

3rd Edwards Pt.4: the teaching of Scripture on God's end in creating the world

3A. Texts showing God's end (II, 1, 3)

1B. Scripture teaches that God makes Himself His own last end in creating (106)

1) Select texts

First and last, Isa. 44.6: **Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.**

Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, Rev. 22.12-13:¹² **"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end".**

Rom. 11.36a: **For from him and through him and to him are all things.**

Col. 1.16: **For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him.**

Heb. 2.10: **For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.**

2) Appropriateness

That God is His own last end is fitting (meet and suitable). It is a fitting "prerogative of the great, infinite, and eternal Being; a thing becoming the dignity of him who is infinitely above all other beings; from whom all things are, and by whom they consist; and in comparison with whom all other things are as nothing" (106).

Q: what grace of the Christian life, difficult to cultivate, does this doctrine distinctively help us cultivate? How does this work?

2B. Particular texts that show that God's own last end is His glory

Edwards has 9 sub-headings (107-112); the following is selective

1) What He does for His own sake, He does for His glory

This is His determined goal in dealing with Israel, even through disobedience and chastening: ¹⁰ **Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another (Isa. 48.11).**

Note the contribution of Rom. 11.36b to the God-ward goal of all things as they come together in chapters 9-11 in His marvelous saving wisdom: **For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.**

2) He saves sinners for His glory

Isa. 43.1-7: **But now thus says the LORD... Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. ⁶ I will say ...bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."**

Ephesians 1.5-6: ⁵ **he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**

Ezekiel 36:25-27: ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

This promise is now being fulfilled in the new Israel composed of Jew and Gentile through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the cleansing of the heart symbolized in baptism. What explains this saving of sinners? ¹⁹ **I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. ²⁰ But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' ²¹ But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came. ²² "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came (Ezek. 36.19-22). It is to vindicate the holiness of God's great name (v. 21). It is for His sake not for our sake ultimately (v. 22, "not for your sake..."). God saves sinners for his own glory, majesty, and excellence.**

Q: what lessons can you draw from this teaching?