



MAP ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Greenwich, OH 44837 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ July 2024

The Secret of the Strength

— by Peter Hoover

CHAPTER 12 On to the Covenant

On a dark, rainy day in November 1977, I was baptized in the old Lutheran church at Hesson, Ontario. We Mennonites had purchased the building, torn out its baptismal font, turned its Gothic windows into rectangles, and were using it for our meetinghouse. After my baptism and public testimony, the bishop gave me a card. On it were the questions I had been asked and the vows I had made. The card's title was *Covenant Reminder*.

Many times since my Mennonite baptism, I have been reminded of the covenant I made with Jesus. The thought of a covenant in baptism, I have discovered, is not new. In the 1520s Balthasar Hubmaier wrote:

Oh, my Lord Jesus Christ, reestablish the two bands with which You have outwardly girded and bound Your bride into a covenant. Your bride is the church community. The bands are proper water baptism and the nighttime meal.¹

¹ From *Balthasar Hubmaier Schriften, Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, Gütersloh, 1962.

Ambrutz Spittelmayr told the court at Ansbach in Franconia: “We make a covenant with God in the Spirit, in water baptism, and in drinking the cup which the Word calls the baptism of blood.”²

Leonhard Schiemer wrote: “Water baptism is the seal of our faith and of the covenant we make in our hearts to God.”³

Hans Hut, the Anabaptist messenger through southern Germany and Austria, said:

Baptism follows preaching and believing. Whoever is willing to accept the suffering that God will place on him when he joins himself to Christ, and whoever is willing to stay with Christ and forsake the world, makes a covenant in baptism before his church community.

The community of Christ may open the door of the covenant to those who desire it with all their heart, just like He said: “What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.” The person who makes this covenant (in baptism) may be sure that he has

² From the testimony of Ambrutz Spittelmayr, written in the castle prison at Cadolzburg in Franconia, October 25, 1527.

³ *Von dreyerley Taut ...* 1527

been accepted as a child by God and as a brother or a sister of Christ, a member of His body and church community.⁴

“Believers wed and bind themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, publicly, through the true sign of the covenant, the water bath of baptism,” wrote Melchior Hofman.⁵ To this, Menno Simons added, “When we are inwardly cleansed by faith, we bind ourselves in the outward sign of the water covenant (*Wasserbund*). We bind ourselves to the Lord Jesus in His grace when we bind ourselves in baptism to live no longer in sin.”⁶

Saved Through the Covenant

Within a few days of the first baptisms in Felix Manz's home in Zurich, dozens more “bound themselves in baptism” in that city and its surrounding countryside. Within months these had baptized hundreds and thousands more in the German cantons of Switzerland, in Austria, in Bavaria, in Wurttemberg, and down the Rhein into the Netherlands and Belgium.

⁴ *Vom Geheimnus der Tauf* ca. 1527.

⁵ From *Die Ordonnantie Godts, De welke hy, door zijnen Soone Christum Jesum, inghestelt ende bevesticht heevt ...* 1530.

⁶ *Dat Fundament des Christelycken leers ...* 1539

Baptism followed teaching. But because they tied faith, repentance, and baptism together, the first Anabaptists did not consider postponing one of the three. They did not wait to baptize until a convenient time after the new birth took place. There was no convenient time. They were baptized at once—even though it might cost them their lives—because they took baptism to be the sealing of their covenant with God.

Eucharius Binder, baptized and ordained by Hans Hut at Königsberg in Franconia in 1526, traveled at once through Nurnberg and Augsburg to Steyr in Austria, baptizing hundreds of people along the way. The following year they caught him at Salzburg and locked him in a house with thirty-seven other Anabaptists. The authorities then set the house on fire and all of the prisoners perished in the flames.

Leonhard Dorfbrunner baptized more than three thousand people in less than a year's time after his conversion. Many young men like him traveled from city to city and from house to house, meeting with those who longed to follow Jesus, as described years later:

Usually, the service began with the reading of a passage from the New Testament and ended with the baptism of such as desired it, and with a general participation in the Lord's supper. Baptisms took place at any time and at any place, in the morning or in the evening, in the house or at the stream. The water was the symbol of the washing of repentance and the putting off of sin, the outward sign of the decisive entrance into a new and holy life. He who received it was henceforth no longer the master of his own life, but a servant of Jesus Christ, ready to do His will at whatever cost.⁷

In the Netherlands and northern Germany, spontaneous baptisms caused new congregations to spring up, as one historian put it, "like mushrooms."⁸ Many Anabaptists testified on arrest that they did not know who baptized them. Those who baptized avoided revealing their names, and those who believed avoided it too, for safety's sake. But a few men like Leenaardt Bouwens kept numerical records. For thirty years he baptized, on average, more than three hundred people a year.

Too Young

The first Anabaptists asked people to wait for baptism only when they found the "document" to which the seal was to be applied incomplete.

In a letter "written in the dark with poor materials" in the dungeon of the castle at Gent in Belgium, Jannijn Buitkijns, who burned at the stake on July 9, 1551, tells of nine other Anabaptists who were interrogated with him. One of them was an adolescent boy.

The boy confessed that he thought the baptism of believers was right and good. He had gone to the teacher once to be baptized, but he was not baptized yet.

"Why did the teacher not baptize you?" the interrogator asked.

The boy answered, "My lords, when the teacher explained the faith to me and asked me questions, he noticed that I was still immature in my understanding. He told me to go and search the Scriptures some more. But I wanted to be baptized. The teacher then asked me whether I knew that the world puts to death and burns those who are baptized. I told him that I knew that well. Then he said to me that I should be patient until he came the next time. He told me that I should search the Scriptures and ask the Lord for wisdom because I am

still so young. Then we parted."

"Are you sorry that you did not get baptized?" asked the interrogator.

"Yes, my lords."

"If you were not imprisoned would you be baptized?"

"Yes, my lords."

For these words, they sentenced him to death, and Jannijn did not see him again.⁹

Not Ready

Lauwerens van der Leyen, imprisoned at Antwerp in 1559, faced the question: "Are you baptized?"

Lauwerens answered, "No."

"Is baptism necessary then?" the interrogator asked.

"Yes," said Lauwerens. "It is necessary for perfection."

"Why then are you not baptized?" asked the interrogator.

"I was not good enough yet."

"Why?"

"Because I was involved too much in this world. I was, and still am, deeply in debt. I thought that if I were caught, people could say I was a hypocrite. Many could be turned away from the truth. Therefore I declined to receive baptism. But I consider it good and right and I want to live and die in this belief. Though I have not yet become baptized, the Lord in His mercy will save me because of His sufferings and precious blood. I believe all that a Christian is bound to believe, and I will stand firm in it. You may do further with me as you please for I am in your power."

They beheaded Lauwerens at Antwerp in Belgium on November 9, 1559.¹⁰

Exceptions to the rule were common in

⁷ Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel*, (Goshen, 1950), pg. 138

⁸ Carl Adolf Cornelius, the Roman Catholic historian.

⁹ *Martelaers-Spiegel*, 1660

¹⁰ *ibid.*

the sixteenth century. Some believers fell into the hands of the authorities before they got baptized. Some, arrested during meetings, got converted during the incident or in prison. Some missed baptism for other reasons. But the question of their salvation did not become an issue. The Anabaptists had no doubts about God's mercy on the faithful.



