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The Secret of the Strength

— by Peter Hoover

CHAPTER 11 On to Baptism

South of Lake Constance, where the land rises to the shimmering peaks of Santis, Altmann, and Kreuzberg, the city of Sankt Gallen lies in the valley of the Sitter River. For more than a thousand years after 612 AD, when the missionary Gall of Down settled here, monks lived in Sankt Gallen.

Over the centuries, their monastery grew. Its library grew to become the most important one in Europe north of the Alps. Its abbots grew in importance until Sankt Gallen became a free city and its abbots princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1525, people knew Sankt Gallen for two things: its ancient monastery and its textiles. For generations, the weavers of Sankt Gallen had made the finest linens in this part of Europe. They had become wealthy and formed an association, a "weavers' guild," and the son of the guild leader was a boy named Wolf.

Despite his growing wealth and his eye for business, Wolf Ulimann's

father did not overlook the tender conscience of his son. He sent Wolf south to Chur (in the Grisons, where the Romans had lived behind the Rhaetian Alps) to become a monk.

While Wolf Ulimann studied in quiet seclusion, another young man of Sankt Gallen, Johannes Kessler, traveled north to the University of Wittenberg in Germany. On his way, he stopped one night at Jena in Thuringen at the Black Bear Inn. Some knights came to the inn. At least, he thought they were knights, but one was not. He was Martin Luther, disguised in a knight's armor, on a secret mission out from the Wartburg Castle where he was hiding.

Johannes Kessler, the student, and Martin Luther, the pope-defying monk in knight's armor got acquainted, like travelers get acquainted on cold evenings at hotels, and their talk turned serious.

When Johannes Kessler returned to Sankt Gallen, he committed himself to the study of the Scriptures. Holding meetings at his house in the evenings, he read the words of Christ and explained them to the young people who came to learn. Wolf Ulimann, during a time at home, attended a

meeting, and his heart was moved to stay and become a regular participant. He listened, read, and prayed until the Spirit led him to inner repentance and a new life in Christ.

The city council of Sankt Gallen (that by now had turned Protestant) asked Johannes Kessler to stop having the classes. They "caused unrest in the church." But Wolf did not want them to stop. He invited those who sought the truth to the meeting room of his father's guild and began to lead the Bible studies himself. More people came than ever. The Scriptures Wolf translated from Latin to German came to life in their discussions. All over Sankt Gallen, people began to think and pray, and the Spirit of God moved their hearts. Then Lorenz Hochrütiner came back.

Lorenz, one of the Sankt Gallen linen weavers, had gone to Zurich, where he became a zealous, but immature follower of Christ. One Sunday, after mass in the Zurich suburb of Stadelhofen, Lorenz joined a crowd of people so moved to "do away with dead idols" that they ripped out and smashed the church's crucifix. For this, he got banished.

Now back in Sankt Gallen, Lorentz

attended the meeting in the weavers' hall where Wolf read Romans, chapter six. The study hinged on the meaning of verse four: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."



Sankt Gallen, the city that grew up around its famous monastery (the monks' twin-towered chapel illuminated on the right) eagerly embraced Reformation ideas. But to go the whole way, to follow Christ and get baptized as believers, seemed far too radical for most of its people in the sixteenth century.

A burial in baptism and a rising to a new life—Lorenz Hochrütiner stood up and explained what he saw in this verse. Wolf Ulimann became powerfully convicted.

Several months later, Lorenz returned to Zürich, and Wolf also needed to go on a short trip. On the road from Konstanz to Schaffhausen along the Rhein, he met Conrad Grebel.

Wolf and Conrad talked. They both felt inwardly moved to follow Christ no matter what it cost.

"Baptize me!" said Wolf. "I must be baptized, not just with water poured from a bowl, but buried in the water like Christ."

Almost before Conrad knew what was happening, Wolf had stripped off his clothes and was heading with him into the frigid waters of the Rhein in February 1525. There, where the water got deep, Conrad "pressed him under and covered him completely," and Wolf came out—fully surrendered to Christ.¹

From this time onward, things happened fast. When Wolf returned to Sankt Gallen, people filled the weavers' hall, standing along the walls on March 18, to hear his testimony in which he said: "The Lord has shown me that I should leave the church. What the church teaches is not true. They have never preached the truth in this church, and they are not doing so now."

On March 25, Conrad Grebel came. Along with him came a man named Eberhard Bolt from the Canton of Schwyz. Eberhard (*Eberli*, as everyone called him) had not been baptized. In fact, he was against the baptism of adults. But he was a sincere believer, and after talking with Wolf and Conrad, he became convicted. Immediately after his baptism, the people asked him to preach for them. He was a gifted speaker with a "God-fearing and compassionate spirit."²

Almost the entire city of Sankt Gallen came out to the Berlisberg, where they sat on the sun-warmed grass to hear Conrad and Eberli speak. It was Palm Sunday, April 9, 1525. The rich were struck to the heart. The poor were lifted up in Christ. Many women and young people believed, and a great crowd streamed down to the Sitter River at the end of the meeting "as if it would have been a day of parades."³

There, Conrad, Eberli, and Wolf baptized those who believed—hundreds of converts—in the Sitter River, and a new church community was born.

¹ In the words of Johannes Kessler: "Er wollte nicht mit einer Schüssel mit Wasser allein begossen, sondern ganz nackend und bloß, hinaus in den Rhein von dem Grebel untergedrückt und bedeckt werden." (*Sabbata*, ca. 1530).

² According to Johannes Kessler.

³ From the eyewitness account of Fridolin Sicher, the Protestant chronicler of Sankt Gallen.

The people chose Eberli to be their leader, and for a whole week, they had services every day. They broke bread in their homes and found the joy of giving up everything for Jesus. One wealthy man, Anthoni Roggenacher, threw a hundred golden crowns at the feet of the gathered believers....Then they got called to court.

The city court of Sankt Gallen, working on behalf of the Protestant church, was most concerned about baptism. Baptizing people without authority, without the blessing of the church, and on top of that, baptizing by immersion—such things simply were not done in Switzerland in 1525!

Wolf Ulimann spoke before the court. "We know only one baptism," he said. "Baptism is nothing without believing in Christ, dying to sin, and coming to a new life."

The court, under the influence of Johannes Kessler and Dr. Joachim von Watt (Vadian), moved cautiously. They asked Eberli Bolt kindly to leave Sankt Gallen. He obeyed and made a trip to his home at Lachen in the Roman Catholic canton of Schwyz. There, he spoke to the priest who became converted. The authorities burned both Eberli and the priest at the stake on May 29, 1525. They walked "gladly into the flames."

The city council of Protestant Sankt Gallen admonished Wolf to stop baptizing "for the sake of brotherly love" in the Lord's church.

"I cannot do that," Wolf answered. "I follow Christ."

