

## Religious Poison

Amos 6

By Randy Wages

7/21/13

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

### I. Introduction:

- A. Some of you will recall that the last message I preached was titled the “Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness,” taken from Hebrews 12. Well, in preparing that message I searched for the phrase, “fruit of righteousness,” and I found it again in Amos, chapter 6. And I was struck by its usage there in the latter part of verse 12 where God, through His Prophet, declares to Israel, “...*ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:*” The word hemlock here refers to a poisonous weed and in this context, God through His prophet is exposing how the Israelites had taken the very religion God gave to them through Moses, the religion which for God’s true children produces in them the peaceable fruit of righteousness and yet instead, they had turned it into poison – poisonous to their very souls. With that in mind, I’ve titled this message, “Religious Poison.”
- B. When I first turned to Amos 6, I noticed my Bible was full of notes in the margin and that caused me to recall that not so long ago, our former Pastor delivered an excellent message from this same chapter. So while without shame I’ve borrowed liberally from him, I am approaching this with a slightly different emphasis so I trust you won’t find it too repetitive.
- C. That said, we will again walk through the passage verse by verse. But first I’d like to share that which was impressed upon me in my own study. As it pertains to religion, there is little argument that each of us can be accurately described at any given time as being either: 1) Indifferent, 2) In Ignorance, or 3) In Christ
1. Indifferent: If we’re indifferent about religion it simply means it’s just not very important to us, not at this given time
  2. In Ignorance: Now most that are indifferent about religion are admittedly ignorant about it, not having taken the time to seriously consider it. But know for our purposes today, when I speak of those in religious ignorance, I am not referring to the indifferent. Rather I’m referring to those who are religious. Granted, folks are religious to varying degrees. There are zealots for their religion and there are those that practice their religion but don’t “wear it on their sleeves” so to speak. But as I speak of those in ignorance, I am referring to all degrees of zeal found among those who are truly religious to some extent, just religiously wrong.

I'm speaking of the majority who name the name of Christ, the many Christ described as traveling the broad road that leads to destruction – those who are tragically mistaken in their religion. And in reference to this ignorance, know that it has nothing to do with intellectual capacity and in no sense am I suggesting that those who have been delivered from this ignorance are in any way intellectually superior. No, this ignorance describes the state of all us initially, whether indifferent or religious. The Bible declares we all start out our physical lives on this earth as spiritually dead sinners and so spiritually blind, spiritually deaf, without spiritual understanding – in ignorance of God as He truly is. As the scriptures teach, by nature (in our natural, spiritually dead state) we cannot know not the things of God for they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14). So there are those who are (1) **indifferent** and those who are religious but (2) **in ignorance**, and ...

3. In Christ: Thirdly there are those who are trusting (3) **in Christ**. Now before you think, “Whew, glad to know you’re not suggesting I could be among those in ignorance because “I’m a “Christian,” consider that most of the Epistles are written to warn us of the deadly deception by those who name the name of Christ, but deny the vital doctrine of Christ, often in their own ignorance – meaning they deceive others because they are deceived themselves. But these I’m describing as “in Christ” are those who have been delivered from their ignorance to see of the necessity of their standing in Christ, those who by God-given faith come to trust in Christ alone for all of their salvation – a salvation based solely on the merit of His finished work of righteousness on the cross being imputed (or charged to) their accounts whereby they discover they have stood for all eternity, accepted in the beloved Son of God – in the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Now as I studied Amos 6, it struck me that both the (1)indifferent as well as and those who worship (2)in ignorance – both are portrayed and described in these verses, and that in contrast to those who are (3) in Christ, who shall without fail enjoy the peaceable fruit of His finished work of righteousness, evidenced by their having been delivered from their indifference and /or from the poison of man’s religion. So keep these 3 categories in mind as we examine this passage beginning with verse 1 where we read...

