

# The Founders of New Haven and Their Spiritual Vision

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right. All right.

Well, it was on the 25th of April, 1638, the Sabbath, that a party of newly arrived pilgrims gathered beneath the spreading boughs of a giant oak, a spot which would later become the corner of College and George Street.

No doubt you know it here in New Haven. Well, they blessed their God for his great mercies upon them hitherto and entreated his sustaining aid in the realizing of their great errand, as they called it. There were two ministers on board in their company. The first was John Davenport. There he is, a fellow in the black with a collar.

However, he held forth in the morning upon the text, Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.

[ 1 : 08 ] The second was Peter Pruden. His charge was the afternoon charge. And he held forth from the verse, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Clearly, they were in agreement as to where they were. This was the wilderness for them. So, who were these first pilgrim settlers to New Haven?

And what was their errand in the wilderness? What dreams were in their breasts which drove them to leave hearth and home, kith and kin, in their beloved old England, and endure the perils of the sea, the privations of a wilderness, from bitter winters and wild beasts to the potential hostility of the natives?

Well, our first forefathers and mothers, for there were many brave women among them, who gathered under the shelter of that oak that Sabbath in 1638, in the beginnings of New Haven, were Puritans.

And to understand their passions and their hopes, we must go back to old England and the period of Reformation in which they were bred.

[ 2 : 24 ] So, who were the Puritans? Well, in Europe, at the time of the Reformation, sovereigns of state were profoundly involved in the religions of their land.

Indeed, without exception, religious beliefs and practice were governed and established by king, prince, and parliament.

So, the story of the Reformation in England is not simply, what was that, not simply a tale of the spread of gospel. Would help me to have a little bit more...

Is that all right? Just so I can see these notes. It's completely... But I could make this stuff up, but it'll have a better ring if I bother to read.

So, the story of the Reformation in England is, thank you, is not simply a tale of the spread of gospel conviction as the scriptures, freshly translated by William Tyndale, made its impact among the people.

[ 3 : 27 ] It's also the story of kings and queens shaping creed and worship by means of law and edict that were police-enforced, in fact.

So, here we go. Oh, there was John Davenport. There's another picture of him. Let me see if I... Nah, here we go. King Hal. And really, in that regard, the story begins with the much-married Henry VIII who first broke with Rome rejecting leadership of the Church of England, rejecting Rome's leadership of the Church of England, and substituting his own royal self as head of the Church. But in contrast to Luther, King Henry VIII had very little quibble with the teachings of Roman Catholicism. Indeed, he was awarded the title from the Pope himself, Fide Defensor, or Defender of the Faith, for his writings against Luther.

And indeed, Fide Defensor still remains on the English coinage today. So, under King Henry VIII, the Church remained Catholic. It simply ceased to be Roman Catholic in that sense, as Thomas Hooker, later that Puritan of Connecticut, would put it. Henry's mistake was that he cut off the head of potpourri, but he left the body of it within his realm. Okay.

[ 5 : 01 ] So, during the brief reign of Henry's son, Edward VI, England moved closer to the Reformation churches on the continent.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cramner, established contacts with John Calvin and Luther's lieutenant, Philip Melanchthon, and brought over to England two of the principal Reformation leaders, Peter Martyr Vermilli and Martin Busser, to assume chief teaching posts at Oxford and Cambridge universities to train up the next generation of ministers for the Church of England. And their influence was profound. But, alas, short-lived for their Protestant-leaning royal patron, died young, and was succeeded by his half-sister, Mary.

There she is. What an expression. Now, Mary was a vehement Roman Catholic and determined to reverse any Reformation gains in England.

So, history would add to her name the epithet bloody, for in her brief reign of terror, 1553 to 1558, she blackened the skies with the smoke from the burning flesh of unrecanting Protestants.

[ 6 : 33 ] There we go. 300 fed the flames. 800 fled the country to escape that fiery fate and to keep the cause alive in exile.

And Fox's Book of Martyrs gains much of its material from those crying days. If Bloody Mary was convincingly cast as Jezebel by the godly, her successor and half-sister, Queen Elizabeth I, was hailed in her coronation among the Protestants in exile and in hiding as the new Deborah. Very, very hopeful. She restored the Reformed faith to the realm and staffed her church with the returning exiles. But these returning exiles had tasted the fruit of the best of the Reformation churches on the continent.

