

History and current events are like a speeding train to me. Imagine one of the fastest trains in the world traveling almost 200 miles per hour! The Shinkansen Bullet Train is an example of this.¹ Imagine something terrible happening to the train where it to be derailed or if it hit an obstruction. Destruction would be absolutely horrible. We can apply this image in our minds to history as it is viewed by many today. We are troubled at every turn today whether it is bad news of murder, kidnaping or the ravages of war. If that were not enough to worry about we could worry about being hit by an asteroid that was big enough to destroy all life on earth as we know it!²



History and current events can be very disturbing. Man in his quest to deal with things and events around him can become like the person trying to outrun a tsunami - an impossible task yet the man finds himself running anyway. I have good news for everyone. I've read the last chapter in this drama and WE WIN!

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, ⁴ and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Rev 21:1-4, NASB.

This is the crux of the study of Redemptive History. The short story of the whole thing is that God is in control of the destiny of man - not the speeding train of random uncontrollable events. It is not the crazed dictator nor is it the religious zealot who is going control the history of man but God. Now that we have read the final chapter in the history of man, it seems to me that it would be a fascinating study to go through God's word and pick up this thread of Redemption and see how it relates to our time – the 21st century.

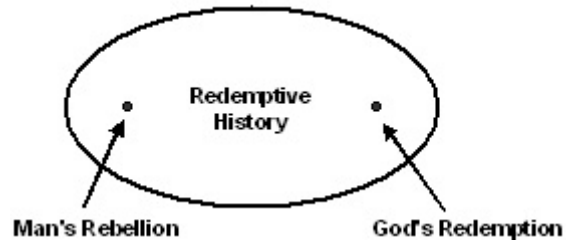
A Review from a Previous Lesson.

Redemptive History is... *"all about the Person of Jesus Christ. Over the past months we have studied together the impact the incarnation of the Son of God has had on mankind. Redemptive history, as I would like to call it, has one main point – that God delights in the sons of men and although man rightly deserves an eternity separated from Him in hell, God has redirected history to include the redemption of mankind. Hosea tells of this in his book by the account of his marriage to Gomer. In this account Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea and as a result was sold in slavery. The story should have ended there for unfaithfulness to a husband should have ended in death – an even more dire consequence than being sold in slavery. But Gomer was restored in right relationship with Hosea through her purchase from the slave market.*

This is redemption in a nutshell.

Redemptive history has two epicenters: man's rebellion and God's redemptive plan for man."

"The incarnation of the Son of God and the carrying out of God's Redemptive plan culminated in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. But Redemptive history doesn't end there. The rest of John



details out but leaves some of this history because it is too much in scope to cover in any one account that might be written by man. In the following outline we will see how John brings his brilliant account of the Person of Jesus Christ and how He is the very personification of Redemptive history – in Jesus Christ is the Redemption of man – the bringing together of God and man in an eternal relationship – a relationship best summed up by Jesus Himself by the relationship that a Father has with His son(s)."³

The problem is that men are sinners. As such, they cannot have fellowship with God – indeed if men were to be kept in such a sinful state they would face certain calamity – the calamity of hell. From sinful man's viewpoint, history, life is a [crapshoot](#). If it were not for Redemptive History and the impact this history has in the 21st century, man would have no hope – all things in life would be meant to be grasped for because without the grasping one would completely lose out. For the redeemed man, life is a Certainty but for sinful man – from his viewpoint – death is a crapshoot. "Who knows" says the unbeliever. Death is the ultimate Uncertainty. But the Good News is that God has stepped into history and made the ultimate difference in this crapshoot and changed it into an Eternal Certainty – a certainty of eternal life where there is no pain, no crying, no Death (see passage quoted above).

So history is not in the hands of dictators – not in the hands of well-intentioned nations – nor is it in the hands of any religious sect. Rather, it is in the hands of God.

Redemptive History is the only History that matters.

²⁴ **God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;**

²⁵ **Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;** ²⁶ **And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;** ²⁷ **That they should seek the Lord, if**

haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: ²⁸ For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Acts 17:24 - 28 (KJV).