## II. Verse 1: “*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!*”

A. Amos is addressing here the leaders of the entire nation of Israel, Zion representing the 2 tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah, and Samaria representing the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. And here the prophet declares collectively “woe” to them at ease there. Zion or Jerusalem, being the principle seat of government and religion for the southern kingdom is where the people traveled to just as Samaria was where those of the northern house of Israel came.

- B. The declaration of “woe” to them means it will be sad for them, suffering and troubles are coming their way, great misfortune and devastation that will be described later in the chapter. And it is directed to those who are at ease in Zion. When we see folks who are doing well, who are at ease, we’re inclined to declare how happy their future must be, just as those at ease presume the same. But the God of truth (the only One whose judgment ultimately matters) declares otherwise.
- C. Zion here is also representative of the church state, and refers in this context to Jerusalem, the central city of their religion where the temple was. And it is in the mountains of Samaria that the northern kingdom made sacrifices to their idols. So, from a spiritual application, we see in this 1<sup>st</sup> verse that God’s judgment is directed to both the indifferent as well as those who are religious, but who remain in darkness, in ignorance, whose hope is a false hope, a false assurance – a presumption of being at ease (religious, and thinking their safe or saved) but to whom God declares not so – but Woe unto them.
- D. Now in the immediate context this ease speaks of the comfort and trust they placed in their own strength, in their fortified cities, their strongholds, and in the mountain of Samaria, thinking they were safe and secure from all their enemies. That would be in keeping with verse 2 where they’re told...

III. Verse 2: ***<sup>2</sup>Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?***

- A. He is telling them to remember these great cities. They all were great, even greater than Jerusalem and Samaria and they all were destroyed under the providence of God. In essence he is saying, do you really think you’re invulnerable, and deserve better than they? This can be likened to those who think that by their own strength – by their act of faith or decision that they have made but others won’t – that they are eternally safe and secure. God in essence speaks to every generation in that initial state of ignorance saying, “Are you better than others – better enough to rest in something that proceeds from you, a sinner? Perhaps your faith, your free-will decision?” In verse 3 he continues to address them as...

IV. Verses 3-6: ***<sup>3</sup>Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; <sup>4</sup>That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; <sup>5</sup>That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; <sup>6</sup>That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.***

- A. Now verse 3 reflects their indifference to the Prophet’s warnings of impending physical danger. And the lesson here for us is how much more devastating is the eternal danger that extends to those in indifference regarding their spiritual state.

Here, they put out of their minds the coming judgment of which Amos is prophesying, but this also alludes to the eternal judgment by almighty God in which the indifferent – those who persist in choosing to put it out of their minds, who perhaps consider themselves too busy to delve into this religious stuff, figuring maybe someday when I'm not so consumed with my work, my family, or other activities – to them he says there is a day of reckoning, like the day appointed for your own death or even the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ. There truly is a pay day some day!

Woes (great misfortune and eternal grief) shall come upon those who remain indifferent when it comes to Jesus Christ and to God's one way of salvation by grace in Christ as set forth in God's Gospel. Those who put off the serious consideration of spiritual things must imagine they never will be called to account and yet this passage teaches that God is a God of justice and wrath and as we're told elsewhere, He is One who will by no means clear the guilty. As sinners, we all need salvation.

And when we read that by their indifference they "cause the seat of violence to draw near" it is in essence telling us that by so mocking God (ignoring Him) they heap even greater judgment upon themselves. Indifference is unbelief and God says they those who do not believe His Gospel, shall be damned (Mk 16:16).

B. And verse 4 also speaks of their lying around on beds of ivory and stretching themselves out on couches as they eat of the finest, getting their lambs wholesale right out of the flock and picking calves out of the middle of the stalls to select the very best. This is addressing the ease and comfort they took in their indulgences or excesses, taking all their comfort and pleasure from the things of this life. Now listen, the Bible says we are to enjoy our portion (or that which we've been blessed with in this world). So there is nothing evil in these things they enjoyed. The evil came from all their happiness being derived from them at the expense of their reliance upon God for their chief happiness.