Geneva, Zurich, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt. As one exile expressed his enthusiasm for the church in Geneva, he called it the most perfect school of Christ since the day of the Apostles.

Thus, the Reformed churches on the continent shaped their hopes for the Church of England. But, these bright and blessed hopes were soon blighted.

[ 8 : 05 ] For headstrong Elizabeth, did not shy from exercising her role as head of the church, and determined that a *via media*, a middle way, would be the path the Church of England would tread, and tread in lock step, in utter and uncompromising conformity.

Such was the Elizabethan settlement, and it proved exceedingly unsettling to many a Protestant, committed to thorough biblical reformation of the Church.

For Elizabeth's efforts to accommodate, remember she lived in a realm in which there were many Protestants and many Catholics, it involved a strange hybrid compromise of Protestant doctrine. That's what the Protestants are going to really care about, they're going to really care about doctrines, let's give them the doctrine, but we'll give the Catholics the ritual, needs to appear like it used to be for them, so that's how we'll do this.

So you combine in the Church of England services, Catholic ritual with Protestant doctrine. Well, in the minds of many of the Reformation folk, this royally sanctioned Church of England represented a very unhappy compound, a potpourri, if you will, of potpourri and gospel.

[ 9 : 29 ] Sorry. And as such, woefully inadequate for their consciences, were very ill-disposed to half measures in God's causes.

How can we have half measures in God's causes? As one wrote to the Queen, the spelling is certainly unorthodox here, I'll try to read it well, your majesty hath so insufficiently heard, believed, and taken to heart what God hath commanded you, and so weakly and coldly obeyed and followed the same, that but halfly by your majesty hath God been honored, his church reformed and established, the people taught and comforted, his enemies rejected and subdued, and his lawbreakers punished.

So what were some of these, what they called popish remnants that indeed needed to be purged in the minds of the Puritans? Well, they did not like the vestments, the clothing, the apparel that ministers were required to wear, for these carried over from Roman Catholic conviction, which modeled the attire of the priests on the Levitical priesthood.

As appropriate, it was thought and it was urged for a priestly caste as they continued, like their Levitical forebearers, to offer sacrifice, that is, the sacrifice of the body of Christ in the mass. So you see how the apparel matched this doctrine that they had of the mass being a sacrifice of the body of Christ. And the Puritans thought, why reinforce in costume a doctrine we disbelieve? [ 11 : 12 ] Yea, find abhorrent. Why would we do this? Then there were such vestiges as the observance of saint days, so many holidays or holy days, singing, signing the cross in baptism and addressing questions to the infant.

Well, thought the Puritans, this was simply superstition at best and perhaps incompatible with scriptural worship, at least not according to scripture.

As John Field wrote of the Book of Common Prayer, that was the required text and rubric for worship, it be an imperfect book called and picked out of the popish dunghill, the mass book, full of all abominations, for some of the contents therein be such as are against the very word of God. puritan. So it was this passion to purify the worship of the church that gained the reforming party, the epithet, for it was originally spoken in derision by their opponents, Puritan, would roll off the tongue in contempt, Puritan, you're trying to purify the church.

And indeed they were, as Bishop John Jewell wrote, Now that the full light of the gospel has shone upon us, the very vestiges of error must, as far as possible, be removed.

[ 12 : 48 ] Now notice, as far as possible. For the sovereign still dictated in the matter, as it was a national church.

So appeal had to be directed to the sovereign her royal self, or efforts made through the parliament to change what you were going to do in the church. And the agonizing question for Protestants, especially the ministers in the Church of England at the time, was how much compromise they could live with in good conscience.

And this was very agonizing for them. When their pleas for change were unavailing, what do you do? Must the, as they called the popish dung, be removed completely, as opposed to according to the sovereign's good pleasure and good measure?

And must it be removed immediately, and not simply at the sovereign's leisure? These were the grand issues. This burning question was answered variously among the godly.

Some urged reformation, without tarrying for any, without waiting for anyone. They gave up on the magistrate in the state church, separating themselves from them.