Antwerp, from the Scheldt (one of the mouths of the Rhein), home to a large "underground" fellowship of believers in the 16th century. Many Anabaptist prisoners, including Lauderens van der Leyen, lay in chains in Het Steen castle, center foreground.

Children

Roman Catholic and Protestant authorities often tried to rescue Anabaptist children from their "heretic" parents to baptize them. They accused the Anabaptists of murdering infants' souls. But the Anabaptists, resting on the Word of God, did not worry. Conrad Grebel wrote:

All children that have not come to know the difference between good and evil, who have not eaten from the tree of knowledge, are surely safe through the work of Christ.¹¹

Menno Simons wrote:

Little children, especially those born in Christian homes, have a special promise. It is a promise given to them by God with no rites involved. It comes to them through pure and abundant grace, through Christ who says: "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such

as these." This promise makes glad and assures all the saints about their children.

Christian parents have in their hearts a sure faith in the grace of God concerning their beloved children. They believe that their children are sons and daughters of the kingdom. They believe that their children are under grace and have the promise of eternal life, not by any ceremony but through Christ. As long as they are mere children they are clean, holy, saved, and pleasing unto God, be they alive or dead.

Christian parents thank God for His love to their children, so they train their children in godly ways. They correct, chastise, teach, and admonish them. They exemplify to them the irreproachable life until the children are able to hear the Word for themselves, to believe it, and to obey it. Then is the time, and not until then, that they should receive Christian baptism as Christ and the apostles practiced and taught. . . .

If children die before coming to the age when they can decide between good and evil, before they have come to years of understanding and before they have faith, they die under the promise of God and that by no other means than the generous promise of grace given through Christ Jesus (Luke 18:16). If they come to the age where they can decide for themselves and have faith, then they should be baptized. But if they do not accept or believe the Word when they arrive at that age, no matter whether they are baptized or not, they will be damned, as Christ himself teaches (Mark 16:16).¹²

Infant Baptism

"Simia semper manet simia, etiamsi induatur purpura (a monkey stays a

monkey even though you dress him in purple)," wrote Menno Simons. "In the same manner infant baptism will remain a horrid stench and abomination before God, no matter how finely the learned ones adorn it with garbled passages from the Scriptures."¹³

Then, in a more serious tone he added:

Because true Christian baptism involves such great promises, among them the promise of remission of sins (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Cor. 12:13, 1 Peter 3:21, Eph. 4:5), some would like to baptize their children. But they fail to notice that the above promises are given only to those who believe and obey the Word of God.¹⁴

Conrad Grebel wrote:

The baptized are dead to the old life and circumcised in their hearts. They have died to sin with Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and arisen with Him. . . . To apply such things to children is without and against the Scriptures.¹⁵

The Mode of Baptism

The first Anabaptists did not write about the mode of baptism. They baptized by pouring or immersion, in rivers or ponds, or in the houses, barns, caves, mills, or forests where they had their services. Shortly before Conrad Grebel baptized Wolf Ulimann in the Rhine River, Felix Manz baptized Hans Bruggbach¹⁶ in a house at Zurich in Switzerland. This is the account:

After Hans confessed his sins and requested baptism Georg Cajacob (Blaurock) asked him, "Do you desire baptism?"

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Hans Bruggbach (Brubacher) appears to have been the ancestor of Peter Brubacher of Wädenswil, mentioned in the *Ausbund* and in the *Martyrs Mirror*—and as such, of the Brubachers (Brubakers) now living in Pennsylvania and southern Ontario.

¹¹ *Ein Brief an Thomas Müntzer*, September 5, 1524.

¹² *Verclaringhe des christelycken doopsels* . . . ca. 1542

Hans replied, “Yes.”

Then Felix Manz asked, “Who will forbid me that I should baptize him?”

“No one,” answered Georg.

Then Felix Manz took a metal dipper (of the kind commonly found in Swiss kitchens) and poured water over Hans’ head saying: “I baptize you in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.”

The first Anabaptists saw no conflict between baptizing by either pouring or by immersion. Menno Simons, who no doubt baptized mostly by pouring, freely spoke of “burial in baptism.” Conrad Grebel, who baptized by immersion after the example of Christ and the apostles, wrote about the apostles themselves:

After that, they were poured over with water. Just as they were cleansed within by the coming of the Holy Spirit, so they were poured over with water, externally, to signify the inner cleansing and dying to sin.¹⁷

Einverleibung

Jesus is the head of the body of believers. The first Anabaptists believed that in water baptism we become members of that body. They called it an *Einverleibung*, literally a going into and connecting onto a body, or a growing into each other. That body, they believed, is one, glorious, universal body consisting of all those who have committed themselves unconditionally to Jesus, the head.

An *Ausbund* writer wrote:

Those of us who have been washed with the blood of Christ and made free from sin, are tied together in our hearts. We now walk in the Spirit who shows us the right way and who rules in us. The Spirit rules in our sinful bodies, that are now dead. And

in Christ, we become members of His body (einverleibt), and buried with Him through baptism in His death. Now we live for Him and keep His commandments.¹⁸

Menno Simons wrote:

Those who hear and believe the Word of God are baptized into the body. They have a good conscience. They receive remission of sins, they put on Christ and become members of the most holy body of Jesus Christ. . . . All who hear the Gospel and believe in it, all those who are made alive by the Holy Spirit within them, no matter of what nationality or speech they are, Frisians, or Hollanders, Germans, Belgians, Jews, Gentiles, men or women, all are baptized into one spiritual body of which Christ is the head—that is, they are baptized into Jesus’ church community (Col. 1:18).¹⁹

Noah’s Ark and Jesus’ Community

The story of the flood held symbolic significance for the first Anabaptists. Noah was Jesus. The ark was Jesus’ church community, and the door into it was baptism. Jakob de Keersgieter, burned at the stake at Brugge in Belgium, wrote:

Baptism must be received upon faith for a burial of sin, a washing of regeneration, a covenant of the Christian life, and a putting on of the body of Christ. It is an ingrafting into the true olive tree and vine of Christ, an entrance into the spiritual ark of Noah, which belongs to Christ.²⁰

After baptism the Anabaptists found themselves within the body of Christ, breaking bread together and sharing their material things. Whoever took part in the life of the body showed himself to be a member of it, but beyond

this, “church membership,” in the beginning, did not exist.

Thousands of converts were baptized into the Anabaptist movement at meetings among people they never saw again. The believers (above all, the servants and messengers) moved about continually, and congregations that numbered several hundred people at one meeting might well number fifty or less in the next—and vice versa. Only in Moravia, at the beginning, did congregations become stable units. There they lived on the *Bruderhofs* (also known as *Haushaben*, communal households in rented buildings in town) but their teaching on baptism remained the same. Messengers from the *Bruderhofs* still baptized converts spontaneously wherever they traveled, and only those who decided to move to Moravia actually became part of the settled congregations there.

Bundesgenossen

Grown into each other through baptism into the body of Christ, the first Anabaptists called one another companions of the covenant (*Bundesgenossen*). To this teaching, Martin Luther and the translators of the first Dutch (Biestkens) Bible made a contribution. They translated 1 Peter 3:20-21 like this: “A few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the *covenant* of a good conscience with God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Baptism as a covenant and the resulting *Bundesvereinigung* society of the covenant) brought the first Anabaptists to say like Jakob Kautz and Wilhelm Reublin in a letter to the town council of Strasbourg in 1529:

When the merciful God called us by His grace to marvelous light, we did not reject the heavenly message but

¹⁸ *Ausbund*, 114:4-5

¹⁹ *Verclaringhe des christelycken doopsels* . . . ca. 1542

²⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Protestation und Schutzschrift*, 1524.

made a covenant with God in our hearts to serve Him in holiness all our days. . . . Then we reported our purpose to the companions of the covenant.

