

1. The Time and Place

a. The Tudors

- i. **Henry VIII (1509-1547): *the convenient Reformer***
 1. Renounces Papal authority in 1534
 2. The Reformation floodgates are open.
- ii. **Edward VI (1547-1553): *the true Reformer***
- iii. **Mary Tudor (Bloody Mary) (1553-1558): *the counter-Reformer***
 1. The Marian Persecution
 - a. Cranmer, Hooper, Latimer, and Ridley (among others) are burned at the stake. (The events in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* take place)
 2. Exodus to the continent (esp. Geneva)
- iv. **Elizabeth (1558-1603): *the ambivalent Reformer***
 1. Act of Uniformity and Supremacy past (later to be put to ill use during the Restoration).
 2. The Forty-Two Articles became the less Calvinist "Thirty-Nine Articles"
 3. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* published

b. The Stuarts

- i. **James I (1603-1625): decline toward *Arminianism***
 1. Lancelot Andrewes was Bishop of London
- ii. **Charles I (1625-1649): decline toward *Despotism***
 1. Political Despotism Radicalizes the Parliament
 2. Ecclesiastical Despotism Radicalizes the Puritans
 - a. Imposition of the less-Reformed version of the Prayer Book
 - b. Worries of encroaching Roman Catholicism from his wife
 - c. William Laud writes the Royal Declaration as preface to the Thirty-Nine Articles.
- iii. **Response: Civil Wars (1639-1649) and Commonwealth (1650-1660)**
 1. Parliament responds to Political Despotism
 - a. John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, etc.
 - b. Charles I is executed (1649)
 2. Puritans respond to Ecclesiastical Despotism
 - a. Westminster Assembly (1643 - 1653)
 - b. Laud is Executed (1645)
 3. The Commonwealth / Oliver Cromwell (1650 - 1660)
- iv. **Charles II (1660 - 1685): decline toward *Libertinism***
 1. At this point the Established Church was seen as worldly, Arminian, and sympathetic to Catholicism.
 2. Charles II enforces the Act of Uniformity
- v. **James II (1685-1688) decline toward *Catholicism***
 1. Bunyan dies August 1688
 2. James II is deposed (the "Glorious Revolution") in November 1688
 3. Mary II (daughter of James II) and her Dutch husband William of Orange succeed them.
 4. Act of Toleration is passed (1689)
 5. Second London Baptist Confession is published (1689)

2. The Man

a. His biography

i. Early life (1628-1647).

1. Son of a poor tinker
 - a. “My father’s house [was] of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to boast of noble blood, or of high-born state, according to the flesh.” (*Grace Abounding*, 2).
 - b. Not likely a particularly religious family but they sent him to school.
 - c. He was rascally.
2. English Civil War
 - a. Siege of Leicester (1645). He would have been 17 years old. Likely fought on the Parliamentary side.
3. Marriage
 - a. Poor. “Not having so much as a dish or a spoon between us.”
 - b. His wife had a godly father who left her two books after he had died.
 - i. The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven by Arthur Dent (1601). A puritan classic written in plain English for commoners.
 - ii. The Practice of Piety by Lewis Bayly
 - c. A daughter is born blind.

ii. Spiritual crisis (1647-1653)

1. Conviction of sin, esp. language, dancing, and bell ringing.
2. Outward reformation
3. Encounters the born again Christians in the marketplace.
4. Thrown into doubt.

iii. Early ministry (1653-1660)

1. Baptized in the River Ouse in 1653
2. Pastor (1655-1660)

iv. Prison

1. “[T]o confirm the truth by way of suffering, as I was before in testifying of it according to the Scriptures in a way of preaching.”
2. “I never had in all my life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now; those Scriptures that I saw nothing in before, are made in this place and state to shine upon me; Jesus Christ also was never more real and apparent than now; here I have seen him and felt him indeed.”
3. Publishes *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* in 1662;
4. Writes but does not publish *Pilgrim’s Progress*
5. Released in 1672

v. Later ministry

1. Continued persecution and occasional imprisonment while continuing to preach.
2. Publishes part 1 of *Pilgrim’s Progress* in 1678; Publishes *The Holy War* in 1682; Publishes part 2 of *Pilgrim’s Progress* in 1684.
3. Dies in 1688 at age 60

b. His theology

i. The last Puritan

1. Calvinist
2. Strict Observance of the Regulative Principle of worship
3. Strict morality (Suspicious of games, sports, stage, holidays, etc.)
4. High bar to church membership

5. Long preparatory period before confidence of salvation
6. Worship services
 - a. Long sermons
 - b. Exclusive psalmody
 - c. Strict sabbath keeping
- ii. The first Evangelical
 1. Credo-baptist (coupled with a de-centering of the role of sacraments, generally)
 - a. See his *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion* (1673)
 2. Non-confessional (excluded from the Second London Baptist Confession on this account and for advocating “open communion.”)
 3. Politically disenfranchised
 - a. Bared from public office
 4. Emphasis on personal salvation
 5. Congregations were independent from each other (ie. non-denominational)
 6. Preachers and topical writing, not systematic theologian
 7. Working class, self-taught, and uncredentialed
 - a. Bared from universities
 - b. “His college was a dungeon, his library, his Bible; and he came forth with gigantic powers to grapple with the prince of darkness. No human learning could have so fitted him for this terrible and mysterious warfare.” GAB, pg 41, editor’s note.