"Then we must expel you from the city," the court decided. But they did not expel him at once. The "evangelical leaders" of the city felt compelled to prove themselves right and Wolf wrong. They arranged two public de-

bates. At the last debate, they read from Huldrych Zwingli's book *On Baptism, Rebaptism, and Infant Baptism*. To that, Wolf replied in a clear voice before the great crowd of people who had come to listen: "You can have Zwingli's word, but I will have the Word of God!"

By June, the Anabaptists of Sankt Gallen were strictly forbidden to assemble. On July 17, 1525, they were banished.

Wolf fled with a group to Moravia. He traveled, spoke, and baptized. After a year, he was back in Switzerland and they banished him from the city of Basel. Then, he led another group from the Sankt Gallen area toward Moravia. But they did not get there. At Waldsee, across the Rhein in Swabia, they got caught. The authorities dispersed the children, drowned the women, and beheaded and burned the men. "In this way," wrote Kaspar Braitmichel, a brother from Moravia, "they witnessed with their bodies, like knights, that their faith and baptism were founded on the truth of God."⁴

Wolf Ulimann would have called it his third baptism—the baptism of blood.

A Threefold Witness

The first Anabaptists looked to Jesus for their example in baptism. Jesus was baptized in the water. The Spirit came upon Him, and He spoke of another baptism He had to go through: the baptism of suffering (Luke 12:50). The Anabaptists understood this in the light of 1 John 5:6-8: "*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ;*

⁴ *Geschichtbuech unnd kurtzer Durchgang van Anfang der Welt wie Gott sein Werck inn seinem Volck auff Erden angericht gehandelt unnd triben hat*, ca. 1570.

not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."⁵

The first Anabaptists believed that Spirit baptism, water baptism, and baptism by blood were the three witnesses of their souls' salvation. Jörg Rothenfelder, servant of the Word in Bavaria and Switzerland wrote:

Baptism is not for the unknowing, as practiced by those who are against Christ, but only for those who believe. The order of Christ must be observed, and the three witnesses, Spirit, water, and blood, must be kept together. It is not enough to have only an "inner baptism," as some perverted spirits teach. Inner faith demands an outer witness.⁶

From 1 John 5 came the teaching of baptism being a "co-testimony" or *Mitzeugnis*, as the Anabaptists of southern Germany frequently called it. From John the Baptist came the picture of Jesus' baptism by fire (the fire of suffering), through which all His followers need to go.

Suffering to the Anabaptists was more than being tortured or burned at the stake. They believed it comes on us in three ways: the suffering of

⁵ Martin Luther's German Bible, read by the Anabaptists, did not include the additions to 1 John 5:7-8, which appeared in Greek texts after the sixteenth century and in the English King James Version. The words appear in some later German editions, but not as part of the main text in Bibles now in use among the Amish, the Old Order Mennonites and the Hutterites.

⁶ From a letter to Ulrich Agemann, written from Sankt Gallen, in Switzerland, on October 15, 1562.

persecution (*Verfolgung*), the suffering of temptation (*Anfechtung*), and the suffering of sorrow or anxiety (*Trübsal*). When they asked Ambrutz Spittelmayr, a young, Latin-speaking Anabaptist messenger arrested at Erlangen in Franconia in 1527, what he asked people to do before he baptized them, he said:

Just like a man submits to the water in baptism, so he must throw himself under God and stay faithful to Him in spite of prison, the sword, or whatever trial may come.... You understand the words of Christ in John 6 in a wooden, literal way. You think you eat his body and drink his blood in the mass. But to do so is something else. It is to suffer with Him. It is to be baptized like Him, in blood. Whoever does not want to be baptized with the Spirit, with the water, and with the blood will be baptized in the lake of fire.⁷

Shortly after giving this testimony to the German court, Ambrutz completed his third baptism. They beheaded him at Cadolzburg near Ansbach in Franconia on February 6, 1528. Ordained as a messenger by Hans Hut, he had spent only seven weeks in freedom as an Anabaptist.

A Mark

On April 16, 1525, shortly after the beginning of the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland, Conrad Grebel visited the mountain town of Oberwinterthur. He stayed in the home of Arbogast Finsterbach, brother-in-law to his friend Marx Bosshard. When Conrad spoke to him about following Jesus, Arbogast asked him: "What must a person do before he can be baptized?"

Conrad answered, "To be baptized,

⁷ From Ambrutz's written testimony to the court, 1527.

a person must stop fornicating, gambling, drinking, and charging interest on his money.”

On another occasion, Conrad Grebe answered that question:

Baptism is for those who want to better themselves, take on a new life, die to immorality, get buried with Christ, and rise out of baptism to newness of life...Baptism is the mark of change in the inner man. It is the mark of a new birth, a washing away of sin, and a promise to walk according to Christ.⁸

It took me some time before I understood Conrad Grebel, but his words became clear in the context of what other Anabaptists taught.

An Ausbund writer wrote:

Come with joy and dressed in new clothing! Come discerning the evil from the good!... Come and draw near to the Passover feast if you have taken His mark: His Spirit, the water, and the blood. This is the Christians' possession, and to this, they cling. It is the mark of baptism, which they receive of their own free will and in which their old flesh drowns⁹

Like Jesus, who responded with commandments (love your neighbor, sell what you have, etc.) when people asked what they must do to be saved, the first Anabaptists responded with commandments. But they taught that commandments (the law) can be obeyed only when we follow Jesus and become born again. They taught that Jesus bears us again in the Spirit, the water, and the blood of baptism.

Water does not save us. “We are not born again when we are baptized,” wrote Menno Simons, “but we are baptized when we are born again by faith in God's Word.” For the first

Anabaptists, the new birth was not complete without the mark of water baptism.

Dirk Pietersz, arrested after holding meetings in his house on the dike at Edam in the Netherlands, faced interrogation. The interrogator asked him: “How long is it since you were baptized?”

“Ever since I was born,” Dirk replied.

The interrogator did not catch the implication. (Dirk was speaking about his new birth.) But when the matter became clear, they sentenced him to burn at the stake in Amsterdam on May 24, 1546.

A Seal of Faith

Just as circumcision was the seal of God's Old Covenant, the first Anabaptists saw water baptism as the seal of God's New Covenant. Menno Simons wrote, “Outward baptism with water is a seal or proof of our faith, just as outward circumcision was to the believing and obedient Abraham.”¹⁰

The Anabaptists quoted Tertullian, who, in German translation, spoke of a *Versieglung* (sealing), and they believed that “the seal of God on men's foreheads” in Rev. 9:4 was water baptism—the counterpart to the mark of the beast. Baptism, they taught, is the stamp of legitimacy on faith that makes it a saving faith. Faith without baptism is like a document without a seal.