Pilgram Marpeck addressed his major book, published in 1542, to “the Christian society of the covenant *Bundesvereinigung*) of all true believers.”

Menno Simons’ addressed his earliest Anabaptist writing to “all the true companions of the covenant scattered abroad.”

Loyalty

Brothers and sisters deeply conscious of their covenant with Jesus become deeply loyal to Him and to one another. In a letter to me, a friend once mentioned “the Anabaptist emphasis on corporate discipleship” as the “centerpiece of our great heritage.” He was partially correct. The first Anabaptists spoke of corporate discipleship, but they revolved around Jesus, not around “corporate discipleship.”

Jesus was the centerpiece.

The first Anabaptists did not bother writing about loyalty to the church, loyalty to the brotherhood, or loyalty to

God-ordained leaders. They did not make two commitments, one to the head and one to the body. Their covenant with Jesus made all other relationships conditional.

The oneness, the love, and the community that resulted from the Anabaptists’ covenant with Jesus made their enemies suspicious. The Catholics and Protestants began to suspect that the Anabaptists had sworn themselves to one another with some secret and terrible oath. But when questioned about this, Ambrutz Spittelmayer said:

I know of no other commitment we make to one another than the covenant we make in baptism...We bind ourselves to God and become one with Him in love, in spirit, in faith, and in baptism. At the same time, God binds Himself to us and promises to stay with us through thick and thin.²¹

Married to Jesus

The first Anabaptists spoke often of being “married to Christ.” At baptism they did not bind themselves to a congregation or denomination, not to rules or constitutions or human authorities, but to Jesus—like a bride binds herself

to the groom. Wherever their fellow believers followed Jesus, they were committed to supporting them. Wherever they did not, they were committed to opposing them.

Hans Betz wrote:

Faith comes from hearing Christian preaching, then when a person believes, he must be baptized. Baptism in Christ is the covenant of a good conscience...the promise to live from this point onward in the will of God.

We make a promise to God in baptism that we are bound to keep. Like a wife is subject to her husband here on the earth, so we become subject to Christ when we marry Him in baptism.²²

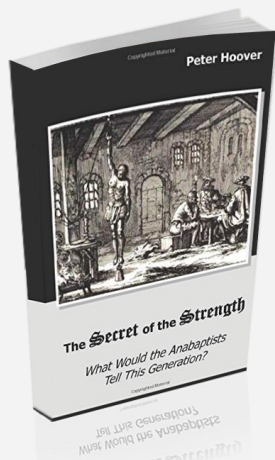
The “rose-red blood of Christ” was unspeakably precious to the first Anabaptists. It released them from the debt of sin that they could not possibly have paid. But logic told them that Jesus who bought their debt had the right to claim them as His bond servants.

This covenant with Jesus led them...

²¹ From the written testimony of Ambrutz Spittelmayer, of October 25, 1527.

²² *Ausbund*, 108:5-6

Continued in Next Issue



Are you anticipating the next chapter and would like to read this book in one sitting?

To request your **FREE** personal copy of *The Secret of the Strength*, write to:

The Amish Voice
575 US Highway 250
Greenwich, OH 44837

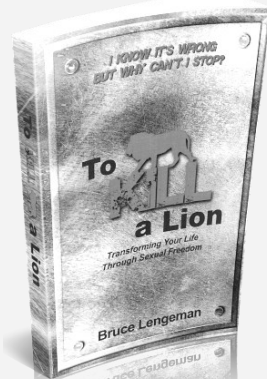
Include your address and a note stating that you would like a free copy of the book *The Secret of the Strength*.

FREE!

To Kill a Lion, written by Bruce Lengeman, is designed to help men find the roots of their sexual addiction and what makes it operate “out of alignment” with God’s design. The theme is, “Men cry out, ‘I know it is wrong, but why can’t I stop?’” You’ll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a pure and Godly way. Though this book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting an understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

To order mail a
\$17 check to:

The Amish Voice
575 US Highway 250
Greenwich, OH 44837



We previously discussed how the Amish in Europe struggled because many emigrated to the United States. In 1937, the last Amish in Europe merged with Mennonite congregations.

The Amish in North America also struggled to keep the church united. The American Revolution challenged the church's place in American society, while many Amish, especially young people, were attracted by the wave of revivalism of those days. By 1800, only about 1,000 Amish remained.

Movements and Growth of the Amish church in North America

The American-born Amish had hardly begun putting down roots in new western settlements, like Holmes and Wayne County, Ohio when hundreds of European Amish immigrants began arriving on North American shores. Eventually, totalling some 3,000 people, the 19th century Amish newcomers were fleeing the political and military consequences of life in post-Napoleonic Europe (where obliged military service became more and more standard) or looking simply to improve their economic lot in life. Most new immigrants settled in western Amish communities, such as Ohio and Indiana. Also, this new wave of immigrants founded the first Amish settlement in Canada (Ontario). If needed, newcomers could profit from the Amish practice of mutual aid.

Like other immigrants, the Amish often moved to find cheaper land, better soil, or better living circumstances. Still, some also did so to escape conflict and church difficulties in their home communities or for other personal reasons. The forces of migration changed the size and geographic center of the church. By 1851, for example, the area with the largest Amish congregation was no longer Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but rather central Illinois.

Regional meetings of Amish leaders were held to align doctrine and daily practices with those of neighbouring communities (approximately every 4-5 years). Topics could vary, such as clothing, fancy furniture, or baptism. However, prior to 1862, these meetings were always regional and occasional; each congregation was formally self-governing.

Since the economic situation in the United States improved and thus the Americans' lifestyle, the Amish's emphasis on simplicity became more relevant. However, some Amish communities were more open to change, while others were more traditional-minded. Several change-minded churches gathered in meeting houses, and some even sponsored Sunday school programs.

Despite the growing rift between tradition-leaning and change-minded church members, the Amish remained nominally united, with those on both sides generally recognizing one another and sharing communion.

Politics, Civil War, and Amish Views

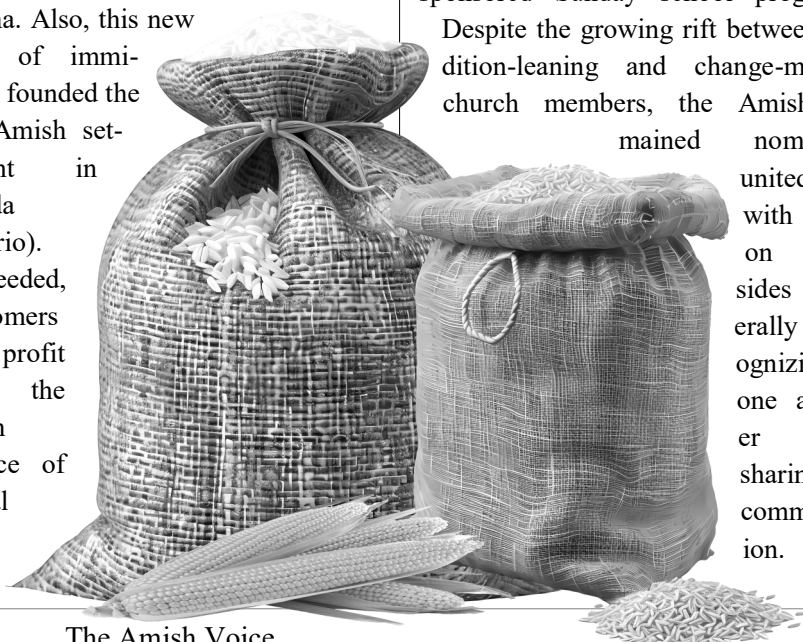
Some Amish, especially of the change-minded wing, were active in various public ways, such as township supervisors, overseers of the poor, school directors, assessors, road overseers, auditors, and tax collectors. But how far would Amish involvement of civic-minded Amish in American politics extend when the Civil War broke out in 1861? Some Amish did join the Union Army. However, most used the legal means available to avoid such service. State and later federal draft laws typically allowed men to pay a commutation fee (often \$300) or hire substitutes to muster in their place. However, some Amish leaders saw this practice as hypocritical.

