God, that is by necessity also the pursuit of our greatest good.
* **Original Sin** - Rom 5:12. The imputation of Adam’s sin to the entire human race is the only explanation to make sense of this fallen world. This also extends to the imputation of the sins of the elect onto the second Adam. The second Adam, unlike the first, obeyed perfectly. There is now kind of a counter-imputation. Adam’s sin was imputed to Christ while Christ’s righteousness was imputed to us. 2 Cor 5:21. The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ achieved by His perfect obedience to the law of God is imputed to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

1. The Last Year. 1758. The Board of Trustees, the governing institution which would later be called Princeton University, determined that Edwards was the most qualified man to serve as president. When Edwards received this letter, he immediately writes his response. “I am unqualified to be the president of such an esteemed institution as the College of New Jersey. You could surely do better than to ask someone like I to come be a president.” They sent another letter to him and finally got him to agree. He came, and on February 16, 1758, he was inaugurated as the third president of The College of New Jersey. The smallpox epidemic broke out in the colonies. In late February, Jonathan chose to take the disease to be inoculated to show others that they do not need to fear taking the injection. He contracts a secondary infection. He suddenly dies after five weeks as president.
2. Sarah’s Response: When Sarah is informed of her husband’s death, she writes, “My very dear child, what shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that I may kiss the rod that strikes me and lay our hands upon our mouths. [Job 1:21. Blessed…] The Lord has done it, he has made me adore His goodness that we had him so long. My God lives and He has my heart. O what a legacy my husband and your father has left us. We are all given to God. And there I am and love to be.”