C. And they chanted to the sound of the viol (a stringed instrument) and invented instruments themselves to make music like David. Here we see they practiced their religion as they so chose. They even sought to excel above their forefathers through the invention of instruments (perhaps making it more relevant to their time and their desires) but the difference was that while they were "religious" they were simply using their religion for their own entertainment – not as the Psalmist David who wrote songs to the glory of God. And yet they were at ease, and took comfort in their religion, perhaps in their having some similarity to David, one whom God said was a man after His own heart.

And so in our day, many meet to worship and claim to believe on Christ in the practice of their religion, while the truth is they merely borrow His name for they deny His doctrine, tickling their own ears with that which pleases our natural appetites. So churches decide, “Let’s go contemporary with our services so as to attract a bigger crowd, make it more relevant for our day.” They build their congregations, not by clear preaching of God’s Gospel as found in God’s Word – not by their message, but they attract thousands by their methods – man’s inventive means. And they do so in religious ignorance – in ignorance of the doctrine of Christ which is absent. They are at ease in Zion and God declares “Woe” unto them.

I couldn’t help but think of some of the mega churches of our day which major on entertainment and seem to only invoke the name of Christ so as to soothe their own consciences, while admittedly their popularity is derived from the many enticing activities and methods they employ. We have friends who attend such a church. They recently shared with us how their church met in 4 separate locations with 10,000 attending at their particular location alone. And they told us how cool it was that they kicked off their services, not with what is called “Contemporary Christian” music as many churches employ today, but this particular mega church, would kick off their services with popular secular performers or bands like you might hear on any radio station, or at a night club, or at public concert. And then they added of course after that they hear what they might call a “regular sermon” from their very well-known pastor. I, like many of you, love good music and there is nothing wrong with that in and of itself. But clearly, the draw was all the other activities such as this – methods and performances, in this case with no pretense of any relevance to spiritual things – much less the Gospel of God’s sovereign grace.

D. Well, we also see there in verse 6 that they drank wine in bowls. Some believe that this refers to the very bowls that were used to pour sacrificial blood – using the things that God provided to point sinners to the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, but used by them to entertain themselves in their excesses. Again, isn’t that what any religious group does when they are ignorant of the doctrine of Christ – of salvation by grace in Christ alone, based upon His finished work alone – and yet they invoke the name of Christ (call themselves Christians) and use God’s very words from the Bible to put themselves at ease in their religion of works – of salvation ultimately conditioned on themselves (at least imagined to be so in some way – their acceptance of Jesus, their profession of faith – something they do that is presumed to be the real deciding factor in their salvation. And the drinking of wine in bowls rather than cups would suggest again the excesses in which they indulged just as they did by anointing themselves with the chief (or most expensive) of ointments.

E. But at the end of verse 6, we see the indictment when, after describing all these practices, he says, “**but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.**” Some believe that the word “Joseph” in this context refers to the northern kingdom of Israel while others think it is in reference to all of Israel, in keeping with its usage in the 80<sup>th</sup> Psalm. But regardless, the point is that they had “put far away the evil day” of God’s judgment and the pending devastation that had been prophesied to them. So in their unbelief of God they weren’t grieving over the affliction for which they, as unbelieving sinners, were destined. They weren’t worried about it – not truly sorrowful over their sin and demonstrated that they did not truly believe there would be a sure and certain outpouring of God’s wrath against them. Whether indifferent or in religious ignorance, the problem is summed up in our spiritual darkness in which we do not comprehend the true nature of our sin problem. There was no true sorrow over sin so in verse 7 he says...

V. Verses 7-8: “**Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.** <sup>8</sup>**The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.**

A. Verse 7: It would seem that this declaration as to who would be taken captive first is directed to those chief leaders and nobles who were at ease and those who had put off any consideration of the day of judgment. And he tells them how in their captivity there will be no more banquets or lying around on couches of ease.

B. Verse 8: But when we read in verse 8 that God has sworn by Himself concerning the fate awaiting them, it should awaken the senses. Here God is engaging all that He is and in essence putting the entire honor of His name at stake. This is equivalent to God declaring that this destruction shall come to pass or I am not who I say I am. In swearing by Himself He is asserting that this will take place as sure as I am God.