Even if they did not join the military themselves, the Amish sometimes suffered the consequences of the war when it reached their communities. Some saw a warning of God in the war. A bishop in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, saw a struggle in his church that reminded him of the schism between the American North and South. Just as two different sections of the nation had previously chosen divergent social, economic, and political paths, so too had change-minded and tradition-minded Amish set out on apparently incompatible means of relating to the world. For many Amish, the choice became especially acute in the 1860s, the decade in which the United States painfully struggled to remain united. The Amish church also struggled during those years – and ultimately would divide.

We will see how this happened in the next article.

To be continued in September issue.

Primary source: "A History of the Amish" by Steven M. Nolt



Acts 7:54-60

“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Persecution will come, will you stand? Our world is in serious trouble, for it is ruled by the Prince of Darkness, whose primary goal is to steal, kill, and destroy. A time is coming when it will mean death to be a Christian, perhaps very shortly. In several countries, this is already the case. Are you willing to die?

God's children have always been persecuted and always will be. This happens either directly or indirectly. Direct persecution comes from the government or another authoritarian figure, outright and deliberately creating pain, suffering, or death, solely and intentionally directed at God's people. Indirect persecution can come in many forms by slandering God's people, mocking, belittling, etc. There has always been a degree of persecution and always will be.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Do you think that by following Christ, you will leave this world unscathed? Jesus also said, *“...In this world, ye shall have tribulation...”* (John 16:33).

Paul says in Galatians 6:17, *“...I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”*

Stephen did not go looking to die for Christ; indeed, to do so is nothing short of a martyr complex. He preached the gospel, and such was their hatred for him that they purposely set up false witnesses against him. His faith never wavered, nor did his love and compassion for these men.

Man seeks a reason, a cause to live, and will not willingly lay his life down for nothing. Our human body fights against death; we want to live, so How could Stephen die this painful, agonizing death? Go back to verse 55:

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.”

Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost. God was with him, for God was in him. He knew who he was! He knew where he was going! He knew that killing his body was the extent of these men's power!

“And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do” (Luke 12:4).

Stephen looked up steadfastly into heaven; he saw the glory of God. His affections were set on things above and not on the things of this world! Through faith, he looked beyond his pain. He saw the finish mark; his race

was nearly won! Nearing death, he saw the One who had given him his breath in the first place, and very soon, he would be face to face. He found that God's grace was sufficient in life and remained sufficient as he neared death! Stephen saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

The Patriot of this world says, “I'll die on my feet before I live on my knees!” Stephen was willing to die on his knees as he saw his Lord standing on His feet! Jesus is not oblivious. Jesus' face was set toward Stephen. What a way to die!

Consider the Apostle Paul. He was kept chained in a dark, cold dungeon, waiting for his execution day after day until, early one morning, THUD, THUD, THUD! Paul woke out of his sleep. “What is that?” he wondered. A key rattled in the lock, and a big Roman soldier swung open the door.

“Paul!” He barks.

“Yes,” Paul replies.

“Paul, get up! You're coming with me!”

“Uh, ok,” Paul replies.

“Why so early? Where are we going?”

“Haha!” The soldier grins. “Today you die, Paul! I'm here to take you to the square. I'm taking your head off.

Paul, Paul, Paul, this is going to be fun!

“Really?” Paul replies. “Hold on, let me grab my hat!”

They stepped into the prison hall and the soldier led Paul out. Paul can't help but smile; a whistle breaks his lips.

Bewildered, the soldier looks at Paul and asks, “You must not understand. You realize I'm taking you out to kill you, right? How can you be so joyful?”

The following article was taken from
The Topical Sermon Notebook, End Times
 by Dr. Alan Carr, Lenoir, NC.
www.sermonnotebook.org

Revelation 20:1-10

Intro: Revelation chapter 20 mentions a 1000-year period of time 6 times in verses 2-7. This period has come to be known as the Millennium. It is a compound word from the Latin which means “1000 years.” The millennium is that 1,000-year period of time when the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will rule upon this earth. He will usher in a time of peace, prosperity, and righteousness such as the world has not witnessed since before man sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Many do not believe in a literal 1000-year reign of Christ. They believe that this is just symbolic language. However, there is more written about this future time than about any other event in the realm of prophecy. It is a time that the Bible refers to in a literal sense and there is no reason to believe that it will not happen just as the Bible says. Therefore, those of us who believe the Bible is to be taken literally believe that there will be a literal 1,000-year period of time during which Jesus Christ Himself will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Since there is so much said in the Bible concerning the Millennium, there is no possible way that I could cover all the details in one message. Therefore, I just want to skim the surface this morning and look at a few specific areas of this great period of time that will give us a little insight into what will take place during that glorious time.

At this point, it might be good to refresh our memories concerning the order of future events.

1. **The Rapture**—This is the next event.
2. **The Tribulation Period**—This will begin after the Rapture of the church.
3. **The Judgment Seat of Christ**—This will take place while Tribulation is unfolding upon the earth.
4. **The Marriage Supper Of The Lamb**—This too will take place alongside the Tribulation Period.
5. **The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus**—This event will close the Tribulation and will bring about the Judgment of the nations, Matt 25. The Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed and those who have their faith in Christ will enter into the millennium.

Now, with that information in our minds, let’s look at a few specific areas of the Millennial period that will help us to understand it a little better. My friends, I want you to know that this is one thing you do not want to miss for the world! You want to be sure that you are a child of God so that when this time comes to pass, you can join Jesus in His Kingdom and reign with Him for 1,000 years.

I. The Savior During the Millennium (v. 4, 6)

(Ill. What will Jesus be doing during the Millennium?)

A. He Will Be Reigning—At long last, the Lord Jesus Christ will sit on the throne of David, **Isa. 9:6-7**. He will rule the world in power, righteousness, and glory. His reign will usher in a time of peace and prosperity like nothing the world has ever experienced. His reign will finally bring justice and holiness to the world.

(Ill. The world has never had a ruler like this. All human rulers are con-

trolled by their lusts for power, wealth, and self-glory. Jesus, on the other hand, will reign in perfect righteousness. The millennium will be a time of almost perfect existence.)

B. He Will Be Ruling—The Bible tells us that Jesus will “**rule the world with a rod of iron**”, **Rev. 19:15**. Like a shepherd, Jesus will guide the entire population of the world. However, those who refuse to bow to His authority will be dealt with swiftly and harshly. Rebellion will not be tolerated on that day!

