**WEEK 3: Lessons from the Great Awakening**

**Introduction to the Great Awakening**

* There are 3 or 4 “Great Awakenings” but the first is often called The Great Awakening. It occurred in the American Colonies, England, Wales, and Scotland in the 1730-40’s.
* The Great Awakening was the greatest movement of the Spirit of God on American soil, ever. It laid the moral foundation for the birth of our country. It was a time of revival for a church that had fallen asleep, was in a dull spiritual state, and needed awakening to God’s holiness.
* Each successive generation from the Pilgrims experienced a downward spiral of spiritual decline. Churches were full of religious people who believed they were saved because of their infant baptism and Sunday attendance, yet their lives were unchanged. Like John 3, where Jesus explains to Nicodemus “You must be born again…of water and Spirit”, few had experienced the new birth brought about by true repentance and brokenness of spirit.
* Typical services were focused on oratory, ritual, routine, meaningless membership. Worship was flat and lifeless. There were as many unsaved people as truly converted Christ-followers. From this deep spiritual slumber, the Awakening launched the Church into renewed life.
* Every individual soul who is saved is a miracle, yet at this time in history God chose to harvest unparalleled numbers of His elect and did so by raising up some of the greatest preachers in the history of the Church.
* William Tennent, Sr. established the Log College in 1727 and operated it till his death in 1746. He graduated 20 ministers, including 4 sons, who became fiery preachers for the coming Great Awakening. It was the first Presbyterian training ground which later became Princeton University.
* Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen was a Dutch reformed pastor who arrived in the New Jersey colonies in 1719. He is referred to by one historian as “an important herald, if not the father of, The Great Awakening”. He preached the necessity of personal repentance and conversion which bears the fruit of a new heart.
* The fuse of The Great Awakening was lit by Jonathan Edwards, but the flames were fanned into a conflagration by the evangelistic preaching of George Whitefield.

**Jonathan Edwards (1703-58)**

* Born to Timothy Edwards and Esther Stoddard in East Windsor, CT. Esther’s father Solomon was called “the Pope of the Connecticut Valley.”
* Attended Yale in 1716, receiving his BA in 1720 and MA in 1722. He was converted while studying for his MA. He was overwhelmed by 1 Tim. 1:17: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”
* Shortly after, Edwards pastored a church in New York [City] for 10 months in which he helped repair a church split.
* In 1722-23, Edwards composed his famous 70 Resolutions: 6) “Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.” 20) “Resolved, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.” 56) “Resolved, never to give over, not in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.”
* Edwards became the assistant minister in the church of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard in Northampton at age 24. Two years later, Solomon died, and Edwards became the pastor of one of the most influential churches in New England.
* He also married Sarah Pierpont that same year. They had 8 daughters and 3 sons. Their devotion is well expressed in numerous letters. He had 72 grandchildren who played significant roles in American history.
* Edwards saw signs of revival in 1735 when preaching on justification by faith alone. He wrote of the revivals, expanding it into a book in 1736, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, fanning the flames.
* Edwards invited George Whitefield to come to America in 1740 to preach having heard of his success in England. When he heard Whitefield preach, he wept knowing that this was the man God would use to bring further revival.
* On July 8, 1741, Edwards preached “Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God” at Enfield, CT. The response was remarkable. The text was Deut. 32:35: “Their foot shall slip in due time.” He preached the sermon a month earlier in Northampton with no response. The excitement in response at Enfield was so great that he could not finish the sermon.
* He published *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* in 1746 in which shows that true Christianity is not just a matter of accepting the gospel intellectually but involves a transformation of one’s affections for Christ.
* In 1749, Edwards published the diary of David Brainerd (1718-47), a missionary to the Delaware Indians in New Jersey. He died of tuberculosis at age 29 in Edwards’ home. The diary was instrumental in convincing men like William Carey, Henry Martyn, Adoniram Judson, and Jim Eliot to engage in foreign missions.
* In 1749, Edwards published *A Humble Inquiry Concerning Communion* opposing his grandfather Solomon’s position on the Lord’s Supper. In 1750 Edwards was fired for his views.
* Edwards moved to Stockbridge and ministered among Mohican and Mohawk Indians. The next 8 years (1750-57) was one of the most productive writing periods of his life.
* He became 2nd president of the College of NJ (Princeton), but died a few months later from a smallpox inoculation.