Menno Simons wrote:

Do you suppose, dear friends, that the new birth is just like the world says, just a plunging into the water or a little speech: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?” No, dear brothers. No! The new birth consists not in water nor in words. The new

birth is a heavenly life-giving power, the power of God in our hearts. Power flows from God when the Word is preached. Then, when we believe the Word, it quickens, renews, penetrates, and remolds our hearts so that we are changed from unbelief to faith, from sin to righteousness, from evil to good, from carnal to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly, from the nature of Adam to the nature of Christ...Those who go through this change are the truly born again. They are the regenerate ones to whom Christian baptism is a seal of faith by which they receive remission of sins.¹¹

No Empty Seal

Catholic and Protestant baptism, the baptism of infants or of anyone else who did not “produce fruit in keeping with repentance,” was no baptism at all to the first Anabaptists. They did not feel guilty of *anabaptism* (baptizing twice),¹² for the only seal they counted valid was the seal of water on faith.

Menno Simons wrote:

The Word of God must be taught and understood before baptism. To baptize before that which is represented by baptism, namely faith, is found in us, is as logical as to place a cart before the horse, to sow before we plow, to build before we have the lumber on hand, or to seal a letter before it is written.¹³

Leonhard Schiemer wrote:

To sum it all up, baptism with water is the testimony of the covenant we make with God in our hearts. Baptism may be compared to a

⁸ From *Protestation und Schutzschrift*, 1524.

⁹ *Ausbund*, 55:10-12

¹⁰ *op. cit.*

¹¹ *op. cit.*

¹² The state churches called them Wiedertäufer (rebaptisers). Using a play on words some Anabaptists, in turn, called them *Widerchristen* (Anti-Christians).

¹³ *Opera Omnia Theologica*, 1681.

man who writes a document and then asks that it be sealed. Nobody will seal it or sign it for him without knowing what the document says. Whoever baptizes a child puts his seal on a blank document.¹⁴

Baptism for Remission of Sins

An Ausbund writer wrote:

He who is born out of water and Spirit is no longer a sinner. His flesh rules him no longer... True Christians have buried all their fleshly lusts with Christ.¹⁵

Concerning Peter's command at Pentecost that repentant believers be baptized for remission of sins, Menno Simons wrote:

We preach that remission of sins takes place in baptism, not on account of the water of the rite performed (Jesus Christ is the only means of grace) but because men receive the promises of the Lord by faith and obediently follow His Word and will.¹⁶

Peter, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, commanded us to get baptized like Jesus said, for remission of sins. We must, therefore, receive baptism as it is commanded in the



The Limmat River in Zürich, Switzerland, where Felix Manz experienced the final dimension of his threefold baptism—that of suffering—on the day Protestant authorities drowned him for what he believed, January 5, 1527. Huldrych Zwingli's church, the Grossmünster, stands tall in the background.

¹⁴ *Von dreyerley Tauf* ... 1527

¹⁵ *Ausbund*, 94:20-21

¹⁶ *Dat Fundament des Christelycken leers* ... 1539

Scriptures. Otherwise we cannot obtain remission of our sins, nor will the Holy Ghost fall upon us. Who has ever received remission of sins contrary to the Word of God? Surely we cannot take the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost from God as by force. If we then desire the remission of sins, we must do and fulfil all that God has taught us through Christ Jesus and through the holy apostles.¹⁷

The forgiveness of sins takes place during baptism according to the Scriptures. Baptism is the putting on of Christ. It is an immersion into the community of Christ, not on account of the water or the administered signs (else the kingdom of God would be bound to elements and signs), but on account of the promise that we receive by obedience through faith.¹⁸

With all this, Menno Simons was careful not to imply that sinners could go through baptism and come out saints. In 1539 he wrote:

As Christ died and was buried, so we ought to die to our sins and be buried with Christ in baptism. Not that we are to do this for the first time after baptism, but we must have begun all this beforehand.¹⁹

Not Water Alone

The Anabaptists' enemies thought they could regenerate babies in baptism. They believed that baptism was a channel of grace. This, the Anabaptists steadfastly denied. Hans Betz wrote:

Baptism alone will not wash you from lust and sin. It only shows that you are clean in Christ. The

righteousness of Christ is the garment you are to put on in baptism, when lust, sin, and deceit—your Adam—is washed away.²⁰

Thomas von Imbroich wrote:

The washing of water is joined to the Word. No one is cleansed by the washing of water but by the Word, as the Lord says: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).²¹

Menno Simons put it plainly:

As long as men's minds are not renewed and they are not of the same mind with Christ—as long as they are not washed inwardly with clean water from the fountain of God—they may as well say, "What good can water do?" For as long as they are earthly and carnally minded, the entire ocean is not enough to make them clean....

He who seeks remission of sins only through water baptism despises the blood of the Lord and makes water to be his idol. Therefore, let everyone be careful lest he ascribe the honor and glory due to Christ to ceremonies performed and to created elements....

Do not imagine that we insist on elements and rites. I tell you the truth. If anyone were to come to me, even the emperor or the king, desiring to be baptized but walking still in the lusts of the flesh—if the holy, penitent, and regenerate life were not in evidence—I would rather die than baptize such a person. Where there is no regenerating faith that leads to obedience, there can be no baptism. Philip said to the eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."²²

¹⁷ *Verclaringhe des christelycken doopsels* ... ca. 1542

¹⁸ *Dat Fundament des Christelycken leers* ... 1539

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *Ausbund*, 108:9

²¹ *Confessio*, 1558

²² *Dat Fundament des Christelycken leers*. . . 1539

Baptism and the Cross

Baptism literally pictured life and death to the first Anabaptists. To get baptized on confession of faith was to sign your own death sentence in the sixteenth century. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin had mercy on rebaptized people and only beheaded them, but beheading in Roman Catholic countries was considered far too mild a punishment. (It was reserved only for those who recanted.) Baptized adults were usually burned at the stake.

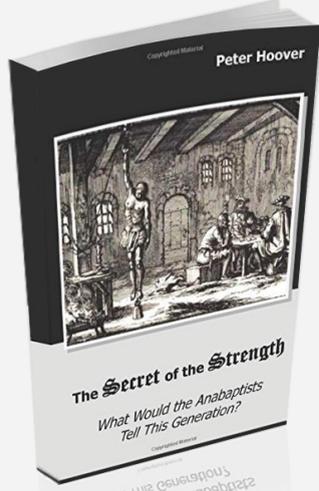
Menno Simons wrote:

All who hear and believe the Word of God get baptized. With this, they declare they will live no longer according to their own will but according to the will of God. They declare they are prepared to forsake their homes, possessions, lands, and lives. They declare they are ready to suffer hunger, affliction, oppression, persecution, cross, and death for Christ. In baptism, they express their desire to bury the flesh with its lusts and arise with Christ to eternal life.²³

Baptized into a life of the cross, the first Anabaptists followed Christ ...

*To be continued
in the July issue...*

²³ *ibid.*



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Just Listen

—by Joe Keim

Most of us would rate ourselves as good listeners. At least, we would like to think that way. Sadly, most of us are not good listeners. We fail miserably.

A good listener does not finish the other person's sentences.