[ 14 : 11 ] These were called the separatists, or Robert Brown was of this view, so sometimes the separatists were called Brownists. The separatists denied that the Church of England was a true church at all.

It was apostate. And they gathered their own congregations. Among those separatist congregations would be the first Plymouth colony, 1620.

They were a separatist congregation. So others, while eye to eye with the separatists in terms of virtually all matters of doctrine, they agreed on all of that, they agreed that the English church was contaminated and in need of reform, but thought, well, it's still a true church.

It's just a corrupted one. So that was the difference between the separatists. No, no, no, it's not even a true church. It's so compromised. Versus many of the Puritans that said, well, it's corrupted, but they still count as the people of God.

A church in which one could remain laboring hopefully for reform. This boat might be going down, but let's still try to bale water and make it as good as possible.

[ 15 : 33 ] And of this latter persuasion that the church is just corrupted, not hopeless, of this latter persuasion was a gifted and rising minister in London.

There he is. There he is. John Davenport. Church of St. Stephen's there in London. 1597 to 1670. He was a stirring and scriptural preacher, well beloved in his growing congregation to whom he bravely ministered through the terrible plague of 1625 when 35,000 in London were carried off by the pestilence.

He stayed at his post, didn't head up to Scotland where it was so cold that not even insects can live. So his great compassion also came to the fore in his leadership in raising a collection for the relief of refugees.

This was very close to his heart. The persecuted Protestant brethren of the Palatinate who were displaced and distressed through religious wars. There. His zeal for further reform of the English church prompted an effort to raise funds also to buy up pulpits and lectureships.

So what you could do is you could buy the right from the bishop to decide who the minister was going to be. So you could buy up the pulpit. And they would just raise money to do this. It was called the Fia Feast. So you could fill the pulpits with godly reformed preaching.

[ 17 : 08 ] Well both of these enterprises ran foul of William Laud. This is where Raul you're supposed to hiss. There we go. Okay.

There we go. The bane of Puritans who became Archbishop of Canterbury in an English church which under James I and then Charles I was self-consciously moving farther and farther from Puritan hopes.

Indeed self-consciously anti-reformation. Now to this point Davenport was still able to claim conformity to the Church of England requirements as distasteful as they were to him.

He still wore the costume. He still made the sign of the cross and baptism. He still knelt at the communion rail to the host and these things that he disliked greatly.

He considered these matters relatively unimportant, relatively minor, irksome gravamina they called it, at least relative to the preaching of the gospel that we can do which conformity allowed them to continue to do and from in his case a prominent London hope.

[ 18 : 27 ] So that was a paradox. Can you feel this? If we just conform on some of these things we'll still be able to keep preaching and people are coming to Christ. So how much can we bend our consciences on this?

And this is where we're going to do it. But all the while Davenport is turning these matters over in his mind and keeping hundreds of pages of notes which reflect the evolution of his convictions under the heading, the grounds whereupon the safety of conformity is built together with the sandiness of them.

The sandiness of them. His conviction about conformity was slowly shifting. But the decisive turning point for Davenport came in a crucial meeting.

Two of the great lights among the Puritan party were John Cotton, the first, John Cotton, and Thomas Hooker.

They had weighed up matters and concluded that the state and prospects of the church in England were too dire and resolved to start afresh in New England.

[ 19 : 41 ] Well, before they embarked, Hooker and Cotton, Davenport, distraught that such champions of the truth be lost to the gospel cause in England, he hoped to reclaim these esteemed brethren, so met for them to plead with them to stay.

But by their conference, he did not persuade Cotton and Hooker to remain, it rather shook Davenport's conviction about conforming, and soon he would follow them into their errand across the sea.

So what was it that Cotton told Davenport that persuaded him to follow in this pilgrimage? Well, we have a letter of John Cotton in which he gives the reasons for his and Mr.

Hooker's removal to New England. And he writes, this is Cotton, John Cotton, it hath been no small inducement to us to choose rather to remove hither, this to New England, rather than to stay there, Old England, that we might enjoy the liberty not of some ordinances of God, but of all, and all in purity.