c. His ministry

- i. Preacher
 1. Charles II once asked John Owen, one of the most learned scholars that he knew, why any intelligent person should waste time listening to the sermons of an uneducated tinker and Baptist preacher by the name of John Bunyan. “Could I possess the tinker’s abilities for preaching, please your majesty,” replied the scholar, “I would gladly relinquish all my learning.”
- ii. Writer
 1. Sermons
 2. Polemical / topical tracts
 3. Allegories
 - a. Pilgrim’s Progress (parts 1 and 2)
 - b. The Holy War
 - c. Others
 4. Misc.
 - a. Catechisms
 - b. Poems
 - c. Letters

3. Application

a. Read his work

- i. What to read
 1. *Pilgrim’s Progress*
 2. *The Holy War*
 3. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*

4. Topical matters that arise in your study or discussion
 5. Biography / period history
 - a. The Puritans: A Transatlantic History (David D. Hall)
 - b. Meet the Puritans: A Guide to their Lives and Books (Joel Beeke)
- ii. How to read
1. If you are a practiced reader who has never read Bunyan, start with *Pilgrim's Progress*.
 2. If you are a practiced reader who has read only the first part of Pilgrim's Progress, consider reading either:
 - a. Part II of *Pilgrim's Progress* or
 - b. *The Holy War*
 3. If you are a practiced reader who prefers strictly non-fiction, consider "The Puritans: A Transatlantic History" by David Hall
- iii. If you are not a practiced reader, consider:
- a. Audio versions
 - b. Modern language versions
 - c. Modern biography
 - d. Be encouraged: Bunyan was a *Bible* man. In prison he had his Bible, a concordance, and Foxe's Book of Martyrs. You can conquer the world with your Bible, a concordance, and one classic work. Choose well and live in those few books your whole life.

b. Model his Endurance

- i. Bunyan possessed a scripture-fueled endurance to seek God even when he was inwardly filled with doubts, depression, and despair.
- ii. Bunyan possessed a scripture-fueled endurance to *serve* God even when his outward circumstances were difficult.
 1. "The Bible was precious to me in those days" (GA 45).
 2. "And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the epistles of the apostle Paul were sweet and pleasant to me; and, indeed, I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying out to God, that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory." (GA 46)
 3. "Oh how good a thing it is for God to send his Word!" GA 32.
 4. "Oh the combats and conflicts that I did then meet with as I strove to hold by this word...I should be sometimes up and down twenty times in an hour, yet God did bear me up and keep my heart upon this word, from which I had also, for several days together, very much sweetness and comfortable hopes of pardon; for thus it was made out to me, 'I loved thee whilst thou wast committing this sin, I loved thee before, I love thee still, and will love thee for ever.'" GA 30.
 5. "A word, a word to lean a weary soul upon, that I might not sink for ever! It was that I hunted for." GA 250.

c. Model his Community

- i. His father in law's dowry and legacy to his daughter were two books. They had nothing. But they had books,
- ii. The Poor Women of Bedford (GA 37-41) inspired him and made long to have what they had.
 1. They were born again and happy and smart.

2. "I was provoked to a vehement hunger and desire to be one of that number that did sit in the sunshine." GA 56.
- iii. Friends who offered financial support to him when he was in prison.
- d. Beware his Neuroticism**
- i. Intrusive thoughts regarding the unpardonable sin.
 - ii. One weakness in Puritan thought and practice was its emphasis on a long period of angst and uncertainty prior to having assurance of one's salvation. One sees this in Jonathan Edwards and many others, as well. This is not something we want to model.
 - iii. For this reason, I don't give an unqualified endorsement of *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*
- e. Weigh his Legacy**
- i. What if the non-conformists were wrong? Not "what if they were wrong on the substance" but what if they were wrong about what they were willing to sacrifice for it. They thought they were only sacrificing their own freedom and wealth and prestige, but what they were actually sacrificing was the education and influence of generations. They ceded the power to the compromisers and left the Godly to starve intellectually and culturally. And they sacrificed the Established Church, as well. When is it capitulation and when is it prudence? Buyan wasn't living in a Muslim country or even a Catholic one. He was living in a Protestant country. We need to have firm convictions about what we are willing to sacrifice for what convictions. How far do you let your convictions take you? What are you willing to sacrifice, not just of your future, but your children's and grandchildren's? One might call this "the complicated legacy of indomitable endurance". Were the non-conformists right to sacrifice so much? Was Foxe's lesson learned too well?

Close:

The crown is before you, and it is an incorruptible one; so run that ye may obtain it. Some there be that set out for this crown, and after they have gone far for it, another comes in and takes it from them: hold fast, therefore, that you have; let no man take your crown. You are not yet out of the gunshot of the devil; you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Let the kingdom be always before you, and believe steadfastly concerning the things that are invisible. Let nothing that is on this side of the other world get within you. And, above all, look well to your own hearts and to the lusts thereof; for they are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Set your faces like a flint; you have all power in heaven and earth on your side. (*Pilgrim's Progress*, part 1, Evangelist speaking to Christian and Faithful prior to their entering Vanity Fair. Faithful is executed there.)