A good listener does not respond with a bigger, juicier story.

A good listener leans in, pays attention to detail, looks the speaker in the eyes, and waits for the person to finish. After a short pause, a good listener will respond with questions like, "You mentioned earlier that you _____. How did that make you feel? What happened after that? Wow! That's very interesting. Can you share more?"

Do you want to be a mentor?

Learn to listen.

Do you want to make a difference in a hurting person's life?

Learn to listen.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak..." (James 1:19).



There's a reason the Lord gave us two ears and one mouth. We should listen twice as much as we speak.

Amen, Joe! That's good preaching.

People in ministry are tempted to fix others rather than listen. I've learned (and am still learning) that we, in ministry, cannot fix anyone. We can, on the other hand, listen.

Listening does not require a special license or a four-year degree.

Listening does not require you to be popular or famous. Age doesn't matter. Gender doesn't matter.

Recently, someone called and talked 100 miles an hour, nonstop, for 45 minutes. Suddenly, the person ran out of words. After a long pause, I asked, what I could do to help her. She said, "Nothing! I just needed you to listen."

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

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www.sermonnotebook.org

...continued from March 2024 issue

Revelation 19:11–21

II. His Coming Will Be Violent

(v. 17–18)

A. The Fowls Are To Be Called (v. 17)—The slaughter will be so great when the Lord does battle that God calls for the fowls of the air to come and help dispose of the bodies of the slain. Revelation 14:20 tells us that the blood will be to the horse's bridle! What a slaughter that will be!

B. The Flesh Is To Be Consumed (v. 18)—Notice that all levels of the army of God's enemies are on the menu for this great supper. In life, they were separated by class and by rank. Here, we see slave and freeman, small and great. All are reduced to nothing more than food for the scavengers in that day!

(III. What a lesson! In life, they were different. Some gave orders, others carried them out, but in death, they are all equal! Friends, death is the great leveler! No matter who you are, when death comes for you, everything you had and everything you were will be no more! Your money, position, power, intellect, and everything will be gone! If you leave this world without having trusted Jesus as your Savior, then you have nothing but hell to look forward to! Some think they will make it because of this reason or the other, but the truth is, none will make it without Jesus. When you leave this world, you had better know Christ! If you don't, you will go to hell!)

III. His Coming Will Be Victorious

(v. 19–21)

A. Earth's Armies Will Be Drawn To Armageddon (v. 19)—All the armies of the world, armies that are enemies today, will join together to fight against the Lord Jesus when He returns. Armies fighting with one another just before Jesus comes back will join forces in a effort to defeat the Lord and His army. But this is meant to be! God will draw them here to His killing field so that He might execute His wrath upon all the enemies of the Lord! Their desire shall be to put an end to the Lord and all He represents. They will fail miserably!

B. Earth's Armies Will Be Destroyed At Armageddon (v. 20–21)—the two verses tell us the amazing news of how this battle turns out.

1. v. 20 **The Devilish Duo Are Destroyed** — Throughout the Tribulation Period, the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet had led people to believe they were superhuman. They had used deception to convince the world that the Anti-Christ was, in fact, God. Their plan was so convincing that the world bowed down in reverence to the beast.

However, when the Lord returns, it quickly becomes apparent that these men, despite all their bluster and their miracles, were nothing more than men. These men are taken, and they receive a fate worse than death. They are cast alive into the Lake of Fire! They are sent directly into hell. Jesus will claim absolute victory over these men.

2. v. 21 **The Doomed Multitudes Are Destroyed**—With the image of the great leaders being taken alive and cast into hell still burning before their eyes, the Lord Jesus will speak the word, and

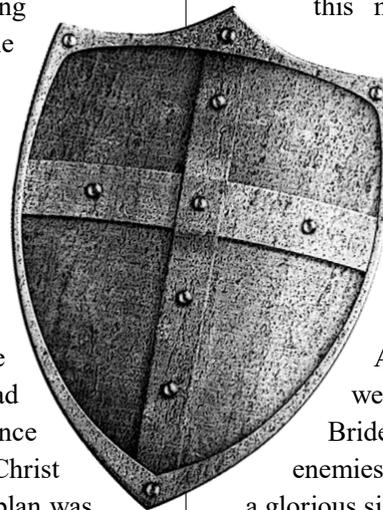
all these armies will be destroyed in an instant of time! Their blood will saturate the clothes of the Lord Jesus, verse 13, and the fowls of the air will devour their rotting flesh. Without firing a single shot, Jesus will prove Himself greater than every opposing army and greater than all the military might men can muster against Him. What a horrible day that will be for all the enemies of the Lord! But what a glorious day it will be for those who love Him, look for Him and for those special ones who ride with Him!

Conc: When read, these things sound almost too fantastic to be true. However, everything I have preached this morning will come to pass one of these days!

While this will happen, this is not an event that you should worry about! If you are saved, you will witness the victory of the Lord from the air. As we ride behind Him, we will see our beloved Bridegroom dispatch all our enemies instantly! That will be a glorious sight.

On the other hand, if you are not saved, you may very well be in that crowd of soldiers that is defeated instantly. Which would you rather have this morning? The peace of heart that comes with being saved, or the doubt and fear that comes with being lost? Where would you rather serve? With a victorious, glorious army, or an army that is defeated before it is even formed? (III. It is already done!)

My friends, you can be saved today if you come to Jesus and accept Him into your heart and life. Will you do that this morning? Will you be ready when the King comes?



The bodily resurrection of Christ is fundamental to Christianity. It defines the Christian faith. No one can be a Christian without it, for it is the very core of the gospel! This may sound severe, but saying anything less neglects what the resurrection of Christ accomplished.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor 15:1-4).

Why does Christianity depend on the resurrection of Christ? What does it mean for us? Following are five things the resurrection accomplished.

1. To Declare Christ as the Son of God

Jesus claimed the ability to raise His own self from the dead.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2:19).

This is the power of God! He told Israel that the sign that proved He was the Son of God would be His resurrection;

“But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt 12:39-40). Jonah came out of the whale alive!

Paul also testifies to this resurrection declaration:

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom 1:4).

If Christ did not resurrect, He was a liar, not the promised Christ, and not God manifest in the flesh.

He has always been the Son of God, but after the resurrection from the dead He was declared to be the Son of God with power.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt 28:18).

2. Payment for Sins

You may be thinking that it was through His death and shed blood that He provided the atonement for sins, and you would be right. However, if He did not resurrect, His death would not mean anything.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17).

If there was no resurrection of Christ, then there is no forgiveness of sins because, *“The wages of sin is death...” (Rom 6:23).* He paid our wages for us to take away our sins. He did the work for us! Hallelujah!

Christ's resurrection not only proved that He was the eternal God and the giver of all life but that His work to pay for sins through His death was sufficient and complete. Without the resurrection, His death would have been a good effort, but it would have been like writing a check without money in the bank. It would bounce. Christ's resurrection meant the check was cashed! The work was finished! Just as the surgery is not over until the doctor walks out of the surgery room and the cooking is not done until the turkey comes out of the oven, your sins were not paid in full until Christ rose from the dead.