Sure, in England, congregations enjoy the means of salvation, and may it be continued and enlarged to you, yet, I go on quoting Cotton, seeing Christ hath instituted no ordinance in vain, but all to the offering of the body of Christ, the people of God, and we know that our souls stand in need of all of these ordinances to the utmost.

[ 21 : 38 ] We durst not so far be lacking to the grace of Christ as to the necessity of our own, and to the necessity of our own souls as to set down somewhere else, New England, under the shadow of some ordinances in Old England, when by two months travail, we might come to enjoy liberty of all.

Okay. Did you catch that? For here is the essence of the matter. He was saying, it's not enough, Davenport would agree, it is not enough that we enjoy the blessing of God merely in some of what God has given us in his directives for our worship.

He has given us, God has given us no directives pointlessly. We have to follow all of them, and follow all of them very carefully.

Our souls stand in need of, and you remember, you heard the phrase, all to the utmost. All to the utmost. This is Puritanism.

All that God has given us is our obligation and our blessing. Let us not let one of his commandments, even the supposed least, fall to the ground.

[ 23 : 00 ] Let us give all diligence to follow fully, all to the utmost. All to the utmost. Well, this was the vision that made the pilgrims, or Puritans, pilgrims, go on pilgrimage, go on pilgrim wayfair, that burned in the breast of John Davenport and his little band of settlers who gathered under that oak, that first Sabbath in 1638.

The first letter we have from Davenport's pen perfectly echoes the language of cotton and hooker. Davenport writes, the Lord our God hath here bestowed upon us the greatest outward privilege under the sun, to have and enjoy all his ordinances purely dispensed in a church gathered and constituted according to God's own mind in all things.

So that was their ambition. But their ambition was not merely to gather and to constitute a church according to God's mind in all things. Every aspect of society was to reflect the mind of God as revealed in scriptures.

The design of this plantation is religion, openly proclaimed Davenport as he arrived. And none of his followers, fellow settlers, dissented on this matter.

There was utter agreement. At the close of the first day, a day of fasting and prayer, they all solemnly subscribed to a plantation covenant.

[ 24 : 40 ] So this is the beginning of New Haven, plantation covenant. Quote, that in matters that concern the gathering and ordering of a church, so likewise in all public offices which concern the civic order, we would all of us be ordered by those rules which the scriptures hold forth to us.

It's incredibly comprehensive. Indeed, none but what the scriptures directed. Quote, the word of God shall be the only rule to be attended unto in the ordering of the affairs of the government of this plantation.

So we don't want to just look through a book of aphorisms or Bartlett's quotes of wisdom. No, just the Bible. That's it. That's all we're going to look on. We'll do this.

Davenport was convinced that what they established right at the beginning would be critical. For in his sad experience in England and from wider observations, he maintained that once Reformation is brought about, it is rarely afterwards carried on even one step further than the first Reformers achieved in their first endeavors.

As he put it, quote, as easily might the Ark, Noah's Ark, as easily might the Ark have been removed from the mountain of Ararat, where it first grounded as a people get any ground in Reformation after and beyond the first remove of the Reformers.

[ 26 : 25 ] So, if their first shot had to count, they would make it count. And accordingly, and again in Davenport's word, we must drive things in their first essay, or first attempt, as near to the precept and pattern of Scripture as they can be driven.

That's what we want to do. They would endeavor in the words of Cotton Mather, quote, a yet stricter conformity to the word of God in settling of all matters, both civil and sacred, than had yet been seen exemplified in any other part of the world.

It's remarkable, remarkable distinctive here of New Haven, New Haven Colony. Even the layout, the nine squares, you'll kind of recognize that.

This is the original, even the layout of the town, drew upon scriptural models. How do we plan this thing?

Well, what sort of biblical directives do we have? Well, how about the way the tribes of Israel went through the wilderness, gathered around the central tabernacle?

[ 27 : 39 ] So the meeting house will be right in the center, and we'll put everything around that. Oh, good. Well, where will we put Theophilus Eaton's house? Where will we build his house? Well, where was Moses' tent in relation to the tabernacle?

Well, it was on the east side of the tabernacle. We'll build Theophilus Eaton the governor's house there. How about John Davenport, the minister?

