

COURSE TITLE	Puritan Theology
INSTRUCTOR	Dr. Joel Beeke jrbeeke@aol.com
DEPARTMENT	Theology
MEETING TIMES	

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An in-depth examination of some major themes of Puritan theology, including the Puritan view of Scripture, meditation, election, predestinarian grace, adoption, assurance of faith, sanctification, conscience and casuistry, church and worship, evangelism, experiencing God, perseverance, and family life. The course will give special emphasis to the nature of experiential religion, a singular characteristic of Puritan writings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Be able to define Puritanism and its major characteristics.
2. Be able to articulate why we need the Puritans today.
3. Be able to give a general overview of basic Puritan history, Puritan theology, and Puritan literature.
4. Be able to explain the pilgrim mentality of Puritan thought in terms of its biblicist, pietist, churchly, two-worldly, warfaring, and methodical outlook.
5. Be able to expound the Puritan view of Scripture through the insights of John Owen, the prince of the Puritans.
6. Be able to distinguish the different kinds of Puritan meditation, as well as the manner, subjects, benefits, and obstacles of such meditation.
7. Be able to grasp the core notion of experiential, predestinarian grace in Puritan thought through the thinking of William Perkins, the father of Puritanism.
8. Be able to appreciate the comprehensive Puritan view of spiritual adoption and its privileges and responsibilities.
9. Be able to develop the Puritan teaching on assurance of faith as expounded in chapter 18 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.
10. Be able to explicate the Puritan doctrine of sanctification in terms of its definition, agent, subject, activity, measure, method, and motive.
11. Be able to unfold the Puritan concepts of conscience and casuistry and their relation to each other.
12. Be able to describe the Puritan view of church and worship.
13. Be able to elucidate the Puritan views of communing with distinct persons of the Trinity.
14. Be able to understand the Puritan view of perseverance in grace.
15. Be able to comment on the Puritan view of eschatology.
16. Be able to understand the Puritan lifestyle that flows from Puritan theology in terms of the role of husbands, wives, parents, and children.
17. Be able to utilize the strengths of Puritan theology in contemporary situations, especially its major contributions in areas of experiential theology that remain deeply significant for the church today.

PRIMARY SOURCE TEXTBOOKS

John Bunyan, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*

Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*

John Owen, *The Forgiveness of Sin: A Practical Exposition of Psalm 130* (*Works of John Owen*, Vol. 6, pp. 324-648)

* You may substitute other Puritan titles for the primary source reading (i.e., for Bunyan, Owen, and Edwards) with my permission. –jrB

SECONDARY SOURCE TEXTBOOKS

Joel Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*

Joel Beeke, *The Quest for Full Assurance*

Ernest Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology*

Peter Lewis, *Genius of Puritanism*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*

James I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*

Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*

FINAL EXAM

The final exam, to be taken in the last half of class on January 13, will cover the lecture material and the reading assignments for weeks 1 and 2, excluding Owen. It will consist of five or six essay questions to be answered in 80 minutes.

FINAL PAPER

A final paper (15-25 pages; *Th.M. students, 35-45 pages*) on some aspect of Puritan theology is due by February 28, 2006. The paper should:

1. make use of both primary and secondary source material,
2. be well supported by footnotes, and
3. contain a good bibliography on the subject you are treating.

COURSE GRADING

Final paper	50%
Final exam	30%
Book review	10%
Completion of reading	10%

Assignments for Week #1

1. Finalize with me by the end of the first week of class the subject you would like to write on for your final paper on some aspect of Puritan theology.
2. John Bunyan, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ* (entire book)*
3. Lewis, "Introduction"
4. Lloyd-Jones, "Puritanism and Its Origins," 1971
5. Packer, Chapters 1-2

Assignments for Week #2

1. John Owen, *Exposition of Psalm 130* –**OR--** Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* (entire book) [Th.M. students should read both]
2. Packer, Chapters 3-6
3. Ryken, prefatory material, Chapters 1, 8, 12
4. Beeke, *PRS*, chapters 5-6

Assignments for Week #3

1. Kevan—first half of book
2. Lewis, Part III
3. Packer, Chapters 7-9, 11
4. Ryken, Chapters 6-7
5. Beeke, *Quest*, pp. 82-98, 111-213, 245-285

