PURITAN PERIOD: Fire & Brimstone

IMAGINE: Living in 1607...

IMAGINE: Living in a Theocracy, where religious laws ARE the law

IMAGINE: Church services where people are screaming, shouting in fear

IMAGINE: Any selfish act, jealous thought, or lazy worth ethic being a sign of damnation

IMAGINE: Living life looking for signs you have been picked by God
IMAGINE: Only wearing black...

IMAGINE: Never wearing makeup

IMAGINE: Never getting your hair done

IMAGINE: Never reading plays, books, magazines

IMAGINE: Never dancing, never having fun, always being restrained

IMAGINE: Welcome to Puritanism
Massachusetts Puritans

- Highly educated, but not artists or writers
- Only “literature” written was poetry.
- Most writing consisted of:
  - Diaries/Journals
  - Sermons
  - Letters
  - Historical records

Purpose of literature - moral instruction

The Pilgrims

- Wanted to “purify” their religion, so they separated from the Church of England; prevalent belief of uniformity of religion must exist in any society led to intolerance.
- Mayflower landed in Plymouth, MA in 1620.
- Created the “Mayflower Compact”:
  - Male-signed document governing the colony
  - Concept of majority rule
  - Considered by many to be the first democratic document in the colonies

Puritan Lifestyle

- Predestination
  - Individual salvation was already determined by God, not by the acts of individuals
- Sign of Grace (or being saved)
  1. Overwhelming emotional experience or inner assurance
  2. Prosperity
  3. Good Works

- Prosperity and good works were not the cause of salvation, but rather the effect of being saved.
- Spent a majority of their time looking for sign of grace and avoiding things that took them away from God.
- As a result of their search for signs of grace, their lifestyle was very simple

Puritan Lifestyle

- Churches
  - Lacked decoration associated with most churches.
  - No stained glass windows or statues
- Forbidden Activities
  - Wore only dark black clothes
  - Women wore no cosmetics and hairdressing was banned
  - Had no paintings of themselves
  - Did not read plays/novels
  - Did not work on Sunday
  - Did not dance
Puritan Lifestyle, Con’t.

– Theocracy

• A society whose civil laws are the same as religious laws
• Rules of their city were to be based on Biblical laws and religious doctrine

Jonathan Edwards
Fire and Brimstone

Background

• Feared by eighteenth-century Puritans
• Entered Yale at thirteen and graduated 4 years later as class valedictorian
• Brilliant thinker, who learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew by the age of 12

SINNERS
In the Hands of an
Angry GOD.
A SERMON
Preached at Eastford, July 8th 1741.
At a Time of great Awakenings and attended with remarkable Impressions on many of the Hearers.

By Jonathan Edwards, A.M.
Pastor of the Church of Christ in Northampton.

Preach’d in the North Church in the Town of Eastford, Jul’y 8th 1741.

Boston: Printed and Sold by R. M briefing and T. Green, in Queen-Street near against the Flock, 1741.

Preaching Style

• Emphasized “fire and brimstone”
• Talked in a quiet and restrained manner
• Sermons were up to 6 hours in length!

Religious Influence and Works

• Leader of the “great Awakening,” a religious revival that swept the colonies in the 1730’s
• “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” is his most famous work
• It was said to have caused listeners to rise from their seats in a state of hysteria when they first heard it—groaning and screaming in terror!