

# Faith Pulpit

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Faith Baptist Theological Seminary  
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Dr. Jim Tillotson, President

Dr. Douglas Brown, Seminary Dean

## Upcoming Modules:

### April 8-12

Greek Exegesis IV  
Pastoral Theology  
Preaching Seminar II  
Theological Issues in Missions

### May 13-17

1 Corinthians  
Greek Exegesis II  
Marriage Couns. Problems & Case Studies

### May 20-24

Hebrew Exegesis III  
Introduction to Biblical Exegesis  
New Testament Seminar

### May 27-31

Greek Exegesis V  
The Pastor's Wife

## A Baptist Perspective on Reformed Theology

By Myron J. Houghton, Ph.D., Th.D.

**T**he term *Reformed theology* means different things to different people. For some, this term simply refers to the “doctrines of grace” which are also known as *the five points of Calvinism*. The five points of Calvinism are:

Total depravity: Sin has affected all areas of our personality so that no one seeks after God.

Unconditional election: God’s choice of some to be saved was not based on foreseen merit or faith.

Limited atonement: God’s purpose in sending His Son was to actually save and preserve the elect.

Irresistible grace: Sooner or later, all who have been chosen will come to faith in Christ.

Perseverance of the saints: Those who are truly elect and thus saved will persevere.

For others, in addition to Calvinism, *Reformed theology* includes ***Covenant theology***. This view is taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, adopted in AD 1646, which was produced by and authoritative for Presbyterians.

Certain Calvinistic Baptists in London wanted the dominant Presbyterians to know they were not a sect, but rather very similar to them, so they produced a modified Baptist edition of the Westminster Confession, known as the Second London Confession of Faith (LBCF) which was adopted in AD 1689. Here is a website that compares these two Confessions, noting differences and similarities: [www.proginosko.com](http://www.proginosko.com).



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# Dr. Houghton: A Baptist Perspective on Reformed Theology

*Covenant theology* centers its teaching around *two major covenants*:

(1) The Covenant of Works:

“The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to Him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension of God’s part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.” [LBCF, VII:1]

“God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it. The same law was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables.” [LBCF, XIX:1,2]

(2) The Covenant of Grace:

“The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.” [LBCF, XX:1]

“Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal

life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.” [LBCF, VII:2]

“This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.” [LBCF, VII:3]

“It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” [LBCF, VII:3]

## **My evaluation of these issues:**

### **I. The doctrines of grace evaluated from Romans 8:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” [NKJV]

Notice the following truths from these verses:

(1) Romans 8:28 begins with certain knowledge: “And we know...”

(2) The promise is not that all things which happen are good; rather the promise is that all things work together towards a goal that is called good. Liquid vanilla tastes bitter but when mixed in the right amount with other ingredients, the end result is good.

(3) God being in control of all that occurs. The blessed reality that all things work together for good rests on the fact that God determines or permits everything that comes to pass.

(4) This promise is not made to all human beings, but only to believers. They are the ones who love God; they are the ones who are “the called according to *His* purpose.”

(5) God’s purpose is explained in verses 29 and 30 and involves His determination to do five things to the same people:

(a) He foreknew these people. This is where scholars disagree. Foreknowledge might be passive awareness or it might be knowledge based on God’s involvement.

(b) He predestined the people whom He foreknew to be conformed to Christ’s image, an event that takes place at Christ’s return [1 John 3:2] and is described as being glorified. [Romans 8:18-21, 30]

(c) He called the same people He foreknew and predestined. This calling is only for those whom God foreknew and predestined. This calling produces an affirmative response because these people are not only called but also justified. This is why “those who love God” in verse 28 are believers.

(d) He justified the same people whom He foreknew, predestined, and called. This is where the glory of the cross can be seen. How can people know with certainty that they are part of the people

# Dr. Houghton: A Baptist Perspective on Reformed Theology



## *Dr. Myron Houghton:*

- ◆ Diploma, Moody Bible Institute, 1962
- ◆ B.A., Pillsbury College, 1964
- ◆ B.D., Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, 1967
- ◆ Th.M., Grace Theological Seminary, 1968
- ◆ Ph.D., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1971
- ◆ M.L.A., Southern Methodist University, 1971
- ◆ M.A., St. Thomas Theological Seminary, 1977
- ◆ Th.D., Concordia Seminary, 1986
- ◆ Doctor of Human Letters, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Minnesota, 2014

*"It has been my incredible privilege to teach those who have become missionaries, pastors, and numerous other Christian leaders." —Dr. Myron Houghton*

whom God has foreknown, predestined, and called? Only by means of their justification!

This passage tells us that the ones God foreknew are the ones He also predestined and called. But God's Word tells us that we can know we are justified: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" [Romans 5:1]; "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." [Romans 5:9, NKJV]

(e) He glorified all those whom He justified. None will be lost.