Assignments for Week #4

1. Kevan—second half of book
2. Lloyd-Jones, "Edwards and Revival," 1976
3. Packer, Chapters 12-14
4. Ryken, Chapters 2-5
5. Beeke, *PRS*, chapters 9-13

Assignments for Week #5

1. Hand in a five page book review by February 3 of one of the classics you have read by Bunyan, Owen, or Edwards.
2. Lewis, Part II
3. Lloyd-Jones, "Owen on Schism," 1963; "Bunyan: Church Union," 1978
4. Packer, Chapters 15-16, 19-20
5. Ryken, Chapters 9-11

LECTURE OUTLINE FOR PURITAN THEOLOGY

I. Introduction

- A. Puritanism defined
- B. Major Puritan characteristics
- C. “Why do we need the Puritans?”
- D. The ideal Puritan
- E. Basic Puritan history

II. The Theological Heritage of the Puritans

- A. Theology shaped by pilgrim mentality
 - 1. Biblicist outlook
 - 2. Pietist outlook
 - 3. Churchly outlook
 - 4. Two-worldly outlook
 - 5. Warfaring outlook
 - 6. Methodical outlook
- B. Puritan theological literature
 - 1. Owen’s *Holy Spirit* and Baxter’s *Christian Directory*
 - 2. Homiletical literature
 - 3. Ramist, educational method
 - 4. Exegetical, affectionate, and practical

III. The Puritan View of Scripture

- A. The authority and inspiration of Scripture
- B. The extent of Scripture's authority
- C. The interpretation of Scripture
- D. Case study: John Owen's view of Scripture
- E. Concluding applications
 - 1. Richard Greenham on reading the Word
 - 2. Thomas Watson on hearing the Word

IV. The Puritan Practice of Meditation

- A. Introduction
- B. Definition, nature, and kinds of meditation
 - 1. Occasional meditation
 - 2. Daily, deliberate meditation
- C. Duty and necessity of meditation
- D. Manner of meditation
 - 1. Frequency and time
 - 2. Preparation
 - 3. Guidelines
- E. Subjects of meditation
- F. Benefits of meditation
- G. Obstacles of meditation
- H. Conclusion: meditation as self-examination
 - 1. Trial
 - 2. Reproof or exhortation

V. The Puritan View of Election

- A. An act of God's eternal will and sovereign pleasure
- B. An act immutable
- C. An act related to Christ
- D. The importance of election
- E. Objections answered
- F. The practical use of election

VI. The Puritan Understanding of Predestinarian Grace

- A. Predestination and the *ordo salutis*
- B. Election and reprobation
- C. Effectual calling
- D. Justification
- E. Faith
- F. Sanctification
- G. Perseverance
- H. Glorification
- I. Case Study: William Perkins's decretal and experimental predestination
 - 1. The immovable will of God: preaching predestination
 - a. The framework of high Calvinism: a Christocentric supralapsarian position
 - b. From sovereign pleasure to sovereign glory: a golden chain of election and reprobation
 - c. God's decretal execution: covenant grace in Christ; divine wrath outside of Christ

- d. The degrees of decretal execution: effectual calling, justification, sanctification, glorification, reprobation
- e. The decretal question: “Am I in the number?”

2. The moved will of man: predestinarian preaching

- a. Bringing in the elect: preaching election
- b. The divine goldsmith: humiliation (mining); faith in Christ (smelting); repentance (refining); new obedience (forming)
- c. The divine potter: preaching reprobation
- d. Conclusion: transition to federal theology

J. Concluding applications

VII. Puritans on Spiritual Adoption

- A. Introduction: wrongness of secondary literature
- B. Greatness and comprehensiveness of adoption, and its relation to soteriology
- C. Adoption compared in the two testaments
- D. What adoption is not
 - 1. Adoption is not regeneration
 - 2. Adoption is not justification
- E. Adoption is not sanctification
- F. The Westminster Assembly’s definitions of adoption
- G. The transforming power of adoption
- H. Pastoral advice in promoting adoption
 - 1. Visibly adopted, but lacking experiential power
 - 2. Visibly adopted, but still under “the Spirit of bondage”