3. Salvation Offered

Jesus Christ is the Savior. If the Savior is still dead, then how would you know why He died, that He died willingly, or that He died for you? Scripture describes Jesus as a mediator, but if the mediator is dead, then future reconciliation is impossible.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

Christ revealed the mystery of the gospel after His resurrection. Christ could only offer free salvation by grace (His work for you) through faith if He had already finished the work and was not dead. If Christ is still dead, then our faith is dead, and so is any hope of salvation.

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Cor 15:14).

The resurrection is a huge issue regarding the gospel and salvation. When asked if they are saved, people commonly respond, “I believe in Jesus.” It is true that salvation is found only in Him.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

While it is true that belief in Jesus is necessary, a person can believe in Jesus and still not be saved. The question is, what do you believe about Jesus? Do you believe He existed? Do you know what He did for you? For example, Muslims believe in Jesus. He is considered a prophet in the religion of Islam and the Koran. The Hindus believe in Jesus. Historians believe Jesus was a first-century Jew who lived in Galilee.

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

Do you see times when merely believ-

ing in Jesus cannot save you? I spoke to a person a while back, and he commented that a simple belief in Jesus is enough for salvation. Yet, we read:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17).

So, it's apparent that it's more than just believing in Jesus. We must also believe/trust in what He did for us. Let's go to Paul's gospel to see what he taught.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1 Cor 15:1-4).

What does the gospel say? It describes what Jesus did at the cross. Yes, we have to believe in Jesus. It is the first step. But we must also believe and trust in what Jesus did for us at Calvary's cross for salvation. He did everything necessary for salvation for all men. Much confusion comes from people failing to rightly divide. Remember what it says in 1 Cor 15:17, *"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."* If you don't know who Jesus is or what He did or fail to trust His finished work at Calvary's cross, then believing in Jesus cannot save you.

4. Righteousness Imputed

The resurrection of Christ proves His righteousness. After dying for the sins of the world, if Christ were not perfectly righteous in so doing, He would not deserve to live again. Only by His resurrection can His righteousness be imputed to us. The gospel does not stop with our sins being put on Christ; it

must finish with His righteousness being imputed to us by faith. Imputed righteousness is a must for a person to go to heaven.

"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 Cor 5:21).

Without Christ's resurrection in righteousness, we could never be justified by faith.

"And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his 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" (Rom 4:22-25).

5. Give Power of Eternal Life

Christ's bodily resurrection exhibited the power to raise humanity from the dead. The promise of eternal life would be nonsense if the Savior ended His life with death, never to live again. There is no life found in a dead Savior. This is what separates Christianity from other religions. Muhammad never rose from the dead. Neither did Buddha. The Lord Jesus Christ did. The Lord Jesus Christ defeated death through His resurrection, alive forevermore, to guarantee eternal life.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor 15:55).

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57).

It is the power of His resurrection that He offers to us through the gospel. Without the bodily resurrection of Christ, we could not live the Christian life. There would be no life in Christ. Life and immortality were only brought to light at the appearance of Christ after His resurrection.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:" (2 Tim 1:10).

Paul reminded Timothy that Christ had abolished death and given eternal life to all who believed the gospel given to Paul.

Paul said:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Without Christ's resurrection, we are all dead.

Conclusion

These five things depend on the bodily resurrection of Christ. They must be accomplished to have a reason to worship Christ, preach Christ for salvation, and declare righteousness in Christ or eternal life through Christ. In summary, we would not be Christians unless Christ rose from the dead. It is no coincidence that most of these reasons are found in the epistles where the mystery of Christ is revealed. The first time the word Christian is used is in Acts, after the cross, the work of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and after the apostle Paul was saved.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

It was Paul who said:

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (2 Timothy 2:8).

Christianity is not a religion filled with religious followers of a religious figure. The Christian faith rests on the resurrection. Without resurrection power, there is no eternal life! It is by the gospel of the resurrected Christ that we are saved!

When situations arise, and my emotions are stirred up, I am reminded of past wounds and sadness at the level of accusations made against a fallible human who is choosing a harm-filled path. Yet, I am also reminded of God’s un-failing love, His boundless delight in forgiveness, the awe of God's mighty justice, “but for the grace of God, here go I,” and how much healing has happened in the past years. All these are tensions that I get to hold both sides of gently. Thankfully, I do not have to have it all figured out - yesterday, today, or next week.

The job of our emotions is to help keep us alive. Emotions will tell us “a” story, not necessarily “the” story (the truth). “When our emotions run wild, facts are our friends” (Dr John Delony). "Grief demands a witness" (David Kessler). “Shame eats secrets for breakfast” (Brene Brown).

Over the last few years, I have had to conscientiously choose to step out of hiding and walk through life alone, take a considerable risk, and honestly talk with trustworthy friends, a licensed counselor, and trained wise persons... while at the same time talking with God about the things which are stirring in my heart and mind.

You know what? Letting safe and trustworthy people into hearing my story was SCARY! Shame yelled ever so loudly at me, saying, “If they know, then they will reject you. You will be laughed at and ridiculed again and again! Just stuff it down and keep smiling.” LIES! All worthless lies. Once I talked about it, the shame melted away. At the same time, grief was able to finish its cycle in me, and my body was able to file the event away in a healthy manner.

So, to you reading this, when your emotions get all stirred up, GREAT!

You are a living, breathing human! You are not broken. Your body is doing its job of sounding the alarm that things are NOT okay! Something must change. Do not run to quiet the alarm and become numb again. I dare you... This time, deal with the root cause of the fire or flooding, which is causing the internal alarms to blare. Go to a trusted friend or trained counselor who you know will:

- Listen intently and ask a few thought-provoking questions.
- Be comfortable to sit in silence with you as you think about things.
- Gently and clearly tell you the truth, even if it doesn't align with your thinking.
- Not judge you for expressing emotions but will gently pull you back from expressing your emotions so big that you would hurt someone.
- Encourage you to handwrite three letters (that you will NEVER send) to the people who caused you pain and tell them:

- A.) The pain they have caused you.
- B.) That you choose to forgive them and turn them over to God for justice.
- C.) That going forward, they will not stop you from becoming the person of noble character you aspire to be.

Now, read the letters to a counselor, then a trusted friend or two. Grief demands a witness. Choose your hard.

⇒ Stuffing pain or trauma down and not letting it up works for a bit, then it comes out sideways at the most inopportune times and creates more chaos. (Picture keeping a giant beach ball underwater and then letting go of it.)

⇒ Forgiveness and healing are both a lifelong journey. They are hard work today, but worth it when you can honestly smile a happy smile, enjoy the warm spring breeze, easily laugh from your toes, honestly empathize with a hurting person, and not be triggered.