Well, where did Aaron have his tent? We'll build Davenport's house there. You see? I mean, they're really working this thing. They are really working it.

The meeting house, of course, in the center. What was it like? Well, for one thing, it was cold. They spent a lot of time in that meeting house.

Church was the people, as you know, the meeting house. Really cold. The women would bring no heating at all. The women would bring in warming pans. It was kind of like an old-fashioned iron

where you put coals in it and you slip it under your feet.

[ 28 : 39 ] The men thought this was beneath them. We don't need warming pans. So what they would do so their feet wouldn't freeze is they would bring in their hunting dogs and they would train them to sit down at their feet to just warm them with all the fluff.

In consequence, it's hilarious, do you realize one of the actual official diaconal posts in the first church there in New Haven was called the dog whipper.

They actually had a deacon devoted to taking care of all the dogs that were in the sanctuary because dogs were welcome in the church, in the meeting house. How else were you going to warm your feet if you were a man other than hunting dogs?

So, yeah, the dog whipper. Though my favorite diaconal post was one was designated the wielder of the tickle wand. A tickle wand?

Just to make sure that no one missed a potential edification if they started to doze off. There was someone that had basically a long pool cue. It had mercifully a feather at one end, but less so a thorn at the other end.

[ 29 : 46 ] So you would first try to tickle them in the earlobe, and if they couldn't wake them up, you'd pick that and get them. Make sure they didn't miss edification. It seemed that they liked edification. I remember reading through these manuscripts of some of the first sermons that were preached there, and I see this little notation.

At the end of the thing, someone had written it and said, they begged for another glass. I thought, what does that mean? Just really good refreshments? Is it good ale? I need another glass of ale? And then I went to this old Puritan meeting house, and at the lectern, there was a big iron arm, and I discovered it had held originally, they would have hour glasses.

So when the preacher would come, Davenport would turn over the hour glass, and he would preach to them for an hour. And if particularly the spirit was moving and people were feeling that the gospel was evangelizing their hearts and changing them, they would beg for another glass.

In other words, turn that thing over and keep preaching to us. The spirit is afoot here. That's mixing metaphors. The spirit is at work here. So they would beg for another glass.

[ 30 : 56 ] So that's the church. Civil code. Oh, another fun thing. all the children had to sit in the back row interleaved with the young men in full arms.

They thought in case there would be a Native American raid, so you would always attend, if you were a young man, you would have to attend church in your full arms, sword and everything. And they thought, oh, this is handy.

We'll have the little uproarious kids sit between fully armed people to make sure that they stayed quiet. So, there's another provision that they had. The civil code.

Well, they determined that they would adopt the laws of Moses. Despite the fact that they were English, they did not bring over English common law.

Sometimes when I mention this to groups a little bit less sympathetic perhaps than this one, I hear this audible shriek, how barbaric, the laws of the Bible.

[ 32 : 03 ] And so I quickly then ask, remind them that the period alternative would have been English common law. And English common law prescribed over 150 offenses that were capital offenses.

You pick up sticks on the Lord's land and they'll kill you. And then I say, well, how many capital offenses do you think the Mosaic law has? Thousands! No, 11.

11. So really this was the height of legal progressivism to take over the Old Testament laws. Well, how did this practically work out?

Well, when someone did something wrong, the appointed governor, in the first instance it was Theophilus Eaton, he'd call him over and they would open their Bibles together and look in the Bible and he would admonish the offender from the scriptures and then if there needed to be a repentance or if there was a punishment, he would prescribe that from the scriptures.

And if he, the governor, Theophilus Eaton, had any hesitation, he would consult Greg, Matt, or Nick. Well, in this case, Davenport, consult Davenport as to how to read the scriptures on these matters and then they would settle the matter.

[ 33 : 24 ] Modern studies have been extremely impressed at how hospitable this court was, particularly to women. Their testimony was credited in sexual abuse charges every time.

Very impressive, very impressive. The image that we often have of over-criminalizing, an over-criminalizing law, images of stalks or whippings or that sort of thing, it just doesn't bear out. In the first decade, and we have complete records, in the first decade, there were six cases of fornication. Then seven in the second decade, three of bestiality in the second decade, only two convictions, three cases, no cases of adultery.