And when it comes to eternal judgment, likewise, we need to understand it is as sure and certain as the existence of God Himself. He declares that there are none righteous and yet none but the righteous shall enter into His presence. We best be seeking to understand how He can be true to those clear assertions in His Word and still save a sinner like you and me. He is holy and will not commune with sin. All sin will be punished. And He places the very honor of His holy name at stake in assurance to us of the certainty of His judgment.

And to remind us of who we are dealing with we’re told that this is what “...**saith the LORD the God of hosts.**” As the God of hosts it speaks of His massive, invincible army, the legion of angels at His beck and call, and all the might of nature itself which he commands. He swears by Himself because there is none greater to swear by, emphasizing the omnipotence of almighty God and certainty that what God has determined to do cannot fail to take place.

His abhorrence of the “excellency of Jacob” is a reference to their arrogance and to their false assurance, hating the palaces where they found their comfort. So, he says He will deliver them up to their enemies. And He begins to describe the extent of this as we read in verse 9...

VI. Verses 9-11: ***And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die.*** <sup>10</sup>***And a man’s uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.*** <sup>11</sup>***For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.*** There is no security anywhere to be found – neither in the great houses of the high and mighty nor in the little houses of the common folks. These verses make it clear that the devastation would be great, that no matter how many perhaps might survive the initial onslaught from the enemy invasion – that however many or left, that all will be touched as God has so determined, whether by the sword, or by famine or by an epidemic disease (as the burning of the bodies suggests), etc.

And note at the end of verse 10, it is suggested that when they go to take the bodies, should a survivor who has yet to succumb inquire of another as to whether there are any left alive, they shall answer “No” – again showing how widespread the destruction would be. But it adds that then they shall say, “...***Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.***” The day of mercy is over. And now they no longer boast falsely in His name, they dare not even mention it. The reality of God’s judgment against them and their sins has been realized and now there is terror. This may also be an answer intended to show that they dare not mention the name of the Lord by way of complaint, seeing in hindsight that God was just in giving them what they deserved due unto their sins. But their hindsight will be to no avail for then it will be too late – their destruction will have taken place. And one day it will be too late for all those who remain spiritually indifferent or in religious ignorance – too late for their eternal welfare. Then as we continue in verse 12, to make a point, a physical absurdity is set forth as we read...

VII. Verses 12-13: ***Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:*** <sup>13</sup>***Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?***

A. Clearly it would be absurd to race horses on rocks where they would likely fall, break limbs, and throw the riders. Likewise, no one in their right minds would choose to plow a field to raise crops on a bed of rocks. That would not only be contrary to sound reasoning, but it also would be a misuse of horses, plows, and oxen. And that describes what the nation Israel had done in taking those elements of religion that were so graciously given to them by God under the Law of Moses and instead of exercising sound judgment, misuse them so as to heap even greater judgment upon themselves rather than reaping the intended benefit for which those elements of the Old Covenant had been intended.

- B. Gall is that which is nauseous, bitter or sickening while hemlock refers to a weed that is noxious or poisonous. So in their judgments (in their indifference and in their ignorance) they had corrupted the Gospel of God's grace in Christ as it was set forth in the pictures and types of all the sacrificial system, the priesthood, the entire ceremonial law. As Christ proclaimed, Moses wrote of Him, the promised Messiah. And as the Apostle Paul wrote, the Gospel (the gospel pictured in the ceremonial law of Moses which only the nation Israel had at that time) – that Gospel is the power of God unto salvation because therein is the righteousness of God revealed (Romans 1:16-17). And that very righteousness, the entire merit of that which Christ, the promised Messiah would accomplish in time on Calvary's cross, the perfect satisfaction He made to the justice of God on behalf of all of God's true children, produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness for each and every one for whom He established righteousness, all those to whom God has graciously imputed righteousness, having charged His very righteousness to their accounts.
- C. And as a whole, the nation Israel placed no real value upon it, taking comfort in their own strength for their security and safety. So in looking to themselves rather to God for their safety and comfort they corrupted their religion, turning what was intended to point them to the righteousness of God in Christ whereby they would enjoy the wondrous eternal fruits of that righteousness – turning that into something deadly and harmful to them. And in that sense their very religion (as corrupted by them) would now be their downfall – a poisonous fruit or as the sermon title suggests, "Religious Poison," poisonous to their very souls.
- D. From verse 13 we see that to trust in your own strength is to trust, take comfort, even rejoice "...in a thing of nought," as the verse reads. In other words, there was no basis whatsoever for their presumed confidence and trust. God is declaring that to so trust in your own strength is as insane as running horses on rocks or trying to plow with oxen on them. And so in verse 14 He declares...