## **II. The origin and nature of the church evaluated from Ephesians 2:11-15**

Reformed theology sees all the elect from Adam onward as part of the universal church. "The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be

gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." [LBCF, XXVI:1]

Israel in the Old Testament is called "the Jewish church." [LBCF, XXI:1]

Many Baptists do not see either the universal Body of Christ or the local church in the Old Testament. Here is one reason why:

In Ephesians 2:11-15 Paul states: "11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His

flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace." [NKJV]

Note the following facts:

(1) Gentiles, who before Christ died were "far off," are now brought near by Christ's blood (v. 13);

(2) By His death, Christ broke down the law which was a wall that had divided Jews from Gentiles (vv. 14-15);

(3) By His death, Christ created a new entity (v. 15). Andrew Lincoln comments, "Christ's death not only terminated the old order dominated by the law but also introduced in its place a new creation, a corporate new humanity ('one new person') which is embraced in Christ's own person. It must be underlined that the nature of Christ's accomplishment is described as a creation and its product as something new. In its newness it is not merely an amalgam of the old in



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which Gentiles have been combined with the best of Judaism. The two elements which were used in the creation have become transformed in the process. This is "the third race" which is different from both Jews and Gentiles." —"The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2" by Andrew T. Lincoln *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 [1987] 612.

The glory of the cross emphasizes that the church's origin is related to Christ's death and resurrection.

### III. The shape of the future evaluated from Romans 11:25-29, 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, and Revelation 20:4-7, 10-15

Reformed theology teaches that everyone who has ever lived will be raised and judged together: "God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgement is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." [LBCF, XXXII:1]

Notice in this scenario, there is no place for the future restoration of the nation

Israel. But in Romans 11:25-29, Paul states, "<sup>25</sup> For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: *'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;* <sup>27</sup> *For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.'*"

<sup>28</sup> Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." [NKJV]

God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham [Genesis 12, 13, 15, 17] and reaffirmed it in the New Covenant. This includes a spiritually renewed national Israel [Jeremiah 31:31ff] and a return to their promised land. [Ezekiel 36:24-28]

Reformed theology teaches a general resurrection and a general judgment, but in 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 Paul teaches that there is an order in the resurrection. Not everyone will be raised at the same time (v. 23): Christ at His resurrection, then those who are His, to reign with Him, then finally at the end of this kingdom (so the eternal kingdom has not yet begun) death will be defeated,

meaning even the lost will be raised from the dead.

This is further explained in Revelation 20:4-7, 10-15, where we see that there is an order of resurrection and judgment:

(1) Believers will be raised and judged before Christ's millennial reign. ["and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." – Revelation 20:4, NKJV]

(2) Believers of all the ages will participate in the first resurrection. ["Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."—Revelation 20:6, NKJV]

(3) Unbelievers will be raised and judged following Christ's reign when they will be cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:7, 10-15]

The glory of the cross points to the fact that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins and when we trust Him, we are promised that we shall not come into judgment but have passed from death to life. [John 5:24]

We will never stand at a judgment where our eternal destiny is determined. The judgment seat of Christ is concerned with an evaluation of a believer's work and occurs before the 1,000 year reign of Christ because we "live and reign" with Him for 1,000 years.



# The Life and Legacy of Dr. Myron J. Houghton

By Lance Augsburg

**N**o one says, “Schenectady” quite like someone who spent their formative years in that part of New York. I still love to hear it roll off the tongue of my theology professor and friend, Dr. Myron J. Houghton. Not only does Schenectady, New York, have a pleasant ring—it also has a significant history. While you may not find it in most history books, it is the place that God reached into the Houghton family with His saving grace. Twin brothers Myron and George came to saving faith in Christ through the gospel witness of a neighborhood Bible club.

It was there in Schenectady, in a nearby church, that God began to form young Myron’s thoughts about God and his Word—what Dr. Myron would later call “my theology” in the opening section of his systematic theology notes. As his students know, however, the characteristics of his theology were forged by more than just a backyard Bible club. Though one could credit his eleven different degrees and certificates from ten different institutions for his distinguished understanding of theology, it is actually his skillful exegesis of Scripture that defines his theology and pedagogy.

During his days at Moody Bible Institute in the 1960s, God developed in him a passion for ministry and theology. An avid reader and lover of books, education was a natural fit for him. So he studied, and learned, and read. It is important to note, however, that in all his studies, he did not lose sight of the ministry. What good were books and learning without the opportunity to minister the Word to people in desperate need of a right understanding of Scripture, and a right relationship with God? It was during his graduate studies at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, in May of 1966, that Faith

Baptist Church of St. Paul ordained him for the gospel ministry. From that point on, the roads would never be the same. As he likes to tell his nervous passengers, with that classic grin on his face: “They don’t call me ‘Rev.’ for nothing.”