3. Believers with a weak sense of sonship
4. Believers with an assured sense of sonship

I. The marks of adoption

J. Transformed relationships in adoption

1. Our relationship to God
2. Our relationship to the world
3. Our relationship to the future
4. Our relationship to ourselves
5. Our relationship to the church

K. Privileges and benefits of adoption

1. The overarching privilege: heirship with God and joint-heirship with Christ
2. Specific blessings
 - a. Our Father engrafts us into His covenant family
 - b. Our Father gives us freedom to call Him Father and calls us sons
 - c. Our Father gifts us with the Spirit of adoption
 - d. Our Father grants us likeness to Himself and His Son
 - e. Our Father strengthens our faith through His promises and prayer
 - f. Our Father corrects and chastens us for our sanctification
 - g. Our Father comforts us with His love, pity, and communion
 - h. Our Father offers us spiritual, Christian liberty
 - i. Our Father preserves us and keeps us from falling
 - j. Our Father provides us everything we need
 - k. Our Father gives us His angels for our good

L. Responsibilities or duties of adoption

1. Show childlike reverence and love for your Father in everything

2. Submit to your Father in every providence
3. Obey and imitate your Father, and love His image-bearers
4. Resist every hindrance that keeps you from relishing your Father
5. Rejoice in being in your Father's presence

M. Concluding applications

VIII. Puritans on Assurance of Faith

A. Contemporary need for considering assurance

1. Fruits of genuine assurance are largely lacking
2. Assurance is inseparable from revival and conviction of sin
3. Assurance is necessary to be God-honoring Christians
4. Assurance is needed to promote a love for sound doctrine
5. Assurance is needed to counteract emphasis on "feeling"

B. Case Study: Anthony Burgess in the Context of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 18

1. Burgess's life and writings
2. Burgess and WCF 18.1: The possibility of assurance
 - a. False assurance
 - b. True assurance
 - c. Lacking the consciousness of assurance
3. Burgess and WCF 18.2: The foundation of assurance
 - a. Divine promises in Christ
 - b. Inward evidences verified by syllogisms
 - c. The witnessing testimony of the Holy Spirit
4. Burgess and WCF 18.3: The cultivation of assurance
 - a. The time involved in reaching assurance

- b. The means of attaining assurance
 - c. The duty of pursuing assurance
 - d. The fruits of assurance
5. Burgess and WCF 18.4: The losing and renewal of assurance
- a. The causes of a lack of assurance
 - i. The believer's backsliding
 - ii. The sovereign withdrawal of God
 - iii. Vehement temptations
 - b. The way to revive assurance

C. Conclusion

IX. Sanctification in Puritan Theology

A. The definition of sanctification

1. Sanctification is inseparable from holiness
2. Sanctification is rooted in the essence of God
3. Sanctification involves both our status and condition
4. Sanctification is a divine work of renewal, universal and moral
5. Sanctification is expressed in repentance and righteousness

B. The agent of sanctification

1. The Triune, covenant God
2. The special domain of the Holy Spirit

C. The object of sanctification

1. The believer as a human individual
2. The believer as fallen and disordered
3. The believer as redeemed and justified

D. The practice of sanctification

1. Pursuing Trinitarian Godlikeness

- a. Imitating the character of the Father
- b. Conforming to the image of Christ
- c. Submitting to the mind of the Spirit

2. Exercising mortification

3. Exercising vivification

4. Using the means of grace

a. Private disciplines

- i. Read and search the Scriptures
- ii. Meditate on the Scriptures
- iii. Pray and work
- iv. Journaling

b. Corporate disciplines

- i. The preached Word
- ii. The Sacraments
- iii. Spiritual fellowship
- iv. Sanctify the Lord's Day

c. Neighborly disciplines

- i. Evangelize and serve others
- ii. Flee worldliness
- iii. Exercise stewardship of time and money

5. Develop a scriptural formula for godly living

E. The benefits of sanctification

1. For our good and God's glory

2. To resemble God and to persevere in integrity
3. To evidence justification and election
4. To foster assurance
5. To provide effective service
6. To fit us for heaven