C. He Will Be Receiving—In the day in which we live, the Lord Jesus is viewed as some kind of a comical character by the world. He is like a poor fool who got Himself killed on a cross. However, in the Millennial kingdom, He will receive the glory He has always deserved. All people from every nation will come and bow at His feet and worship the King of Glory! Instead of cursing His name, men will worship Him and shout His praises! What a day that will be!

(Ill. **Isa. 40:5**, “**And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**” This verse tells us that man will finally be able to look upon the glory of the Lord on that day! It will be a time of glory to God!)

II. Satan During the Millennium (v. 1-3, 7-10)

A. He Will Be Jailed (v. 1-3)—For 1,000 years, the enemy of God will not be able to hinder God’s work, tempt God’s people, nor will he be able to work in the lives of the lost. He will be chained and bound for the duration of the Millennium!

(Ill. Right now, Satan is the “god” of this world, **2 Cor. 4:4**. He spends his time doing everything in his power to

hinder God's business, trip up God's saints, and claim souls for Hell. Ill. Note the titles given to him in **verse 2**. He is a wicked and evil enemy! However, on that day, he will be out of the picture. Imagine a world, ruled by Jesus with no devil! GLORY!

B. He Will Be Judged (v. 7–10)—These verses tell us that at the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed from his prison. He will return to the earth and will be able to amass an army of incredible size. He and this army will attack the city of God, where Jesus is reigning, and will think to overthrow Jesus. However, divine judgment falls and all the people who followed the devil in his scheme will be destroyed. The devil himself will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and he will spend eternity in those terrible flames. His judgment is certain and his doom is sealed! The devil is headed to Hell! When he is cast into Hell, the universe will be forever free from his influences and wickedness. Just to know the devil is going to burn is enough to shout about!

(Ill. Does it bother you that even when Jesus Christ has ruled the world with perfect, righteous judgment, Satan is still able to find a vast multitude to follow him? It bothers me, but it is a clear illustration of the heart of the lost sinner! No matter how good God is to someone, until they are saved by grace and changed by the power of God, they are wicked to the core! I believe this is one of the primary reasons for the Millennium. It is to prove the hardness and sinfulness of the heart of men! You see, in various ways, God has tried to reach men, and each time, man has failed to respond with love toward God. Notice:

1. **The age of Innocence** (Gen. 3) ended with willful disobedience.
2. **The age of conscience** (Gen. 5–6) ended with universal corruption.
3. **The age of human government** (Gen. 11) ended with devil worship

at the Tower of Babel.

4. **The Age of Promise** (Gen. 12–Ex. 1) ended with the people of God in bondage in Egypt.
5. **The Age of Law** (Ex. 2–Matt. 27) ended with humanity killing their Creator on the cross.
6. **The Age of the Church** (Acts 1—?) Will end with worldwide apostasy.
7. **The Age of Tribulation** (Rev. 19) will end with the battle of Armageddon.
8. **The Age of the Millennium** (Rev. 20) will end with an attempt to overthrow God Himself.

The point is that the human heart is terribly wicked and prone to evil. There is no good in it all, **Rom. 3:10–11**. The only hope for men is to come to Jesus for salvation. He changes hearts! Anything less will result in damnation and Hell. Where do you stand this morning? Are you saved!)

III. The Saints During the Millennium (v. 4–6)

(What will the redeemed people of God be doing during the Millennium?)

A. They Will Be Reigning (v. 4a)—All the saints of God, that is, every person who received Jesus between the Day of Pentecost and the Rapture of the church will reign with Jesus in His Millennial kingdom. We will share in His glory and in His reign, **2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:1**.

(Ill. The children of God may be mocked and ridiculed down here right now, but there is coming a day when we will return with Jesus in power and glory to this world and we will reign with Him on this earth. On that day, we will be different than we are now. We will have already been through the Judgment Seat of Christ and we will have enjoyed the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We will have been with Jesus when He took control of the world

away from the devil and his armies. We will have shared in it all and we will share in His glory! When we reign with Him, we will be in our glorified bodies! We will be free from sin, free from death, free from disease. We will be perfect on that day!)

B. They Will Be A Resurrected (v. 4b)—At the beginning of the Millennium, all the Old Testament saints and all those who died with faith in Jesus during the Tribulation will be raised from the dead. Imagine, seeing all the Old Testament believers serving the One they were looking for! You see, they all died in faith, looking ahead to that day when the promised One would go to the cross and die for sin. Well, He did and now they are saved! They will love again on that blessed day! Ill. Abraham saw His day and was glad, **John 8:56**. On that day, he will see Jesus!

C. They Will Be Received (v. 4c)—The last part of this verse makes it clear that there will be a number of people who will come to the end of the Tribulation Period with their faith in Jesus, These people refused the Mark of the Beast and they lived until the end. Some will be Jews, others will be Gentiles, but they will all enter the Kingdom of Christ. This is pictured for us in **Matthew 25:31–46** as the Judgment of the Nations. Jesus will honor the faith of those who trusted in Him and He will receive them into His kingdom. Those who lived to the end of the Tribulation and did not place their faith in Christ will be destroyed and will go to Hell!

(Ill. I hope you can see that the bottom line is faith! Where is your faith this morning? Is it in Jesus Christ, alone for salvation? If it is in anything else, then you are on dangerous ground. Trust Jesus while you can, He is the only One Who can save the soul.)

IV. The Sinners During the Millennium

(Will there be sinners during the Millennium? Yes! There will be none who enter the Millennium, but there will be billions born during the 1,000-year period. You see, all the Jews and Gentiles who enter the Millennium, out of the Tribulation will do so in their flesh and blood bodies. These people are saved, but their offspring will be born with a lost, sinful nature. They will need to be saved too!)

A. Their Relationship To The Savior—On that day, even the lost man will know Jesus. He will know Him as King, but He will not know Him as Savior unless he repents and receives Jesus by faith. Salvation has never changed!

1. **They Will Be Forced To Worship Correctly**—Every person on the face of the earth will bow in worship before King Jesus! Everyone will lift their voices in praise and in singing to Him Who sits upon the throne of glory. What a blessed day that will be! However, imagine having to praise Him and not love Him! Imagine worshiping Him outwardly, while hating Him inwardly! It will happen on that day!

(Ill. Listen, it also happens on this day! A lost person comes into the church. They stand with the congregation of the saints and they sing the songs of praise unto the Lord. They join in with all the redeemed of God as we worship the King. Outwardly, there is no difference, but inwardly, the heart of the lost sinner is not in love with Jesus. He is merely going through the motions. Friend, it does not have to be that way! God can make this thing real for you if you will only come to Him by faith!)

2. **They Will Be Forced To Walk Correctly**

Now, lost people walk to their own tune. They do what they please without regard to what the Lord has to

say about it. However, it that day, they will be forced to live rightly! Again, there will be outward obedience, but without inward love! People will need salvation then, just as they do now!

B. Their Relationship To Satan—Just as the lost have always had a close relationship with the devil, so they will in the Millennium.

1. **They Will Be Deceived**—The Bible tells us that when Satan is loosed from his prison, he will deceive a great multitude of those who are not saved. They will join him in his bid to conquer God.