⇒ Unforgiveness and wallowing in pain paint a massive bullseye on you for others to take advantage of, and you become unendingly miserable until you finally expire. Choose your hard.

⇒ Journal on physical paper. It is astonishing how much writing gets the jumble of clamoring thoughts out of your brain space. Typing will help, but it is far less beneficial than writing on paper.

⇒ Lastly, are you properly caring for yourself? Are you eating healthy amounts of nutritious food at the proper hours of the day for your schedule? Are you getting quality sound sleep? Have you bathed and groomed your body in the last few days? Are you going to work? Are you getting good physical exercise? If you are not doing all these at the average level of a healthy adult, then please hold off on making big, life-changing decisions until you are stable and have cared for yourself properly.

If you want a listening ear, I may or may not be the one to help you. I do have a friend who is a licensed counselor and can connect you to someone who can help you.

“Worry is like a rocking chair: it keeps you moving but doesn’t get you anywhere.”
Corrie Ten Boom

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May

How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity with God

(program 1, part 1)

We discuss the vital teaching the Bible offers on this important topic. You'll be encouraged and equipped to better know the Lord and to share Him with others. (Dr. John Ankerberg)

How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity with God

(program 1, part 2)

It is vital to ask the question, "Am I sure that I will spend eternity with God?" This program will further your understanding of God's gift of salvation in ways that will help you confidently serve Him today. (Dr. John Ankerberg)

The Rescue!

Pastor Mark Henry and Mondo Gonzales discuss the imminent rapture of the church. They explain the problems with various rapture timing theologies.

A Preview of Things to Come

Jan Markell talks to Tim Moore and Nathan Jones about the convergence of signs of the times. The rapture is the ultimate apocalyptic event.

June

How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity with God

(program 2, part 1)

Message by John Ankerberg

How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity with God

(program 2, part 2)

Message by John Ankerberg

Saved by Grace (parts 1&2)

There is no reason to wait until heaven to experience the fullness of God's grace. He wants us to live abundantly right now. From the moment we are saved to our last breath on earth, God desires for us to be intimate with Him. Dr. Charles Stanley shares how important it is to embrace God's gift of friendship and what it means to be saved by grace.

Ready for the Antichrist

Jan Markell plays a conference message by Amir Tsarfati on the preparation Europe is making for the Antichrist. Scripture indicates this man of lawlessness will come from the Revived Roman Empire. How are all things lining up?

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.

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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

“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever” (Psalm 125:1).

I would like to write about the true church of God. The Bible defines the church in two different ways. One way is the physical, as we see it. If someone speaks of an Amish Church, we immediately think of all the members of that church and where it is located. Or, if one speaks of the Baptist Church in town, we envision its building and what street it is on. And that’s the same for the Methodists, Catholics, and so on. Being a devout member of one of these physical churches will not make you a child of God.

But the Bible also defines the true church of God. *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,”* (this is the key to entering the true church of God. ‘Jesus.’) *“called to be saints,”* (called to be what we are not) *“with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”* (1 Cor 1:2).

The true church consists only of those who are in Christ by faith. If you really are one of His, you will know it. And if Christ comes to call His church, I’m afraid you will see only a small percentage of the physical going to meet Him in the air. The salt is losing its savor. Few people look forward to meeting the Saviour. The Bible says perfect love casts out fear. Are you truly a member of the Lord’s body, “His” church, or are you just hoping to be?

“And He” (Jesus) *“is the head of the body, the church... And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself... And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he recon-*

ciled...” (Notice that it is Him who reconciled you. It’s not something you do except to believe it.) *“If ye continue in the faith,”* (Continue believing Christ and his provision. Having faith in his blood, the cross, and resurrection. Pledging allegiance and staying loyal to a particular denomination is not continuing in faith. Many devoted church members do not have faith in Christ and his provision with all their heart, but are lost) *“grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...”* (Col 1:18-23). That is how you stay in the faith!

The true church of God is singular. It is the body of Christ. It consists of many different races of people. They are sprinkled throughout many different denominations. And they are all one in Christ Jesus. But they are few in number. No denominational walls can separate them, for the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts and toward each other. They all have a singular goal of someday living with their Redeemer, and they also have a hunger and calling to give the gospel to the lost while there is yet time, hoping that more will turn to Jesus Christ (repent) and be saved. *“...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 20:21).

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (baptism into Jesus Christ, that is. Read 1 Cor. 12:13), *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph 4:4-6).

“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17)

“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor 10:17).

“...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13).

“...for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph 2:15).

“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb 10:14).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles” (or Amish, or Mennonites, or Baptist, or Methodists), *“whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”* (1 Cor 12:13).

Christ is not divided. Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-13.

The point that I am trying to make is this. Just because you are a water-baptized, devout member of a certain denominational church, zealous of good works, this does not make you a member of the true church of God, which is the body of Christ. Don’t get me wrong. All of this is well and good to do. It just won’t get your sins forgiven, nor will it get you into heaven in any way. The only way to know if we are members of the true body of Christ is if His Spirit dwells in us. *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Romans 8:16).

A person who tries to argue this point and cannot get past the “good-works-to-go-to-heaven” doctrine has never honestly compared his good works with the Word of God because he would have forsaken them by now as a means to get right with God. He has never experienced the washing of his sins in the blood of the Lamb of God, once and for

all, nor has he experienced the entry of God's Spirit coming to dwell with his spirit and walking in the Spirit of God. "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9).

To receive His Spirit and become part of His family, you must seek Him at heart level, just as you are, without first trying to reform yourself. If you seek Christ, you will receive a kind of divine hunger. And don't give up searching until you know that He knows you and you know Him, and your life is joined with His in a one Spirit union. Then you will "...be found in him not having" (your) "own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil 3:9).

Growing in faith is different than the new birth. You can't grow in faith until you've been born again, and you won't be born again until you believe that what Christ has done for you is enough.

I know that all my stories somehow always turn out to be a gospel message, but it just breaks my heart to see so many caught in the same religious net of trying to "get right with God" that I used to be in. And it is so hard to see the Light while in this net. And the ones who see it know how close it was that the Light had just passed them by without being seen or understood, and they would have been forever lost, which is going to be the fate of so many. So often, I write with a sense of panic, looking out over the vast river of people drowning in their self-made destruction and trying to save themselves. Then someone throws out the life preserver named Jesus, and most refuse to reach out and grab it, thinking that God will be more pleased if they struggle to shore in their own way, and it won't work.

They will drown because on the far side of the river, close to shore, is a powerful undertow called "the righteousness of the law." No one has ever made it through alive because they were "judged according to their works."

It is so painful to see someone close to us struggling to "get right with God," and they really do want the right thing. But if you mention that Jesus is the only way and that He can deliver us from the guilt and power of sin, they will ridicule you and tell you that is not enough. (Please try to imagine yourself saying that in the presence of Jesus.) It is so hard to think of the terrible end many will face if they reject the gift of eternal life provided by Jesus Christ and Him alone.

