

Acts

- 1:6-8 - What did God use to send the gospel to the remotest part of the earth?
- 17:1-10 - What brought the gospel to Berea?
- 21:15-28:31 - What brought Paul to Rome?



Lesson 14: The Church Responds to Stalemate

The Puritans, Part 2: The Nonconformists

Return of the Status Quo

- The “Free” English Republic
 - No monarchy
 - No state religion
- The English Republic died with Oliver Cromwell
 - The rule of Cromwell was always just short of chaos
 - Overwhelming support to reinstitute the monarchy
 - Cromwell’s body actually dug up and hung for treason

The Return of the King

- Charles II (1660-85)
 - Exiled in the Dutch Republic
 - Parliament officially invited him back to rule after Cromwell's death
- A new king requires a new parliament
 - Hoping for religious freedom
 - Pro-Anglican MP's were elected



The Clarendon Code

- “Attempts” were made to seek a “compromise”
 - 12 Anglican bishops met with 12 Presbyterian theologians
 - Presbyterians were asked for a list of “necessary changes”
 - Produced 99 items necessary in order to reform the Anglican church
- It was a trap
 - Presbyterians were seen as demanding
 - All talks of compromise were thrown to the wind
 - Parliament worked swiftly and produced the Clarendon Code

The 1661 Corporation Act

- All elected officials will be loyal members of the Anglican church
 - Deny the Solemn League & Covenant
 - Partake in Anglican communion within a year of being elected to office
- Implications: It is now impossible for non-Anglicans to serve in Parliament

The 1662 Act of Uniformity

- Reinstated the King as the supreme ruler of the church
 - No other form of church governance allowed
- Reinstatement of Common Book of Prayer
 - Solemn League & Covenant publicly burned
 - Every church will abide by the “authorized” liturgy

The 1664 Conventicle Act

- All unauthorized religious meetings made illegal
 - Unauthorized = non-Anglican
 - Meeting = 5+ people gathered

The 1665 Five Mile Act

- Prohibited any non-Anglican pastor from living or lodging within 5 miles of any city or town
 - Aimed at separating pastors from their congregations
 - Even to include places where they served as guest lectures

Conformists

- Many thought it best to bide their time and try to hold to their convictions
 - Not all who remained within the Anglican church capitulated
 - A few of the Westminster divines (authors of the confession & catechism) submitted to Anglicanism to keep preaching publicly

Non-Conformists

- Ingenious ways of “conforming” without conforming
 - Preaching all week to small groups (less than 5)
 - “Three Counties Point” congregation
- Careful ways of not conforming
 - Meeting at night or in secluded areas
 - Preaching behind a curtain to avoid identification
 - Building escape routes into homes

Separatists

- To leave the State Church means to leave the State
- The idea of separating from both church and state is over 60 years old
 - The Pilgrims left England forever in 1620 - 40+ years before the Clarendon Code
 - The next few decades would bring over 20,000 Puritans to the New World

Puritans in the New World

- **Presbyterianism in Massachusetts**
 - The “Pilgrims” in Plymouth
 - New colonists in Boston
- **Independent Calvinists in Rhode Island**
 - Founded Providence (a cool name for Sovereign)

Concluding Thoughts

- Persecution is within God's sovereign will
 - Sent the gospel out of Jerusalem into the ends of the earth.
 - Galvanized the church under Rome
 - Converted the Barbarian invaders
 - Separated Christ's church from apostate Rome
 - Sent biblical Christianity to North America