It is God who establishes and puts down entire nations just so man can be redeemed. It is in this remarkable passage that we see the big picture of History. Allow me to jump right to the end of this passage – all men are the offspring of God. That assertion by Paul is not a case for eternal life for all men (universal salvation) but a statement of Association by God to man – that we all belong to Him much as children belong to their fathers. It matters not the relationship in that particular case – it matters only that dads are always a child’s dad and nothing can change that association. The same is the true the case of God and all men. Our Heavenly Father is just that – our Father. This is the big picture of the Plan of God. God claims all men as His own and so we have the redemptive plan of God where Christ died for the sins of the World – no exception. What it really comes down to is that Satan has no right to sinful men – “Hands off Satan! Men belong to Me”, says the Father. Whether or not the individual sinner realizes this salvation is a matter of personal decision for Christ as Savior. Now let’s take up Paul’s points from verse 24.

- **Verse 24 (men are the creation of God).** First, God created the universe and all creatures including man.⁴
- **Verse 25 (men do not create God nor assist Him in any way).** Second, He is not the result of man’s imagination nor does He need any help from man in matters of the universe or the affairs of man – he was not made by the hands of man – rather man was made from the Hands of God. Men are in such a desperate, sinful condition that they are completely helpless with regard to any cooperative effort with God.⁵
- **Verse 26 (man share one blood).** Third, God asserts His Lordship over all including sinful man. Now note an important point made by Paul that God made of “*one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*” The one common thing we have as nations is that God made us and has determined that we all should have the same opportunity to live on this earth in national environments of His purpose.⁶
- **Verse 27 (men are to discover God).** The purpose of this divine determination is that we should discover Him. The picture here is not one of high achievement by man but that of men groping blindly after God, trying to find Him. Yet they find Him *because of the Gospel not their insightfulness or groping.*
- **Verse 28 (men are sons of God).** Finally, Paul asserts God’s ultimate association with sinful man as though all men are the sons of God – not candidates hell but for redemption and an eternal relationship with Him.⁷

So how does sinful men obtain Eternal Life as in the “final chapter” of Revelation? Redemption is that process where sinful man is literally purchased from the slave market of sin where there is only calamity for the slave and restored in right relation to God. More on that next time.

The Divine “Great Game” – Eternal Life for Man.

Much of the Near East’s national divisions were determined by Europe’s attempt to shape the national borders starting from the turn of the 20th century, through World War I and even later than that. This has been called by some the [Great Game](#). The design was to shape the national boundaries so that Europe would have the upper hand in the area. Although this is an oversimplification of the case it might serve to illustrate the Purpose of God when it comes to His plan for man. Yes, God has a plan for man. It’s best stated in John 3:14 - 18:

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (KJV).

Please note the inclusiveness of this Plan: the world. This is another big picture passage – God’s Redemptive Great Game plan, if you please.

Verse 14: This refers to yet another rebellion of the Hebrews against God and yet another deliverance provided by God to His people. [Read Numbers 21:4 - 9](#). The Hebrews complained against God and were punished by fiery serpents.⁸ The cure for this fatal punishment came in the form of a brass serpent fashioned by Moses, put on a pole and lifted up high. If anyone had been bitten by one of these fiery serpents he had but to look at the brazen serpent to be cured. Jesus makes this comparison with Himself in that sinful man had but to look to Him for salvation. This look was one of placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ much as the smitten Hebrew placed his faith in looking at the brazen serpent. This look of faith is referred to in Hebrews:

¹ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:1 - 2.

Here we see our utter dependence on Jesus Christ for the initiation and finishing of our faith.

Verse 15, 16. This is the divine Great Game Plan of God - the redemption of man through Jesus Christ through faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. This is the scarlet thread of redemption we intend to trace in coming lessons.⁹ Most importantly, let us grasp the importance this History has on the 21st century. Amen.

Endnotes:

1. The Japanese Shinkansen Bullet Train travels at an average speed of 126 MPH with a top speed of 277 MPH
2. NASA currently maintains a web site of their study of asteroid or comet collision possibilities: <http://impact.arc.nasa.gov/>
3. Taken from a previous lesson [The Rest of Redemption's Story](#).
4. Read [Psalm 139](#), esp. NIV.
5. See [Rom 5:5 - 7](#).
6. Read [Heb 2:14 - 17](#).
7. I fully expect to be challenged by the class on some of these points. I think Paul is trying to point out that these Greeks have been claimed by God for redemption and that Paul was there to see to it that was the case. See verse 34.
8. "*nechash nechosheth*. Hence we find that the word for brass or copper comes from the same root with *nachash*, which here signifies a serpent, probably on account of the color; as most serpents, especially those of the bright spotted kind, have a very glistening appearance, and those who have brown or yellow spots appear something like burnished brass: but the true meaning of the root cannot be easily ascertained."—Adam Clarke's Commentary.
9. See [Josh 2:8-22](#).