It wasn’t until 1971—the same year he graduated with his first doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary (and, notably, an M.L.A., from Southern Methodist University)—that Dr. Myron began to occupy the seat on the “other side” of the classroom. That year he joined the faculty of Denver Baptist Bible College. It certainly was not the end of his days as a *student*, but it was the beginning of a monumental career as *professor*. “Coincidentally,” that year also marked Dr. Myron’s introduction to the Augsburg family—a connection for which I am deeply grateful. Dr. Bryce Augsburg, my grandfather, was serving as President of DBBC at that time, and his son Bernie was also on the faculty there. It just so happened that Myron and Bernie were both bachelors and struck up a vibrant friendship, which has continued to the present day.

For nearly *five decades*, Dr. Myron would continue to teach and learn. Five decades. In 1983, just before DBBC merged with Faith Baptist Bible College, he joined the FBBC faculty. Though he has transitioned to teaching primarily in the seminary (FBTS), Dr. Myron continues to teach at FBBC&TS in anticipation of his retirement at the end of this 2018-2019 school year. In his years of teaching after 1971, he would receive four more degrees, including an earned Th.D. and an honorary doctorate. As his students liked to joke, it seems he knows more about Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, and Orthodox theology (not to mention Baptist theology) than any of us know about our

own *Baptist* theology. A pedigree that robust makes an individual exceptionally qualified to teach. But it is not just the pedigree that makes Dr. Myron a distinguished, often favorite, professor.

For some, it is his eccentricities: the fact that, at any given moment, he might pull a foam dart gun out of the drawer and fire it at drowsy students, or that he keeps books in his oven, or that when they call his home with theology questions they find they reached either the “Ayatollah of Ankeny” or “Houghton’s Mortuary: you stab ‘em, we slab ‘em.” For others, it is his quick wit. Few students dare challenge his pun-prowess. He has a response for just about everything.

It was my own love for puns that precipitated our connection. During my senior year of high school, our youth group visited Faith Baptist Bible College. Somehow, we connected with Dr. Myron at the local Village Inn. True to form, he was showing us a trick with a dollar bill that would turn George Washington’s profile into a mushroom. I responded that it appeared that President Washington must have been a pretty fun guy (fungi). Dr. Myron exclaimed his classic laugh, and we struck up a friendship. A few months later, during my freshman year at FBBC, he invited me out for dinner—a weekly appointment that would continue for the next 16 years. In fact, I’ll leave shortly to meet him for dinner tonight. I share that, not so that you will sympathize with me over the fact that I have eaten so many meals at Village Inn, but rather so that you might sense his propensity for relationships.

As a single man, he was accustomed to eating out. As a *relational professor*, he was intentional about inviting students to join him. (continued on back page)

Hundreds of students through the years can attest to his hospitality and care in this way. His goal? Good Christian fellowship. It was possible that theology would come up, but usually only if the *student* asked about it. Instead, Dr. Myron prefers to chat about life, ministry, and of course, any related puns. Through the years, Dr. Myron has enjoyed regular meals with students, colleagues, the local Catholic priest, a Greek orthodox friend, and countless others. He enjoys hearing what God is doing in his friends' lives, and how he might pray for or help in such endeavors.

In my own assessment, it is that trait that makes him such a wonderful professor. He is, in his very core (and by God's grace), a giver. He sees the needs of others, he cares, and he works to meet those needs. In the classroom, through the years, students can attest to the clarity and skill with which he walks through a text of Scripture. His explanations are textual, clear, accurate, and practical. Countless times, I came away from his class lectures or sermons thinking, "I get it! What a great passage; what an amazing God!" There may be no greater aim, nor feat, for a theology professor.

While reading and question-sets certainly aided in the students' broader theological fluency (and added to the late nights), they were not the primary formative tool of Dr. Myron's classroom. The clear explanation of the Word formed the students' theology. Thus, a legacy of *five decades* of students have been shaped in their theology, not just by Dr. Myron J. Houghton, but by a right understanding of Scripture. He taught us how to read, study, think, and conclude. He forever shaped my understanding of law, Gospel, and grace. The clear distinction between God's purpose for the law, and my standing (and resultant demands) under grace, affect my Bible study and preaching on a weekly, even daily basis. It is hard (maybe even impossible) to grasp the number of God's servants ministering today that have been impacted by the teaching ministry of Dr. Myron.

When considering his legacy, it may be that many will remember the things he enjoyed. From maple-glazed, old-fashioned donuts to Sherlock Holmes, he enjoyed many things. Many will remember his generosity. Only he and the Lord truly know how many student mission trips, financial needs, building projects, crisis aid, and outstanding debt repayments he funded. He loves to give. But I think most will conclude that his legacy consists of his love for the Lord, his love for His Word, and his love for students of the Word. His legacy is *seen* in the hundreds, even thousands, of God's servants who love the Lord, love His Word, and study His Word accurately, all the more for the time they spent with Dr. Myron J. Houghton.

There's so much more I could say, but that's all for now. I'm excited to get dinner with my friend.