This is why God will have to wipe away so many of the believers' tears when they get to heaven. It is for all the friends and family that perished. But then, eventually, the former things will be remembered no more, for God's glory shall be revealed in us. Oh, what a great and wonderful Saviour we have. This is called hope.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph 1:10).

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:7).

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

NEED AT LEAST 4 BASIC ELEMENTS TO SURVIVE.

1. Water
2. Air
3. Food
4. Light

AND LOOK WHAT THE BIBLE TELLS US ABOUT JESUS.

1. I am the Living Water
2. I am the Breath of Life
3. I am the Bread of Life
4. I am the Light of the World

SCIENCE WAS RIGHT, WE NEED JESUS TO LIVE.

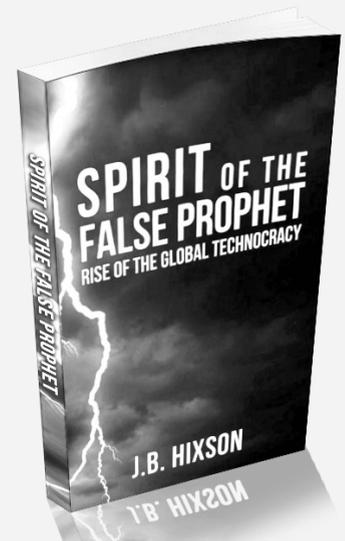
The Spirit of the False Prophet

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Tradition

(n.) Peer pressure from dead people.

The Amish in Europe

The previous article focused on the Amish who migrated to the United States. Let's return to Europe to see how the Amish developed after many of their friends and family members sailed overseas.

Consequences of the French Revolution

During most of the 18th century, the Amish, Mennonites, and other religious minorities were more or less 2nd class citizens. They had to deal with discrimination and sometimes even persecution from civil and some church authorities. Here and there, a tolerant noble or an aristocrat offered them a safe haven in return for working their land, but this was always an exceptional gift and never a civil right.

This all changed with the French Revolution, even though the Anabaptist groups did not participate in the violence that overthrew the French king and his noble elite and proclaimed freedom, equality, and brotherhood. From then on, everyone was seen as an equal citizen, regardless of who their parents were or what religious group they belonged to. In this way, the French Revolutionary idea of citizenship opened the door for social acceptance that went beyond toleration. But while the Amish potentially were freed from future discrimination and persecution, they also were freed to engage in the process of acculturation and assimilation that accompanied such civic acceptance.

The French revolutionary government did make one distinction for its Amish and Mennonite population. They were granted an exemption from military involvement. In return for this privilege, an extra tax was collected. The privilege lasted only a short time. The rise of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 and his crowning as emperor in 1804 changed the lives of nearly all Western Europeans. He filled the next decade with violence, conquering several countries and pushing the revolutionary ideas of equal citizenship to the extent that no one was exempt from its rights and duties.

Even though the Amish and Mennonites officially asked for exemption with a petition three times, it was not granted to them. Some tried to avoid direct participation by hiring a draft substitute or offering alternative military services. Still, several participated in the troops – resulting in conflict in the Amish and Mennonite communities.

Famous Farmers

The Amish developed themselves as good farmers and often established good relationships with the nobles they rented their farms from. Ironically, the outsider status of the Amish fitted them for their role as agricultural innovators. Because they rarely were able to own land, Anabaptist farmers invested their earnings in livestock and other productive assets rather than real estate. The term Anabaptist became nearly synonymous with good farming. The appeal of the Amish as skilled farmers opened a way for them to migrate to other areas as tenants, such as Bavaria.

Leaving the Church or Leaving the Continent

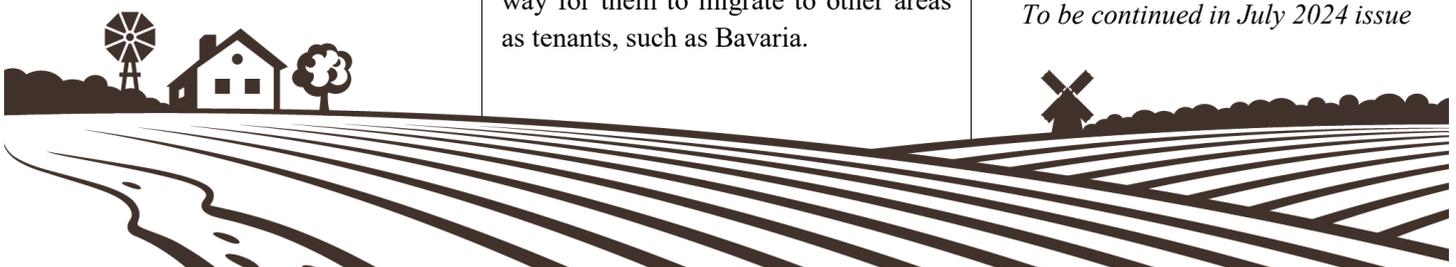
The final fall of Napoleon in 1815 did not end the influence of French Revolutionary thought or slow the state's tendency to usurp the church's moral authority. Moreover, the small political states that rose from the ashes of the French Empire were all brought up on the revolutionary ideals of universal citizenship and the need for standing armies maintained through universal conscription. These developments resulted in two main directions: immigration to America and acculturation as European citizens. The ones who stayed in Europe often grew closer to neighbouring Mennonite communities, for example, by using the same literature. Some churches, especially in the Netherlands and Eastern Europe, even merged with Mennonite congregations.

During wartime in Europe, migration was not easy. But after 1815, sea travel became more regular and safe, and between 1820 and 1860, more than five million Europeans left for Canada or the United States, from which some twenty-seven percent were German speakers and around 3,000 were Amish.

The rapid loss of members and leaders during these years weakened the church that remained in Europe. At times, nearly an entire congregation from Bavaria or Hesse left together as a large group. Several Amish communities in those regions were so diminished that they eventually disbanded.

Main source: *A History of the Amish*
by Steven M. Holt

To be continued in July 2024 issue



For those who don't understand exactly what is happening in the Middle East and what is happening here on American soil, I will break it down as simply as I can.

God found favor with Abraham. God even called Abraham His friend. Abraham's wife was named Sarah, and together, they were leaders of a large tribe, community, or encampment, you could say.

God promised Abraham that his seed (offspring) would be numbered like the sands of the seas.

Sarah, being 99 years old (and folks lived long lives at this time in history), began to doubt God's promise and suggested that Abraham sleep with her very attractive and younger handmaiden, Hagar.

Abraham, being human and born of a sinful nature, agreed with Sarah (because he's a dude) and slept with Hagar. Soon after, it was realized that Hagar was pregnant with Abraham's firstborn, Ishmael. True to God's promise, Sarah birthed Abraham's second son, Isaac, thirteen years later.