(Ill. I find it amazing the people who have known nothing but the holiness, goodness, and blessing of God would rather fight Him than love Him. I do not understand that! Yet, we see it all around us in the world today. Even in this room, there are people who eat God's food, breathe His air, and enjoy His goodness, yet you will not bow before Him and receive Him into your heart and life. That is something I will never understand! Willing to tread underfoot the goodness of God, while you march toward a destiny with Hell! My friend, I would just like to remind you that it is the *"goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance."*, Rom. 2:4.

2. **They Will Be Doomed**—Satan's plan will fail. All those who followed him will be devoured by the fire of God out of Heaven. Their bodies will burn up and their souls will go to Hell. What a terrible doom awaits the enemies of God!

(Ill. It is the same fate that awaits everyone who refuses to come to Jesus for salvation. Friends, He is the only way for anyone to miss Hell. He is the only way to be saved, **John 14:6**. Do you know Him?)

V. Society During the Millennium

(Ill. For just a few minutes, I would like to share with you some of the changes that will come about during the Millennium. I won't take too long, but these are a blessing.)

1. **Peace**—Cessation of all war by the unification of the nations and the resultant economic prosperity. This will be a time of personal and national peace. (Isa. 2:4; 9:4–7; 32:17–18; 33:5–6; 55:12; 60:18; Eze. 28:26; 34:25, 28; Hos. 2:18; Micah 4:2–3; Zech. 9:10.)
2. **Joy**—The fullness of joy will be a trademark of the Kingdom. (Isa. 12:3–6; 14:7–8; 25:8–9; 61:7, 10; 65:18–19; 66:10–14; Jer. 31:18–19; Zeph. 3:14–17; Zech. 10:6–7.)
3. **Holiness**—This Theocratic kingdom will be a holy kingdom. This holiness will be manifested through the king and his subjects. The land will be holy, the people holy, the city holy the entire world will be holy unto the Lord. (Isa. 31:6–7; 35:8–9; 60:21; 61:10; Eze. 36:24–31; 37:23–24; Zech. 8:3; 14:20–21.)
4. **Glory**—This kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, with the glory of God in full display. (Isa. 4:2; 35:2; 40:5; 60:1–9.)
5. **Comfort**—Jesus will fully minister to every need so that there will be fullness of comfort. (Isa 12:1–2; 30:26; 40:1–2; 49:13; 51:3; 66:21–23; Jer. 31:23–25; Zeph. 3:18–20.)
6. **Justice**—Perfect Justice will be administered to every individual in the entire world. (Isa. 9:7; 32:16; 42:1–4; 65:21–23; Jer. 23:5.)
7. **Full Knowledge**—All the subjects of the king will possess fullness of knowledge. No doubt, there will be an increase in the teaching ministry of the Holy Ghost. (Isa. 11:1–2, 9; Isa. 41:19–20; *54:13*; Hab. 2:14.)

8. **Instruction**—Perfect knowledge will come about from instruction from the king. (Isa. 2:2–3; 29:17–24; 32:3–4; Jer. 3:14–15; Micah 4:2.)
9. **The Removal of the Curse**—In Gen. 3:17–19, God placed a curse upon the earth. During the millennium, this curse will be removed, resulting in an increase in the productivity of the earth, and it will cause animals to lose their ferocity and venom. (Isa 11:6–9; 65:25).
10. **Sickness Removed**—The King will be a healer so that sickness and death will vanish. Except as a punishment for extreme sin, (Isa 33:24; Jer. 30:17; 33:6.)
11. **Healing of the deformed**—(All deformity will be healed. (Isa. 29:17–19; 35:3–6).
12. **Protection**—There will be a supernatural preservation of life during the millennium. (Isa. 41:8–14; 62:8–9; Jer. 23:6; Joel 3:16–17; Amos 9:15; Zech. 9:8; 14:10–11.)
13. **No oppression**—There will be no social, political, racial, or religious oppression on that day, (Isa. 14:3–6; 42:6–7; 49:8–9; Zech. 9:11–12.)
14. **No Immaturity**—It seems that there will be no mental retardation or dwarfed bodies, and longevity will also be restored, (Isa. 65:20).
15. **Reproduction by the Living People**—The living saints who enter the millennium will reproduce. The

population of the earth will soar. Yet, all children will be born with a sin nature, and will therefore need salvation, (Jer. 30:20; 31:29; Eze. 47:22).

16. **Labor**—There will be no laziness or welfare. In a perfect economic system, all needs will be provided for by the labor of men under the direction of the king. It will be a fully industrialized world, (Isa. 62:8–9; 65:21–23; Jer. 31:5.)
17. **Economic Prosperity**—The perfect labor situation will produce economic abundance so that there will be no want. (Isa. 35:1–2, 7; 30:23–25; Jer. 31:5; 12; Eze 34:26; 36:29–30; *Joel 2:21–27* *Amos 9:13–14*; Zech. 8:11–12.)

The value of all the combined mineral and natural resources of the earth has been estimated at one decillion dollars. This figure is beyond our comprehension. Listen to where decillion comes in line. Million, billion, trillion, quadrillion, sextillion, septillion, octillion, novillion, decillion. If this number is divided by the population of the earth, everyone on the earth would be a millionaire. (1 followed by 30 zeros)

18. **Increase of Light**—There will be an increase in solar and lunar light, accounting for the increase in productivity. (Isa. 30:26).
19. **Unified Language**—All language barriers will be removed, (Zeph. 3:9).

20. **Unified Worship**—The entire world will worship God and Jesus, (Isa. 45:23; 66:17–23; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 14:16; 8:23; Mal. 1:11).

21. **The manifest presence of God**—God will be present upon the earth, and recognized by man. Fellowship with God will be experienced to an unprecedented degree, (Eze. 37:27–28; Zech. 2:2; 10–13; Rev. 21:3.)

22. **The fullness of the Spirit**—All who are subject to the King will experience divine enablement and presence, (Isa. 44:3; Eze. 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 2:28–29.)

23. **The eternal nature of the Millennial state**—(Isa. 51:6–8; 55:3, 13; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; Eze. 16:60; 37:26–28.)

(Ill. As you can see, the Millennium will be a special time. I look forward to that day when it comes.)

Conc: I have been preaching about a time when Jesus will reign as King upon this earth. That will be a special time and it will be a blessed time. However, you do not have to wait until the Millennium for Jesus to be King. If you will trust Him as your Savior, He will reign as the King of your heart right now. I wonder, have you ever bowed before Jesus and confessed your sins and received Him into your heart? If you haven't, you need to and you can if you will come to Him today. Will you do that? **END**

Continued from Page 7

Not many people recover from a beheading, you know."

Paul stops whistling, turns and looks at the soldier, and with a twinkle in his eye, he says, "This is nothing new; I die daily!" (1 Corinthians 15:31)

What did both of these men have that they could face death in such a way, without fear? Jesus! Again, they knew who they were and where they were going!

Paul said, "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21).

They knew they lived in the midst of a

crooked and perverse nation, among whom they were called to shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:15).

Will you be able to stand? Do you have real salvation? Does the spirit of God live within, that with Christ and because of Christ, you can stand...and you will? **END**

“And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15: 20, 25, 33-34).

Why did God forsake Jesus on the cross? Why did Jesus cry, *“My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?”* Why was He forsaken by God the Father? Was He not God in human flesh? As God, would He not have known precisely why He must be forsaken by God the Father?