F. The joys of sanctification

1. The supreme joy
2. The ongoing joy
3. The anticipated joy

G. Conclusion: The way of sanctification

X. Conscience and Casuistry in Puritan Thought

A. The nature of conscience

1. Rational self-knowledge and self-judgment
2. The practical syllogism of conscience

B. Conscience must be married to Holy Scripture

C. Conscience must apply the gospel

1. Peace and a good conscience
2. Alertness and a tender conscience

D. Conscience and preaching

E. Conscience in action

1. Not action of legalism but of liberty
2. Not action of license but of obedience

F. Casuistry: cases of conscience

1. The pioneer, William Perkins

- a. Questions relating to the individual's soul struggles
- b. Questions related to the individual's relation to Scripture
- c. Questions related to the individual's relation to others

2. A practical casuistry

- a. A casuistry of idealistic standards
- b. A casuistry of realistic assessment
- c. A casuistry of diagnostic prescription
- d. A casuistry of rigorous righteousness

G. Conclusion: What can we learn from Puritan counseling today?

1. Theological basis determines approach
2. God-centeredness is the key to a healthy self-image
3. Sanctification by theology rather than psychology
4. Consciences need to be exposed to drive sinners to Christ
5. Final challenge: Be a credible pastor, not a probing psychoanalyst

XI. The Church and Worship in Puritan Theology

A. The church's spiritual reality

B. The church's worship

1. Biblical authority in worship
 - a. Regulative principle of worship
 - b. Prayer book vs. directory
2. The mechanics of worship
3. Preparation for worship
4. Westminster Directory case study: the sacraments
5. The inner reality of worship

C. The church's "market day" of the soul: keeping Sabbath

D. The church's fellowship

E. The church's ideals

1. Purity of doctrine

2. Purity of worship

3. Purity of government and discipline

4. Purity of life

XII. Puritan Evangelism

A. The message of Puritan evangelism

1. Thoroughly scriptural

2. Unashamedly doctrinal

3. Experientially practical

4. Case study of distinctive: conviction of sin

5. "Wholistically evangelical"

6. Studiously symmetrical

B. The method used to communicate the message

1. The "plain style" of preaching

2. Catechetical evangelism

C. The inward disposition of the Puritan evangelist

1. Dependent upon the Holy Spirit

2. Salted with earnest prayer

XIII. The Puritans on Experiencing God

A. John Owen's *Communion with God*

1. Theological balance
 - a. Oneness in Being and threeness in Person
 - b. Attention to each Person
 - i. Communion with the Father: love
 - ii. Communion with the Son: grace
 - aa. The grace of Christ's person
 - bb. The grace of Christ's purchase
 - iii. Communion with the Spirit: comfort
 - c. Sovereignty of God
2. Pastoral sensitivity
 - a. The Father
 - b. The Son
 - c. The Spirit
3. Practical, experiential emphasis
 - a. The Father
 - b. The Son
 - c. The Spirit

B. Sibbes on "entertaining the Spirit"

1. Biographical synopsis
2. The indwelling Spirit
3. The sealing of the Spirit
4. The comfort of the Spirit
5. The grieving of the Spirit

XIV. Conclusion: The Puritan Lifestyle Resulting from Puritan Theology

A. The Puritan marriage

1. Purposes of marriage
2. Procedures for getting married
3. Principles for marriage
 - a. The Christ-church principle
 - b. The covenantal principle
4. Practices or duties of marriage
 - a. Marital duties
 - b. The husband's duties
 - c. The wife's duties
5. "No society...more delightful"

B. The Puritan family

1. Children are gifts of God
2. Authority in the family
3. Principles of child-rearing
 - a. Child-rearing begins at conception
 - b. Mothers have the major role in caring for newborns
 - c. Baptizing infants is part of parents' covenant obligations to God
 - d. Children must be trained early in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
 - e. Family worship is the most powerful means for child-rearing
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Bible reading
 - iii. Bible instruction
 - iv. Psalm singing
 - f. Discipline is an essential part of child-rearing

g. Children should welcome their parents' help in making major life decisions

4. Thorough parental involvement

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