Since the original sin (Adam & Eve), mankind has disappointed, failed, and angered God. It was not God's will that man failed. It is and has al-

ways been about choices and free will.

From Hagar came Ishmael. From Sarah came Issac.

True to God's promise, Abraham's seed became and is as the sands of the seas. However, true to there being consequences for sin, God told Abraham that he must get the sin out of the camp.

Having to banish Hagar and Ishmael from the camp grieved Abraham a

great deal. He loved both of his sons like any good father would.

When it comes down to it, Ishmael was born against the will of God. From that beginning, Ishmael's descendants have waged war against Issac's descendants.

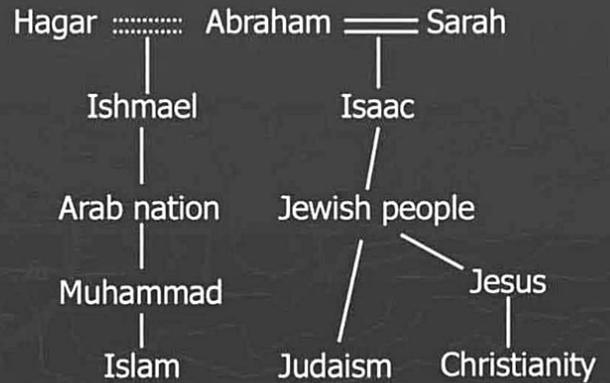
From Ishmael came the Arab Nations, the prophet Mohammed, who was a fierce warrior and writer of the Islamic Quran, which instructs followers of Muhammad that if Christians or any other faith won't convert to Islam or the Muslim faith, they are labeled as infidels and must be killed.

From Isaac came the Jewish nation and eventually Judaism, Christianity, and finally, Jesus as a blood sacrifice for sin to all nations. This is how the Middle East has been labeled 'the cradle of civilization.'

Ishmael's descendants don't believe that Jews and Christians have a right to live. That is why the leaders of Iran, who are the head of the octopus, direct

the tentacles like Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, and a host of other murderous Islamic terrorist organizations to attack and chant "Death to Israel" and "Death to America."

Abraham's descendants



This war, jihad, has been going on from the beginning and will be going on when Christ appears for His second coming to wage the final war against evil.

This country has been blessed because this country has been a defender of Israel and the Jews.

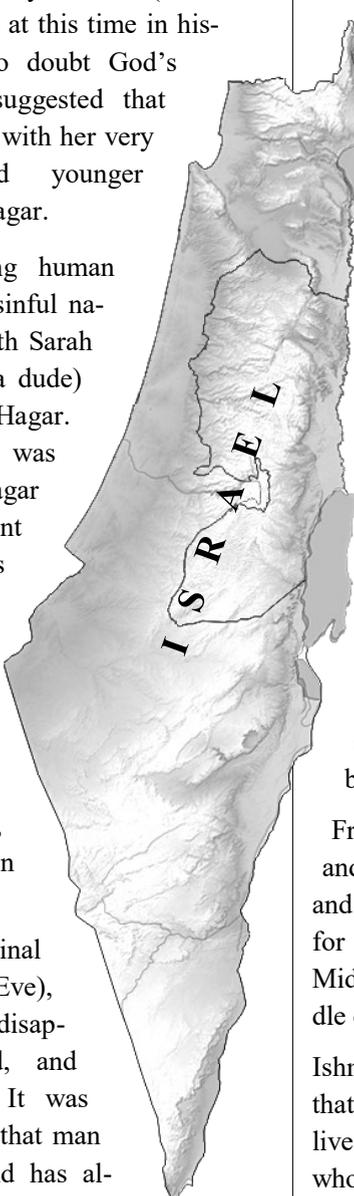
As you can see by the siding of the youth of this nation with supporting and protesting on behalf of terrorists, we're only a generation away from turning our backs on Israel.

They're so misguided, indoctrinated, and naive that they don't understand the weight of their actions.

God chose the Jews for Jesus to take on human flesh and walk among us for thirty-three years, ultimately becoming a blood sacrifice on the cross. This sacrifice was not just for Christians and Jews; it was for any human who would answer the call to become Christ-like.

Remember, folks, God said Israel is the apple of His eye.

I will stand with Israel.



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Fathers

—By John Weaver

Father's Day. What is it? How should we celebrate? In this country, the average amount a person spends on gifts is \$115.00! If dads are not honored, it is not because insufficient money is spent.

Much of that money is spent by wives for their husbands. It has been said that on Mother's Day, we honor and bless mothers, but on Father's Day, we remind fathers of their duties and obligations and where they fall short.

I believe that Dads should also be honored, not because they always deserve it, but because God would have you do that. (Some dads end up in prison - or should. I'm sorry if that is your dad. It would be tough to honor such a person). By far, most dads are hard-working providers, giving of themselves for their wives and children. There has never been even one perfect dad. Jesus would have been, but He was not a dad.

So what should you give your dad? Or your husband? I will focus especially on what a wife can give her husband. Forget the presents at the store - at least don't make that the priority. He will probably appreciate a meal at his favorite restaurant, but I can tell you what he really wants. He does not want a \$115.00 present. What he wants from

you costs no money but is worth a lot. It is priceless. He craves it from you.

Please hear me...What your husband wants from you more than anything else is simply HONOR AND RESPECT.

Ephesians 5:33 instructs husbands to love their wives. Then, it tells wives to see that they reverence their husbands. How many wives understand what reverence is? I am sure many of you do. I am also sure that many don't.

Rev-er-ence. "Regard or treat with deep respect." Reverence goes beyond respect. It is a deeper form of the word. Many a husband would long to receive respect, let alone reverence. Again, I know that many fine ladies who read this do respect or reverence their husbands. But again, many do not.

If you are a wife who thinks your husband does not deserve respect or reverence, then you are probably right. We don't. But if we are believers, we certainly understand that none of us deserve salvation. We are not saved because we deserve it. We are saved because someone else loved us despite our shortcomings.

The prodigal son tried to tell his father that he didn't deserve to be treated like

he was. The father treated him the way he did because he was his son. It had nothing to do with earning. In the same way, we dads can never live up to what we should be. Can you give honor and respect like the prodigal's father did? Not because we earned or deserved it, but because of our position.

God created wives to be a helpmeet for their husbands. Many are that. Some go way beyond the line of duty. As I write this, I keep thinking of abusive husbands. Please, I am not even suggesting that you need to respect an abuser. But I see too often that a wife becomes a "correct-meet" rather than a "help-meet" to her husband. Such a husband will be put under a law of expectation. He will not be able to function correctly if an expectation is placed on him by his wife. He certainly won't if he knows he doesn't quite measure up. Or can't.

Sorry to you, Godly wives, that I had to go where this article led me. I give a great shout-out to you and no condemnation, just encouragement if you see yourselves as a correct-meet at times. We all fall short. Sometimes.

Husbands love your wives... and wives see that you reverence your husbands.