VIII. Verse 14: ***But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation,*** <which we know from history to be the Assyrians> ***O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts;***<the almighty God will bring this about > ***and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath*** <that is from the north> ***unto the river of the wilderness.*** That would be to the south. Some think that to be the Nile river to the south of Israel, but regardless, the point is that their entire territory (north to south) would be overrun – nowhere to hide from the just wrath of God.

IX. Religious Poison: So when and how is religion that comes in the name of Christ poisonous to our eternal souls? How do folks in our day turn judgment into gall and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock or poison? Well they do so when they trust in a thing of nought – trusting in their own strength for their eternal security.

A. The Indifferent: Those who remain indifferent do so because (whether they admit it or not) they just don't believe (or choose to put out of their minds) that there is definitely a day of reckoning or else they flippantly presume that somehow they will be alright. But as Amos 6 teaches us, God is a God of wrath who will justly punish sins. And we all sin because we are all sinners. And to trust that you'll come out okay because you're a good guy or not as bad as someone else is to not believe God who declares that we all are guilty – all having sinned, and that He will by no means clear the guilty. Sins will not go unpunished. Your sins were either punished in your Substitute and Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ or else you will suffer the eternal punishment due unto your sins. Whose sins were punished in Christ? All those who by that blood-bought gift of faith flee to Christ alone for their eternal safety and security and repent of ever having imagined that something done by or found to be true of them could make the difference. They repent of having ever relied upon their own strength. So what should you do? Take God at His Word and trust in Christ alone for all your salvation!

B. Those In Religious Ignorance: But what about those who are religious and who, like the nation Israel, invoke the name of the true and living God, even considering themselves to be a Christian? How is their ignorance exposed? It really comes down to the basis or ground of their salvation. Ask yourself – Why or on what basis do you count yourself to be safe and secure from the just wrath of God because of your sins. Sadly, most in our day would misuse the very Word of God and invoke the name of Christ as their savior, all the while actually trusting in their own strength to be saved. And they do so at ease in Zion, blindly heading toward destruction while trusting in a thing of nought – in their own strength to save themselves.

1. Paul wrote of his fellow Jewish kinsman and of their religious ignorance in Romans 10, beginning in verse 1 where we read, ***“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*** <In other words Paul is saying they are lost> <sup>2</sup>***For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God,*** <they are religious. They don't think they are lost. They have a zeal of God> ***but not according to knowledge.***<sup>3</sup> <What knowledge do they lack?>

***For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*** <What is that righteousness?> <sup>4</sup>***For Christ is the end*** <the finishing or fulfillment> ***of the law for righteousness*** <that perfect satisfaction that He rendered for them to God’s holy law and justice. He was the fulfillment of all that God requires...> ***to every one that believeth.***” Every true believer looks to Christ and His righteousness alone for all their salvation – that is, to His doing and dying alone. He really got the job done. His righteousness is the only righteousness by which any can stand justified (righteous, not guilty) before a holy God.

2. I know what it's like to have trusted in a thing of nought for I used to be right there, just as many of you were before God was pleased to reveal Christ to us through this preached Gospel of grace. Trusting in anything other than (or in addition to) Christ and His imputed righteousness for your salvation is to rejoice and trust in a thing of nought.