After being given vinegar, Jesus cried, *“It is finished.”* That would seem to imply that while Jesus asked, *“Why have you forsaken me,”* He knew He must be and the reason why. He then cries, *“It is finished.”* What is finished? The debt was paid! Sin is a debt that has put every person in debt to their creator, for ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The debt must be paid. Either Christ pays your debt for you, or you pay the debt yourself. You can pay the penalty for only one man’s sin, your own. Only Jesus, the one who never sinned, could pay the debt for the whole world!

When Christ paid your debt, that doesn’t mean every man’s debt to God was immediately forgiven. It means that the forgiveness of our debt became available to all of mankind, and then that canceling of our debt can only be done if we accept that our debt is paid through the shed blood of the Lamb of God!

On the cross, Jesus became sin. Jesus lived a sinless life and was loved by His Father, yet when the sin of the world was placed on Jesus, He who had never sinned became sin. Jesus, who had been the object of His Father’s greatest delight, became the object of the Father’s loathing. God the Father had to look on God the Son as He would look on you and me at the final judgment without our sin atoned for. God the Father had to turn His back on God the Son. And God the Son cried out, *“My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?”*

If there had ever been a time when God would have been tempted to be lenient on sin, it would have been when that sin rested on his darling Son. Yet, God spared not his own Son (Romans 8:32).

If God spared not Jesus when sin was laid upon Jesus, do you think that God will spare you when your sin is still on you? God spared not the angels that sinned. God spared not Sodom and Gomorrah. God spared not the old world in judgment. God spared not His own Son in redemption.

God loves us enough to deliver up His beloved son, Jesus. The sad thing about standing in judgment for hell is that you don’t have to go. The debt has already been paid. Jesus, while hanging on the cross cried, *“It is finished!”* Then, of His own accord, He gave His life and paid that debt.

These verses show exactly what Jesus became so we might go free.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might

be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

Being made a curse and being made sin, God would not and could not spare Him. God is not lenient on our sins; therefore, He could not be lenient on his darling Son when his Son became sin. Had God been lenient on His Son when Jesus bore the judicial responsibility for man, God would have ceased to be holy and would have toppled from His throne of holiness.

God cannot change, so there was no temptation to be lenient on his darling Son. The point is, why does man think that God will overlook his sin if God could not overlook sin when Jesus took it on Himself? If you believe God will be lenient on you, visit blood-stained Calvary!

On the cross, Jesus became the object of the Father’s loathing. God did not loathe Jesus. We associate loathing with hatred. God does not hate man. God loves man. God is love. *“...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

So, exactly what did Jesus endure on the cross? He was forsaken by man and forsaken by God. In that moment, Jesus, the creator of all things, God who took on human flesh, became the most vile, most perverse, most corrupt person on the earth in the Father’s eyes. He didn’t just bear our sin; He became sin! He is immediately convicted, sentenced, and punished for murder, rape, child molestation, homosexuality, and all the worse sins that man’s imagination can come up with.

God the Son, who had previously forgiven sin, prays, *“(Father) forgive*

them.” Jesus never uttered words of forgiveness to the repentant thief dying beside Him. He only informed him that he would be in paradise that day.

He had become the substitute. All sin of everyone, past, present, and future, was laid upon Him, and He that knew no sin became sin and was being held judicially and legally responsible for it as if He had committed it Himself. Two thieves died beside him, both paying the judicial price required by the law of the land. Jesus was in the middle, paying the judicial price required by God the Father. Paying the judicial penalty means that we are no longer judicially on the hook but can go free.

Jesus took the sentence for all of mankind. You can only pay the judicial price for one person's sin, your own. Jesus paid the judicial price for all of mankind, and unless you trust that, you will be held judicially responsible for yours. Why did Jesus become a curse, meaning a thing of utter detestation? Here's why.

“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...” (Habakkuk 1:13).

For the first time and the last, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were out of fellowship with one another. Under those circumstances, Jesus cries, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* Where was the emphasis? Was it on “why?” Yet, Jesus knew the “why.” Or was it on “Me?” Knowing that He was God the Son, was the pain of this separation so severe? Jesus understood man being separated from God, but Himself too? Me? God, why Me? I'm Your Son? I am also God! As God's Son, Jesus never cried, “Father, Father, why have You forsaken Me?” Did God forsake Him to such a degree, and was that fellowship so severed that Jesus could not look on God as His Father, and God could not look on Jesus as His Son?

There are three words to keep in mind when you think of the cross—justice, mercy, and grace. Justice is God giving us what we deserve. If you say, “I hope I get justice,” you better hope you don't! If you get justice, you will go to hell!

⇒ Justice is God giving us what we deserve.

⇒ Mercy is God, not giving us what we deserve.

⇒ Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve: His righteousness.

On the cross, Jesus suffered the wrath of God for us; therefore, God's justice was satisfied. Forgiveness is only free for the receiver. To forgive is to bear the burden. Salvation is free for us, but it did cost. It cost Jesus!

Jesus endured the wrath of God and became our substitute. Then, God's mercy was shown because God's justice was satisfied. Because God's justice was satisfied, we don't face wrath, putting us back as if we had never sinned. God's justice is satisfied for all past, present, and future sins. No child of God will ever face God's wrath. Because of the love of God, He took it in our stead!

So, knowing what Jesus endured for me, what does that do to and for me?

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Romans 5:8-11)

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

Why dark Gethsemane? Why bloody Calvary? Why the agonizing death on a hellish Roman cross?

For the JOY set before Him! Jesus says it was worth it. Jesus says, you are worth it!

As a Christian, Jesus walks, talks, and breathes in the flesh. He became as we are, that we might become as He is. He took my sin so that I might be declared and viewed before God as if I were innocent. He became the Son of Man, that we might become the sons of God. He became guilty that we might become acquitted. He took our despair that we might be filled with joy. He took our shame, that we might have His glory. He endured the pains of hell so that we might know the joys of heaven. We are identified with Him in death. But that's not all. I walked out of that empty tomb with Jesus.

Why did Jesus ask the Father to forgive them? Could it be possible that Jesus could not forgive sin, while at the same time bearing our sin? While He became sin, Jesus was still 100% God: God the Son bearing the judicial punishment from God the Father. To say that Jesus would have been unable to forgive sin after becoming sin would also mean that God the Father would have been unable to forgive sin at that moment also, seeing that the Father was no more God than the sin-bearing Son

was. What God the Son cannot and will not do, neither can God the Father. I wonder, could the only way for Jesus to have been unable to forgive sin after becoming sin would have been for Him to have lost even the tiniest microscopic part of God or His equality to God? Had that happened, He would have been disqualified to be able to satisfy the wrath of God.

“For since by man came death, by

man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

Jesus was God in human flesh. Being man, He paid the price. Being God qualified the man to pay the price.

What does that do to you and me? Knowing how far the creator of the universe would go to pay that steep of a

price to save us ought to flood us with love and gratitude.

Behold the Lamb of God, who took away the sin of the world on bloody Calvary, lay in a cold grave, rose again, is seated at the right hand of God, and is not ashamed to call us His brother!

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb 2:11).

Impute

—by Joe Keim

He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith...being fully persuaded that, what He (God) had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore, it was imputed to him (Abraham) for righteousness.

Now it was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to Him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 4:20-25 through 5:1

The word impute is an accounting term. In Scripture the word impute is speaking of recording our debts or crediting to our accounts. Imagine you go to the store, buy a product, walk to the register, and hand the cashier your credit card. The cashier imputes your charges to your credit card account. Later, your bill comes due, and you are obligated to pay your bill.