That was criminal. No cases of adultery. Very little crime. Very little crime. That's right. Who was entrusted with running of the state?

Well, only the members of the church in good standing could hold official state offices. churches. It was thought that only they would have the certain assured integrity to perform that role blamelessly. [ 34 : 59 ] Indeed, only church members were given voting rights in matters of the state. So, just to give you a sense, the first decade, 64% of the New Haven men were church members.

We have that. So, you know, it would have been about two thirds there. Now, this arrangement was actually not a power grab of the elect.

When they came in under Davenport, they asked the question who should be able to have offices and they voted. And the vote was absolutely unanimous.

Even those that were not church members at the time actually voted, no, no, no, we only want church members in good standing. To govern us. We trust them. They have integrity.

They have to. It's a high bar to become a church member around here. I didn't make it. So, yeah, I want to have that there. There's integrity for you. So, that's what they decided.

[ 35 : 59 ] That's what they decided. And who was admitted as a church member? This, the purity of the church, was Davenport's one of his greatest concerns, as he put it.

The first church was gathered August 22nd, 1639, right after they arrived, twelve men of heartfelt faith and blameless deportment were chosen as the nucleus, and they in turn would admit others at their scripture-governed discretion.

So, to join the church, one was given a rigorous doctrinal examination. Basically, had they grasped the gospel?

had they grasped what flesh and blood could not reveal? And then, in corroboration, had the gospel grasped them?

Was there indication of gospel fruit in their lives? Attesting to a gospel root in their hearts? inheritance. If this proved a credible account, that is, as they put it, with regeneration visibly manifested to the charitable discernment of the church.

[ 37 : 22 ] It has to be some manifestation that you are regenerated, charitably assessed by the church, by the others, then they would be called upon to enter into covenant, a church covenant, to forswear all former pollutions, to make Jesus Christ your only priest and atonement, your only, these are all quotes from thereof, your only guide and king, and walk before him in all subjection to all his holy ordinance according to the rule of the gospel, and to walk together with his church and the members thereof, in brotherly and sisterly love, and mutual edification and succor according to God.

So to this, covenant members were held strictly accountable. You went on to the, if you signed on to the covenant, you would be held accountable.

In this mutual accountability, they seem to have had no, to be no respecter of persons, even the wife of governor Theophilus Eaton, we have, one of the early censures.

She was excommunicated. So that meant she had to sit just outside the meeting hall so you could hear the sermon still because that would help you to grow, but you had to sit outside the meeting hall.

Well, New Haven Colony quickly gained the reputation, even within Puritan New England, for being zealous for the purity of the church, admitting only genuine believers, the regenerate, and excluding all of the faithless.

[ 39 : 05 ] As judgment was fallible, it needs to be charitable, as Davenport said, with due moderation and gentleness. Cotton Mather of Boston wrote of Davenport in the New Haven Church, quote, he used more than ordinary exactness in trying those that were admitted under communion of the church.

Indeed, so very thoroughly, I had almost said severely, strictly, were the terms of his communion, and so much, I had well nigh said, over much, were the golden snuffers of the sanctuary employed by him in the exercise of discipline toward those that were admitted, that he did all that was possible

to render the renowned church of New Haven like the New Jerusalem.

That was their aim. John Davenport was hopeful of a pure church as he believed in what was called the Middle Advent, a time before Christ's physical return of great spirit outpouring, enabling a great measure of holiness that anticipated the heavenly New Jerusalem.

So this was their eschatology. There will be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so we ought to really be able to do this. We ought to be able to do this well. That worked out for them. Good point. How did that work out for them? He was disappointed at the end of his life. Surprise, surprise. This Middle Advent hope near the end of Davenport's life became subject to no small discouragement.

[ 40 : 55 ] The next generation of churchgoers across New England did not seem to be widely exercising the Spirit's regenerating power.

Having been baptized as infants in the majority of New England churches, including New Haven, the hope was with maturity under the preaching of the gospel, these infants that had been baptized would have come to saving faith and own the covenant, a covenant that they had been made part of by birth to regenerate parents.

That's how they did this back in the day. But, as it turned out, many of these baptized children, when grown, did not experience regenerating grace.

Oh, they faithfully attended and lived moral lives, but they did not have the new birth. Accordingly, even though members of the church, they could not take the Lord's Supper because they had no evidence in the judgment of charity of regeneration.

Thus, they were unregenerate members of the church of New Haven. And these unregenerate members of the church also married, naturally, and had children themselves.

[ 42 : 28 ] themselves. The question then arose, do we baptize the children of unregenerate parents like we do of regenerate parents?

we ever only thought it appropriate to baptize children of the visible saints, the elect, those who we knew were regenerate, thought Davenport.

We only ever thought it appropriate to baptize those children. But should we not also let this next generation of children be baptized? Their parents want them to be baptized?

baptized? Wouldn't it be better to bring them into the church? Many of the New England churches said yes. And the provision was called the halfway covenant.

But John Davenport, New Haven, set himself like Flint against the halfway covenant. In his mind, bringing into the church church, those who were not even children of the godly, they're not children of the godly, would surely water down the purity of the church.

[ 43 : 56 ] Rather than loosen the requirements for membership, we should urge people to repent and believe the gospel and be converted. converted. Well, of course, John Davenport was right about how bringing into the church the unregenerate would compromise its purity.

but had not the camel already gotten its nose in the tent by ever admitting the unregenerate into membership which is done when you baptize infants in the first place.

Whether children of the godly regenerate or not. So the problem was even the New Haven Church, zealous for purity, had two ways to enter the covenant.

By saving faith, new birth, but also by natural birth, simply being born to regenerate parents or church members.

Two ways into the covenant. John Davenport was worried, rightly, that the halfway covenant would widen the door for once born folk into the church.

[ 45 : 17 ] The connection to regeneration is not simply parents now, but grandparents. And perhaps what? Ancestors? Or just hereditary?

Is that the way it's going to go? Says Davenport? Really? Are we going to do this in New England? But of course the door had already been opened by infant baptism itself, which is membership in church by hereditary.

By hereditary. So these poor Puritans had their knickers all in a twist, it seems to me, trying to resolve this conundrum. The problem, of course, was infant baptism itself, admitting into the church by infant baptism, the unsaved.

what was the covenant status of these baptized, unsaved members? What covenant were they in? Not the new covenant, for one is in the new covenant only by spiritual relation to Christ by faith.

But what other covenant is there in operation? it was all hopelessly confused. Ironically, and delightfully, supporters of the halfway covenant told John Davenport that his arguments against the

halfway covenant actually undercut infant baptism itself, and supported, get ready for this, the Baptist cause.

[ 46 : 53 ] Oh! John Davenport would not pass laws against the Baptists. He was tolerant of them in New Haven.

I like to think he was on his way. At least we know he's a Baptist now. No, I didn't say that. I didn't say that. I didn't say that. It was true. It was the unscriptural practice of infant baptism which was the fatal flaw in the realization of John Davenport's great concernment for a pure church.

It would be left for the Baptists to take up John Davenport's scriptural vision of a pure church and show a more excellent way. Well, and so we part with this witness, a polished shaft in the hands of Christ.

Whoops, that was the end. So, maybe one final lesson. A life lived unto God is worth any every unsettlement.

That's one of the things that this story of the first colonist tells me. If you were to respond to the call of God upon your life, what unsettlement might it cause?

[ 48 : 13 ] Any upheaval? Back in old England, they were urged to settle down at ease in the Elizabethan settlement. But they felt it would require of them that they trim the edges of a wholehearted response to God's call.

And they were convinced that in the call of God upon their lives, they dare not respond in any way less than in all things to the utmost.

And so theirs was an unsettled life in terms of outward matters. Relatively trivial matters of outward sustenance, but supremely settled in terms of their deepest core conviction that the pearl of great price was worth any cost to obtain.

Well, let me end there, and I think we probably have five minutes maybe, in case there are some questions. Yes? It sounded like Davenport right at the beginning when he organized the church required evidence of regeneration.

Yes? Were there people who came, you know, maybe you don't, and said, well, wait a second, I was baptized as an infant, so I am a member of the church, so I don't need this examination.

[ 49 : 45 ] No, nobody brought that up. They all agreed that in order to be able to take communion, in other words, to be a member in good standing, to be able to take communion, you had to have evidence of regeneration.

So that's the way, so you have to have evidence of regeneration. In the judgment of charity. In the judgment of charity. Let's give people the benefit of the doubt. But yes? Yes, so what they would see is, is there any evidence in your life that you follow Christ, that the dominant influence in your life is Christ?

Do you ever give up anything for Christ? Or do you live for the world, the flesh, and the devil? people, is there any evidence that for anything in your life, I will reject this and not walk down this path because of Christ, my allegiance to Christ?

So that sort of thing. So any of the fruit of the spirit would be evidence of this sort of thing. So, yeah. Who decided?

Well, the elders. So there were twelve at the time. The elders in the judgment. So the elders would make a recommendation, but the church would decide that.

[ 51 : 14 ] The congregation. They were congregationalists. So the church had to actually vote on that. Yeah? I think I heard you, the statistics was like 64% were in good standing.

So did those others come all that way thinking that I want to live that way, I want to live to this new country, you part of his covenant plantation and then did he pass the test?

Yes. Were they coming because they're like, oh yeah, I can get my land grabbed, start business. I mean, I'm just curious about that. So, yeah. I mean, that's not much better than half.

Right. It was two thirds. But yes, many of them would have come recognizing I'm not yet regenerate. I hope to be. And I think my best prospects of becoming regenerate, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

John Davenport is a remarkable preacher. I will follow him to the ends of the earth because I want to be regenerate. I'm not yet. The spirit of God has not softened my heart, but I'm hopeful. I'm not regenerate yet, but I'm hopeful.

[ 52 : 17 ] So they could have been very, very sincerely hoping to become regenerate, desiring it vehemently, but the penny hadn't dropped for them yet. Hard to search the hearts.

You know, are there some? If I was going to cross the ocean in the 1600s, I'd have been believing in God, too. Yeah, exactly. And I would have dropped God as soon as I...

You're right. Yes. John, is there anything in the writing of the readers of the time called self-doubt or about whether they're kind of close to division over the brother and people?

And this is very close to division. Well, yeah, they felt like they were involved in each other's lives. They had small groups. They had small groups, kind of like we do.

People were involved in each other's lives. The women were very involved. There was a lot of lay involvement. So this was a big part of your life.

[ 53 : 17 ] So people knew each other well. So yes, they thought that they could be involved in each other's lives. And were. That's a common group that you continue to know through it. Yeah, yeah.

And what you do is if you got too big, you'd have another little church and you'd be in Brantford. Then you'd be in Guilford. Then you'd be, you know, so you'd have other churches that were not so large that it was impossible.

We're not talking mega churches here. So yes. Yeah, Mike. Just so I think you want to clarify, there was a whole more apology or a whole set way of how we would determine whether a person was regenerative.

There were steps they had to follow. A lot of them actually laid it out. Yeah. So it wasn't so subjective as we might think it was. I don't agree with that morphology, but it was very much put, they all understood that there were the steps they had to go through with penance and so forth and all that.

And if they didn't follow them exactly, usually the elders said, well, you've got to go back and get the steps right. That's right. So they had thought about this very carefully. And one of the things that you would experience, you would give an account and you'd say, you experience the terrors of the law or the thunders of Sinai.

[ 54 : 32 ] I feel myself to be completely undone, a sinner, and there's no hope in myself. I've come to the end of myself. So you would have to, you couldn't just say, hey, I'm just feeling really comfortable about my faith.

You know, I just feel so consoled. No, you had to experience the terrors of Sinai and the law and your inability to fulfill it before you could. So there was a morphology, as Mike says, a whole sequence that they had down.

They thought a lot about this. That's right. So it wasn't, they would have said, this is not subjective. This is the biblical account that we are following.

So we are looking for precise things. So, yeah, it wasn't just, hey, I like this guy. No, no. Yeah.

Team, we should probably head up because it's five minutes.

Next week, Lord willing, we'll talk about the founding of Yale, the founding of Yale College and the vision there. Thank you.