For the multitudes (who like me in years past) – who mistakenly believe that Jesus Christ died for all men and women without exception – I pray God will expose to you that in so believing you are left with no other option than to ultimately be placing your trust in something other than the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation. There's little argument that God's Word is clear that many shall be damned, eternally punished for their sins. But if Christ died for any whose sin debt remains unpaid, then what is left to make the difference? What makes the real difference in your salvation? My answer would have been something like, "Oh, but you must believe" and it is true you must believe – but believing that your believing makes the difference in whether you're saved or not is not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. That would be faith in faith. To believe on Christ is to trust in Him alone for all your salvation – in His doing and dying whereby He established a perfect righteousness for you along with each and everyone of His dear children for whom He lived and died.

3. And to think otherwise is to turn judgment into gall. The popular version of today's so-called "Christianity" which directs the sinner to trust in their own strength to save themselves is nauseous, sickening before God. The typical message is Jesus Christ died for you and has made everything possible if you will now just do your part, say this prayer, walk this aisle, make this profession, you believe something to make the real difference – to get yourself saved. That dishonors and diminishes the glorious cross-work of Christ. In keeping with the words of Augustus Toplady, it diminishes Christ's Person and work to nothing more than a pedestal upon which the sinner might stand to boast of his or her decision for Jesus – a decision that they made, but others wouldn't so as to save themselves.
4. And while multitudes feel good, safe and secure, at ease in Zion under this false gospel of salvation by works (a 'gospel' cloaked or camouflaged in the language of grace) – but a message that suggests that salvation is at least to some degree conditioned on the sinner rather than solely upon the sinner's Substitute – and while it may feel safe and secure being accompanied with so many of like minds, know that this corruption and misuse of the Gospel message of God's Holy Word is (gall) sickening to God and (hemlock) poison to your soul.

- X. Closing: But thank God, there is deliverance from both our indifference and our ignorance – a sure and certain salvation for that 3<sup>rd</sup> category of folks I mentioned – those who are found in Christ.

In verse 8 we read of God engaging His very honor, swearing by Himself of His sure and certain judgment upon sin. Almighty God, who can and does do according to His own purpose and will, has emphasized the certainty of His just wrath against sin – as certain as the existence of God Himself. Our sins will not go unpunished. But in reading verse 8 I couldn't help but be reminded how the same God of wrath is the God of mercy and grace. And He has likewise sworn by Himself so as to assure believers of the absolute certainty of salvation in Christ – a salvation as sure and certain as the very existence of God Himself.

As we close, look at that in Hebrews 6, beginning in verse 13 where we read, ***“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,”*** And skipping down to verse 16 we read... ***“For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.”***<sup>17</sup> ***Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise*** <heirs do nothing to earn an inheritance. They're born into it. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise...> ***the immutability of his counsel,*** <that's His unchangeable, infinitely wise purpose> ***confirmed it by an oath:***<sup>18</sup> ***That by two immutable things,*** <He purposed and promised> ***in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,*** <a sure and certain assurance> ***who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:***<sup>19</sup> ***Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*** <into the very presence of God><sup>20</sup> ***Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”*** – this speaking of the eternity of His priesthood – His intercession for His people, having offered up the one sacrifice of Himself, His death on the cross, to pay in full the penalty due unto all the sins of those for whom He lived and died.

That's not presumption. Just as sure as sins shall not go unpunished, the sins of all those for whom Christ bore the punishment shall be saved. Our triune God (Father, Son, & Spirit) has engaged all that He is to make certain their salvation in a way whereby He receives all praise and glory!

Have you been indifferent about spiritual things? Have you been in ignorance of the righteousness of God necessary for the salvation of any sinner? We all begin life's journey in ignorance. Well there's good news and you've heard it today in the preaching of the good news – the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. May God's grace shine upon you and deliver you from the religious poison that would leave us indifferent and / or in ignorance. Christ is the end or finishing of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. And I pray that God the Holy Spirit will make that (His righteousness) your heartfelt hope as well, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.

*Randy Wages*