

# God's Flaming Glory – Post 13 – God's Glory in Redemption, According to Jonathan Edwards

## God's Glory in Redemption

Redemption was God's end in creating the universe through the communication of His goodness. Redemption and the new creation are the end (or the goal) of the old creation “as the use of a house is the end of... building it.”<sup>1</sup> God makes use of all things, and orders all things (whether mankind, or angels, or heaven, or earth), for this grand end of redemption and new creation: “all other works are to be looked upon either as parts of it, or appendages to it, or are some way reducible to it.”<sup>2</sup> God exercises His sovereign power over all things to accomplish this singular grand design.

the world, even in its very creation, was designed to be for the use of Christ in the great affair of redemption, and His purpose in that work was the end of the creation, and of all God's providences in it from the beginning... all the works of God that were before the fall of man, were parts of the work of preparation for the work of redemption. The creation itself was so...<sup>3</sup>

How did Edwards define the end goal of this *grand design of redemption*, this *great affair of redemption*? It is reducible to one word: marriage. “God created the world to provide a spouse and a kingdom for His Son: and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual marriage of the spouse to Him, is what the whole creation labours and travails in pain to bring to

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume One*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 2272.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume One*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 2272.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume Two*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 1688-1689.

pass.”<sup>4</sup> Out of the Fallenness of humanity in Adam would come the gloriousness of new humanity in Christ.

This is God’s glory in redemption: the selfless glory of the Triune God who gives up everything to save His elect to Himself. This is how God glorifies Himself: the lavish overflow of God’s eternal love and fullness. That *is* His glory. That is the purpose of all His works:

The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, that the eternal Son of God might obtain [through redemption] a spouse towards whom He might fully exercise the infinite benevolence of His nature, and to whom He might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in His heart, and that in this way God might be glorified.<sup>5</sup>

This is the way the Triune God of Scripture is glorified. He is not a tyrannical theatrical displayer. He is not glorified by obedient slaves. His is a bright glory, not an inward and shadowy, negative and mirky glory. He wants sons with His Son. He wants to obtain children through creation, and so much so He obtains them through bloody atonement, loving them before the foundations of the world.

This understanding of salvation is so profoundly relational that conceiving of God’s glory as a theatrical demonstration cannot be maintained. Redemption is no mere drama. It is no idle spectacle to be marveled at. It is not a play that is meant to be observed. No, God Himself undertook in this the grand design of His glory – the spilling over of His gracious fullness – all the burning hot love of His enfolding glory. And this is the goal that He pursues:

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume One*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 2272.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume Two*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 62.

the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, wherein He will greatly rejoice, and all the saints shall rejoice with Him. Christ shall rejoice over His bride, and the bride shall rejoice in her Husband, in the state of her consummate and everlasting blessedness... [when] Christ the great Redeemer shall be most perfectly glorified, God the Father shall be glorified in Him, and the Holy Ghost shall be most fully glorified in the perfection of His work on the hearts of all the church.<sup>6</sup>

This glory is God's purest and brightest delight. This is what makes God Triune happy. This is His Gospel, and the satisfaction of Christ:

this was the joy that was set before Him, that made Him cheerfully to endure the cross, and despise the pain and shame in comparison of this joy; even that rejoicing over His church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride that the Father has promised Him, and that He expected when He should present her to Himself in perfect beauty and blessedness.<sup>7</sup>

The Trinitarian God saving His Bride from the darkness of their own hearts – that was the Gospel Edwards preached! This was the story that captivated his heart and mind. This was the glory that struck at the core of his heart, and filled him with joy. This was not inward focused glory, defined by what it is not. This glory is abundant and outgoing. A glory so incredibly different than any conception fallen humanity has of gloriousness that only the Holy Spirit through Scripture can reveal its weight of love.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume One*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 2269-2270.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume Two*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> "God might speak in all of nature and in all of life, but the only place where one could find the key to unlock the whole system was in Scripture. All knowledge must begin there. Scripture was not just a source of information but the necessary guide to a radical life-changing perspective... The starting point for unraveling the mysteries of the universe must be the shattering revelation of one's total inadequacy and a recognition of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Unlike it is with theatrical glory, God's sovereignty over creation and the orderliness of the universe are not means of *displaying* glory. To Edwards, sovereignty is sweet and order is beautiful because in all God's works of providence, He is *communicating* His love to His Bride. All things are the work of the good and generous God who wants first and foremost fellow heirs with His Son, a Bride for the Son. All His works – everything He has done – serves that end, however manifold in their expression. This is no theatrical, demonstrated glory. This is a superabundant, bright, lavish, delighting, loving glory. A glory which, said Edwards, is brightest when it is shared, and hottest when it is basked in. The human heart is dark and cold when God is not glorified in by it (1 Corinthians 1:29 KJV), and God's glory is seen in His heart for His Bride in the Son.

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One who was so changed could then experience how all creation was one harmonious hymn of praise to the glories of the Creator and the mercies of Christ. Without the grace that gave sinful and rebellious people ears to hear, they would never hear the sublime Christ-like choruses or see how the particular notes of reality all fit together" [George Marsden (2003). *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. Yale University Press. New Haven & London. p. 81].