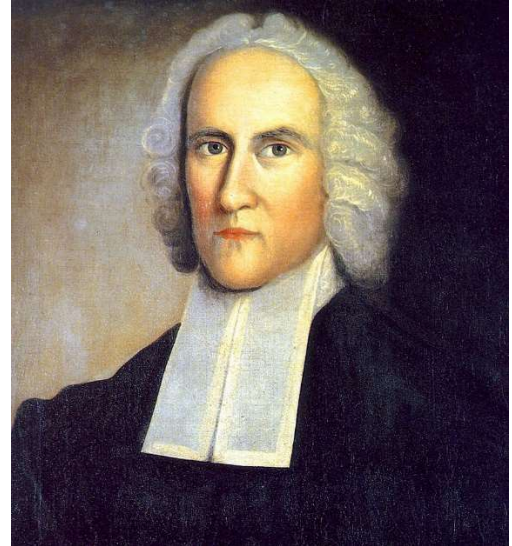


# History of the Reformation

## Jonathan Edwards

- American Background
  - The Gospel moved to America
    - Desire for religious freedom
      - Separatists (Pilgrims)
      - Puritans (Massachusetts)
      - Baptists (Roger Williams – Rhode Island)
      - Quakers (William Penn – Pennsylvania)
      - Roman Catholic (Maryland)
  - Self government
    - Massachusetts – government to God’s Glory
      - Established Puritanism
  - Massachusetts “State Church”
    - Congregational
    - Puritan emphasis on Godliness in all of life
    - Expulsion of those who disagree
  - Over the generations, Church became the routine
- 2nd Generation Puritanism
  - Puritanism became a “way of life” in New England
    - Congregational
  - Solomon Stoddard
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Librarian at Harvard
    - Pastor of Congregational Church in Northampton
      - 100 miles W of Boston on Connecticut River
    - Pastored for more than 50 years
    - Married widow of predecessor
      - Daughter Esther
    - “Pope of the Massachusetts Valley”
  - Concern about Church membership
    - Lord’s Supper – only for church members
    - Church membership required personal conversion experience
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Puritans
  - As 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Puritans began to die
    - Fewer church attenders were actually members
    - Only members could have children baptized
    - Children and grandchildren and immigrants did not have “the experience”
  - Stoddard – solution in “Half-way Covenant”
    - Partial church membership for baptized children/grandchildren
    - Accept the church covenant
    - Follow the Creed
    - Could participate in Lord’s Supper and have children baptized
  - Logic
    - Roman Church – all baptized into the church
    - Reformation – the church was believers and their children

- Puritanism – real belief was a matter of the heart
    - Children needed to be in church to hear the preaching
    - And to be encouraged to live a pious life
- Puritanism had done great things for the New England colony
  - Puritan *Ethos*
  - Work ethic
  - Work hard, be diligent, be honest in your dealings
  - And you will prosper in this life
- Spirituality was becoming secondary, but still important
- Into this world, Jonathan Edwards was born



- Jonathan Edwards
  - Esther Stoddard married Timothy Edwards
    - Congregational Minister at East Windsor, Connecticut
    - Educator – tutored boys in preparation for college
    - 11 children – 10 girls, 1 boy
  - The one boy was Jonathan b. 1703
  - Early education
    - Began learning Latin at the age of 6
    - Had learned Greek and Hebrew by age of 13
    - Entered The Collegiate School (became Yale College 1716)
  - At Yale
    - Interested in becoming a scientist
      - Sir Isaac Newton, etc.
      - His mind gravitated to the logical precision of the Scientific Method
    - Also interested in philosophy
      - Particularly John Locke (puritan vision of limited government)
      - Studied in the Age of Enlightenment
  - Edwards questioned the Calvinism of his upbringing
    - In scientific fashion, he studied the matter objectively
    - The more he studied the Bible, the more he found himself “painted into a corner” about God’s Sovereignty
  - Edwards’ “enlightenment”
    - I Tim 1:17 – “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only-wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen”
    - Edwards was “blown away” that the Everlasting God, who is dependent on nothing, would condescend to have a relationship with men”
    - Puritanism made sense to him
  - 1722 – graduated from Yale with both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees
    - Served as the stated supply of various churches in New York
  - 1722 – Resolutions – Puritan determinations of purposes for life
    - 70 Resolutions
    - To be read weekly to be reminded of your goals toward godliness
      - 1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God’s glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration,

without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriad's of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.

- 11. Resolved, when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances don't hinder.
- 17. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.