If I were behind you in the checkout line and handed the cashier my credit card to pay for your transaction, it would be unjust for her to charge both of us. If I placed your purchase on my credit card, the charge would not appear on your account.

Likewise, when we, by faith, believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, God imputes our sins to Jesus' account. You could say that God gave His credit card so all the sins of the whole world could be placed on Jesus' account. Since God paid for our sins by imputing them to Jesus, we will not have any charges showing up on our account. Jesus took care of the charges. Every one of them. It's just as if we'd never sinned. That's justified!

The author invites you to text or call if you have questions or comments!
(419) 651-6813

The Prodigal's Brother

—by Gerald Hochstetler

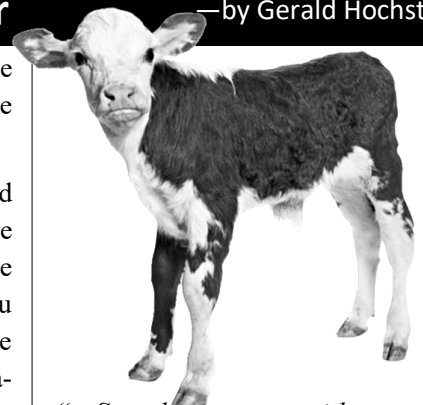
Let's take a look at the prodigal's older brother more closely.

He was angry. He had faithfully served, and served, and served. Why the big party for the younger brother who had wasted away so much?

The Father did not rebuke his oldest son but, with the same kindness, responded, "Son, you are ALWAYS with me. Everything I have is yours."

The older son was frustrated because he did not understand his position. The Father reminded him who he was.

As believers, we are often frustrated because we forget who we are. We are children of God. The fatted calves are ours. You can have one any time you so desire. We tiptoe around like we are at a friend's house rather than the Father's house. If you are home, go to the refrigerator and get what you want.



“...Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine” (Luke 15:31).

Sermons over the Phone

Dial the phone number.
Enter the access code.
Choose the sermon. Enjoy!

Dial-in Number: (641) 715-3800
Access Code: 478499 #

New sermons are
available each month!

July

How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity With God

(program 3, parts 1 & 2)

Messages by Dr. John Ankerberg

Biblical Counseling: Cause or Occasion?

Join us in this five part series as Pastor John Marino explores secular counseling models vs. Biblical counseling. What is the difference, and how do we think through these issues Biblically?

How to Handle Difficult Circumstances

Dr. Stanley explains how God helps us deal with the tension, stress, and doubt of tough times.

The Coming Digital Society: Blessing or Curse?

Jan Markell talks to Michele Bachmann, and they conclude a form of global government is here now. The centerpiece of this is healthcare. A digital gulag now exists in Europe but the goal is America and the rest of the West. A global health emergency could make this system functional tomorrow. Covid set the stage.

August

Biblical Counseling Saving Normal

(part 1 of 4)

Join us in this series as Pastor John Marino explores secular counseling models vs. biblical counseling.

How to Encourage Yourself

Dr. Stanley looks at the life of David, the man who would become king—but not before he experienced his own moment of despair. Learn from David how to encourage yourself in the Lord.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

Jan Markell talks to Dr. David Reagan. The Bible speaks much about peace and war. Will believers witness any of the nine end-time wars and which one is next?

13 Scholars Answer Tough Questions About the Rapture, Tribulation, and the 2nd Coming

(parts 1 & 2 out of 7)

How much prophetic material did God put in the Bible? How many times does the Bible mention Christ's Second Coming? Where does the Bible teach the doctrine of the Rapture? Where is Imminence (that Christ could return any moment) taught in Scripture?

September

Biblical Counseling On Depression and Unpaved Roads

(part 2 of 4)

Pastor John Marino explores secular counseling vs. biblical counseling.

Satan's Successful Snare

Dr. Stanley explains that partial obedience to God isn't obedience at all: it's rebellion. If we want God to use our lives for His mighty purposes, we must listen and obey His voice. Learn how to surrender your will to the Lord and walk according to His will for your life.

God's Grand Finale

Jan Markell welcomes author Jeff Kinley and Pastor Mark Henry for the hour. They focus on Revelation, which is God's grand finale. This future time will find God literally shaking the planet. The chaos will result in the return of Jesus Christ in his Second Coming to put an end to the chaos and establish his Kingdom.

13 Scholars Answer Tough Questions About the Rapture, Tribulation, and the 2nd Coming

(parts 3 & 4 out of 7)

This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA. We welcome your articles, testimonies, and questions. We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles.

The cost to print and distribute *The Amish Voice* is \$.75 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

Current Resident

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Ashland, Ohio
Permit No. 188

Moving? Receiving duplicate mailings?

Not interested in the Amish Voice?

Your address label is needed to make these changes. Please help us update our database by noting any corrections directly on your address label, and then returning it to us at:

575 US Highway 250 - Greenwich, OH 44837

Pride

—By John Weaver

PRIDE: A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's accomplishments.

"...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think..." (Romans 12:3).

"...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

If anyone has any doubts about what God thinks about pride, we could go to Proverbs and read about the six things that God hates. The first is a proud look. So why does God hate a proud look, or why has he promised to resist the proud person? It is because ALL glory belongs to God alone. He made us and ALL good things come from Him. We should be careful to give all glory to God.

Pride, on the other hand, seeks to

glorify oneself. We are servants of the most high. We should always seek ways in which our lives can give honor and glory to God. Pride, on the other hand, robs that glory from God and seeks to exalt self.

It was pride that caused Satan and his angels to be cast out of heaven. Pride will raise havoc in a brotherhood.

"Only by pride cometh contention..." (Prov 13:10).

When the time came for Jesus to be crucified, He lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed this beautiful prayer:

"...Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1).

And also in the prayer:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

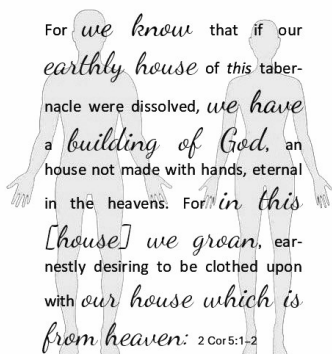
We can take a great lesson from Jesus: He knew God like no one else who ever walked on the earth. His whole life consisted of doing the Father's will, always seeking to deflect all glory to the Father God.

Jesus said of Himself, "...I am meek and lowly in heart..." (Matthew 11:29). No pride there.

Humility belongs to God's kingdom. Pride belongs to Satan's kingdom.

Father God, we confess we have not always had a proper concept of You. ALL GLORY belongs to You alone. Forgive us wherever we have allowed pride into our lives. God forbid that we glory except in the cross of Jesus Christ. We lift you up, oh Father, for you alone are worthy to receive honor, glory, dominion, and power both now and forever. Amen and AMEN.

END



For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this [house] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 2 Cor 5:1-2

In this passage, the physical body is referred to as "our earthly house of this tabernacle." In other words, don't forget: you are living in a tent! Tents are temporary and unstable. They don't last forever. While living in this tent, we tend to groan and moan the day away.

There's a better house coming! The materials are not made with tent material. The house you and I will be clothed with is a building of eternal beauty that will last for tens of billions of eternities and then more. It is a good house. No more groaning and moaning.

Enjoy your tent today. Take good care of it.

— Joe Keim