

## XVIII.IX. THOMAS BOSTON, THE MARROW MAN - The Eighteenth Century (pt.9)

Two questions and answers:

### QUESTION 1. What is Church History?

**ANSWER.** Church history is the story of how Jesus has built his church for his own glory and his peoples' good. **Matthew 16:18** "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

### QUESTION 2. Why should we study Church History?

**ANSWER.** We should learn church history because it is the amazing story of Jesus conquering the nations through his Gospel. **Revelation 6:2** "[Christ] came out conquering, and to conquer."

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## Q. ARE YOU READY FOR CHURCH HISTORY?!

Today we are going to look at the Eighteenth Century for the ninth time. But before we do that let's remember what we learned last time.

**Q. Can anyone tell me *who* Brett taught you about last time?**

**Everyone say, "William Carey."**

**Q. Who can tell me something about William Carey?**

## RECAP

In the Eighteenth Century, God used William Carey to show a great example of perseverance.

Who can tell me the

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (pt.8) MEMORY VERSE.

- "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (pt.8) MEMORY QUOTE.

- "I am not afraid of failure; I am afraid of succeeding at things that do not matter" (William Carey)

Now, today I am going to teach you about the Eighteenth Century PART 9 (1,700-1,800).

What happened in the Eighteenth Century (1,700-1,800) that shows us how Christ built His church as He continued to conquer the nations?

## **I. THOMAS BOSTON (1676-1732).**

**Everyone say, "Thomas Boston."**

In the Eighteenth Century, God used Thomas Boston to recover the right use of the law and the free offer of salvation.

### *HISTORY*

- **(i) Thomas Boston was born in Duns, Berwickshire (Scotland) in 1676.**
- **(ii) He grew up, the youngest of seven siblings, in a Christian home.** One of Boston's earliest memories, was visiting his father in prison, where he had been imprisoned for binding his conscience to God's Word (before the Act of Toleration in 1687).
- **(iii) Jesus saved Boston at age 11 under the preaching of Henry Erskine.**
- **(iv) In his younger years, Thomas would walk four to five miles on the Lord's Day.** "In the winter sometimes it was my lot to go alone, without so much as a horse to carry me through Blackadder water, the wading whereof in sharp frosty weather I very well remember." (*Memoirs*)
- **(v) In 1699, Thomas Boston was ordained to pastor a congregation in Simprin, Berwickshire.** When he arrived, he was perplexed to discover that only one family practiced family worship (which entirely changed in seven years), and that it had been several years since the Lord's Supper had been administered.
- **(vi) Boston had a hard life.** He describes his first 10 years pastoring at Ettrick as very difficult on account of the peoples spiritual hardness. His wife, Katherine Brown, slipped often into states of depression and insanity. And he buried six of his ten children. But he was faithful and pressed on.
- **(vii) Thomas Boston is perhaps best remembered today because of his role in the Marrow Controversy.**
  - **The Marrow of Modern Divinity** was a book banned by the Church of Scotland for its teaching.
  - **The book asked such questions as:**
    - Was Christ's salvific work offered to all, or only to the elect?
    - Did a sinner need to demonstrate sufficient repentance before coming to Christ, or did they come to Christ for repentance and forgiveness?

- Boston contended that salvation in Christ is to be offered indiscriminately to all men, and nothing (not even a sufficient display of repentance) should be made a prerequisite to coming to Christ.
- He was opposed by the antinomians (those who rightly teach that salvation is by grace, but wrongly teach that the law has no place in the life of a believer).
- He was opposed by the legalists (those who rightly teach that the law is binding upon believers, but wrongly teach achieving salvation by means of the law).
- But God used him, as he stood firm, to recover His truth.
- (viii) He died on May 20, 1723 at the age of 56.

## THEOLOGY

### I) THOMAS BOSTON TAUGHT SALVATION BY GRACE ALONE

- **Everyone say, "Thomas Boston taught God's grace"**
  - **THOMAS BOSTON:** "God's electing grace chooses whom He will, not for any worthiness in them, but for the glory of His own mercy." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 1, Sermon on Ephesians 1:4-5)

### II) THOMAS BOSTON TAUGHT THE RIGHT USES OF THE LAW

- **Everyone say, "Thomas Boston taught God's law"**
  - **THOMAS BOSTON:** "The law, in its commanding power, shows us our duty, but in our fallen state, it also reveals our inability, driving us to seek Christ's righteousness." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 2, Sermon on Romans 7:7-9)
  - "The law is a curb to the wicked, restraining their sin by fear of punishment, though it cannot renew their hearts." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 6, Sermon on Psalm 119:115)
  - "To the believer, the law is a rule of life, written in the heart by the Spirit, directing them to walk in holiness to the glory of God." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 1, Sermon on Psalm 119:105)

### III) THOMAS BOSTON TAUGHT THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

- **Everyone say, "Thomas Boston taught about man's condition"**
  - **THOMAS BOSTON:** "Man was created upright in the state of innocence, but by sin fell into a state of nature, wholly corrupt and unable to please God; yet through Christ, in the state of

grace, he is renewed, and in the state of glory shall be perfected, while the wicked abide in misery everlasting." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 8, pp. 15–20)

#### IV) THOMAS BOSTON CALLED ON ALL MEN TO CLOSE IN THE COVENANT WITH CHRIST

- **Everyone say**, "Thomas Boston called all men to come to Christ"
  - **THOMAS BOSTON**: "Sinners, close with Christ in the Covenant of Grace; take Him as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and rest on Him alone for salvation. The door of the covenant is open, and whosoever will may come in." (*The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 8, pp. 456–458)

#### RECAP

In the Eighteenth Century, God used Thomas Boston to recover the right use of the law and the free offer of salvation.

#### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (pt.9) MEMORY VERSE.

- "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

#### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (pt.9) MEMORY QUOTE.

- "As the light depends on the sun, or the stream on the fountain, so the believer depends on Christ for all his graces."

#### FOR FURTHER STUDY

- *The Whole Christ* (Sinclair Ferguson)