- 1724 – returned to Yale as “pillar tutor”
  - As several of his mentors and tutors had returned to the Anglican church
- Feb 1727 – selected to be assistant to Rev. Solomon Stoddard at Northampton
  - He was the “scholar-pastor” – dedicating himself to the academic side of the pastorate
- Married Sarah Pierpont (age 17)
  - After 4 years of challenging courtship
  - Daughter of James Pierpont, founder of Yale
  - Mother was great-granddaughter of Thomas Hooker (Father of Connecticut – disagreement on suffrage in Mass.)
  - Edwards enamored with her piety from age of 13
  - “bright and cheerful disposition, a practical housekeeper, a model wife and the mother of his 11 children”
- Feb 1729 – Became primary pastor at death of Stoddard



- Edwards deeply concerned with the spiritual state of “the Puritan experiment”
  - Not a flamboyant orator, but an academic preacher
  - The content of his messages was clear, scriptural, and logical
- His preaching
  - Faithfully and earnestly devoted to Christ
    - Consummately Christo-centric in everything
  - The Christian life was to be lived in obedience to God's Word
  - Christian life is one disciplined and encouraged
- All of his life and preaching was driven by a vision of the “Beauty of God's Sovereignty”
  - Calvinism was not just an academic exercise
  - But an amazement that God would have a relationship with sinful man
- Great Awakening
  - 1733-34 – Protestant revival began taking place
    - Edwards was simply preaching on God's Sovereignty
    - “God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon Him, in the Whole of it”
    - It was God's good pleasure and “meer and arbitrary grace” that He grant any person the faith necessary to incline him toward holiness.
  - Edwards was surprised

- During that winter, little conversation in Northampton other than the importance of religion of God and the impact in life
      - Revival spread throughout the Connecticut River valley, even as far as New Jersey
  - This movement gained the name of Revival
    - Edwards (in typical fashion) scientifically studied the phenomenon
  - Great Awakening
    - After Spring 1734, Revival had subsided at Northampton
      - Edwards studied what had been done
    - Criticism in larger metropolitan areas of “over-emotionalism”
    - At request from friends in England, his “report” was eventually documented in a book
      - “A Divine and Supernatural Light” (1734)
      - “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton” (1737)
    - This happening caught the eye of an English clergyman named George Whitfield
      - Member of Wesley’s “Holy Club”
      - Great orator, preached to thousands
    - Awakening reinvigorated
      - 1741 – “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
        - Originally at Northampton – “thanks, Pastor, excellent message”
        - Then at Enfield, CT- invited guest speaker
        - Preaching to those professed to be believers
        - Widely reprinted as an example of “fire and brimstone” preaching
        - Actually a message of hope and call to repentance
          - The only thing standing between you and eternal damnation is the merciful hand of God
    - Edwards continues to examine the happening of Revival
      - “Thoughts on Revival” (1742)
      - “Religious Affections” (1747)
        - Good place to start in order to understand Edwards
      - Influential later on revivalists such as Charles Finney
        - Unfortunately, many others adopted the “methods”
        - But rejected Edwards’ Calvinism behind it
        - Method became a mechanical process by which men might be saved
- Post Awakening
  - Edwards’ life was, in one sense, dedicated to answering the question
    - What is the evidence that my faith is genuine?
    - What are the true marks of the work of the Spirit?
      - Emotions are not useless but valuable indicators
      - Emotions are necessarily indicators of true regeneration
  - 1749 – published biography of David Brainerd
    - Engaged to his daughter Jerusha
  - 1750 – Edwards began to challenge the Stoddard concept of the Half-Way Covenant
    - Credible profession should always be a prerequisite for Church membership
  - 1751 – longtime church members incited the congregation
    - Edwards was dismissed
    - Went to Stockbridge to minister to a tribe of Mohican Indians

- Later Life
  - 1751 – 1757 – Edwards ministered in Stockbridge
    - Became a school tutor
    - Would come home at night and meditate and write
    - Paper was no longer available and he would write on whatever scraps were available
  - During this time, Edwards made much use of his time in meditation and writing
    - Leisure of horseback riding
    - Would come back looking like he'd been in a snow storm
  - 1757 – invited to become president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton)
    - Daughter was married to Aaron Burr, Sr, original president
    - Burr died 1757
    - Edward's grandson, Aaron Burr, Jr, became VP of the US
    -
- Edwards' Death
  - Immediately after arriving at Princeton
    - February, so left Sarah at Stockbridge
    - Great supporter of new concept in medicine of inoculation
    - Inoculated for Small Pox
  - Contracted Small Pox and died March 22, 1758
  - Buried in Princeton Cemetery
  - Sarah
    - *"O my very Dear Child, What shall I say. A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may all kiss the rod and lay our hands on our mouths. The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long. But 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."*
- Legacy
  - Change in Calvinistic emphasis
    - New Light Calvinism – accepted reality of Revivalism
  - One of the most profound theologians and philosophers which America has produced
    - 2006 – Yale University finished “decoding” Edwards
    - Published in 26 volumes
  - Practical Christianity
    - “true happiness” can only be found in meditation upon Him
      - Not considering what will make one happy
  - Contemporary Evangelicalism
    - Narcissistic to the extreme
    - All things are wrapped up in what makes me feel good
    - Accepting Jesus is for the purpose of “making me feel better”
  - Edwards
    - Have a deep, Christian devotion wrapped up in God, not myself
    - Remember that the Great Omnipotent King has given us the privilege of being in His Presence
- I Timothy 1:17
- Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the One and Only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen