

Basic Tenets of Puritanism:

Puritans as **chosen people**: This refers to people chosen by God to settle a new world (note Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" sermon in which he says, "We are as a city upon a hill." All eyes are watching to see if the Puritans succeed or fail).

Innate depravity: Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, we inherit original sin and a fall from grace. A children's Puritan primer reads, "In Adam's fall we sinned all." We may be converted only by God's grace.

Covenant of Grace and the Doctrine of the Elect: This is the belief that after the fall of Adam and Eve, we were a fallen people since Adam and Eve broke the first covenant with God, the **covenant of works**. However, Jesus Christ renewed our **covenant** or agreement with God, and God allowed certain people (called Saints) to benefit from this **covenant of grace**. It is imperative that the Puritans do not break the covenant with God, so they become responsible for each other's actions. Thus, before we are born, God **predestines** some to be "chosen" or **elected** for salvation while others are not chosen. Though **good works** may be a sign of one's **election**, i.e., evidence that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within, no amount of good works may earn the way into heaven.

Theocracy: The Puritan form of government was a theocracy in which civil and ecclesiastical leaders were one and the same.

Providence: Generally, there are two types of providence that the Puritans understood: **general providence**, which explained the natural workings of the universe as God created it (the tides rising and falling, the seasons, the sun setting, etc.) and **special or remarkable providence**, where God intervened in the normal workings of the world, to reward or punish the Puritans for their behaviors. Note in the Puritan writings of Bradford, Winthrop, Bradstreet, and Rowlandson the use of the term providence and how fortune and misfortune are explained in terms of divine providence.

Bible as the final authority: The Bible is the sole authority which guides the Puritans. However, the Bible is interpreted by the Puritan leaders. Individual Puritans were not expected to interpret the Bible for themselves. In fact, this was considered heresy. See the figure of Anne Hutchinson in Winthrop's journals as well as the link on The Trail of Anne Hutchinson for more about her court case.